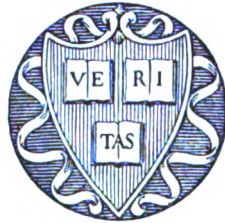


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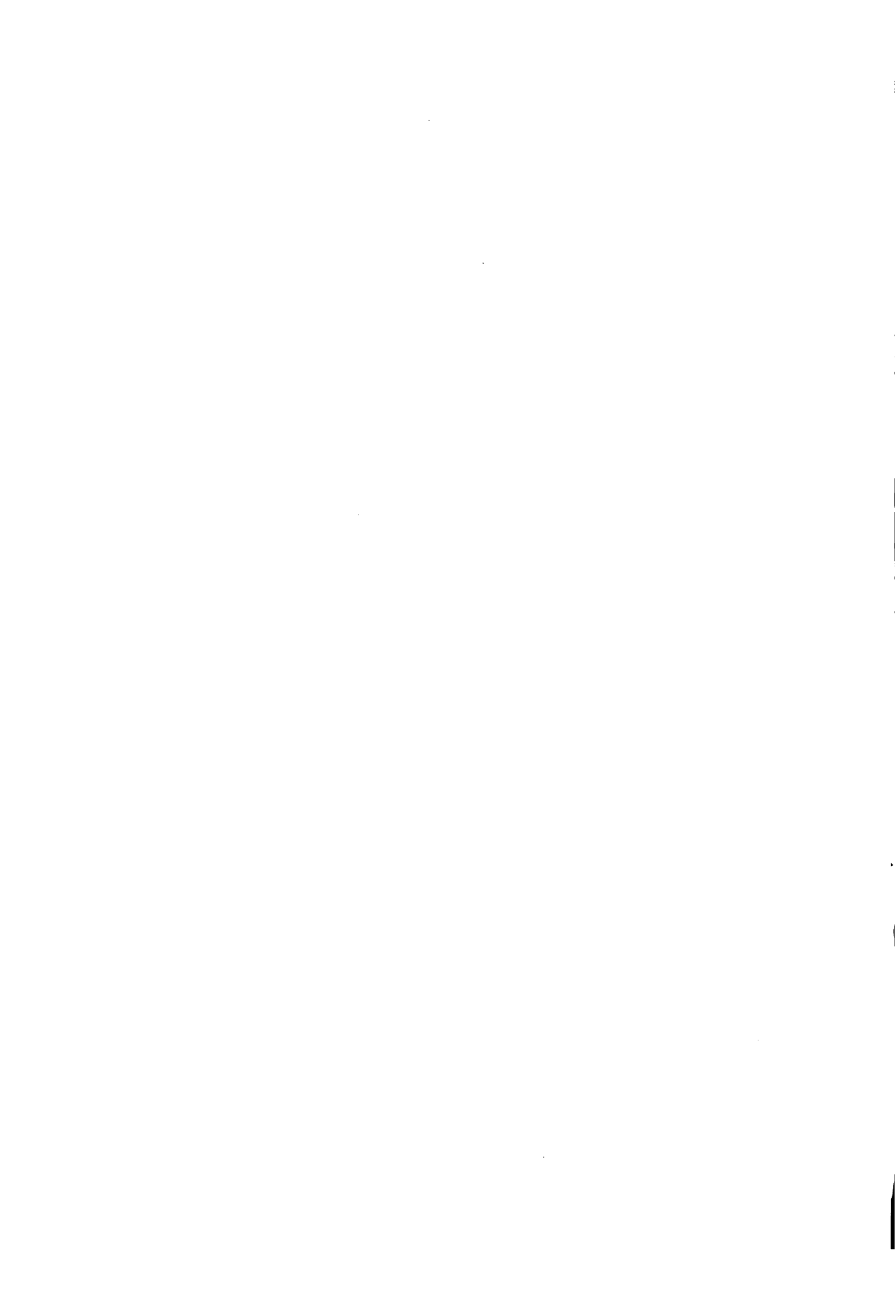
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Poet Lore

A MAGAZINE OF LETTERS

EDITED BY

CHARLOTTE PORTER—HELEN A. CLARKE

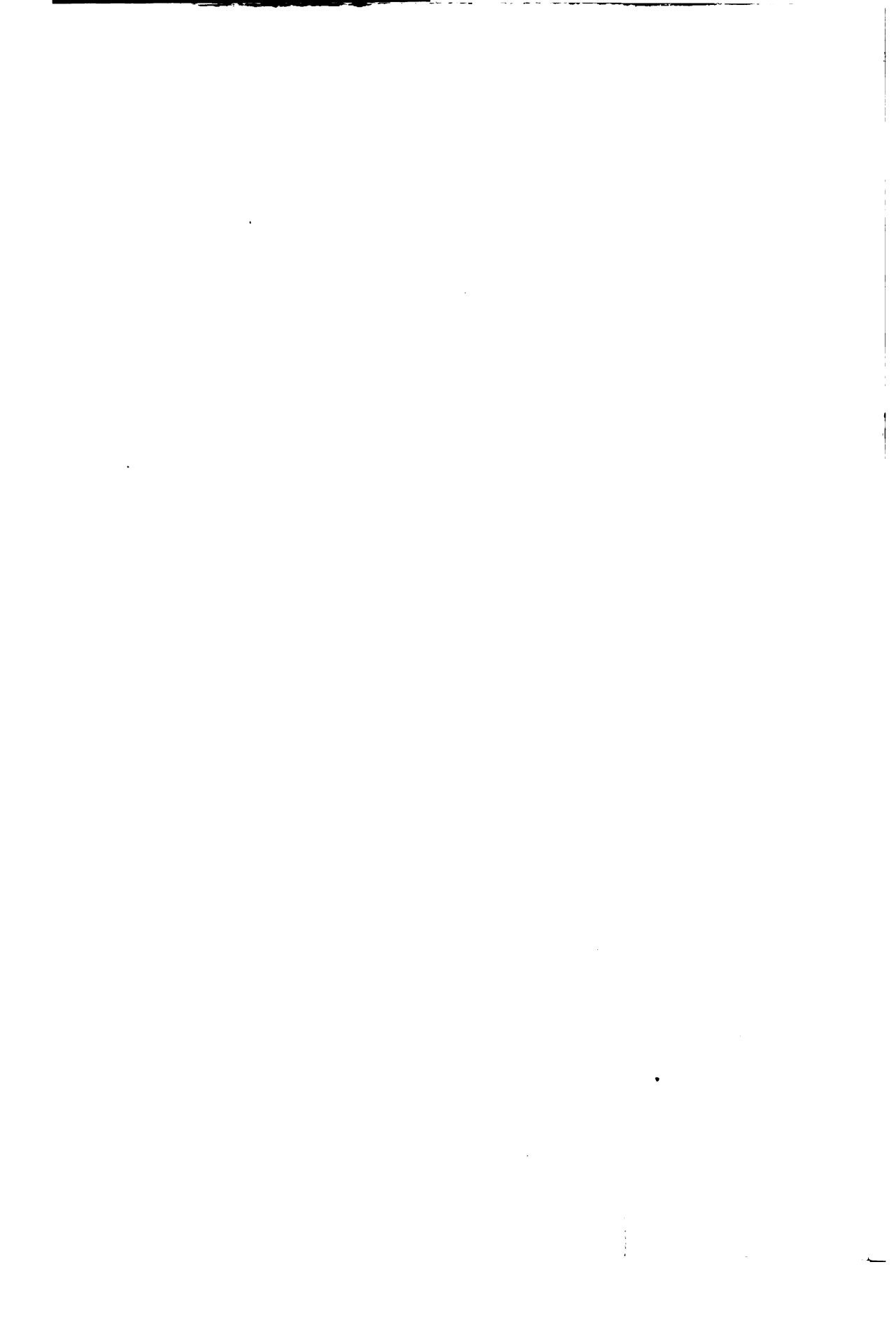
RUTH HILL

VOLUME XXXIII

JANUARY—DECEMBER, 1922



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THE POET LORE COMPANY
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DEVOTED TO POETRY AND DRAMA

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By MIGUEL RAMOS CARRION and VITAL AZA

The Prince of Semberia, A One Act Drama
By BRANISLAV NOOSKICH

The Delusion of a Human Cup
By YONE NOGUCHI

Ghosts at First Nights in Italy
By WINIFRED SMITH

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Editors

CHARLOTTE PORTER, HELEN A. CLARKE, RUTH HILL

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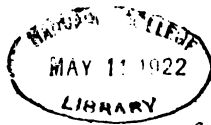
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P. Greenleaf

ZARAGUETA*

A COMEDY IN TWO ACTS

BY MIGUEL RAMOS CARRIÓN AND VITAL AZA

*Translated from the Spanish by Stephen Scatori and Roy Temple
House*

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

DON INDALECIO RUIPÉREZ, *a wealthy farmer of the province of
Salamanca*

CARLOS, *his nephew*

DON SATURIO, *a village doctor*

HERMÓGENES ZARAGÜETA, *a money-lender from Madrid*

PIO, *son of DONA BLASA, whose ambition is to be a priest*

PERICO, *a servant*

AMBROSIO, *a cab-driver*

DOÑA DOLORES, *wife of INDALECIO*

MARUJA, *her niece who lives with her*

DOÑA BLASA, *sister of the village priest*

GREGORIA, *maid-servant*

Time, the present.

Place, DON INDALECIO'S home.

ACT I

Sitting room of a house in a village. Decent, proper furniture. A large door rear, to the right of the actors, thru which a garden is visible. Center rear, a window. Left rear, kitchen door. Right front, a door leading to the study and rooms of DON INDALECIO. Right up stage, the rough door of the wood room, with a movable transom. Left front, exit to the back yard. Left, up stage, the stairway to the main floor. Three or four of the lower steps are visible. Proscenium right, the entrance to the wine-cellar, with its movable trap-door. Between the door to the stairway and that to the backyard, a cupboard. Hanging in the corner left, a shot-gun, a game-bag and a cartridge-belt.

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SCENE I

GREGORIA, then DOÑA DOLORES. Later, PERICO. Later still, MARUJA. When the curtain rises the stage is deserted. The bell is heard calling to prayers. Then GREGORIA comes out of the kitchen, goes to the wine-cellar and opens the trap-door.

Gregoria.—Perico! Perico! (Sitting on her heels and looking thru the trap-door.)

Perico (Below and at a distance).—Well?

Gregoria.—When you finish sweeping the cellar, bring up a bottle of vinegar.

Perico.—From which barrel?

Gregoria.—From the one under the cellar window.

Perico (Below).—All right! (GREGORIA leaves the trap-door and goes to the kitchen.)

Doña Dolores (Comes out of the first door right, bringing sheets, pillows and knitted spreads).—Come here. Here's all the linen for one bed. (She puts the linen down on the table and examines it carefully.) My! how yellow these trimmings are! Of course, you expect that! We never use the fine linen except when we have guests.

Gregoria.—You can be pretty sure that young man never had as good a bed as the one we're getting ready for him.

Dolores.—What could you expect the poor fellow to have in a rooming-house?

Gregoria.—Four brand-new mattresses as soft as soft can be! He ought to sleep well to-night!

Dolores.—We'll hope so! But he won't! The poor boy is so ill—

Gregoria.—Is it true that he is so bad?

Dolores.—Very ill, my dear, very ill. But with his uncle and his aunt to look after him, he'll get well soon. God has given me good hands to nurse sick people with. I like to do it, too. No, I can't say I exactly like it, either, but—

Gregoria.—To be sure! Why, you know more about medicine than don Saturio does.

Dolores.—No, my dear, not as much as that; but the truth is that there is no one in the world can make a drink for a sick person better than I can, or put on a mustard plaster better, or do a better bit of massaging. (PERICO comes out of the cellar with a bottle, lets door fall suddenly. DOÑA DOLORES, who has her back turned, starts with fright.) Oh!

Perico.—Don't be afraid. It's me.

Dolores.—What a brute!

Perico.—Here's the vinegar. (*To GREGORIA*)

Gregoria.—Leave it in the kitchen.

Perico. All right! (*Starts to go, but comes back.*)

Gregoria.—Perico!

Perico.—What?

Gregoria.—Go and get me a good load of wood, I have only a few twigs.

Perico.—Yes'm. I'll get some right away from the wood room. (*He goes to the kitchen and leaves the bottle of vinegar, then returns with a large basket. A little later he comes out of the wood room with the basket on his shoulder and enters the kitchen. He crosses the stage and goes out into the garden.*)

Dolores (*To MARUJA who comes down-stairs singing and goes to a chest at the back of the stage.*)—Maruja, my dear, how can you want to sing, to-day of all days?

Maruja.—Ah, that's true. I had forgotten. Forgive me, dear aunt. (*Affectionately.*)

Dolores.—It's a pleasure to have such a gay disposition as yours! Take these pillow-cases (*To GREGORIA*) and carry all of this to the room upstairs. (*GREGORIA goes out, second left, coming down a little later to the kitchen.*)

Maruja (*Measuring the wheat which she takes out of the chest with a cup and pours into a small basket.*)—One . . . two . . . three . . . four . . . (*She closes the chest.*)

Dolores.—What does this mean? Are you going to feed the chickens?

Maruja.—Yes ma'am.

Dolores.—And you're taking a bushel of wheat, just as you always do!

Maruja.—A bushel! Dear aunt, I never take more than four cups.

Dolores.—Precisely, four now and four more at noon and four more in the morning. Those little creatures ought to be fat enough to burst.

Maruja.—They are! There's a feather-legged hen especially, and a crested-hen that are getting as big as turkeys. It's a pleasure to see them.

Dolores.—They will make a fine broth.

Maruja.—What? Are you thinking of killing them?

Dolores.—Of course. Now that your cousin will need a good nutritious broth . . .

Maruja.—You are right. If it will help poor Carlos, I'm willing to sacrifice Top-Knot or even Feather-Legs. Now I'll go and feed them. I'm sure they are getting impatient waiting for me.

Dolores.—You are fortunate to have nothing more to worry about than your chickens.

Maruja.—And what do you want me to worry about? Young fellows are scarce in the village, and I have to be satisfied with these young fellows out in the yard.

Dolores.—Go on, chatter-box.

Maruja.—Good-bye. (*She enters the kitchen, evidently on her way to the poultry-yard to the right.*)

SCENE II

DOÑA DOLORES, then DON INDALECIO, who comes out from the first right with a newspaper in his hand.

Dolores.—What a cheerful little girl she is! No one would dream that she has been educated in a convent. She is as gay as a lark all day long. (*The chickens are heard cackling in the yard.*) There now, they're all stirred up, those hens. (*Looking thru the window.*) They're picking and flopping around and cramming themselves with wheat. Look, Maruja, that one coming up to the drinking pan is the one we must kill. Kick that duck away, he won't let the little chickens eat. (*The last peal of the church bell is heard in the distance. PERICO comes out of the kitchen and goes toward the door rear right.*)

Indalecio (Coming out).—Why, what does this mean? Aren't you going to church. That's the last bell.

Dolores.—I am not going this afternoon. I want to go with you to the station to meet Carlos.

Indalecio.—All right, if you want to. Ambrosio, the cabman, will come and get us. I sent him word by Perico.

Dolores.—Goodness, can't you walk half a mile, when you know it's the best thing for you? You remember what don Satorio is always advising you. Exercise, lots of exercise. And you won't take any; you sit around and do nothing all day long.

Indalecio.—Very well. I'll take some exercise. We will walk to the station.

Dolores.—Then let Ambrosio go to the station to bring us back, because Carlos won't be in condition to take such a long walk. You and I will take our time and take the short cut, and that will give us a nice little walk.

Indalecio.—The short cut? It makes me perspire just to think of it. Well, just as you say; we'll take the short cut.

Dolores.—It will do you good, you'll see it will.

Indalecio.—Very well; but listen. You must take a few buns and cookies along for us to eat at the Obispo Fountain.

Dolores.—What? Aren't you going to take any chocolate this afternoon?

Indalecio.—Yes, my dear, yes. We'll have our chocolate just the same. The cakes are for later on. We'll take the chocolate before we start. Please have it made right now. (*He sits down in the arm-chair.*)

Dolores.—We have plenty of time. For several days the train has been more than an hour late every day.

Indalecio.—It will be on time to-day, because I just read in "The Chronicle", that the bridge at Valderrones has been repaired.

Dolores.—If that's the case, I must tell the maid. (*From the kitchen door.*) Gregoria! Make the chocolate and bring it at once.

Gregoria (From within).—Yes'm, I will.

Indalecio.—Listen, Dolores. Is all that cake eaten up that the Capuchin nuns sent us from Salamanca?

Dolores.—Why, you ate it all in two days.

Indalecio.—That's so. Too bad. There are some cakes that ought to last forever.

Dolores.—May the Lord preserve that appetite of yours!

Indalecio.—Amen. The day this eating apparatus of mine gets out of order, goodbye Indalecio.

SCENE III

The same and PERICO at rear right with a force pump and garden hose in his hand.

Perico.—Señor Indalecio!

Indalecio.—What is it?

Perico.—Here's the pump. The blacksmith has fixed it up like new.

Indalecio.—Did you try it?

Perico.—Yes, sir, just now at the forge; and the water came this side of the veterinary's house. I tell you it's strong . . .

Dolores.—How much did he charge?

Perico.—He says he'll come around and collect later.

Dolores.—All right, then go and water the endives first. They need it badly.

Perico.—I'll go right off (*He starts for the garden.*)

Dolores.—That blessed pump is costing us a fortune.

Perico (Rear).—Yes sir, come in!

Indalecio.—Who is it?

Perico.—The doctor (*Exit PERICO.*)

SCENE IV

The same and DON SATURIO, rear right

Dolores.—Ah, don Saturio!

Saturio.—Good afternoon

Indalecio.—Good afternoon!

Saturio.—They just told me at home that you sent for me. Is some one sick?

Dolores.—Yes, sir.

Saturio.—One of those stomach attacks of yours, I suppose. (*To DON INDALECIO*) I've always told you you eat too much.

Indalecio.—I eat what I need, and I digest it well.

Dolores.—No, he isn't the one that's sick.

Saturio.—Is it little Maruja?

Dolores.—No, she isn't, either. It's my nephew.

Saturio.—What nephew?

Dolores.—Carlos, the one who is studying in Madrid.

Saturio.—Why, when did *he* come? I didn't know he was here.

Dolores.—He hasn't come yet. He will get in this afternoon on the mail-train; but we wanted to talk to you before he came.

Saturio.—All right, I'm ready to talk.

Dolores.—You will have some chocolate with us, won't you?

Saturio.—Yes ma'am, with pleasure. In fact I shan't be able to have any at home today, because I have to go to Villarejo this afternoon.

Indalecio.—Have a chair, don Saturio. (*DOÑA DOLORES goes out to the kitchen and comes out at once.*)

Saturio.—Tell me what's the matter with the young man. (*They sit down at the table.*)

Indalecio.—Yes. I'll read you a startling letter we got from him yesterday.

Dolores.—We are very much troubled about it. (*Seating herself.*)

Indalecio.—All broken up.

Saturio.—Let's hear it.

Indalecio (Reading).—"Madrid, Sept. 5. Dearest uncle and aunt."

Dolores (Moved).—How affectionate he is!

Indalecio.—"Dearest uncle and aunt:—My silence, which has surprised you so much, is not due, as you suppose, to any lack of affection, or forgetfulness, or ingratitude."

Dolores.—He loves us so much!

Indalecio.—"In order not to alarm you, I haven't written to you about the state of my health."

Dolores.—Poor boy!

Indalecio.—"But in view of the serious turn that the sickness has taken, I think it is my duty to tell you the whole truth."

Saturio.—The deuce!

Dolores.—He must be awfully sick!

Saturio.—Go on, don *Indalecio*.

Indalecio.—"I have consulted the most eminent physicians in Madrid and they all agree that I am suffering with stomach, liver, spleen and kidney troubles."

Saturio.—Great guns!

Indalecio.—Seems to be out of order all over.

Saturio.—Well, it may not be as bad as it sounds. Go on. (*GREGORIA comes out of the kitchen carrying a tray with three cups of chocolate and three little dishes with cookies which she sets on the table in front of each person. She goes out and comes back again bringing another tray with three glasses of water and does as before.*)

Indalecio.—"The sacrifices which you have made so that I could continue my studies; the great favors that I owe you; the truly paternal kindness with which you treat me, have made me hesitate before causing you this sorrow." You read the rest, *Dolores*; my chocolate will get cold.

Dolores.—Give it here. (*Studying the letter.*) Where were you?

Indalecio.—I had got as far as sorrow. (*At this point GREGORIA takes away the glasses of water.*)

Dolores.—Yes, I've found sorrow. "But I can't conceal the truth any longer; I must speak plainly. According to the opin-

ion of all the doctors I have consulted, my recovery is impossible in Madrid."

Saturio.—Of course. He must come back to the village. What those young men need is fresh air, pure country air . . .

Dolores.—No, sir, that isn't what he wants. Listen: "They all consider it indispensable that I should leave at once for Paris, the only place where they can perform the operation I need."

Saturio.—Operation? I don't understand.

Dolores.—That's what he says!

Saturio.—Well, what else?

Dolores.—He goes on that he hopes we will make this new sacrifice for him and that he is coming home to start for Paris from here.

Saturio.—From the data he gives it is not easy to make a diagnosis. We will see him and then . . . who knows? Perhaps he won't need to go to France. This idea that they can cure everything in foreign countries makes me lose my patience. You'd think we Spanish doctors were a lot of ignoramuses . . .

. . . No sir; right here, without going any farther, here I am, a poor country doctor, it is true, but I'm up on all the scientific discoveries. I'm no old foggy. If there's a new system, I study it. If it's good, I use it. I'm just as up to date as the best of them. I use with my patients, hydrotherapy, electrotherapy and aërotherapy.

Indalecio.—All the therapies.

Saturio.—Hydrotherapy, especially, and most of all, shower-baths in all their applications, have always given excellent results. (*When DON INDALECIO finishes eating his cookies, while DOÑA DOLORES reads the letter, he exchanges his cake-dish for hers and continues to eat.*)

Dolores.—Strange! That girl didn't bring me any cookies.

Saturio.—Here are some, help yourself.

Dolores.—Thanks. I'm not hungry. I'll just sip a little chocolate.

Saturio.—I'm sorry that I must make my visits very short today, since I must be in Villarejo before dark. I'll come around this way if it's only for a moment. (*Rising.*)

Indalecio.—I'm sure you will do us a favor in Villarejo. You will probably see old Celedonio there.

Saturio.—To be sure.

Indalecio.—I should like to have you collect from him the four thousand pesetas he owes me for the wheat he sold for me.

Saturio.—Glad to do it for you.

Indalecio.—Pardon me for troubling you, but . . .

Saturio.—No excuses needed. No trouble at all.

Maruja (*Coming out of the kitchen with her little basket, which she puts away in the chest*).—Good afternoon, don Saturio.

Saturio.—Why, there's little Maruja! How fine the girl is looking! (*GREGORIA comes out of the kitchen with a large tray, she gathers up the chocolate-service and takes it with her.*)

Maruja.—Yes, I am very well, I am glad to say.

Saturio.—Of course. And you're sweet as a rosebud, too! Well, good-bye everybody.

Dolores.—Don't fail to come around.

Saturio.—I'll be here, I'll be here.

Indalecio.—We'll see you later, then!

Dolores.—Good luck to you.

Maruja.—Good-bye, don Saturio. (*DON SATURIO goes out, rear, right.*)

SCENE IV

The same, without DON SATURIO.

Dolores.—Come, Indalecio, Let's go to the station; it's almost time. (*To MARUJA*) Get me my mantilla. (*MARUJA goes to the first door right and comes out with the mantilla for DOÑA DOLORES.*) If I walk with you we must give ourselves plenty of time.

Indalecio.—We'll go, dear, we'll go when you're ready. Ah, don't forget the cookies.

Dolores.—Can you be hungry already?

Indalecio.—Yes, I think I'll feel weak in a short time. The Lord has given me such an active stomach! Before we get to the Obispo Fountain I know the chocolate will be clear down in my heels. (*He goes thru the first door right for his hat. MARUJA, who has by this time brought the mantilla, helps her aunt to put it on. DOÑA DOLORES goes to the cupboard, opens it, takes the cookies and wraps them up in the newspaper which DON INDALECIO has left on the arm-chair.*)

Dolores (*To MARUJA*).—Hurry, go upstairs and make his bed and put everything in order. Poor Carlos will be all tired out when he gets here; he will have to go to bed as soon as he comes. (*DON INDALECIO comes out first right, putting on his hat.*)

Maruja.—Well, good-bye.

Indalecio.—Good-bye, Maruja. (*Exit MARUJA, second left.*)

SCENE VI

The same, without MARUJA; then DOÑA BLASA and PÍO rear right.

Dolores.—Let's start, goodness, let's start or we'll never get off.

(She gives him the cookies.)

Indalecio.—All right, let's start.

Blasa (Within).—Well, we didn't know a word about it.

Indalecio.—Who's that?

Dolores.—Doña Blasa and her son.—Come in, Doña Blasa.

Blasa.—Good afternoon. Don't stop for us, we don't want to trouble you. We were surprised not to see you at the services so we dropped in to see if anything had happened. The servant just told us about poor Carlos, and said that you were starting for the station to meet him.

Dolores.—Yes, we were just leaving. (*DON INDALECIO begins to eat the cookies.*)

Blasa.—Yes, go right along; don't let us detain you. I'm sure it isn't as bad about Carlos as you think. You remember the fright this son of mine gave us two years ago when he was in the seminary. We thought surely he was going to die. As soon as he got home and I took him under my charge I made a new boy out of him, with a gentian tea, a snail sirup and a little white wine to warm up the pit of his stomach. Here he is now, as healthy and as robust as anybody could wish.

Dolores.—Yes, yes . . . Well you'll excuse us, Doña Blasa.

Blasa.—Yes, yes, go on. Don't stand on ceremony with us. Maruja will entertain us. Where is she?

Dolores.—She's upstairs; call her, Indalecio.

Indalecio (With his mouth full). Hum! (*He swallows hard*) I thought I was going to choke.

Blasa.—Never mind. She is probably busy. We'll wait for her here.

Dolores.—Well, we'll see you some other time. Kindest regards to His Reverence.

Blasa.—Many thanks. Good-bye.

Indalecio.—We've been delayed so long, we shan't have time to take lunch at the Obispo Fountain. (*Exeunt, rear, right.*)

SCENE VII

DOÑA BLASA *and* PÍO.

Blasa.—Oh how stupid you are, my dear! You make my blood boil. Nobody can get a word out of you. (*Pío tries to speak.*) Yes I know what you are going to say. You're going to say that it can't be helped, that you are that way naturally. But you mustn't let yourself get that way. With such a disposition you won't get anywhere. I don't know what they give you boys in the seminary that seems to take the spirit out of you. (*Pío tries to speak.*) You needn't say they don't. And you can't live in this world when they are so shy. And you *must* live in this world. You can be sure it wouldn't be good for you to be a priest. The example of your uncle, my poor brother, ought to be enough to prove that. You see how it is; if I wasn't a very economical woman, and if he wasn't a man of few wants, I don't know how we'd live. A priest isn't paid much and I don't suppose you expect to come out of the seminary and get to be a canon right away (*Pío tries to speak.*) Don't say a word; that call from Heaven you talk about is all foolishness. We must think of the future. Your uncle, who is now our only support, is very old; he may die any moment. Just suppose he dies; all right, he's dead. What will we do then? That's what I want you to think about: when a young man gets to be twenty-one, he ought to be thinking of other things than you do. You must make yourself a future by marrying a girl of good standing. And who could be better than Maruja? She's a pretty girl, well-bred and good, and her uncle Don Indalecio is the richest farmer in the village. He hasn't any heirs but the girl and his nephew. and you've heard that the nephew is coming from Madrid very sick. He might even die. Suppose he dies; all right, he's dead. That leaves her the only heir. You marry her, you live here, the two of you, with your uncle and aunt, happy and contented. You know how don Indalecio is,—fat as a pig. With the life he leads and the way he eats, he will drop off one of these days. Suppose he drops off; all right, he's dropped off. Now your wife has all this fortune, and you have an easy time of it and get to be a prominent citizen. Don't deceive yourself, Pío; it's right in this house that you'll do better than any priests do.

SCENE VIII

The same and MARUJA, second left.

Maruja.—Ah! You were here. I didn't know you were.

Blasa.—Good afternoon, Maruja! You uncle and aunt told us you were busy upstairs and we didn't want to call you.

Maruja.—Yes, ma'am, I was getting the room ready for my poor cousin.

Blasa.—Alwas so faithful and industrious. You're a jewel!

Maruja.—You're flattering me.

Blasa.—No my dear, I'm telling the simple truth. I was just saying that to Pío when you came in—Maruja will make any man happy, I said to him. You'd be lucky to find a woman as good as she is.

Maruja.—Gracious! Doña Blasa. I think I am too young to be housekeeper for a priest.

Blasa.—What do you mean by housekeeper? I'm not talking about housekeepers. Don't you know he's given up the idea of being a priest?

Maruja.—Is it possible?

Blasa.—That's what he's done. He refuses to go back to the seminary.

Maruja.—What are you telling me?

Blasa.—He doesn't want to be a priest any more. Of course it's hard on me (*Pío fans himself with his hat*) but I don't want to cross his will, of course.

Maruja.—Why, Pío!

Blasa.—And I can see thru it all right. What it means is the boy's in love. (*Pío fans himself.*)

Maruja.—And with whom?

Blasa.—I don't know. You know how shy he is; there's no getting a word out of him. (*You might scheme around and try to find out.*) Well, Maruja, I'm going. It's getting late.

Pío.—Yes, let's go, let's go!

Blasa.—No, not *you*. You stay here and wait for Carlos. After all, the two of you have grown up together. (*Don't be foolish. This is the best chance you'll have. Take advantage of it.*) Good-bye, Maruja dear.

Maruja.—Good-bye, Doña Blasa.

Blasa.—Never mind. Don't trouble yourself. Good-bye, my dear I'll see you later; I hope everything will turn out all right. (*Exit rear right.*)

SCENE IX

PÍO and MARUJA.

Pío.—(Holy Virgin, what a time I'm having with my mother! She won't be convinced that I was born to be a priest, and nothing but a priest!)

Maruja.—All right, señor don Pío, all right. So, that's what you're up to! Who would have guessed it?

Pío.—Why I don't . . .

Maruja.—Don't come to me with your hypocritical phrases. The men that are always studying the floor are the worst. When your mother is certain that you are in love, she must have her reasons. If you are not in love, why are you giving up the priesthood, tell me that!

Pío.—Why, I don't . . .

Maruja.—Come, don't be bashful with me. I'm curious to know who is the lady of your thoughts.

Pío.—But, I don't . . .

Maruja.—I know; it's Manolita, the apothecary's niece.

Pío.—Good gracious!

Maruja.—She's not the one? Well then, it's Nicanora.

Pío.—Good Heavens!

Maruja.—It isn't Nicanora, either? I'll guess it this time. You are in love with Mary.

Pío.—Holy Mary!

Maruja.—Well, I've named the only marriageable girls in the village. I mean, I don't remember any other. Except . . . (there is another one . . . I'm another one myself! I'll bet the boy's in love with me.) Listen, Pío do you think of any others?

Pío.—I don't . . .

Maruja.—(He's so shy . . . Perhaps he doesn't dare to propose. And when you look at him close, he isn't bad-looking. Bad-looking? I should say not. If he would only dress differently and let his beard grow . . .) Listen Pío, why don't you let your beard grow?

Pío.—Let my beard grow? By the beard of St. Joseph!

Maruja.—I don't see why you shouldn't since you've given up being a priest . . .

Pío.—Listen, Maruja, let me tell you the truth.

Maruja.—Yes, tell me. (He's going to propose to me.)

Pío.—You're so kind that I'm sure you will forgive me.

Maruja.—Of course I will. Consider yourself forgiven.

Pío.—Well, then, my mother is the one who . . . I don't know how to tell you . . . of course, my respect for her . . . But I can't help it, my inclination . . .

Maruja.—No, you mustn't do violence to your inclination. If you feel as if you must do a certain thing, do it.

Pío.—Oh, you don't understand!

Maruja.—(How his face brightens! He looks like another person.) Go on, go on.

Pío.—I've made up my mind.

Maruja.—That's right. When you've decided on what you're sure is right, nobody must block your way.

Pío.—Yes, I think so too. (*The sound of donkey bells is heard within.*)

Maruja.—Have you made up your mind? Well then, don't hesitate or quibble. Have it out as soon as possible, and go right to the altar with . . .

Pío.—That's it, to the altar. I can see myself before the altar, with my chasuble on, saying to the faithful: Dominus vobiscum!

Maruja.—(Good Heavens! So what he wants to do is to say mass! I've come very near making myself ridiculous. If I'd gone a little farther, I'd have been in it bad.)

SCENE X

The same, PERICO, who comes out, rear right. GREGORIA, from the kitchen at the same time. Then CARLOS and AMBROSIO rear right, the latter with a valise and traveling-bag.

Perico.—Senorita!

Gregoria.—Senorita!

Maruja.—What is it?

Perico.—Old Ambrosio's cab has stopped at the door.

Gregoria (From rear).—And a young man has got out. He must be your cousin.

Maruja.—Let me look. (*Going to the door at rear.*) Yes, it's Carlos. And my uncle and aunt have taken the short cut to the station! Go quick and see if you can't catch them and bring them back.

Perico.—I'm going to put on my jacket. (*He goes to the kitchen and comes out a little later.*)

Gregoria (To Pío) Poor fellow! How bad he looks!

Maruja.—Carlos!

Carlos.—*Maruja!* (*They embrace. When he reaches the middle of the stage, CARLOS pretends to faint and falls on MARUJA'S shoulder.*)

Maruja.—He's fainted. Help me! (*PÍO and GREGORIA help support him.*)

Pío.—Poor Carlos!

Maruja.—Let's put him down here. (*They seat him in the arm-chair in the middle of the stage*) Come now, cousin, cheer up. You're back home again, and we'll take care of you.

Pío.—Yes, cheer up, cheer up!

Gregoria.—At least, you will have the pleasure of dying among your family.

Carlos.—(The old fool!)

Perico.—Oh, how sick the poor boy is!

Maruja.—Go, Perico, hurry. (*Exit PERICO rear right.*)

Ambrosio (*Coming out with a valise and a traveling-bag.*)—Where shall I put this?

Maruja.—*Gregoria!* Take it upstairs to his room! (*Gregoria takes the traveling-bag and the valise, and goes with them thru the second door left, coming down again in a little while, and going to the kitchen.*)

Carlos.—Pay that man . . . I . . . I have no . . . no strength even to take out my money.

Maruja.—Go on, Ambrosio, we'll see that you are paid later.

Ambrosio.—Very well, señorita. Good afternoon. (*Coming near CARLOS, from behind, and shouting in his ear.*) Hope you'll get better!

Carlos.—Oh, thanks! (*Exit AMBROSIO rear right, and in a little while the donkey-bells ring again, indicating that the cabman is driving off*) Oh Pío! Oh, Maruja! I'm a very sick man.

Maruja.—Come now, you mustn't be discouraged.

Pío.—The first thing you need is rest. And since I have had the pleasure of seeing you so well . . . I mean since I have had the pleasure of seeing you so ill . . . Well, I am going to the church to pray St. Anthony to give you what you need.

Carlos.—Yes, pray him to give me what I need. Pray with all your might.

Pío.—I hope you'll rest well. Good-bye Maruja.

Maruja.—Good-bye, Pío. (*She accompanies Pío to the back of the stage and both make gestures indicating the invalid's serious condition. Exit Pío.*)

SCENE XI

CARLOS and MARUJA.

Carlos.—Oh!

Maruja.—Do you want anything? Do you need anything?

Carlos (Faintly).—What about uncle and aunt? Where are they?

Maruja.—They went by the short cut to the station.

Carlos.—Aren't they at home, then?

Maruja.—No, I'm alone.

Carlos.—Alone?

Maruja.—Yes.

Carlos.—Close that door. (*MARUJA closes the one first right.*) Close that other one. (*She closes the one first left.*) Close all of them. (*She closes the one to the kitchen.*)

Maruja.—Are you afraid of a draught?

Carlos.—No, it's something else I'm afraid of.

Maruja (He's delirious, poor boy!).—What is it you're afraid of?

Carlos.—Isn't there someone outside?

Maruja.—No one.

Carlos (Getting up).—Then listen to me, Maruja.

Maruja.—Oh, Dear me!

Carlos.—Don't be frightened. You have always loved me like a sister.

Maruja.—And I love you still.

Carlos.—I know that. You are very good, very affectionate, and best of all, you're very discreet.

Maruja.—Yes, but . . .

Carlos.—I need your help.

Maruja.—Well, I'll help you. (*Offering him her arm.*)

Carlos.—No, I don't mean that. It's your moral support I need.

Maruja.—What do you mean?

Carlos.—Maruja, little Maruja, my dearest cousin, if I were to tell you a secret, would you be able to keep it?

Maruja.—Of course!

Carlos.—You're the only person I dare trust. I need someone to help me. I'm in a very serious situation, Maruja.

Maruja.—Oh, I know it isn't so bad. You're not as ill as you think.

Carlos.—Ill? I'm not ill at all.

Maruja.—What!!

Carlos.—I'm as sound as a stone wall.

Maruja.—What do you mean? (*Greatly surprised.*)

Carlos.—That's my secret.

Maruja.—What?

Carlos.—I say, that's my secret.

Maruja.—I'm speechless. You say you're well?

Carlos.—Very well, thanks; how are you?

Maruja.—I don't understand you. Explain yourself at once, for Heaven's sake; don't keep me in suspense.

Carlos.—I'll be very brief, because I want you to know everything before uncle and aunt come back. (*MARUJA goes to rear of stage and comes forward at once.*)

Maruja.—Now tell me.

Carlos.—Listen to the list which I have been making on the train, the sad list of my misfortunes. (*He takes a paper out of his pocket and reads.*) "To the landlady . . .

Maruja.—To the . . .

Carlos.—"To the landlady; four months rent at 80 pesetas, 320; to the shoemaker: half-boots, shoes and slippers, 100; to the tailor; two threes and a two . . .

Maruja.—What?

Carlos.—Trousers and vest, 560; to the waiter of the Oriental chocolates and tips, 85; to the night-watchman, three months pay and four pesetas he lent me one night, 10; to don Hermógenes Zaragüeta: and here's the climax! For two I. O. U.'S and interest 3000. Total sum, get ready! Four thousand and sixty-five pesetas. That's what I owe in Madrid.

Maruja.—Holy Heavens! Oh Heavens! Oh Heavens! But how do you come to owe all that?

Carlos.—Because I haven't paid it.

Maruja.—And without uncle and aunt knowing anything!

Carlos.—That's just the point. They mustn't know anything. Do you think that if I had written them and told them that I am strong as an ox, but that I owe four thousand pesetas, they would have sent me the money?

Maruja.—Of course they wouldn't

Carlos.—Well, I've got to have that money, some way. For two months I haven't been able to leave the house. My creditors lie in ambush for me. Even the night-watchman refused to open

the door for me, and one night I had to sleep in the park between Recaredo's statue and Chindasvinto's monument.

Maruja.—Poor Carlos!

Carlos.—Have you any idea what it means to live in a house with a landlady you owe four months room-rent to? It's a terrible thing, Maruja. It begins when you wake in the morning. Here's your chocolate! (*With exaggerated brusqueness*) At luncheon: Here are your fried eggs. And at dinner: Take your soup. And so it goes every day until finally you say to yourself: It's either jump in the river or deceive my uncle and aunt. There's no other solution.

Maruja.—And you . . .

Carlos.—And I've decided for the second. You don't think I ought to have killed myself, do you?

Maruja.—Good Heavens, no.

Carlos.—Well, to make a long story short. I'm pretending to be very sick. That was the only thing I could think of. I admit that it isn't a noble thing to do, but I've got to do it. They are a good hearted old couple and they think a lot of me.

Maruja.—Of course; you owe everything to them.

Carlos.—Yes, everything. That's why I want to owe them the four thousand pesetas, too. You understand that a trip to Paris and a surgical operation can't cost a penny less.

Maruja.—But if you aren't sick, what are you going to Paris for?

Carlos.—Hush, you foolish girl! Where I'm going with the money, if I can get hold of it, is to Madrid. I'll pay all my creditors, every cent I owe, and then I'll be able to walk the streets with my head up, no matter who comes by. I'll talk up to the landlady good and proper. I'll tell the nightwatchman where to get off. And old Zaragüeta—I'll punch his head for him.

Maruja.—Yes, and then you'll go back to living just as you did before, and . . .

Carlos.—No, I won't. I've repented, really. Those two months shut up in the rooming-house have taught me a lot. I've made up my mind to study, to finish my course and pay uncle and aunt for their sacrifices.

Maruja.—That's all very noble; but Carlos, you have no right to play such an absurd trick on them.

Carlos.—It isn't a trick. It's an expedient. It was reading the history of the popes that made me think of it.

Maruja.—What?

Carlos.—Have you ever heard of Sixtus V?

Maruja.—I? No.

Carlos.—Well, he pretended to be sick and feeble and decrepit so that even his opponents would vote for him in the election for Pope, thinking that he would live only a short time. As soon as he was elected, he threw away the staff he was leaning on, stood up straight and looked at his enemies and said: I'm well and sound. You'll have a pope for some time.

Maruja.—But is all that true?

Carlos.—Absolutely historic. So, if no less a person than a pope deceives a whole conclave that way, why shouldn't a poor student full of debts and troubles deceive his uncle and aunt? I tell you my situation is desperate. The landlady, the tailor and even the nightwatchman can wait; but don Hermógenes.

Maruja.—Who's don Hermógenes?

Carlos.—Zaragüeta. That fellow won't wait for anybody. He's found out that my uncle and aunt live here, and that they are rich, and he's threatened to write them a letter and ask them for what I owe him before he takes the case to the courts. That fellow's a robber, that's what he is!

Maruja.—I don't think he'll do that.

Carlos.—You don't know Zaragüeta. He's a very polite and smooth little old man, but for all his politeness and courtesy he'd just as soon send a fellow to jail as . . . And it's useless to argue with him. Whenever you try to argue he pretends he's deaf; that is to say, he doesn't pretend to be because he is.

Maruja.—Is he deaf?

Carlos.—Deaf as a post, but I'm here to tell you that, if uncle and aunt give me that money, he'll hear what I have to say to him.

Maruja.—Bless me!

Carlos.—Of course you understand that I can't wait until he takes a notion to write to them and tell the whole story.

Maruja.—You're right. Listen, I can help you a little with my savings.

Carlos.—How's that?

Maruja.—I have a money-box with three thousand and some reales.

Carlos.—Three thousand and some? I'll take the three thousand, but I wouldn't think of taking the some under any circumstances. I don't want to impose on your generosity.

Maruja.—Don't say that!

Carlos.—The important thing is to prove to uncle and aunt that I absolutely must go to Paris, so that they will give me what I need to pay that infamous money-lender. If they hesitate, you could help me convince them. Tell them that I'm very sick—that they must send me to France at once.

Maruja.—Yes—but I—well, if you promise to change your conduct completely—

Carlos.—I promise you. I swear I will. And now, for Heaven's sake, give me something to eat; I'm so weak I can scarcely stand on my legs. I've been seventeen hours without eating.

Maruja.—You have?

Carlos.—All I've had were a few chocolates I bought in Villaba. I hadn't any money to spare and I couldn't buy a meal anywhere.

Maruja.—Poor boy!

Carlos.—So that I'm as hungry as a dog.

Maruja.—I'll get you something right away.

Indalecio and Dolores (Within).—Where is he? Where is he?

Maruja.—Uncle and aunt!

Carlos.—Well, here goes for the arm-chair! You won't abandon me, will you? (*He drops into the chair in a state of complete collapse.*)

SCENE XII

The same, DON INDALECIO and DOÑA DOLORES rear right.

Indalecio.—Carlos!

Dolores.—Dear Carlos! (*They embrace and kiss him.*)

Carlos.—Uncle! Aunt!

Indalecio.—At last you are with us!

Dolores.—How we wanted to see you!

Indalecio (Behind CARLOS and aside to DOÑA DOLORES).—
(How bad he looks! But we must cheer him up.) You're looking very well.

Dolores.—No one would think you're sick.

Carlos.—But I *am*—awfully sick!

Indalecio.—Well, well! You'll get over it!

Dolores.—You'll get well here.

Carlos.—No ma'am, I won't. I must go to Paris.

Indalecio.—To Paris? Nonsense!

Carlos.—Yes, uncle, yes; I am very ill. Just ask Maruja; when I got here I had a fainting-spell. Isn't that so?

Maruja.—Yes—it's true.

Carlos.—I often have fainting-spells.

Dolores.—Well, you'll get over them.

Indalecio.—Here, with us, with rest and good cutlets and good wine . . .

Carlos.—Those things wouldn't do me any harm.

Dolores.—But you must be careful with your eating. In your condition . . .

Indalecio.—Good food won't hurt anybody. Let me feel your pulse. (*He does so*) I don't know anything about such things but I think he's very weak.

Carlos.—Very, yes sir.

Indalecio.—The first thing to do is to get him a good supper. (*To MARUJA.*)

Dolores.—Goodness, Indalecio!

Indalecio.—A little light soup with eggs, a rasher of bacon with tomatoes and a roast chicken.

Carlos.—Yes, sir, yes.

Indalecio.—Do you see? (*To DOÑA DOLORES*) Just hearing about it makes him better.

Dolores.—Indalecio! Good gracious!

Maruja.—Uncle is right. A little food can't do him any harm.

Carlos.—I'm surè it won't.

Dolores.—Are you hungry?

Carlos.—Very. That is to say . . . I don't know whether it's hunger or sickness, or faintness . . .

Indalecio.—Weakness, weakness, weakness! Half the people that die, die of that—Go and order a supper for him.

Maruja.—I'm going. (*She goes to the kitchen.*)

SCENE XIII

The same without MARUJA.

Carlos (*Heaving a great sigh*).—Ah!

Indalecio.—What's the trouble? (*Bringing up a chair.*)

Dolores.—Do you feel worse? (*Sitting down at CARLOS' side.*)

Carlos.—I am in a very serious condition, I must tell you . . . that. I'll die if I don't go to Paris to-morrow at the latest.

Indalecio.—But let's see. (*Sitting down*) When did you first begin to feel sick? You never told us anything about it till a week ago.

Carlos.—I didn't want to alarm you, but this began—ah!—during Carnival.

Dolores.—So long ago as that?

Carlos.—Yes, ma'am, and then during Lent I got worse.

Indalecio.—Of course. Those Lenten-meals. That spinach people eat then is poison.

Carlos.—First I began to notice some strange symptoms. At times I'd be hot—and at other times cold; and other times—neither hot nor cold.

Dolores.—And what else?

Carlos.—Well, pains everywhere.

Indalecio.—Pains? Sharp pains, eh?

Carlos.—Very sharp. And strange, empty feelings. First they would settle in one place . . . and then in another . . . but mainly here, in the two sides. (*Placing his hands over pockets of his vest.*)

Indalecio.—Empty feelings in the sides?

Carlos.—Completely empty.

Indalecio.—Great Scott! And we never knew a word about it!

Dolores.—And you suffering like that!

Carlos.—Yes, I suffered a good deal. For two months I wasn't able to leave the rooming-house.

Indalecio.—Two months!

Carlos.—Yes, sir. I was so bad I didn't dare go thru the streets.

Indalecio.—How horrible!

Carlos.—Why, one night I had to sleep on a bench in the park.

Dolores.—Dear me!

Indalecio.—How terrible! And wasn't the night air bad for you?

Carlos.—Not as bad as don Hermógenes.

Indalecio.—What?

Carlos.—I mean . . . ah! (*Groaning very loud.*)

Dolores.—Poor boy!

Indalecio.—What's the matter?

Carlos.—These pains that never leave me.

Dolores.—Try to throw it off dear, don't take it so hard.

Carlos.—I can't throw it off, I can't. I feel a depression that is wearing me out, a horrible melancholy, an impulse to cry—*(He weeps.)*

Dolores.—Poor dear boy! *(Weeping and rising.)*

Indalecio.—Poor Carlos! *(Idem. Idem.)*

Carlos.—Yes, aunt, yes. Yes, uncle, yes. I must go to Paris at once.

SCENE XIV

The same and MARUJA bringing a tray with a set of dishes for one person.

Maruja.—Your supper will be ready at once; but I don't want to keep you waiting, so I'll go set the table myself. But what has happened? Have you all been crying?

Indalecio.—He told us all about his sickness, and it was so sad we couldn't help crying.

Maruja.—*(What a rascal!)*

Dolores.—*(He is very ill.) (To MARUJA.)*

Indalecio.—*(He is very weak.) (Idem.)*

Maruja.—When he has had something to eat he will feel stronger. You will see he will feel better, for a time at least. Won't you Carlos?

Carlos.—I think so; I feel horribly weak. *(Heavens! I still have two chocolate bonbons here!)* *(He eats them. DONA DOLORES helps MARUJA set the table.)*

SCENE XV

The same and DON SATURIO, rear left.

Saturio.—Well, well! So the traveler has arrived!

Dolores.—Don Saturio!

Carlos.—*(The doctor! I didn't count on this.)*

Dolores (In a low tone to don Saturio).—*(I don't like his looks at all.)*

Saturio.—*(We'll see in a moment)* How do you do, Carlos?

Carlos.—How do you do, don Saturio? *(In a very weak tone.)*

Indalecio.—Have a seat.

Saturio.—No, this must be a purely professional visit. They've sent an urgent call for me from Villarejo, and they are probably waiting for me there with a cab. So let's get to work. How did you stand the trip?

Carlos.—Very badly, very badly.

Saturio.—(He looks as if he were in pain) (*to DOÑA DOLORES*). Let me see your hand. (*He feels the pulse*) The temperature is normal. The pulse is somewhat weak, it's true . . . How long is it since you have taken any food?

Carlos.—A long time; since before I left Madrid.

Saturio.—Then this weakness doesn't surprise me; so long without eating anything . . .

Indalecio.—Horrible! Just what I was saying!

Saturio.—The pulse, however, doesn't show anything alarming.

Carlos.—But I feel very bad, very bad.

Saturio.—Let me see your tongue. (*CARLOS shows it*) (Bad) (*To DOÑA DOLORES.*)

Dolores.—What?

Saturio.—(Chocolate color. I don't like that symptom) Well, well; to-morrow we will make a more thorough examination.

SCENE XVI.

The same and GREGORIA, who comes out of the kitchen, bringing a soup-tureen and a platter with chicken, then PERICO rear right.

Gregoria (Coming out).—Here's his supper.

Indalecio.—That's what he needs. Come, my boy, come! (*CARLOS rises.*)

Saturio.—What? Supper! By no means. Strict diet.

Carlos.—(Good Heavens!)

Saturio.—Now, go to bed and rest.

Dolores.—You are right. We'll put you to bed, my dear boy. (*Leading him towards second left.*)

Carlos.—But can't I eat something?—(*To DON SATURIO.*)

Saturio.—Water with sugar; nothing else.

Carlos.—But . . . (*Looking at the table.*)

Dolores.—Rest easy; I'll see to it that he eats nothing.

Carlos.—Aunt! . . .

Dolores.—You must go to bed.

Perico.—Don Saturio, they are waiting for you. (*Exit*
(PERICO.)

Saturio.—I'm coming. Good afternoon, God be with you.

Indalecio.—Good-bye!

Maruja.—Good-bye, don Saturio.

Dolores.—Come, my boy, come. (*Going up the stairs.* CARLOS gazes fixedly at the table.)

Maruja.—Poor Carlos! (*To DON INDALECIO.*)

Indalecio.—They're going to starve the boy to death. (*To*
MARUJA.)

Maruja.—I'm afraid so.

Gregoria.—Shall I take this away?

Indalecio.—No, leave it. I'll eat it. (*Seating himself and removing the lid from the soup-tureen.*)

ACT II

The same stage-setting as the preceding.

SCENE I

GREGORIA, MARUJA then PÍO.

Gregoria.—(*Singing very loud and cleaning the furniture by slapping it vigorously with a duster.*)

Maruja (*Coming down the stairs*).—Gregoria! Gregoria!

Gregoria.—Yes ma'am!

Maruja.—My dear, don't bawl so and beat the furniture so loud. Remember there's a sick man upstairs and that my uncle is still asleep.

Gregoria.—Don't worry about your uncle! He wouldn't wake up if the house fell in. This morning when I took in his chocolate I almost had to beat him to wake him up.

Maruja.—Well, well; go to the kitchen. I'll finish the cleaning. (*Exit GREGORIA*) Oh, dear, I don't know how we'll get out of this. Poor Carlos is getting himself into a terrible pickle.

Pío.—Good morning, Maruja!

Maruja.—Why, good morning Pío! How early you get up! (*She continues dusting the furniture during the conversation.*)

Pío.—It's a habit I learned at the seminary. I always hear early mass.

Maruja.—And what brings you around here?

Pío.—Well . . . The first thing, to ask how Carlos spent the night.

Maruja.—Very badly.

Pío.—Is that so?

Maruja.—Of course. He hasn't had a bite to eat since he left Madrid.

Pío.—But haven't they given him some broth, at least?

Maruja.—No, indeed. Don Saturio has put him on a strict diet, and my aunt, who has been watching him all night, hasn't let him have anything but sugared water.

Pío.—Good gracious! Good gracious! So much for that. Well, the second thing . . .

Maruja.—What second thing?

Pío.—The second thing I came for.

Maruja.—Oh, I remember!

Pío.—It's to speak to you of a very serious affair.

Maruja.—What's the matter?

Pío.—I'll tell you: yesterday I didn't dare tell you the truth, I thought I shouldn't have to; but there's no way out of it now.

Maruja.—Well, tell me then. (*Stops cleaning.*)

Pío.—May the Lord forgive me for saying it, but my mother is making it hot for me.

Maruja.—How?

Pío.—She's determined I shan't be a priest.

Maruja.—She is! Why, yesterday she told me herself that she regretted very much that you had decided not to go into the Church.

Pío.—Pshaw!

Maruja.—And that she didn't want to influence you.

Pío.—Fiddlesticks!

Maruja.—And that you were secretly in love.

Pío.—Foolishness!

Maruja.—Then I don't understand . . .

Pío.—Well, I am coming to that. I'll tell you how it is. My mother insists that I should marry.

Maruja.—She does? And whom?

Pío (*After a moment of hesitation*)—You.

Maruja.—Me? So it *was her* idea?

Pío.—Entirely hers. You don't think I would have had such a foolish notion!

Maruja.—Many thanks for the compliment!

Pío.—No, I am not saying it to offend you, but God has called me to a different vocation.

Maruja.—He has? Well go into your vocation, and the Lord go with you. But I don't understand why you tell *me* all this.

Pío.—Because you are the only person who can get me out of my scrape.

Maruja.—There now! It looks as if it were my business in life to get people out of scrapes.

Pío.—I don't seem to have any courage. Yesterday I didn't dare tell you what was the matter with me, and afterwards I didn't dare confess to my mother that I had not said a word to you. You know how she is; she does all the talking, and you know how I am: I don't say anything. So that at this moment she believes firmly that you and I have come to an understanding.

Maruja.—She's funny! Well, we have not come to an understanding. And you will please tell her that we haven't.

Pío.—Good Heavens! Don't be annoyed. I've an idea that will solve everything.

Maruja.—What is it?

Pío.—You will tell Mother that you are engaged to someone else.

Maruja.—To whom?

Pío.—Oh, anybody! Carlos, for instance.

Maruja.—What nonsense!

Pío.—But that's the only solution: if you were engaged, I would be out of it.

Maruja.—Come, come! Don't get me mixed up in this affair. I have troubles enough without it. Arrange it the best way you can and leave me in peace. (*Going toward rear.*)

Pío.—(No, I am not going tell my mother a word, because with that disposition of hers, she would beat me. I'm convinced she would beat me.)

SCENE II

The same and DOÑA DOLORES, then DON SATURIO and DON INDALECIO.

Pío.—Oh! Doña Dolores!

Dolores.—Good-day, Pío, good-day. (*Second left.*)

Pío.—How are you?

Dolores.—Exhausted, my boy. I spent the whole night at the bedside of poor Carlos.

Pío.—And how is he getting along?

Dolores.—He is sleeping fairly well, now.

Pío.—I'm glad to hear it.

Dolores.—And your uncle? (*To MARUJA.*)

Maruja.—He isn't up yet.

Dolores.—Call him, good Heavens, call him! With so much eating and so much sleep, he'll die one of these days!

Pío.—That's what my mother says. (*Exit MARUJA first right.*)

Dolores.—What?

Pío.—That it isn't good for a person to sleep so much.

Dolores.—No indeed, I know it isn't.

Saturio (Rear right)—Good day señora

Dolores.—Well, don Saturio!

Pío.—Good morning, don Saturio.

Maruja (First right)—Uncle is coming down now. Good day, don Saturio.

Saturio.—Good morning, Maruja.

Indalecio (First right).—Good morning everybody!

Dolores (Seeing DON INDALECIO).—Thank the Lord, here he is at last.

Indalecio.—My dear, you must remember that I sat up all night with Carlos.

Dolores.—Why, you went to bed a little after one, and you'd been dozing since ten.

Indalecio.—That's true; I can't get along without sleep, that's the only thing that hurts me.

Saturio.—How goes it? How did the sick man get thru the night? (*To DOÑA DOLORES.*)

Dolores.—He was very restless. He sighed a great deal and yawned a great deal.

Maruja.—(Of course. People do that way when they are hungry.)

Saturio.—Nervousness, that's simply nervousness.

Dolores.—At daybreak he fell asleep; but he must have had nightmare because he did nothing but jump around in the bed and cry out every few minutes: Zaragüeta! Zaragüeta!

Maruja.—(Oh, good Heavens!)

Saturio.—What a strange thing to say!

Indalecio.—Zaragüeta Who can this Zaragüeta be?

Pío.—Maybe it's the husband of the widow who owns the match factory . . .

Dolores.—Of course, it's not.

Indalecio.—Then we will ask him about it?

Maruja.—I know who it is.

Indalecio.—Who?

Maruja.—Carlos told me yesterday. Zaragüeta is—Don Hermógenes Zaragüeta— (*After thinking an instant*) One of the doctors who attended him in Madrid.

Saturio.—The head-doctor, perhaps?

Maruja.—Yes, sir; the head-doctor. Carlos is very fond of him; he is very grateful to him. I suppose that's the reason he dreamed about him.

Saturio.—Zaragüeta! I don't know him. Come, let's go and see the sick boy.

Indalecio.—Yes, let's go.

Saturio.—I will make a more thoro examination and we will find out what's the trouble.

Maruja.—(Heaven grant he *doesn't* find out what's the trouble!)

Indalecio (On the stairway).—After you, don Saturio.

Saturio.—No, after you!

Indalecio.—Go on, go on! (*The two go out.*)

SCENE III

The same, except DON SATURIO and DON INDALECIO.

Dolores.—Maruja, go to the kitchen and tell them to put on the meat, in case it is necessary to give poor Carlos some broth.

Maruja.—(Broth! Cutlets are what he needs.)

Dolores.—Ah! Listen, where did you put my cook-book? I may need the recipe for gelatine with beef extract.

Maruja.—I think I saw it upstairs in that cupboard in the loggia. (*Exit rear left.*)

Dolores.—Yes, I left it there the other day. I'll go get it. (*Goes to stairway.*)

SCENE IV

Pío, then PERICO and DON HERMÓGENES rear right.

Pío.—Yes, indeed I should like very much to go to the ten o'clock mass; but my mother insists that I stay here as long as possible . . . Oh, how stubborn she is!

Perico (Within).—Yes, sir; yes, sir, come in.

Pío.—Eh?

Perico.—Here's a gentleman who wants to see the master and mistress. (*Exit rear.*)

Herm.—Good morning, sir.

Pío.—Good morning. (He's a stranger.)

Herm.—Do señor and señora de Ruipérez live here?

Pío.—Yes sir, they live here.

Herm.—They told me down town that this was the place, but I wasn't sure. I don't know this town, you see.

Pío.—Be seated.

Herm.—What?

Pío (Offering him a chair).—Have a chair.

Herm.—Oh! (*Sits down in the arm-chair.*)

Pío.—I will call them. Excuse me, sir (*Goes out by stairway.*)

Herm.—Oh! He must have told me to wait. I'll wait.

SCENE V.

Don Hermógenes.—Well, here I am. I wonder how they will receive me. They won't want to see me, they never do anywhere; but I can't help that. If I don't put this thing thru I'll lose the money and it's too much to lose. (*Taking out the notes*) Here are the notes, which with the interest, amount to three thousand pesetas. Yes, those are the ones. "I promise to pay to don Hermógenes . . ." I'll bet you he'll pay me. That is, *he* won't, his uncle and aunt will. (*He rises.*) Now what's coming? I wonder if they will insult me? It won't worry me if they do. Insults go in one of my ears and out the other—or rather they don't go in at all; that's one of the advantages of being deaf. For my business it's very convenient.—They can call me this thing, or that thing or something else—I don't hear it. They can ask me for money when it isn't wise to let them have it—they're wasting their breath. They may come around and groan and lament—I'm as deaf as post. No sir, I never hear more than is best for me. That's my favorite proverb; "None so deaf as those who will not hear."

SCENE VI

The same, DOÑA DOLORES and Pío.

Dolores.—Sir—

Pío.—Here is doña Dolores.

Herm.—Eh? Oh! Is this señora de Ruipérez whom I have the honor of greeting?

Dolores.—At your service, sir.

Herm.—I am so glad to—I have just come to town—

Dolores.—My husband can't come just now. It's a pity.

Herm.—Pretty? Yes, it is a very pleasant little town!

Dolores (To Pío).—(What's he talking about?)

Pío.—(I think he's deaf.)

Dolores.—(He must be) Whom have I the pleasure of?—

Herm.—Isn't señor de Ruipérez at home?

Dolores.—Yes, sir, but he is busy just now.

Herm.—What? You see I'm just a little—

Dolores.—Yes, yes! My husband is busy! (*Very loud.*)

Herm.—Eh?

Pío.—Busy. (*Idem.*)

Herm.—Oh! Then I'll come back later.

Dolores.—As you please. If you'll give me your name I'll tell him you called.

Herm.—No, he doesn't know me. I'll be back, I'll be back after a while.

Dolores.—Well, good morning, then.

Herm.—Good morning. (*Turning around suddenly*) What did you say?

Dolores.—Nothing.

Pío (Very loud).—Nothing!

Herm.—Oh, I thought that—Good morning. Glad to have met you, sir. (*To Pío exit HERM rear right.*)

SCENE VII

DOÑA DOLORS and Pío.

Dolores.—I wonder who that gentleman is?

Pío.—Poor fellow! He is as deaf as a log.

Dolores.—I'll see if I can't find that gelatine recipe. (*She sits down, opens the book and turns the pages.*)

Pío.—Doña Dolores, I hope I'm not disturbing you—

Dolores.—Why no, my dear boy, you are not disturbing me at all. (*Reading*) "Duck with peas."

Pío (Sitting down).—Then I'll wait and see what don Saturio says. I'd like to know what he thinks about Carlos' illness. What can be the matter with the poor boy?

Dolores (Reading).—"Hashed liver."

Pío.—Eh?

Dolores.—I was just reading.

Pío.—Oh! I thought you were saying that he had his liver hashed; that would certainly be very serious.

Dolores.—I should say so. (*DON INDALECIO and DON SATURIO who are coming downstairs, are heard talking*) Ah! They are coming now.

SCENE VIII

The same, DON SATURIO and DON INDALECIO, come down by the stairway, and MARUJA comes out of the kitchen.

Dolores.—What is it, don Saturio? How is he?

Saturio.—Well madam, I will tell you what I have just told don Indalecio. With all due respect for the opinions of my colleagues of Madrid, I can't find anything particular the matter with the boy.

Maruja.—(He is going to find it all out!)

Saturio.—I have examined him thoroly.

Indalecio.—Very thoroly. Oh, what a pounding he gave him!

Saturio.—And I assure you that there is no lesion in any important organ. The temperature is normal; the tongue could not be cleaner—

Maruja.—(I should say so!)

Saturio.—The stomach is in good condition; the liver also; the spleen, the same—

Indalecio.—And the kidneys in their place.

Saturio.—In a word, I think all that is the matter with him is pure nervousness.

Dolores.—Yes, yes, but is it serious?

Indalecio.—Perhaps.

Maruja.—(Thank the Lord he hasn't found it out after all.)

Saturio.—These nervous disturbances sometimes have serious consequences. He says he feels some very queer sensations—says he has fainted several times.

Maruja.—Yes sir, he has.

Pío.—That's true.

Saturio.—He says that in Madrid he had several attacks—and all of this makes it possible that a fit may come on him at any time. This trouble sometimes even brings on insanity.

Indalecio.—Good Lord!

Dolores.—Gracious!

Pío.—Poor Carlos!

Saturio.—Oh, you mustn't be alarmed. The best treatment for this kind of thing is the water cure, especially shower-baths. Shower-baths have a wonderful therapeutic value. I think I can cure him with this and with the active life of the country, exercise, hunting—and a moderate, strengthening diet.

Indalecio.—That's it, that's it: good meat and good wine.

Saturio.—No, we mustn't overload the stomach. We will begin with milk. You may give him as much as he wants, but no other food.

Dolores.—Don't worry, we will do just as you say.

Saturio.—And give him two spoonfuls a day of that prescription I am leaving. (*He points to a scrap of paper which DON INDALECIO holds in his hand.*)

Dolores.—Very well.

Saturio.—And now I must go on.

Indalecio.—We'll see you this afternoon, don Saturio.

Dolores.—Good-bye, don Saturio. (*Giving him his hat.*)

Pío.—I'll go along with you.

Saturio.—Oh! What a memory I have! I was going without giving you (*To DON INDALECIO*) what they gave me yesterday at Villarejo. Here are your four thousand pesetas for the wheat. (*Giving him the notes.*)

Indalecio.—Many thanks.

Pío.—(That wheat is what interests my mother.)

Saturio.—Well, good-bye.

Pío.—Good morning, everybody.

Indalecio.—Good day.

Dolores.—Good-bye. (*Exeunt SATURIO and PÍO rear right.*)

SCENE IX

DOÑA DOLORES, DON INDALECIO and MARUJA, then GREGORIA

Indalecio.—I feel much easier. Don Saturio's opinion has relieved me.

Dolores.—It hasn't relieved *me*.

Maruja.—Nor me either.

Indalecio.—Why?

Dolores.—You noticed he didn't say a word about that operation the doctors of Madrid consider necessary.

Maruja.—Not a word.

Indalecio.—That's true.

Dolores.—And it seems to me that if poor Carlos is not better within a few days, we ought to make a sacrifice and send him to Paris.

Maruja.—I think so too.

Indalecio.—To Paris! That costs money.

Maruja.—No, uncle; Carlos says that four thousand pesetas will be enough.

Indalecio.—And how does he know?

Maruja.—I don't know—He said—

Indalecio.—Very well, very well; of course if it becomes necessary, there's only one thing to do . . . He shall have the four thousand pesetas. We will just figure that the wheat crop was lost.

Dolores.—Well, I am going to doña Rita's. She has some very fine goats and I'll see if she can supply us with the milk we'll need. Gregoria! (*To MARUJA*) Give me my mantilla! (*MARUJA helps her put it on*) Gregoria!

Gregoria (Coming out).—Were you calling?

Dolores.—Yes, you must go with me on an errand. Fetch the large pitcher. (*GREGORIA goes away and returns immediately with a pitcher. To DON INDALECIO*) Give me that prescription, and I will leave it at the druggist's as I pass.

Indalecio.—No, I want to take it myself. I have to order a bottle of that wine of quina, that agreed with me so well two years ago. You remember how it improved my appetite.

Dolores.—Good gracious!

Indalecio.—Yes, my dear, with these troubles we're having I am not in normal condition. This morning when I drank my chocolate, I couldn't finish the second roll. It's a fact.

Dolores.—Be listening, in case Carlos calls.

Maruja.—Yes I will. (*Exeunt DON INDALECIO, DOÑA DOLORES and GREGORIA, rear right.*)

SCENE X

MARUJA then CARLOS

Maruja.—Thank the Lord they're gone! Poor Carlos must be exhausted. I'll take him some cold meat. (*She opens the cupboard*) Half a chicken! Fine! Boiled ham! He will like that.

Let's see if there is anything else. Pickled trout. Of course he must be dreadfully hungry. Now some bread and a small bottle of wine. (*She has set it all out on the table.*)

Carlos (*Comes down. Seems very weak. Supports himself on the baluster of the stairs*) Oh! My legs are giving away. Maruja!

Maruja.—Carlos!

Carlos.—I looked out of the upstairs window and saw uncle and aunt go out, and I am coming to get something to eat. I can't stand this any longer.

Maruja.—I was just in the act of bringing all of this up to you.

Carlos.—Oh, joy! Bless you, Maruja, darling of my heart. (*He sits down and begins to eat voraciously*) Chicken, ham, trout! A feast for a king! I dreamed of this last night.

Maruja.—No, what you dreamed of was something else.

Carlos.—What?

Maruja.—That money-lender in Madrid.

Carlos.—Eh?

Maruja.—Aunt heard you say over and over in your dreams: Zaragüeta!

Carlos.—Julius Caesar!

Maruja.—No, Zaragüeta.

Carlos.—Yes, I know! So I've let the cat out of the bag.

Maruja.—No, it's all right. I made uncle and aunt believe that Zaragueta is the name of the head-doctor who has been attending you in Madrid.

Carlos.—Thanks. What a good cousin—and what delicious chicken!

Maruja.—Eat slowly or you'll choke. Uncle and aunt won't be back for some time. I'll watch for them. (*She goes to the door, rear right.*)

Carlos.—And what do they say, what do uncle and aunt say? Do you think they'll give me the money?

Maruja.—It's very possible. They seem to be on the road to doing it. (*Coming near CARLOS.*)

Carlos.—Well then, I hope I'll be on the road to Paris shortly.

Maruja.—Oh, you rascal!

Carlos.—Oh, you ham! And how about don Saturio? What does that imbecile of a don Saturio say? I am still aching from that examination of his.

Maruja.—He's not such an imbecile as you think; the proof is that he says you're not sick.

Carlos.—Did he say that? (*Frightened.*)

Maruja.—Yes, but don't be alarmed. He believes all you tell him about your strange sensations, and so the good old man has concluded that you are suffering from a nervous disease.

Carlos.—That's good. And so's this. I'll start in on the trout now. (*MARUJA returns to the door at rear to watch.*) I'm beginning to revive. Fine, fine. With this vinegar sauce they are delicious!

Maruja.—Oh!

Carlos.—Eh! (*Getting up.*)

Maruja.—What's the matter with you?

Carlos.—I thought they were coming.

Maruja.—No, don't be afraid. How nervous you are! (*CARLOS sits down and continues to eat.*)

Carlos.—Of course! Didn't don Saturio say that's what's the matter with me? Well then, when I heard you say: "Oh" of course I—

Maruja.—I said "Oh" because I forget to tell you what Pío told me.

Carlos.—What did Pío tell you?

Maruja.—The poor fellow confessed to me that his mother is trying to make him give up the priesthood and marry me (*Laughing.*)

Carlos.—That woman's a schemer. She's bright, too! What more could she want than a daughter-in-law like you!

Maruja (*Leaning on the back of the chair across the table from CARLOS*).—But the boy doesn't want to marry me.

Carlos.—What a fool he is!

Maruja.—And to get out of the awkward situation his mother has got him into, what do you think he suggested to me?

Carlos.—I can't imagine. Some foolishness, of course.

Maruja.—He wanted me to tell doña Blasa that I cannot receive attentions from her son, because I am engaged to you— (*Laughing.*)

Carlos (*Stops eating suddenly*).—Well now, I don't see any foolishness in that.

Maruja.—Hush, Carlos, for Heaven's sake!

Carlos.—What would there be strange about that? (*Rising*) You are young. I am young too; you are pretty, I am not so bad-looking, that is I don't think I am.

Maruja.—Bad looking? I should say you're not.

Carlos.—I don't believe I'm a fool. I make a pretty good appearance, and as to my character—well, we won't say anything about that.

Maruja.—No, we won't say anything about your character.

Carlos.—Well, my dear, you know I've repented in sackcloth and ashes and of such is the kingdom of heaven. And I'm not far from the kingdom of heaven when I'm near that pretty *face*—

Maruja.—Don't, don't—

Carlos.—And those eyes—and that mouth—and that slender figure—(*Putting his arm around her*) No, my dear little girl, I don't think what Pío said was foolishness at all.

Maruja.—Yes, yes; but how am I to believe a word you say? To be sure, from the way you've been living in Madrid, you are not likely to be tied up with any one there.

Carlos.—In Madrid? I swear to you that I'm not tied up with anyone there except Zaragüeta, and I don't think you will be jealous of him. (*His arm is still around MARUJA.*)

Maruja.—Come now, stop your foolishness and go on eating. (*Pushing him back gently.*)

Carlos.—No, I can't eat any more. I have eaten like a vulture. I feel like a new man now. With my stomach full of food and my heart full of hopes!

Maruja (*Has returned to the door at rear*).—Ah, here comes aunt. Let's gather up all of this; so that she won't know you have eaten anything. (*Between the two they succeed in shoving into the cupboard all the things on the table, except the two glasses and the water bottle, which have been there from the beginning of the act.*)

Carlos.—I'll relapse into my state of prostration. (*He drops into the arm-chair.*)

SCENE XI

The same, DOÑA DOLORES and GREGORIA, who takes a glass from the table.

Dolores.—Has anything happened? (*To MARUJA who has gone to rear.*)

Maruja.—No ma'am. Here is the patient.

Dolores.—Well, how are you?

Carlos.—Very well, I mean—no worse. I am never well. Oh! (*Sighing.*)

Gregoria.—He certainly looks better to-day. Yesterday when you came, he seemed just about gone.

Dolores.—Don't be foolish! Give me the pitcher (*Taking it.*) I am bringing you some very fine milk. Just milked. You must drink a little. (*Filling the glass with milk.*)

Carlos.—No, now I can't hold any more.

Dolores.—Eh?

Maruja.—He refuses to take a mouthful of anything. I wanted to give him some cookies with wine . . .

Dolores.—No, you mustn't do that. You know what don Saturio said. Milk and nothing but milk. Drink, drink. (*Forcing him.*)

Carlos.—Not on top of the vinegar . . . (*Pushing aside the glass.*)

Dolores.—What?

Maruja.—He says his stomach is as sour as vinegar.

Dolores.—This will help it; you must take some nourishment. Come, dear, come on.

Maruja (To CARLOS).—Drink, Carlos, drink.

Carlos.—(There's no way out of it) (*He drinks in three gulps the entire contents of the glass, with visible repugnance. When he has finished it DOÑA DOLORES encourages him.*)

Dolores.—Ha! Ha! It will do you good, you'll see it will! With this good milk and plenty of exercise you'll soon get well. (*GREGORIA leaves the pitcher and the glass on the table and goes to the kitchen.*)

Carlos.—No, aunt, no. I must go to Paris.

Dolores.—Well, if there's nothing else to do, you shall go.

Carlos.—There's nothing else to do, I'm sure of that.

Dolores.—Cheer up, child; you try to cheer him up, Maruja.

Carlos.—Oh, she cheers me, all right.

Maruja.—Yes, ma'am; I'll try to help him.

Dolores.—What you need above all is not to get discouraged. You must keep a grip on your nerves. At your age sicknesses, no matter how serious they may be, are easily cured.

Carlos.—Oh! (*He is now suffering in good earnest.*) Puts his hand on his stomach) *The trout!*

Dolores (Poor boy. His face shows he's in pain). (*Aside to MARUJA.*) Oh, I can see that don Saturio doesn't know what's the matter with the boy.)

Maruja.—(No ma'am, he doesn't) (*Exit DOÑA DOLORES, first right.*)

SCENE XII

The same, except DOÑA DOLORES.

Carlos (Rising).—Oh, what torment, oh!

Maruja.—Hush, for Heaven's make, don't make such a fuss; aunt's gone.

Carlos.—I'm not pretending. I'm in agony I tell you.

Maruja.—What?

Carlos.—Milk and vinegar; just what I was afraid of. Good Lord, how it hurts!

Maruja.—Of course. You ate so fast; it's no wonder it didn't agree with you.

Carlos.—No, what I ate agreed with me perfectly; but that little glass of milk was like sticking a knife into me. Oh! There it goes again!

Maruja.—I'll make you a cup of tea.

Carlos.—Yes, for Heaven's sake, make me something!

(*MARUJA goes to the kitchen.*)

SCENE XIII

CARLOS, then DON INDALECIO.

Carlos.—Good Lord, good Lord! Now I know there's a God. This is a judgment for my meanness. (*Sitting down by the table.*)

Indalecio.—Well! You here? How are your spirits now?

Carlos.—Very bad, uncle, very bad.

Indalecio.—Just idle fears, my boy.

Carlos.—No, they're not idle now.

Indalecio.—Well, let's see. What appears to be the matter?

Carlos.—Well, I feel—horrible pains here.

Indalecio.—In your stomach?

Carlos.—Yes, sir.

Indalecio.—Just what I've said from the start: weakness and nothing else but weakness. (*Looking into the pitcher.*) Oh! They're brought the milk. You must drink a little glassful.

Carlos.—No, for heaven's sake! (*Getting up*) They've given me one already.

Indalecio.—You must take another. Don Saturio says that you may drink all you want. (*Following him with the pitcher.*)

Carlos.—But I don't want any.

Indalecio.—Is it possible! This milk is so rich, so creamy. Just see what cream it has! Good enough to drink just as it is! (*He drinks from the pitcher.*)

SCENE XIV

The same and DOÑA DOLORES.

Dolores.—Indalecio, you're drinking the milk!

Indalecio.—I did it to encourage him, my dear.

Dolores (*Taking the pitcher away from him and setting it on the table.*)—What you ought to encourage him to do is not to stay shut up in the house. He ought to be walking, exercising . . .

Indalecio.—Your aunt is right. Why don't you go and take a walk down town?

Carlos.—No, it annoys me to go around and talk with people. (*He is still suffering severely from his stomach.*)

Indalecio.—Then go out that way thru the yard (*front left*) to the bank of the river, and take a stroll as far as Oregano Hill.

Dolores.—It's a beautiful day. Take the shot-gun and shoot some birds. (*Giving him the gun, the game bag and the cartridge box.*)

Indalecio.—Yes, go on. We'll cook them with rice, they're fine like that.

Carlos.—Yes, sir, yes, sir, I'll go to Oregano Hill. (*He runs out, first left.*)

SCENE XV

DOÑA DOLORES and DON INDALECIO. Then MARUJA.

Dolores.—Why don't you go with him?

Indalecio.—Because I have something else to do now. I am going to take care of the pigeons.

Maruja.—Here is the tea. Oh, where's Carlos? Did he go upstairs?

Dolores.—No; he has gone to take a walk. What's this?

Maruja.—A cup of tea; he was complaining about his stomach . . .

Dolores.—Well he's gone; it's not needed any more, so take it away.

Indalecio.—No! Bring it here. I'll drink it myself.

Dolores.—Indalecio!

Indalecio.—Tea is an excellent appetizer. (*He drinks it.*)

Dolores.—Heavens! What a man—Maruja, go to Carlos' room and put things in order.

Maruja.—Yes, ma'am. (*Goes up stairway.*)

Indalecio.—Well, I'm going to feed my squabs.

Dolores.—How fond you are of those birds.

Indalecio.—I should say so. Yesterday I discovered there were four fine new ones. They'll be fine with tomato sauce. (*Goes as far as the stairway.*)

SCENE XVI

The same and DON HERMÓGENES.

Herm.—May I come in?

Indalecio.—Who's this man?

Dolores.—I had forgotten to tell you that this stranger was here before to see you.

Indalecio.—Come in!

Dolores.—You'll have to shout at him.

Indalecio.—Shout at him? What for? What has he done?

Dolores.—Nothing; he's deaf.

Indalecio.—Oh! Come in! (*Loud.*)

Herm.—Are you don Indalecio Ruipèrez?

Indalecio.—At your service.

Herm.—I am delighted to make your acquaintance. How are you? I am very glad to know you. The family? Well, hope. It's a real pleasure—

Indalecio.—(Seems he's ready to do all the talking— Have a seat.

Herm.—Hey?

Both (Loud).—Have a seat! (*Offering him a small chair to the right of the large arm-chair.*)

Herm.—Oh, thank you! (*The three sit down. DON INDALECIO in the arm-chair and at his left DOÑA DOLORES.*)

Indalecio.—(Who can the old fellow be?) (*To DOÑA DOLORES.*)

Herm.—You will wonder at my visit, and I must explain to you why I came.

Dolores.—He is going to tell you who he is (*To DON INDALECIO.*)

Herm.—I had to come to Salamanca, where I arrived early this morning. A cousin of mine who lived there was seriously ill. I'm glad to say he's better now.

Dolores.—We're glad to hear that.

Herm.—Hey?

Both.—We're glad to hear that! (*Loud.*)

Herm.—Oh, thank you. I found out there that this village was very close by and I said to myself: I'll take advantage of the opportunity and give myself the pleasure of calling on señor de Ruy Pérez and his wife.

Indalecio.—(What on earth does he want to call on *us* for?)
(*To DOÑA DOLORES.*)

Dolores.—We'll find out presently, my dear.)

Herm.—Hey?

Dolores.—Nothing.

Indalecio.—Nothing! (*Loud.*)

Herm.—Yesterday, before I left Madrid, I went to see your nephew—

Dolores.—Oh, you know our Carlos?

Herm.—Hey?

Indalecio (*Very loud*).—Our Carlos!

Herm.—Yes, Carlos, Carlos! His landlady told me that he left on the Northern express. This surprised me, because to tell the truth, I did not think he was capable of leaving like that, without telling me a word. That wasn't fair to me.

Indalecio.—Not fair to you, why?

Herm (*Not hearing him*).—I must say that I think he has behaved very unhandsomely, very unhandsomely.

Dolores.—Unhandsomely? Unhandsomely—why?

Indalecio.—Who are you?

Herm.—Hey?

Both.—Who are you? (*Loud.*)

Herm.—I suppose you don't know my name. Your nephew
Your nephew has probably not spoken to you about me.
My name is Hermógenes Zaragüeta.

Dolores.—What? (*Rising.*)

Indalecio.—That's who you are? (*Rising.*)

Dolores.—Carlos' doctor! (*To DON INDALECIO.*)

Indalecio.—Señor de Zaragüeta! (*The three are standing.*
DON INDALECIO and DOÑA DOLORES embrace DON HERMÓGENES affectionately.)

Dolores.—How glad we are to see you!

Herm.—Hey? (*Surprised.*)

Both.—We are very glad to see you!

Herm.—(What an affectionate reception!) But—you know who I am? (*With a certain suspicion.*)

Dolores.—Yes sir.

Indalecio.—I should say we do know who you are! (*Forcing him to sit down in the arm-chair.*)

Dolores.—We know all about how much our nephew is indebted to you.

Herm.—Hey?

Indalecio (Louder).—How much our nephew is indebted to you!

Herm.—Oh, not so much. (*The three sit down.*)

Dolores.—Yes sir, yes sir. It was unpardonable for him to leave Madrid without saying good-bye to you.

Herm.—It surprised me because in general he's a very delicate young man . . .

Dolores.—Awfully delicate, poor boy!

Indalecio.—And being so delicate it was risky to leave without telling you.

Dolores.—We will all scold him for it later.

Herm.—Why later? Isn't he here now?

Indalecio.—Yes, sir.

Dolores.—He arrived late yesterday afternoon, but he's gone out to take a walk.

Herm.—I had no idea he was coming. I am very glad that he has decided, finally, to ask you for help. I advised him to do so several times; but he didn't want to cause you sorrow.

Dolores.—Poor thing!

Indalecio.—He's very fond of us!

Herm.—Well, as the landlady did not tell me where he had gone, I took advantage of my coming to Salamanca to see you and to inform you of the boy's real situation, supposing that you did not understand it.

Dolores.—Yes, we know all about it. (*Very loud.*)

Indalecio.—And now, tell me frankly, since he isn't here to hear us, what do you think of Carlos?

Herm.—You mustn't be alarmed; in a young man those things don't signify anything. I believe he will get over it.

Dolores.—God grant it!

Herm.—If you knew some of the other cases I have in Madrid —This case of Carlos' is very unimportant compared to them.

Dolores.—The physician here says he's nervous.

Herm.—Hey?

Indalecio.—Doctor here says he's nervous! (*Very loud.*)

Herm.—Very nervous, very. I noticed it the first day he came to see me. The poor fellow was miserable, he was horribly frightened, but I told him: There's nothing to worry about; keep up your spirits. I'll save you. I have saved so many.

Dolores.—We know you have.

Herm.—And if you saw what little gratitude some of them show me!

Dolores.—Oh, *we're* very, very grateful!

Indalecio.—And we'll pay you well for what you've done.

Herm.—Thanks, thanks. (Of course I knew they'd pay me.)

Indalecio.—And you don't think it's necessary to send Carlos to Paris?

Herm.—To Paris? I see no objection; but, that's your affair not mine. (They can send him to Jericho, for all I care.)

Indalecio (*Absent-mindedly, speaking very loud to ZARAGÜETA*) My dear, do you think that—?

Herm.—What?

Indalecio.—Nothing, nothing. (*In an ordinary tone to DOÑA DOLORES*) Do you think we ought to invite him to dinner?

Dolores.—(Yes, to be sure; it's only right.)

Indalecio.—You don't expect to go back to Salamanca to-day?

Herm.—Yes sir; if it's possible, I'd like to leave this afternoon.

Indalecio.—But you don't need to hurry so, do you?

Herm.—No, there's no tremendous hurry . . .

Dolores.—Well then, you must stay with us till to-morrow. (*The three rise.*)

Indalecio.—Of course you must.

Dolores.—You must see the town and the country around here. It's very pretty!

Indalecio.—And the church. They say it's Byzantine,—whatever that is!

Herm.—Hey?

Both.—Byzantine! (*Raising their voices more and more.*)

Dolores.—And you will hear the organ.

Indalecio.—(How do you expect him to hear the organ?)

Herm.—Very well, very well; since you insist, I'll stay here to-day; but you must let me write a few lines to my sister, who is looking for me to-night.

Indalecio.—Yes sir, just go into my study in here.

Dolores (Who has gone to rear and looks thru the door).—Oh! There goes don Saturio.

Indalecio.—Call him, call him!

Herm.—Hey?

Indalecio.—We are going to introduce you to our town doctor.

Herm.—All right! (*Shrugging his shoulders.*)

Dolores.—Don Saturio! Don Saturio!

Indalecio.—Hurrah for señor de Zaragüeta! (*Giving him an affectionate slap or two on the shoulder.*)

Herm.—He! He! He! (*DON INDALECIO goes to rear*)
(What an affectionate family it is! If I had known all this I'd have tacked on a per cent or two.)

SCENE XVII

The same and DON SATURIO.

Saturio.—What's the matter? Is the patient worse?

Indalecio.—No sir; we called you to introduce you to a colleague.

Dolores.—Carlos' physician.

Indalecio.—Doctor Zaragüeta came to Salamanca to see a sick person and has honored us with a visit.

Saturio.—Well, what a coincidence! (*Approaching*) I am very much pleased to make your acquaintance.

Herm.—It's mutual sir.

Indalecio (To DOÑA DOLORES).—(Is the study in order?)

Dolores.—I don't know; I'll go and see.

Indalecio.—(I'll go too and get the paper) You gentlemen just wait. (*They go out first right.*)

SCENE XVIII

DON SATURIO and DON HERMÓGENES, then DON INDALECIO and DOÑA DOLORES.

Saturio.—What a piece of good luck to meet you here! (*He offers him the arm chair. ZARAGUETA sits down. Pause. Don Saturio offers him a cigarette.*)

Herm.—(This meeting people is a great bore. What do I care about the town doctor?)

Saturio.—(Now the big city doctor will see what we country doctors amount to.) A cigarette?

Herm.—Thanks.

Saturio.—It's a real pleasure to make your acquaintance. I have seen your name mentioned approvingly in the professional periodicals, and I am glad to have the opportunity of speaking with you, to tell you my opinion about the case of your patient here and to learn whether your diagnosis corresponds with mine. You understand I have never heard what your opinion is.

Herm.—(I wonder what the man is talking about!) (*Puffing mouthfuls of smoke and making no effort to listen.*)

Saturio.—After having put the patient thru an examination of auscultation and percussion, with the greatest thoroughness, I have become convinced that the important viscera are in perfect physiological condition; that there is no noticeable lesion in any one of them, and that, as I conceive of it, the malady centers solely and exclusively in the nervous centers as much in the voluntary system as in the involuntary. It is a case, then, in my humble opinion, of simple nervous exhaustion, of neurasthenia, and consequently the whole therapeutic plan should be directed toward an equilibrium between the two systems. Do you agree with me?

Herm.—Hey?

Saturio.—I asked if we agreed in diagnosis?

Herm (Cheerfully).—I haven't understood a single word you've said.

Saturio (Piqued).—Well, I flatter myself that I've made myself clear. I said it's a case of neurasthenia. Everybody knows what neurasthenia is! (*Raising his voice.*)

Herm.—Oh, yes, tenia. That's high-brow for tapeworm. Have you got a tapeworm? (*Enter DOÑA DOLORES and DON INDALECIO.*)

Saturio.—What's the fellow talking about? (*Rising.*)

Dolores.—Did you notice how deaf he is!

Saturio.—Oh, is he deaf?

Indalecio.—Absolutely.

Saturio.—Why didn't you tell me before? So you—(*Indicating his ear.*)

Herm.—Yes sir, yes sir; I hear a little out of this one, and not at all out of this one.

Saturio.—Great Scott, man, great Scott!

Herm.—Hey?

Saturio (Shouting in his ear).—Great Scott!

Indalecio (*Loud to DON SATURIO thinking that he is speaking with ZARAGUETA*).—You must come to-day—Oh, I got my doctors mixed. (*Laughing*) You must come and dine with us to-day, Señor Zaragüeta will not leave town till tomorrow—

Saturio.—Oh! Then we'll have a chance to talk things over at our leisure. (*To ZARAGUETA*.)

Herm.—Hey?

Saturio.—We will talk the case over later! (*Loud*.)

Herm.—All right! (What a quack this doctor is!) May I go in now and write that little note? (*To DOÑA DOLORES*.)

Dolores.—Whenever you wish.

Herm.—Excuse me, sir. (*To DON SATURIO*.)

Saturio and Herm.—Pleased to have made your acquaintance—(*Both at the same time*.)

Herm.—I'll see you shortly again. (*Exit first right*.)

Saturio.—Well, I'm going. Dinner at twelve, eh?

Indalecio.—Yes, at twelve sharp.

Saturio.—I'll be there without fail. You will see how well doctor Zaragüeta agrees with me about what ails Carlos: nervousness, nothing but nervousness, nothing but nervousness: shower-baths, nothing but shower-baths. (*Exit rear*.)

SCENE XIX

DOÑA DOLORES, DON INDALECIO, *then* MARUJA.

Indalecio.—Hurry, Dolores, and get the dinner ready right away. It must be a real banquet. We're entertaining a man who is no doubt used to good eating in Madrid.

Dolores.—And we're entertaining you, who are always ready to eat.

Indalecio.—I won't deny it. (*MARUJA comes down the stairway*.)

Dolores.—Oh, Maruja, tell Gregoria to go post-haste to the butcher for a leg of mutton and to take down one of the hams in the pantry.

Maruja.—Why are you doing so much?

Indalecio.—We have an important guest.

Maruja.—A guest? Who?

Dolores.—You'd never guess it. Carlos' doctor.

Maruja.—Don Saturio?

Dolores.—No, the one from Madrid.

Indalecio.—The one he dreamed about last night.

Dolores.—Doctor Zaragüeta.

Maruja.—It isn't possible!

Dolores.—Yes, he arrived a moment ago. He's there in the study writing a letter.

Maruja.—(Oh Heavens!) (*Greatly frightened.*)

Indalecio.—A very likeable gentleman. (*He opens the trap-door of the cellar.*)

Dolores.—It's a pity he's so deaf.

Maruja.—(That's Zaragüeta) But, why did he come?

Dolores.—Don't get excited; he just came to have the pleasure of making our acquaintance.

Maruja.—(They don't know anything) And Carlos? Has he seen him yet?

Dolores.—No, he hasn't come back from his walk yet.

Indalecio.—Dolores, let's go down cellar.

Dolores.—What for?

Indalecio.—To open the barrel of sherry wine.

Dolores.—Let Perico go down for it.

Indalecio.—He's so stupid. Remember what happened to the Carthusian wine. He left the spigot open and nearly half of it ran out. We bottled it ourselves. Come! Come!

Dolores.—Very well!—*Maruja*, you get out the silver and see that the good dishes are cleaned.

Maruja.—Yes, ma'am.

Indalecio (*Who has already descended two steps*).—Good wines are for special occasions, and I know this sherry is delicious. It is fifty-four years old, just as old as you are. I tell you that's old!

Dolores.—Hurry, *Indalecio*, hurry!

Indalecio.—Take care you don't fall. (*They descend into the cellar.*)

SCENE XX

MARUJA then CARLOS.

Maruja.—Poor Carlos! What a scene there'll be when uncle and aunt find it all out! I don't know what to do!

Indalecio (*From below*).—*Maruja*!

Maruja (*Crouching down and looking into the cellar*).—What do you want?

Indalecio.—Make a sweet dessert: pudding, custard, whatever you please.

Maruja.—All right, uncle.—I'm in a pretty state of mind to make a nice dessert. To think that that man's right here in this house! (*Looking thru the key-hole front right*) Yes, he's there writing. What can he be writing, good Heavens!

Carlos (First left).—What's that, what are you looking at?

Maruja.—Oh, Carlos, come here, for Heaven's sake!

Carlos.—What's the matter?

Maruja.—Look who's in here.

Carlos.—Who? (*Leaving the gun, the game-bag and the cartridge box on the chest.*)

Maruja.—Just look and see.

Carlos (Looks thru the key-hole).—Za—Za—Zaragüeta! (*Falling back from the door in dismay.*)

Maruja.—Zaragüeta himself.

Carlos.—That fellow here! When did he come?

Maruja.—Just a little while ago.

Carlos.—Have uncle and aunt seen him?

Maruja.—Yes.

Carlos.—I'm done for, then!

Maruja.—No, not yet. You know I told them this Zaragüeta was your doctor, so they've taken him for a doctor, and he's so deaf they haven't learned anything different.

Carlos.—But are you absolutely sure that uncle and aunt don't suspect anything?

Maruja.—Not a thing. Why, they've even invited him to dinner. They are down cellar now, bottling wine to do him honor. (*All of this scene should move very rapidly.*)

Carlos.—Oh, Maruja, my darling! I'm ruined! What shall I do?

Maruja.—I don't know what to advise you.

Carlos.—The only thing I can do is run away. I'll go. I'll go right now.

Maruja.—But where can you go?

Carlos.—I don't know. To Madrid, anywhere. From there I'll write to uncle and aunt and tell them the whole truth; I'll ask them to forgive me, and if they do, I'll come back—and if they don't, good-bye forever, my dear, dear cousin!

Maruja.—Carlos!

Carlos.—There's no other way. Good-bye, good-bye. (*At rear*) But where am I going when I haven't a penny? (*Stopping.*)

Maruja.—Oh, you can go all right. I'll give you what's in my money-box.

Carlos.—I don't know whether I ought to—yes, I ought to. Give me whatever you want to.

Maruja.—I'll give you all I have.

Carlos.—No, not all. Twenty duros is enough.

Maruja.—I'll run right upstairs. (*Exit running up the stairway.*)

SCENE XXI

CARLOS, then DON HERMÓGENES, afterwards PERICO, GREGORIA and PÍO.

Carlos.—Good Lord!—here this creature rolls into town and spoils all of my plans! And I've got to sneak off like a thief! But why *should* I sneak off? He's the one that ought to go away—Yes, and I'll make him go away. Uncle and aunt are down cellar; here's my chance. (*He closes the trap-door of the cellar*) Here's where I need you Mr. Gun (*He takes the gun*) It isn't loaded; but it'll serve to scare him with. There's no time to lose. (*Approaching the first door right*) Ah! There he comes now! (*Holds his gun ready.*)

Herm (*From first right, sticking a stamp on the envelope.*)—What pleasant people! They even had the stamp ready for me!

Carlos.—You get out of here double quick! (*Aiming at him.*)

Herm (*Frightened*).—Carlos! Carlos, my good friend!

Carlos (*Aiming*).—You'll go or I'll kill you!

Herm.—Help! Help! (*Backing till he is stopped by the wall between the door of the study and that of the wood room.*)

Carlos.—Get out, I tell you!

Herm.—They're killing me! (*Pío appears at rear and PERICO and GREGORIA from the kitchen-door. DON HERMÓGENES enters rapidly first right, closing the door behind him.*)

Gregoria.—Good Heavens!

Perico.—Carlos, what are you doing?

Pío.—Hold him! Hold him! He's gone crazy. That was what don Saturio was afraid of. (*PERICO and Pío seize CARLOS by the arms; he resists.*)

Carlos.—Let me go, let me go! That fellow's a scoundrel.

Pío.—Raving crazy!

Perico.—Señor Carlos, for Heaven's sake!

Carlos.—Let me go, let me go!

Pío.—Lock him up, lock him up! (*All of this almost at the same time and very quickly spoken.*)

Perico.—Where?

Gregoria.—Here in the wood room. (*Opening the door of the wood room. She helps PERICO and Pío and by their united efforts they force CARLOS into the wood room and shut the door.*)

Pío and Gregoria.—In with you!

Pío.—Crazy! Raving crazy!

SCENE XXII

The same except CARLOS and DON HERMÓGENES, afterwards DOÑA DOLORES and DON INDALECIO from the cellar; soon after MARUJA.

Perico.—Now he's safe enough. (*Turning the key.*)

Pío.—Dear me, what a terrible thing!

Gregoria.—How he frightened me!

Carlos (Within).—Let me out! Let me out! (*Pounding on the trap-door. The three who are standing on it are frightened and jump.*)

Three.—Oh!

Indalecio (Below).—Gregoria!

Dolores (Idem).—Perico!

Gregoria.—Master and mistress!

Both.—Lift the door, lift the door! (*PERICO rises the trap-door and the two come up hastily.*)

Dolores.—Who dropped that door?

Indalecio.—What's the matter?

Dolores.—Who's that shrieking so?

Maruja (Coming from the stairway).—(Good gracious! I wonder what has happened now!)

Perico.—Oh! Señor!

Gregoria.—Oh! Señora!

Pío.—Oh! Don Indalecio! Oh! Dona Dolores!

Indalecio.—What's the matter? Tell me!

Carlos (Within).—Open the door!

Dolores.—Carlos in there?

Pío.—We locked him up.

Indalecio.—Why?

Pío.—He's gone mad!

Maruja, Dolores and Indalecio.—Eh?

Pío.—He tried to shoot that stranger.

Indalecio and Dolores.—Good Heavens!

Maruja.—Horrors!

Piò.—He had a fit just as don Saturio said he would.

Carlos (Within).—It's a lie! I'm not crazy. Senor Zaragüeta is a rascal!

Dolores.—Good gracious! To call such a kind gentleman a rascal!

Indalecio.—There's no doubt of it; he's gone crazy.

Dolores.—Where is the gentleman?

Piò.—He's there in the study.

Indalecio.—Señor Zaragüeta!—*(Calling.)*

Dolores.—Come out; there's nothing to be afraid of now.

Indalecio.—He's locked himself in.

Piò.—Yes, he was terribly frightened.

Dolores.—And he won't answer.

Indalecio.—Of course he won't. He can't hear. Let him alone; he'll come out pretty soon.

Dolores.—We must have a doctor.

Piò.—Call don Saturio.

Indalecio.—I'll go post-haste to his house. *(Exit running rear.)*

Piò.—I'll go to the drug-store to see if he's there. *(Idem.)*

Carlos (Within).—Let me out, or I'll break the door down!

Dolores (Frightened).—Gracious! Gracious! *(Going away from the door.)*

Piò.—Don't worry, the door is good and strong *(Exit rear right.)*

Dolores.—Good gracious, what a disaster! My poor nephew!

Maruja.—You're excited, aunt. Gregoria, make her some tea. Now auntie go and drink it. *(Pushing her gently toward the kitchen)* I'll stay here. *(In a very loud voice so that CARLOS can hear it.)*

Gregoria.—Now, señora, don't take it to heart so.

Dolores.—Poor little Carlos! *(Exit GREGORIA to kitchen.)*

My poor nephew!

Maruja.—Tea! Tea! *(She closes the kitchen-door.)*

SCENE XXIII

MARUJA *then* CARLOS.

Maruja.—He must go away now, there's nothing else to do. *(She opens the door and leaves it wide open.)*

Carlos.—Oh! Maruja, darling!

Maruja.—What have you done now?

Carlos.—Yes, I spoiled it all, I know. I wanted to frighten him—I'm going away, I'm going away this minute.

Maruja.—Take the money. Three thousand two hundred reales.

Carlos.—All of it? How good you are! Thanks, a thousand thanks! (*Kissing her hand*) Good-bye, good-bye, Maruja! I'll try to catch the first train.

Maruja.—But are you going to leave your valise behind?

Carlos.—Don't talk to me about valises. Throw me my overcoat—and a kiss or two from the window. (*MARUJA runs up the stairway and CARLOS goes out rear right.*)

SCENE XXIV

DON HERMÓGENES, *then* CARLOS.

Herm (*Opening the door cautiously*).—I don't believe there's anyone here; at least I don't hear anything. Deafness has its inconveniences at times. No, nobody. I'll get out of here. After all, I went in of my own free will. (*Starts out rear and returns immediately*) Oh! Carlos again! He saw me! He's going to kill me. Lord help me! (*He runs into the wood room and closes it.*)

Carlos.—Listen! Listen! Oh! You've shut yourself up in there, have you? Well, you'll stay there a while. (*Turning the key and putting it in his pocket*—Now I can go with an easier mind. (*Reaches rear of stage. He hears DON INDALECIO and DON SATURIO speaking. Returning*) Good Heavens! My uncle and don Saturio. What shall I do? I'll go thru the back yard. (*Going to the first door left.*)

Dolores.—Let me alone; I don't want anything. (*In the kitchen.*)

Carlos.—My aunt! She mustn't see me (*Returns and goes to the first door right, which he closes.*)

SCENE XXV

GREGORIA *and* DOÑA DOLORES *from the kitchen*, DON INDALECIO, DON SATURIO *and* PÍO *rear right.*

Gregoria.—But señora—

Dolores.—I don't want to do anything but cry.

*Saturio (Appearing, followed by DON INDALECIO and Pío).—*Keep calm, keep calm.

Dolores.—Oh, don Saturio!—

Saturio.—Keep calm; I was afraid of this; but there's a remedy for everything. Carlos is in the wood room, eh?

Dolores.—Yes sir.

Saturio.—Well, we'll open it—(*Approaching.*)

Pío.—Be careful, he was raving.

Saturio.—Oh, he won't hurt *me*.

Pío.—But you know he has the gun.

Saturio.—Oh! That's a different matter. (*Stopping.*)

Dolores.—Why he wanted to shoot his own doctor! (DON SATURIO retreats.)

Saturio.—Does he have it in for doctors? Well then, we must be cautious, I don't trust crazy people, especially when they have guns. Where's the doctor?

Dolores.—He locked himself in there, in the study. (*After trying the door*) He's still locked in.

Saturio.—Call him. I must consult him—

Dolores (Very loud).—Señor de Zaragüeta! Señor de Zaragüeta!

Indalecio.—Yes, yes, you're wasting your breath.

Saturio.—How so?

Indalecio.—He can't hear you. You remember how deaf he is.

Saturio.—That's so! Well, no matter, I'm sure he'll approve my plan! Where's that lazy Perico? Tell him to bring the thing at once. (*To GREGORIO, who goes to rear right.*)

Pío.—He seems to be quieter now; I don't hear him. Carlos!

Dolores.—Carlos, dear! (*At the wood room.*)

Indalecio.—I wonder if he's dead?

Saturio.—No. Just a fainting-spell, I'm sure. There's no time to lose. Oh! here they are at last!

SCENE XXVI

The same, GREGORIA with a large pail full of water, and PERICO with the force pump and hose and a step-ladder.

Dolores.—Oh, what are you going to do? (*Frightened.*)

Saturio.—Hydrotherapy, madam; give him a shower-bath. That will calm him.

Dolores.—But if he's fainted?

Saturio.—It will bring him to. (*They have set the pail near the door*) Let me see; bring that ladder here. (*He leans it against the transom of the wood-room*) Is the water cold enough? (*He puts his hand into it*) Yes.

Dolores.—But, don Saturio.

Indalecio.—Let him alone; he knows what he's doing. (*He drinks from the milk pitcher when they are not looking at him.*)

Saturio.—The apparatus isn't very good for this purpose, but it's all we have—Give me the hose. (*Beginning to climb the ladder. Stopping and coming down.*) (No, he has the gun.) Perico take this; you go up. Pío work the pump. (*To PERICO*) Now, look thru the transom and be careful. Do you see him?

Perico (From the ladder).—Yes, I can see something on the fire wood.

Saturio.—Well, aim so we'll be sure to hit him. (*To Pío*) And you pump with all your might. (*To PERICO*) Now put it straight at his head. (*Noise of water.*)

Herm (Very loud within).—Oh! Oh! Oh! Oh!

Saturio.—He's come to now! Steady! Steady!

Herm (Within).—Oh, murder! Help, murder!

SCENE XXVII

The same, MARUJA, then CARLOS.

Maruja.—Oh, what is it now?

Carlos (Coming out).—Well, this thing has gone far enough. (*General astonishment. Tableau.*)

Saturio.—Carlos!

Dolores and Indalecio.—It's you!

Pío.—It's he!

Saturio.—Who's in there, then?

Carlos.—That rascal Zaragüeta! I locked him in There's the key. (*DON SATURIO picks it up and unlocks the door.*)

Dolores.—Why, Carlos! . . .

Indalecio.—Why, my dear Carlos! . . .

SCENE XXVIII

The same, and DON HERMÓGENES, from the wood room.

Saturio (To DON HERMÓGENES as he comes out).—I hope you'll pardon my blunder.

Herm (Coming out completely soaked and emptying the water out of his hat on the stage).—That was a mighty poor joke! Hand over my three thousand pesetas! (*Shivering.*)

Indalecio.—What's that?

Dolores.—Eh?

Carlos.—Yes uncle, it's a fact. This man isn't what you think he is; he came here just because I owe him that amount.

Indalecio (To CARLOS).—Three thousand pesetas for professional services! (*In a very loud voice to ZARAGUETA*) Three thousand pesetas?

Herm.—Yes sir, three thousand pesetas.

Saturio.—That's a good, stiff bill! (To DON INDALECIO)

Indalecio.—It's an outrage, I tell you.

Herm.—Come now, produce the money or I'll have him arrested.

Indalecio.—This poor boy arrested? Here take your money—and good-bye, the Lord go with you. (*He hands him the money in bills.*)

Herm (Taking out the notes).—Here are the papers . . .

Carlos (Snatching them from him).—Let me have them. They're no good any more. (*He tears them and throws them into the waste-basket.*)

Herm.—All right. Good-bye and good luck to you. (*Exit running, rear right.*)

Indalecio.—Go to the devil!—He didn't hear me. (*Running to the rear of the stage and very loud*) Go to the devil!

Saturio.—Three thousand pesetas! That's the way Madrid doctors get rich!

Carlos.—Oh, my dear uncle! Oh, my dear aunt! I'm all right now. Do you know what was the matter with me? It was that doctor. (*Embracing his uncle and aunt.*)

Dolores.—Well, we'll send you to Paris anyway.

Carlos.—No, now I'll stay here with you. I'll go to Paris when you send me there on my honey-moon with Maruja.

Indalecio and Dolores.—What's that? (*Joyfully.*)

Carlos.—If she's willing . . .

Maruja.—I'll give you my answer when I'm convinced that you've completely recovered. (*Significantly.*)

Indalecio.—You go with her. (To CARLOS.)

Pio.—Oh, what a weight has been taken off my back! I'll tell my mother that you and she are going to get married and that leaves me free.

Carlos.—You get yourself made a priest in a hurry and we'll have you marry us.

Pio.—I'll be delighted to.

Dolores.—I just can't get over it. What a trick Doctor Zaragüeta played on us!—

Indalecio.—And we were inviting him to dinner! Well, I'll punish him by eating his share. Tell them to set the table! (*To the audience.*)

Now comes the part I dread the most,
As I'm a living sinner.
Applaud a bit, kind friends, I pray,
Then I'll enjoy my dinner.

Curtain

DISTANCE

BY HAZEL HALL

Somewhere there is a hill that's green;
Somewhere there is the sea;
And though the miles yawn in between
It is the same to me.

There may be desert-sands and downs,
Or rearing cataracts;
There may be swarms of huddled towns
With hungry chimney-stacks.

There may be dusty roads and ways
A pilgrim cannot pass
Unless he lays him down and prays
For foot-feel of the grass.

I know not what lies in between;
It is the same to me;
Somewhere there is a hill that's green
Somewhere there is the sea!

THE BALLAD IMITATIONS OF SWINBURNE

BY CONSTANCE RUMMONS

I

SWINBURNE'S probably is not a name which would occur to the general reader in connection with imitations of the border ballads. To one who happened never to have read one of his ballads,—who knew him only by *Atalanta in Calydon*, the *Hymn to Proserpine* or *The Deserted Garden*,—it would seem almost preposterous that he could have written what Mr. Gosse praises as “rugged pieces . . . in which the aboriginal Northumbrian accent is more closely reproduced than in any other ‘imitation’ border ballad.” Certainly there is nothing in the great mass of his work to suggest that the popular ballads exerted any influence upon it. This study will be confined to that part of it upon which their influence is, so to speak, concentrated.

In this respect, there is a marked difference between his poetry and that of Sir Walter Scott, in which the traces of ballad influence are everywhere visible. Yet it is only to Scott's that we can compare Swinburne's ballads, for fidelity to the ballad spirit and language. The work of these two, the earliest and the latest ballad imitators, is more alike, and more like the originals, than that of any others of the numerous poets of the nineteenth century who sought inspiration at the same source. In this comparison, however, we are somewhat hampered by the fact that most of Scott's best imitation of the ballad style consists undoubtedly in his emendation and revision of the mutilated originals of ballads published in the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, and is now extremely difficult to separate from the context. For it is pretty certain that he was guilty of doing what William Morris declared Swinburne capable of,—“writing in verses that no one would be able to tell from the original stuff.” Certainly none of Scott's avowed ballad imitations would be mistaken for a traditional ballad, but many of Swinburne's stanzas, though perhaps none of his ballads in its entirety, might easily be so mistaken.

The difference is due to a difference in their attitudes rather than in their powers, and this again is a matter of the periods in which they lived. Scott's age, while antiquarian in spirit, was not scientifically but romantically antiquarian; it was interested in traditional poetry for its intrinsic merit, and did not care to preserve inferior or mutilated pieces merely because they were traditional. Scott, therefore, saw no harm in filling in the gaps of a narrative, or in rewriting a poor stanza, and in doing this he naturally sought to reproduce the style of the original so closely that the patching would not be obvious,—and succeeded so well that he is the despair of the modern researcher. On the other hand, Scott's age was one of originality, and when it suited him to use the ballad form he used it with as much freedom as Coleridge or any other of his contemporaries.

Swinburne's period, the decadence of the Victorian age, was less original and more stylistic,—and therefore more inclined to exactness in its imitations of the mediaeval models to which, far more than the Romantic period, it returned. Swinburne, particularly, was a facile imitator of styles and languages not his own. He wrote French verse, and Greek verse, and in both was highly successful, as is well known. Probably his ballad-imitations may be considered as similar *tours de force*, compositions in a rugged language and meter, almost, if not quite, as alien to him as French. It was said of his French verse that, in spite of its excellence, it would never be mistaken for verse written by a Frenchman; and in the same way it may be said that, with one or two possible exceptions, none of his ballads could be mistaken for genuine traditional ballads by any student of the latter.

In view of the well-known interest which Swinburne's pre-Raphaelite friends took in all types of mediaeval poetry, it would, perhaps, seem hardly necessary to seek farther for the source of his interest in the border ballads. If an additional reason be needed, however, it is to be found in the pride and interest which he always took in his Northumbrian ancestors. Like Scott, he delighted to imagine them participating in the raids and forays which afford the subject-matter for so many of the ballads. This personal element gave a special point, in his case, to the general pre-Raphaelite interest in them which he shared with Morris and Rossetti.

His earliest interest in the ballads was roused by *The Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, which he took delight in as a boy. It would seem probable, however, considering how much the bal-

lads were "in the air" during the nineteenth century, that he had studied some of the many later collections.

Through much of Swinburne's ballad work, another important influence may be traced, besides that of the traditional ballads. This is the influence of the pre-Raphaelite school of poets, with whom Swinburne was very intimate at the period when his ballads were composed. This shows itself in an elaboration of detail, an exotic richness of coloring, which was unknown to the simple bards of the ballads. Seldom in these do we find descriptive details given, and where we do they are sure to be conventional ballad terms: color is used occasionally in vivid splashes, but it is likewise conventional. The ballad author, for example, might speak of "gowns of goodly green," but he could never give us such a description as Swinburne's of Lady Scales' bower maidens,

In their sma' coats green and white;
With a red rose wrought for the left breast,
And a red wrought for the right.

It is sufficient here to give one example of pre-Raphaelite influence in Swinburne's ballads. Throughout this study this influence will be traced, as well as that of the traditional ballads.

Swinburne's ballad-imitations are nineteen in all, of which four appeared in *Poems and Ballads, First Series*, 1866, three in *Poems and Ballads, Third Series*, 1889, one in *Astrophel and Other Poems*, 1894, and eleven posthumously, in the volume edited by Mr. Gosse and Mr. Wise. Besides the nineteen ballads proper, there are about eleven other poems, which while they show the ballad influence strongly, for one reason or another cannot be classed as ballads.

Of the four ballads in the *Poems and Ballads, First Series*, two, *May Janet* and *The Bloody Son*, are adaptations of traditional ballads from other languages,—the first from the Breton, the second from the Finnish. The Breton ballad apparently has no parallel in English. In Swinburne's version, it is an excellent ballad, with swift movement and clear narrative, merits not always to be found in Swinburne's original ballads. As a whole, it is not highly successful in preserving the ballad tone; but this is caught finely in the fourth stanza:

"But I shall have her by land," he said,
"Or I shall have her by sea,
Or I shall have her by strong treason
And no grace go with me."

The Finnish original of *The Bloody Son* is related to the well-known ballad, *Edward*, first published in Percy's *Reliques*, and Swinburne's rendering of it obviously owes much to the latter. It is a very spirited rendering, and comes very close indeed, perhaps closer than any of his original ballads, to reproducing the genuine ballad style.

The warldis way, to the warldis end,

bears comparison with the finest lines in traditional ballad poetry. In one point, however, his poetic taste has conquered his desire to imitate the Border dialect, and he writes in the refrain:

And wot I hae not anither,

where strict observance of dialectical usage would require the awkward line,

And I wot I hae nae anither.

The other two ballads in this volume, *The King's Daughter* and *The Sea-Swallows*, are less strictly imitative, and are strongly pre-Raphaelite in coloring. One need but note the intricately beautiful variations in the refrain of *The King's Daughter*, to see the difference between this and a traditional ballad. But the refrain itself is, of course, a ballad element, and there are many points about the poem which suggest various individual ballads to parts of which there is a resemblance. The opening stanza, for example

We were ten maidens in the green corn,
 Small red leaves in the mill-water:
 Fairer maidens never were born,
 Apples of gold for the king's daughter.

is strongly reminiscent of the opening stanzas of several ballads, and particularly of this stanza from *Gil Brenton*:

We were sisters, sisters seven,
 We were the fairest under heaven.

The repetition of the thought of the opening stanza in slightly different phrasing, in stanzas 2 and 7, is worth noting, as highly characteristic of Swinburne's ballad method. It is borrowed, of

course, from the ballad device of incremental repetition, but while it is very beautifully handled, this is not incremental, and is quite unessential to the story, and therefore un-ballad-like. True incremental repetition he uses in stanzas 3-6, which have their counterparts in such traditional ballads as *The Unco Knight's Wooing* and *The Cruel Brother*, and again in stanzas 10-13, which might have been suggested by the second and third stanzas of *The Twa Sisters*. From the ballad point of view, which is that of the story, ten is an unnecessarily large number of sisters (besides not being a magic number) and four stanzas rather too much to devote to their description. But it is so exquisitely done, and the whole is so fine a piece of pre-Raphaelite art, that one cannot but be glad that, in this instance, he elected not to follow the ballad model strictly.

The Sea-Swallows is less open to the criticism of over-extended use of incremental repetition. The most striking and the most pre-Raphaelite feature of this poem is the colorful refrain line,

Red rose leaves will never make wine.

The second refrain line is quite a typical ballad refrain,

The ways are sair from the Till to the Tyne,

and the poem on the whole has more of the ballad style than the other. The story is not at all clear. The last stanza seems meant to explain it,—but then who were the “two lovers” of stanza 2? It would appear from this and others of his ballads that Swinburne considered gaps in the narrative a ballad characteristic, whereas these only occur because the ballads have been mutilated in oral transmission through generations. At any rate, the story of the *The Sea-Swallows* is puzzling and unsatisfactory.

The Weary Wedding, the first of the ballads in *Poems and Ballads, Third Series*, exemplifies Swinburne's tendency (shown, I think, not only in his ballads,) to allow his powers of versification to run away with him, increasing the length of a poem out of all proportion to the subject matter. He possessed very strikingly the power of ringing many changes of the same thought, as in the continually varied refrain of *The King's Daughter*. In discussing that poem, I mentioned that he there came perilously near overdoing the use of the stock ballad device of incremental repetition. In *The Weary Wedding* he quite oversteps the bound of restraint in this respect. For example, instead of the usual three or five

bequests of the dying bride, (in *The Cruel Brother*, they are to the father, mother, sister, brother and brother's wife,) he gives us eleven, including bequests to three sisters, three brothers, the bridegroom, best man, and bridesmaid. In the same way the poem is lengthened in every part, until the whole amounts to fifty-nine stanzas. The dreary refrain lines,

One with another,

and

Mother, my mother,

do nothing to save it from monotony.

It is not intended to imply that the poem as a whole is devoid of beauty, in spite of the somewhat wearisome impression it makes. There are remarkably melodious stanzas, like the third,

Too long have your tears run down like rain,
 One with another.
 For a long love lost and a sweet love slain,
 Mother, my mother,

quite in Swinburne's best manner. But it seems to me that the piece would have been vastly improved by a stricter adherence to the ballad ideal of simplicity.

From this we turn to *The Witch Mother*. This is a striking piece, comparable for tragic quality to the finest of the traditional ballads. The story is that of Medea, with the added horror of the children's flesh being served to the faithless lover at his bridal feast. The ballad idiom is admirably imitated, the language attaining in some places a high distinction:

And the rain is sair upon my face,
 And sair upon my hair;
 And the wind upon my weary mouth,
 That never may man kiss mair.

The narrative moves swiftly to its impressive close,

And there were twae mair sangs in heaven,
 And twae mair sauls in hell.

The next ballad is *The Bride's Tragedy*, which has the striking and ballad-like refrain,

In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

The theme of this poem is worth particular notice for the resemblance it bears to those of several of the traditional ballads. Briefly, it is this: A young man is restrained by his mother from keeping tryst with his sweetheart, and goes the next day, only to meet her as she comes from her wedding to another man. He seizes her horse's rein, and they ride away, pursued by the bridal party. They come to a ford which is swollen by a flood. Rather than return to her bridegroom, she chooses to "ride yon fell water," and they are drowned. The first and last parts of the narrative are reminiscent of *The Mother's Malison*, where the mother, unable to persuade her son to stay with her, curses him, and he is drowned on his return. The elopement reminds one of *Katherine Jafferay*, which suggested *Lochinvar* to Scott.

Not in the theme and refrain alone does the poem resemble traditional ballads. The phraseology is distinctly ballad-like, and there are some lines at whose particular origin we may guess.

Weel may ye get a light love yet,
But never a mither mair,

was surely suggested by the lines in *The Douglas Tragedy*,

True lovers I can get many a ane,
But a father can never get mair,

and it is worth while to note, in passing, how Swinburne has smoothed the rough phrase of the ballad, without detracting from its strength. There are other lines, more his own, which strike the ballad note equally well, as, for example, the seventh stanza:

When cocks were crawling and day was dawing,
He's boun' him forth to ride:
And the ae first may he's met that day
Was fause Earl Robert's bride.
In, in, out and in,
Blaws the wind and whirls the whin.

He uses internal rime throughout the poem. This is common in ballads, though never so consistently used.

Altogether, this is a very fine and spirited piece, to be placed with *The Witch Mother*, among the best of Swinburne's ballad-imitations.

The last poem which we can strictly class as a ballad-imitation, which was published in Swinburne's lifetime, is *The Brothers*, which appeared in *Astrophel and Other Poems* (1894). The theme as in *The Bloody Son*, is the murder of one brother by another; but the treatment has nothing in common with that of the latter, nor has it much resemblance to the traditional ballad of *The Twa Brothers*. The murderer, as in *Edward* and *The Bloody Son*, makes a pilgrimage overseas in penance, after burying his victim:

Between the birk and the aik and the thorn,

but he returns after fifty years. He has the body exhumed and at his touch blood gushes from the bones, which he takes for a sign that his expiation is ended and death is about to release him. The psychology of the piece is perhaps rather too subtle for a ballad, but in other respects it is quite successful in catching the ballad note. It has a fine double refrain,

Sweet fruits are sair to gather,

and

The wind wears owre the heather,

which adds to the melancholy effect of the piece.

Among the poems which I have classed as allied pieces showing the influence of the ballads, the first is *After Death* in *Poems and Ballads, First Series*. This very impressive poem is not strictly of the ballad-type, but it owes much to the ballad in form and it also bears some relationship, in its cynicism, to the Scottish ballad of *The Twa Corbies*. The influence of the ballad upon its form is shown in the device, which is not, strictly speaking, incremental repetition, of giving a series of parallel phrases, each varying from the last but all of similar import.

I had fair coins red and white,
And my name was as great light;

I had fair clothes white and red,
And strong gold bound round my head.

This device is used throughout the poem.

Closely related to this piece is *A Lyke-Wake Song*, in the volume of 1889. This might have been called a ballad, since Professor Child has included a lyke-wake dirge in his collection, but it seems better to restrict the term "ballad" to poems in which the narrative element is more important. Swinburne, in his *Lyke-Wake Song*, follows the ballad idiom more closely than in *After Death*, but otherwise this poem is much like the other. The same parallelism is made use of:

Ye set scorn by the silken stuff
Now the grave is clean enough.

Ye set scorn by the rubis ring:
Now the worm is a saft sweet thing.

This, like the other, is a grim piece, with a harsh severity that verges on the horrible.

A Reiver's Neck-Verse is a lyrical piece, which hints at a story, but can hardly be called narrative. The language is that of the ballads. There is a recklessness about the very swing of it that suggests the godless spirit of the old freebooters. The first stanza will be sufficient to illustrate its character:

Some die singing, and some die swinging,
And weel not a' they be:
Some die playing, and some die praying,
And I wot sae winna we, my dear,
And I wot sae winna we,

Very different is the spirit of *A Jacobite's Farewell*. This exhibits a tenderness quite unlike the hardened cynicism of the *Neck-Verse*.

There's nae mair lands to tyne, my dear,
And nae mair lives to gie:
Tho a man think sair to live nae mair,
There's but one day to die.

* * * * *

O lands are lost and life's losing,
And what were they to gie?
Fu' mony a man gives all he can,
But nae man else gives ye.

Only in the language and stanza form does this piece resemble the ballads.

The same is true of *A Jacobite's Exile*. This is a very fine piece in its way, describing in a touching manner the nostalgia of the Northumbrian in France.

On Aikenshaw the sun blinks braw,
The burn rins blithe and fain:
There's naught wi' me I wadna gie
To look thereon again.

One thing which particularly distinguishes the last three pieces from the ballad type is their personal tone. Two other pieces in this volume must be removed from the ballad classification on that account. The first is *The Winds*, which is taken out of its proper order for the better comparison with the similar poem *The Tyneside Widow*. Both are laments in ballad style. The former poem consists of but four stanzas and is most touching in its simplicity and artistic restraint. It is one of the best of Swinburne's poems in this style, but the lack of the epic impersonality which must characterize the true ballad prevents its being so classed. The subject and phrasing are such as we find in the best traditional ballads. As an example of the closeness with which it parallels ballad phraseology, compare the last two lines,

It might hae taken an hundred men,
And let my ae love be,

with such traditional lines as these from *Barbara Livingston*,

Thou micht hae taken anither woman,
And lat my lady be.

The Tyneside Widow is a lament of the same type, but less effective because of its greater length. It has several very fine and impressive stanzas, as for instance the ninth, the tenth, and the last; but the effect of these is weakened by over-elaboration and undue repetition in the rest of the poem,—for example, in the seven introductory stanzas (in a poem of only fifteen stanzas!) The language is the ballad-idiom, but in some places the thought is on a different plane. One could scarcely imagine finding in a ballad such lines as these

My life is sealed with a seal of love,
And locked with love for a key.

Perhaps the best thing about the whole is the pathos of the last stanza:

We were nane ower mony to sleep, my dear,
I wot we were but three;
And never a bed in the weary world
For my bairn and my dear and me, my love,
For my bairn and my dear and me.

The ballad influence is strongly shown in the song from *Mary Stuart* "And ye maun braid your yellow hair." The language is that of the ballads, and the stanza is the ballad-stanza lengthened by two lines—a form often used in the ballads. There is more than a hint in it of a sad story, and a reminiscence of the opening stanzas of *The Weary Wedding*. It seems most like a snatch of a ballad.

The Ballad of Dead Men's Bay has very little to do with the traditional ballads, but here and there the language is borrowed from them. Especially is this true of the opening stanza:

The seas wings owre the slants of sand,
All white with winds that drive;
The sea swirls up to the still dim strand,
Where nae man comes alive.

But this is not at all consistently followed out. For instance, in the sixth Stanza, Swinburne has

For as day's waesome span,

but in the very next stanza he writes "woe" instead of "wae," because it chances to suit the rime. In subject-matter, this mystical piece has no relationship to the ballads.

II

We come now to what is perhaps, the hardest part of this study, the discussion of the ballads published in the *Posthumous Poems*. These eleven poems were placed first by the editors, Edmund Gosse and Thomas James Wise, and form, in bulk, rather more than a third of the whole volume. They were found "among MSS. of the years 1862 and 1863 . . . With them were found several of the ballads published at last in the *Third Series of Poems and Ballads* (1889) but provisionally set up in type in 1877."

Naturally, it is an interesting subject for conjecture why Swinburne allowed so large a body of his ballad poetry to remain unpublished. Mr. Gosse, in his preface to the *Posthumous Poems*, attempts to explain the fact on the ground that these ballads were censored by Rossetti, whose influence with Swinburne was very great at the period when they were written, "as too rough and bare for publication, and that only such as possessed a pre-Raphaelite coloring or costume were permitted to pass the ordeal. But Swinburne persisted in his private conviction that a kind of poetry much closer to the old rieviers' and freebooters' loosely-jointed and rambling folk-poems might be attempted, and he carefully preserved the ballads" published in the *Posthumous Poems*.

For various reasons, this explanation of Mr. Gosse's fails to satisfy. Rossetti's criticism may have prevented Swinburne from publishing most of his ballads in 1866, but when he finally decided to include more of them in the volume of 1889, why did he select a part of them and suppress the remainder? Did the hand of Rossetti, then dead for seven years, reach out from the grave to prevent his giving *Lord Soulis* and the rest to the world? And why did not Rossetti rule out *The Bloody Son*, which is certainly rugged enough, from the first volume? It seems to me that Mr. Gosse's hypothesis involves us in more difficulties than it clears up.

Before a more satisfactory theory can be framed, we must examine the suppressed ballads. Let us then proceed to the study of them with that end in view.

The first of them is *Lord Soulis*, a rather long ballad (280 lines), whose subject-matter, as related by Mr. Gosse in the preface, is in part traditional. There was a historical Lord Soulis, and a wide-spread, though unfounded, tradition "that he had been boiled to death within the Druid circle of Nine-Stone-Rig, which overlooks and slopes down to the Water of Hermitage." This cruel fate was supposed to have been accorded him for practicing witchcraft.

The ballad represents him as having created by his art three castles, "Estness," "Westness," and Hermitage.

The twain to fall at his life's ending,
The third always to stand.

In these he keeps prisoner three maidens, and his capture and death are brought about by the father, brother, and lover, respectively, of Annet, Janet, and Marjorie with the counsel of the "foul

Borolallie." The story, however, is unsatisfactory as it gives no account of the fate of the three "mays" and their would-be rescuers. It is also contradictory, for, though Burd Annet's father says

Ye'll speir at Estness, ye'll speir at Westness
But no at Hermitage,

they do "speir" at Hermitage.

The language is frequently vigorous and effective, in spite of its wilful ruggedness, as in the following,

Gin I wist where I might be wroken of him,
Betwixen dark and day,
I wad give baith my soul and body
To hell to fetch away.

Again, in some places it has the true Swinburnian ring:

O ye'll gang down to me, Janet,
For God's sweet mercy and mine;
For I have sought ye the lang lands ower,
Those eight months wearing nine.

But there are many more places in which the ruggedness becomes awkwardness, and the effect is marred. For example,

Between the wa's and the Hermitage Water,
In ways that were waxen red
There was cleaving of caps and shearing of jack,
And many a good man was there dead.

Here the length of the last line spoils the whole stanza.

There are few places where the language seems directly influenced by that of particular ballads. The lines,

The first of Estness, the last of Westness,
The middle of Hermitage,

bear some resemblance to

The Eastmuir king, and the Westmuir king,
And the king of Onorie,

in one of the versions of *Fause Foodrage*.

Pull off the green, and the goodly green,
Put on the black, the black,

also has a reminiscent ring.

The "foul Borolallie," who starts up to give advice when needed, has his prototype in the familiar ballad fiend, the "Belly Blin," who counsels Burd Isbel in *Young Bekie*, and appears in several other ballads, notably in *King Arthur and King Cornwall*, where he is slightly disguised as the "Burlow Beanie."

Mr. Gosse, thinks it necessary to point out that *Lord Scales* "has nothing to do with the universal poison-ballad of *Lord Randal*," because the latter name is given to the hero. The most casual perusal of the piece shows that it bears a close relation to an entirely different ballad, that of *Little Musgrave and the Lady Barnard*. In this ballad, the lady makes an assignation with Little Musgrave, which is betrayed by a "little foot-page." Lord Barnard finds them and offers Little Musgrave a chance to defend himself, but kills him and also his lady. In Swinburne's ballad, Lord Randal is freed from prison by Lord Scales' wife, Lady Helen who takes him to her chamber. Lord Scales comes, though it is not clear how he has been warned; but, contrary to the ballad story, it is he who is slain by Lord Randal, who attacks him with the lady's "girdle knife" and is victorious in a combat which is rather unequal, as Lord Scales has on a "goodly coat," "a' bound wi' steel thickly," while Lord Randal has "but a little shirt."

Not only does the story resemble that of the ballad, but there are close parallels in the language.

I hear a mouse rin by the straw,
And a bird rin by the coen,

is only a variation on the lines,

Me thinks I hear the throstle-cock,
Methinks I hear the jay,

of the traditional ballad. Again, we have

The first good straik Lord Randal strak,
The red blood sprang upon his face,

and in the other,

The first stoke that little Musgrave stroke
He hurt Lord Barnard sore

The lines,

Wake ye or sleep ye now, madame,
Ye'se gar make room for me,

resemble these, from *Willie and Lady Maisry*, where the father surprises the lovers,

Ye sleep ye, wake ye, daughter Maisry,
Ye'll open, lat me come in.

On the other hand, though the language has so many ballad elements, there are also a great many pre-Raphaelite features about this piece. Such lines as the fifteenth stanza,

The insides of her bed curtains,
The gold was gone them thru;
The outsides of her bed curtains,
They were full merry and blue.

the twenty-seventh,

The small tears fell about her face
Between her lips and his;
From side to side of her gold hair
Her face was full sad to kiss,

and the description of the bower-maidens in the thirty-eighth,

In their sma' coats green and white;
With a red rose wrought for the left breast,
And a rose wrought for the right,

have no affinity with anything in the traditional ballads. Yet Swinburne has not made of this a purely pre-Raphaelite piece, like *The King's Daughter*, any more than he has taken care to preserve the ballad tone throughout, as in *The Bride's Tragedy*. It is this mingling of somewhat incongruous elements which prevents *Lord Scales* from being as effective as these undoubtedly are.

Burd Margaret is the story of a maiden who believes herself betrayed and forsaken by her lover. He returns, however, and bears her off. Her brothers jeer at her, and he kills them. In its main outlines, the plot is not very different from that of *The Broom of the Cowdenknowes*, though in the latter the heroine is of low degree.

The first stanza,

O wha will get me wheaten bread,
And wha will get me wine?
And wha will build me a gold cradle
To rock this child of mine?

resembles the opening stanzas of *Annie of Roch Royal*,

O wha will shoe my fu' fair foot?
 An' wha will glove my han'?'
 An' wha will lace my middle jimp
 Wi' the new-made London ban'?

Or wha will kemb my yallow hair,
 Wi' the new-made silver kemb?
 Or wha'll be father to my young bairn,
 Till Love Gregor come hame?

The stanzas,

The first of them had fair Milan coats,
 The second had but likes and jacks;
 The third had coats of fair scarlet,
 And gold across their caps;

There were three and three wi' bits of steel
 And three and three with siller fine,
 And three and three wi' bits of gold,
 Was red as fair new wine,

might have been suggested by the stanzas in *Kinmont Willie*,

There were five and five before them a',
 Wi' hunting-horns and bugles bright;
 And five and five came wi' Buccleugh,
 Like Warden's men arrayed for fight; etc

Besides these, there are no places where the language resembles that of any particular traditional ballad. It does not in any place reach a high level of distinction. There are some lines which while contrary to the ballad type, and pre-Raphaelite in tendency, are not, on the other hand, of very high quality from the latter point of view. Such, for example, is the sixth stanza,

The tears ran thru her fair sma' mouth;

(one is inclined to wonder how this is physically possible!)

The white bones small and thin
 Were waxen sharper in her lang throat,
 And in her wrists and chin.

On the whole, it is impossible to assign any great merit to this piece.

The Worm of Spindlestoneheugh is a ballad whose source has peculiar interest. There is supposed to have been a traditional ballad of that title, of which *The Hagg Worm* is a surviving version, and a forged ballad on the same legend was published in 1776. The story is of a magical transformation, of the type familiar to ballad readers in *Kemp Owyne*, *Allison Gross*, and *The Laidley Worm and the Machrel of the Sea*. As in *Kemp Owyne*, the malice of a wicked stepmother transforms the heroine (in the other two ballads it is the hero) to the shape of a "laidley worm," or dragon. Her brother, like *Kemp Owyne*, hears of this in a foreign land where he is, and comes over the sea, fearing some harm has come to his sister. Again like *Kemp Owyne*, he releases her by kissing her thrice, and takes vengeance on her wicked stepmother.

Such transformation-stories were the common property of myth and legend all over Europe, and the usual method of breaking the spell was by a kiss, or, as here, three kisses. Morris has given us a story on this theme in *The Earthly Paradise*. The Northumbrian form of the legend, upon which Swinburne has founded his ballad, is highly localized. The heroine's father is Ida, king of Northumbria, and his castle is Bamborough Castle, where the wicked queen, metamorphosed into a toad, is still supposed to dwell. The neighboring locality of Spindlestoneheugh is the scene of the "worm's" devastations.

Swinburne has followed the traditional story with considerable fidelity. He begins, as does *The Hagg Worm*, with the heroine, Lady Helen, left at home to keep her father's house. Word is brought to her that her father has taken a new wife, and she goes to meet her. Then Swinburne interpolates an account of the hardships suffered by her at her stepmother's hands:

And she's ate of the foul swine's meat
With her saft lips and fine;
She's put her mouth to the rank water
Was poured amang the swine.

After a while the stepmother apparently tires of this sort of cruelty, and

She's witched her body to a laidley worm,
A laidley worm to be.

The duration which she pronounces for this spell is inconsistent with the denouement: .

The red fruit shall grow in green river water,
 And green grass in the wet sea,
 Ere ye shall come to a fair woman,
 A fair woman to be.

Word is brought to her mother,—whom Swinburne names Lord Richard instead of Child o' Wynd,—of the devastation caused by the "worm" and of the disappearance of his sister. He apparently suspects the witchcraft of his stepmother, for he has a ship built "a' of the rowan tree,"—supposedly a protection against spells. This circumstance is taken from the traditional ballad, as is the difficulty which they have in landing, which in Swinburne's version is overcome by the magic virtue of vervein. He frees his sister in the traditional manner, and vows vengeance on the witch, though the manner in which he takes it is left in doubt.

The language in one or two places bears a close resemblance to that of *The Hagg Worm*. In the latter we read,

For seven miles east and seven miles west,
 And seven miles north and south
 Nae blade of grass or corn will grow
 For the venom of her mouth,

and in Swinburne's piece

For nine miles out of Spindlestoneheugh
 Of grass and rye there is nae routh;
 There is sma' routh of the good red corn,
 For the breath of her rank mouth.

In general, however, the resemblance is in the circumstances rather than in the diction. The mention of the keys at the opening of the poem is an instance. In the ballad we have

She's knotted the keys upon a string,
 And with her she has them taen;
 She cast them o'er her left shoulder
 And to the gates is gaen.

Swinburne has

She's taen the keys intil her hands
 Between the red sun and the moon;
 The rain ran down upon the grass
 And stained in her silk shoon.

She's taen the keys to her girdle-tie
 Between the warm sun and the weat;
 The rain that was between the grass and rye
 Ran down upon her feet.

These stanzas will serve to show us wherein, in general, Swinburne's poem differs from the traditional ballad. The language, it will be noted, is more archaic, less commonplace. But at the same time elements are introduced that do not belong to the ballad style, but are distinctly of the pre-Raphaelite school. The last three lines in each stanza illustrate this. They are also particularly characteristic of Swinburne's ballad-manner, for he is notably fond of water in all forms, and seems to delight in descriptions of rain or tears "running down." There are other instances of pre-Raphaelite tendencies in this poem: for example, the second stanza,

Lady Helen sat in Spindlestoneheugh
 With gold upon her head;
 The green gown on her fair body
 Was woven with golden thread.

A green gown, "woven with golden thread," is a refinement which would not have occurred to a ballad-author,—it is one of those subtly rich sense appeals which are the distinctive property of the pre-Raphaelites.

In this poem, then, as in *Lord Scales*, we find a mingling of traditional and pre-Raphaelite elements which detracts from the consistency, and therefore from the effectiveness of the piece.

The next poem is *Duriesdyke*, in connection with which it is expedient to consider *Lady Maisie's Bairn*, although the latter is removed from it in order. The former begins, in the manner of *Tam Lin* and *The Broomfield Hill*, with a prohibition to maidens to go to get broom at Duriesdyke. The heroine disregards this, and meets there Lord John, who has long wooed her. She yields to him, and he asks her to sail with him. She refuses because her mother needs her attendance, and he sails without her. Later, however, she regrets her decision, for

It fell upon the midwinter,
 She gat mickle scathe and blame;
 She's bowed herself by the white water
 To see his ships come hame.

The end of the piece leaves her still waiting for him: the final stanza is

O stir not for this nied, baby,
 O stir not at my side;
 Ye'll have the better birth, baby,
 Gin ye wad but a little abide.

The second piece, *Lady Maisie's Bairn*, begins with the birth of a child on a ship during a storm; the father and mother seem to be quarrelling. The ship is overwhelmed in the sea:

Lord John was happed wi' saut sea-faem,
 Lady Maisie wi' sea-sand;
 And the little bairn between them twa
 That was to her right hand.

Now, my conjecture concerning these pieces is that the second was intended for the conclusion of the first, the intermediate part never having been written. Of course, this judgment is based merely upon the internal evidence of the ballads as printed; an examination of the manuscripts might invalidate it. But the internal evidence is certainly strong. It is true, indeed, that the heroine's name, which is Maisry in the first, is changed to Maisie in the second. But if we suppose that the author, having composed the first nineteen stanzas, left the ballad unfinished, and that later, after a lapse of time, he jotted down the conclusion as it occurred to him, it is quite conceivable that he made a mistake in the name, and, as he never took the trouble to complete the poem, never corrected it. As for other evidence, the relation of the incident narrated in the second piece to those narrated in the first is sufficiently obvious. The hero's name is the same in both. But almost incontrovertible proof is found in the return of the last stanza of *Lady Maisie's Bairn* to the opening of *Duriesdyke*. The latter begins

The rain rains sair in Duriesdyke,
 Both the winter thru and the spring;

and the first lines of the last stanza of the second poem read

The rain rains sair on Duriesdyke
 To the land side and the sea.

The recurrence of the place-name and the repetition of the same line surely show that the second poem was intended as a conclusion to the first.

The language of this piece is throughout the language of the ballads. There are few pre-Raphaelite touches. The story seems to bear no particular relation to that of any of the ballads. It approaches most nearly that of *Bonny Annie* in which a knight having beguiled a young girl, carries her off with him in a ship. The ship being endangered by a storm, they cast lots to see who is the unlucky person; the lot falls on her and she is cast overboard. The resemblance, as may be seen, is remote. It may be remarked that Lady Maisry's solicitude for her mother is hardly characteristic of ballad heroines in general.

The next piece, *Westland Well*, has a rather peculiar story. The heroine bargains with her lover for a scarlet gown, "sewn wi' a golden needle," and he rebukes her for her pride:

There's mony a better face then yours
Would fain lie neist my side.

She answers him that

There is not a maid that wons in heaven
Wi' sic a face as mine.

Apparently it is nemesis for this sinful pride that her lover deserts her. When her mother questions her about her condition, she invents a fantastic story of having been bitten in the back by her mother's bloodhound while washing a sheet in the westland well. As one would imagine, this does not deceive the mother. The end of the story is that she dies, breathing maledictions against her recreant lover. The narrative seems to have no traditional parallel.

Neither does the language resemble that of any particular ballad, except in the stanza,

O ye'll make me a bonny bed
Ye'll make it warm and sweet,
Ye'll set a pillow to my head, mither,
And a pillow to my feet.

This suggests the similar stanzas in *Barbara Allan*, *The Douglas Tragedy*, and other traditional ballads. Elsewhere the diction is original. The last stanza is one of the best:

Ill be in your bed, Lord John,
 And ill be in your way,
 Gin ye had been hangit a year agone,
 I had been the merrier May.

The story of *Earl Robert* is, in essentials much the same as that of the traditional ballad of *Willie and Lady Maisry*. This is one of the best of Swinburne's posthumous ballads, but, even so, the quality of the diction is uneven. Some of the best stanzas are admirably spirited, as the first,

O some ride east and some ride north,
 And some ride west and south;
 But the ae best gate that ever I rade
 Was a' for her red mouth.

But in other places the lines seem somewhat forced, as the last in the fourth stanza,

O then he came by waterswa',
 The rain was sair and strang;
 Fair Annie sat in a bower window,
 And her gold hair was grown lang.

The tenth stanza, which Mr. Gosse thinks the author intended to delete, would certainly be better omitted.

Probably the best thing in the whole is the last two lines,

For a' that was between us two
 I think it's a' weel done.

But it is to be doubted whether a genuine ballad heroine could ever give expression to so much philosophy.

The King's Ae Son is a piece in the style of *The Three Ravens* and *The Twa Corbies*, It is in the form of a dialogue:

Quo' the bracken-bush to the wan well-head,
 "O whatten a man is this man dead?"

"O this is the king's ae son," quo' she,
 "That lies here dead upon my knee."

The bracken-bush goes on to inquire concerning the fate of the slain man's body, and finally concerning that of his parents, ending

“What to his leman, that garred him be slain?”
 “Hell’s pit and Hell’s pain.”

The tone of this piece is uniformly good.

Wearieswa’, the next ballad, narrates a story that would be interesting were it not burdened and made obscure by the too profuse use of incremental repetition. A spell has been laid upon the lady of *Wearieswa’*:

He that shall kiss her mouth for love,
 Of his life he is fordone.

Lord Robert rides by the castle, sees the lady, and falls in love with her. She informs him how, by making a perilous voyage, he may free her from the spell. They arrange tokens by which they may know each other. He makes the voyage, but comes back lame, and forgets the hood,

To hang down at his back,

which was to be one of his tokens to her. She fails to recognize him, and has him cast out. He sets sail, but a storm comes up, and he has himself cast overboard as a “Jonah.” His body follows the ship and informs them that the storm will not slack till they bring the lady and throw her in also, which is done and the story ends.

The over-use of incremental repetition, which was mentioned above, is shown in several places. The description of the castle is the first instance, but the most striking one is in the description of the voyage he must undertake:

The first water ye’ll sail upon
 Men call it Wearieswyte;
 Whoso cometh to that water
 He shall have little delight.

The neist water ye’ll sail upon
 Men call it Wearieswan;
 Whoso cometh to that water
 He is nae sicker man.

So it goes on for seven stanzas, until the reader is almost as weary of it as the voyager probably was.

There are several points about this ballad which seem to indicate that it was never revised or carefully finished. Throughout

most of the poem, no quotation marks are used, but we find them in stanzas 53, 54, and 57. Commas seem to have been omitted after the first lines in the stanzas quoted above. In stanza 43, "fair" is written for "fain," and in stanza 47, "hae" for "has." These last are perhaps misprints, but as they occur in the American edition, which is later than the English one, it would seem probable that typographical errors have been corrected.

In spite of the apparent haste of composition, the language is frequently excellent. For instance,

O whatten a weird is this, Hynd Robert,
That is of your body,
To fleet out ower in the easterin' wind
That thraws upon the sea?

The wind shall blaw in the wan water,
It shall never slack for me,
Till ye bring my lady to yon sea-sand,
Cast her body in the sea.

The Earl of Mar's Daughter is not an original ballad of Swinburne's, but an effort to recompose the traditional ballad of the same title "in language more severely archaic." This is one of Buchan's ballads, which are supposed by Child to have suffered revision at the hands of the blind beggar whom he employed to collect for him. Nearly all of Buchan's ballads may be recognized by their smooth and simpering quality, well illustrated by the fearful anti-climax in the last stanza of the piece in quotation:

When that Earl Mar he came to know
Where his dochter did stay,
He signed a bond o' unity
And visits now they pay.

This would seem to have irritated Swinburne to such an extent that he undertook to rewrite the piece in language better corresponding to the usual ballad phraseology. He did not complete his version, however, but only wrote twenty-three stanzas, carrying the narrative down to the twenty-fourth stanza of the original version.

The correspondence of the language is naturally very close, and it would be impossible here to make a detailed comparison. It will suffice to give one or two instances where the contrast, in tone and quality, is striking. Let us take, for example, stanza 8. the Buchan version has

“From whence come ye, young man?” she said;
 “That does surprise me sair;
 My door was bolted right secure,
 What way hae ye come here?”

Swinburne gives us

How cam ye in my bower-chamber,
 For sair it marvels me,
 For the bolts are made o’ the good red gowd
 And the door-shafts of a good tree.

Stanza 10 affords another contrast:

“O tell me mair, young man,” she said,
 “This does surprise me now;
 What country hae ye come frae?
 What pedigree are you?”

Swinburne expands this to two stanzas:

“O whatten a man are ye,” she said,
 “Fu’ sair this marvels me;
 I doubt ye are some keen warlock
 That wons out ower the sea.

“O come ye here for ills?” she says
 “Or come ye here for good
 I doubt ye are some strong warlock
 That wons out ower the flood.”

III

Having completed our individual study of the posthumous ballads, let us return to the reasons for their not having been included among those published by Swinburne. Notwithstanding Mr. Gosse’s opinion, previously cited, I incline to consider that the distinction between Swinburne’s posthumous ballads and those published in his life-time is, in the main, one of literary quality. As was said in the beginning, these ballad-imitations are really only *tours de force*, as all conscious imitations must be. No author who has so much that is original to give the public as Swinburne had is likely to publish such imitative pieces unless they have some special distinction.

Now, we find, on examination of the ballads in the volumes of 1866 and 1889, that each of them stands out, for one reason or another, as a piece of considerable intrinsic merit. We found most to criticize in *The Weary Wedding*, but in spite of its somewhat monotonous effect it is redeemed by many lines of surpassing melody.

On the other hand, if we turn to the posthumous ballads, what do we find? In most of them the irregularities of style are noticeable. Two, *Earl Robert* and *The Worm of Spindlestoneheugh*, are versions of traditional ballad-stories, One, *Duriedyke*, is in a fragmentary condition, and another, *Wearieswa'*, seems to need revision. *Lord Scales* and *Burd Margaret* fall short of the distinction of *The Witch Mother*, for example, because they are not tragic. *Lord Soulis* and *Westland Well* are indeed both tragic pieces, but the former is inordinately long, and the latter has a story too fantastic to be really effective. *The King's Ae Son* is the best piece of all, but it may have been excluded because of its general similarity in manner to *After Death*, published in 1866.

On the whole, it seems justifiable to suppose that it was Swinburne's own taste, rather than Rossetti's, which dictated the suppression of this part of his ballad poetry. Swinburne seems, in 1862-3 to have been greatly interested in the ballads and to have taken delight in imitating them. That the greater part of his imitations were not written with publication in view would appear from the small number included in *Poems and Ballads, First Series*. Later he evidently decided to publish them, and for this purpose very wisely selected only those of greatest merit and interest to the public, withholding the rest,¹—which, however, are of great interest to a study like the present, as throwing more light upon the influence of the traditional ballads on his genius.

We have found this influence to have been a powerful one, though confined to a small part of his work. Nevertheless, this throws an interesting light upon the character of Swinburne's genius and time. A master of form, all styles were easy to him. And he belonged to a period essentially imitative. The ideas of Romanticism were in their decadence; the tide of originality was receding. And so it is that the Romantic Age, whose very birth seems dated by Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, whose

¹This conclusion is based on the internal evidence of the ballads themselves: of course, in the insight into the poet's possible motives which personal acquaintance might be expected to give, an American is at a great disadvantage compared to Mr. Gosse.

infancy was charmed by Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*, finds in the last of its great men its most facile imitator of the traditional ballads, and thus rounds its life to a fitting close.

MONSIEUR BEAUCAIRE

BY ROBERT WILSON McKNIGHT

Je vous salue, Monsieur Beaucaire,
 Gay, polite, and debonair,
 Brave with the courage of high birth,
 Half bravado, and half high pride,
 Breathing a bravery of mirth
 To hide the searching thought inside,
Je vous salue, Monsieur Beaucaire!

“Ah, but it is ze great, great fear
 (With a trill most pleasing to our ear)
 Which gives to life its 'ighest zest!
 Ah, many times I'm much afraid,
 But, my good frien', be'ind a jest
 To 'ide zat I am so dismayed,
 Zat I have such a great, great fear,

Zat t'ing I learned when very young!”
 So bravery from fear is sprung.
Mais oui, nous avons souvent peur!
 Most courage where there is most fear,
 Only does a brave man err
 When spectres in his mirth appear,
 That, too, I learned when very young!

THE PRINCE OF SEMBERIA

BY BRANISLAV NOOSHICH

Translated by Luka Djurichich and Bertha W. Clark

CHARACTERS

PRINCE EVO, *Prince of Semberia.*

PETRONIA SHEESHO, *messenger of Evo*

MILITCH, *servant of Evo*

KULIN KAPITAN

BOYA, *mother of Evo*

STANKA, *captive from Jadar*

FIRST ELDER

SECOND ELDER

THIRD ELDER

FIRST OLD MAN

SECOND OLD MAN

ELDERS, TURKS, SERVANTS AND MESSENGERS OF KULIN, CAPTIVES

The events portrayed in this drama occurred in the beginning of the nineteenth century, in the village of Popovo in the district of Beyelyina, in the province of Semberia.

Place: The enclosure before Prince Evo's house. In the background beautiful great palaces, approached by stone steps. At the left is a drinking fountain. At the right is a great gate.

FIRST SCENE

BOYA and from ten to twenty village ELDERS.

BOYA is standing before the steps of a house. The ELDERS are standing or sitting near her, some with legs crossed, Turkish fashion. One is speaking with her. Others form a separate group on the opposite side of the stage. Others still are sitting on the steps. Most of them are dressed unostentatiously, after the style of the Serbo-Bosnian times. Their fezes are wound about with turbans, and their legs are wound with red cloth. They are smoking short pipes.

Boya.—What have you heard, good folks?

First Elder.—What should we hear? Do you think there is anything of good for us to hear, Mother?

Second Elder.—With us it is bad; and across the Drina, God help them! But there at least they have definite information:—but again the information is only of evil.

Third Elder.—The Turks are very powerful; and what can Veetchenteya and Luke from Podrina do? I say it would be better if they did not attempt to do anything.

Second Elder.—You say well; but when one is under torture he has little choice as to what he should do.

Third Elder.—But we too are undergoing the same torture. Is it not so?

Second Elder.—Yes, but mark you, we do not quit ourselves like those men across the Drina.

First Elder.—And in what way do we not?

Second Elder.—We are indeed not like them. Search throughout the district of Beljelina, and throughout this our Semberia, and you will not find such men as they, except in Prince Evo. Look at him! What wisdom he has, and what fine self-mastery! We have his white hair, but not his prudence. Beg Veedahjitch from Bosnia has been his guest, and even Toozlagitch will do nothing against him. Where in Bosnia would you find such men as Prince Evo?

Third Elder.—All our bravest men have gone over to the other faith.

Boya.—But what would Evo do without you and your support, good folks?

First Elder.—It is easy to obey if one has a wise leader.

Boya.—And difficult to give wise orders if one's followers are not obedient. Our Evo does all he can; but, for all he does, his arm cannot reach everywhere. Listen! But yesterday he learned that Kulin crossed the Drina some days ago, striking terror and awe; that he burned many villages and carried away as slaves the people of Jadar and Podrina. Some say that he took one hundred eleven captives; others say there were more—even three hundred and three. And because of this Evo cannot eat or drink or sleep. He thinks only of how he can ransom them. He sent Petronia to confer with Kulin, and Petronia has returned, and is now in the house with Evo rendering the report from Kulin.

First Elder.—Perhaps it is for this that Prince Evo has called us hither?

Second Elder.—What other reason could there be?

Third Elder.—If he hopes to gather money from us, there is little to count on. There is nothing you can squeeze from rock but rock.

Boya.—I do not know for what purpose he has summoned you. He said nothing to me about any misfortune. He is shielding me because I am old. Till yesterday I was counting the days but now I am counting the hours. I think there must have been some misfortune since he said nothing at all to me.

SECOND SCENE

PRINCE EVO, PETRONIA SHEESHO, THE ELDERS

PRINCE EVO comes out of the house followed by PETRONIA SHEESHO. *The prince wears coarse blue linen trousers, and a vest embroidered all in gold. In his girdle are two pistols and a long knife; and at his side a rich sabre. He wears red boots and has a mantle thrown across his shoulders.*

Prince Evo.—Welcome, Elders!

Elders.—We are glad to see you well, Prince!

Prince Evo.—Are you so few?

Third Elder.—We were overwhelmed with work; therefore we are few. But others will yet come.

First Elder.—Can any disobey your order?

Sheesho.—Whoever is late is disobedient.

Prince Evo.—You are good, as many as you are. (*Turning to his mother.*) Mother, go into the house. I must speak with the elders.

Boya.—Immediately, Evo, immediately. I will go and burn incense before the icon, for your countenance seems sad to me. (*She goes in.*)

THIRD SCENE

The same, without BOYA

Prince Evo.—It is known to you, Elders, as it is to all the people of our district, that Kulin Kapitan has come with a large army and has crossed the Drina. Petsa of Klubatsa came to me some days ago and brought the report that Kulin had taken captive the people of Jadar and Podrina, over-running the prairies and ploughed land and burning the villages; and that he is return-

ing with many captives whom he will conduct through our country. These captives, elders, are our brothers and sisters. The people of Shumadia have risen in revolt and are engaged in terrible battle with the Turks: but we sit here with folded arms, as if the Drina were a great mountain that cut off their cries and their suffering; that we should not hear them; as if the Drina were a thick wall such as separates two hostile houses; as if the Drina were a book of the law which separates two rival faiths. And so we sit and hear what is happening there; and shall we watch them lead their captives through our roads? See! even now Kulin is bringing three hundred and three captives; and he will surely pass through our country: and doubtless he will reach Popovo soon. And those three hundred and three captives are our brothers and sisters, the sons and daughters of those brave Serbians who hid their families in the mountains, went forth from their homes, and gave their lives for us all. If they cross Semberia and go past my palace, should we not lose countenance and soul? I cannot allow it, nor can you elders. I do not say that we should do what is impossible. I do not say that we should rise in revolt against the Turks: but I do say that we should do at least what we are able. And so, I, this morning, sent Petronia to confer with Kulin and to ask him to sell us the captives, that is, to set them free when they arrive in Semberia. What Kulin answered Petronia, himself, shall tell you.

Sheesho.—But what shall I tell, since there is nothing of good? Kulin demands three thousand rushpeye for freeing the captives.

First Elder.—Too much!

Sheesho.—He said that he was not leading away a band of cripples, old people, and weaklings, but that all are young and sound, and that he can sell them for even a higher price.

Prince Evo.—And he will do so. Listen, Elders! Our blood, our brothers and sisters will be sold and scattered in distant, unknown lands, while their fathers and brothers are fighting over there and shedding their blood for liberty. Can I allow, can you allow, these things to be heard and seen while we keep silence? See, it is for this that I have summoned you, that we might arrange to collect the ransom and free your brothers.

Third Elder.—But three thousand rushpeye!

Sheesho.—Kulin will accept no less.

First Elder.—If all Semberia should give to its last penny, the sum would not amount to so much as that.

Prince Evo.—But I demand more than the last penny. The People there in Shumadia have given all—their goods, their captives, their houses, their lives; but we stop and think about the last penny.

Second Elder.—Hear me, Prince. In wisdom and in speech you stand without an equal. You sprang from among us, but as the poplar is taller than the willows, so you surpassed us in reputation and in prudence. When you were but a stripling of twenty years, we elders gave heed to your words. Some said that you were inspired, and we believed in you so. In those days only aged princes ruled in Semberia, but you, though a child, were more sagacious than they, and we accepted you without a question and said, “Evo shall be our prince from now on, and we elders will follow him,” and you know that we did so. Do not take it ill if now for the first time I express my thoughts. God grant it may be only I who hold this opinion, and that it may be expressed by me alone. Again I beg you, do not be angry. The misfortune of our brothers is great, but ours also is not small. We, too, are poor; and how can those who are barefooted give shoes to the barefooted? If you, Prince, shall demand it, we must give, and give to the last penny. But tell me, upon your soul, what shall we have accomplished? We shall have spared those captives, and brought others into captivity. We shall have wiped away their tears, and caused that others shall weep. We shall have freed the slaves whom Kulin leads away, and enslaved ourselves.

Prince Evo.—Do you feel thus, brothers?

Elders.—Prince, we are poor!

Second Elder.—If each must give what he is able, not a single one will hold back.

Prince Evo.—I ask not that I may impoverish you, my poor orphaned children, but I ask in order that I may save you from sin and shame. If Kulin with his captives had gone by another road, it would have been easier for us to hear of it than it is now for us to see it. But I, as Prince, and you, as Elders, cannot survive and let Kulin lead Serbian captives through our country. (*He takes off his mantle and spreads it on the ground.*) Children, brethren, in the name of God, who will not forget you in your poverty, bring each one of you as much as you are able, and as much as you will, that we may gather the ransom for those poor captives. (*Far in the distance is heard the sound of zurlle and of drums.*)

First Elder (*Taking out his purse and pouring out its contents.*)—Then let me be first, Prince! (*Throwing the money on the mantle.*)

Here are three rushpeye and some grosschens. They are from me and from my village. I had gathered the money to pay a tax to the Turks, but I give it toward the ransom, and for the tax we shall collect another sum.

Second Elder (Taking money from a purse and throwing it down).—Here are four rushpeye from my village, and here are two out of my own poverty. (*He throws them down also.*)

Third Elder.—I have only this one rushpeya, my own. Here it is (*Throwing it down*) and I will go to my village and collect as much as I am able.

Some other elders come forward and throw down their money saying nothing.

First old man.—My daughter was to be married into the house of Myrvesheetsh, and I had saved ten rushpeye for her dowry; but I give it all in this good cause. (*He throws down the money.*) She can remain a virgin, if it will save other lives from danger.

Prince Evo (With emotion).—Old man, (*He stoops down and takes up the purse*) take back the money. I will give the ten rushpeye for you.

First old man.—No, Prince, you will give more than we all. Let me do this!

Prince Evo (Putting the purse back).—Very well, old man, but I shall give the dowry for your daughter. I want to present her with the ten rushpeye.

Second old man.—Prince, his daughter is to marry my son, and my son will marry her without a dowry. Let your money remain.

Sheesho (Bending and counting the money).—Twenty-four rushpeye and some grosschens.

Prince Evo.—And Kulin demands three thousand rushpeye! Oh, my poor people! You wish to do, and you cannot. Evo will not enslave his country, nor cause slaves to ransom slaves. If you are left penniless, with what shall I ransom you from the Turks? Take back the money.

First Elder.—No, Prince.

Prince Evo.—Take it!

Second Elder.—We have given willingly, and we will not take back. (*Outside is heard the sound of zurlle and of drums, mingled with the murmur of peoples' voices, with a sudden cry at intervals, or the firing of a gun. The sound grows ever louder.*)

FOURTH SCENE

MILITCH, *and the previous characters*

Militch (Entering from without).—Master, Kulin Kapitan comes upon our road; and there is great uproar in that direction.

Prince Evo.—I hear it. Good folks, take your money.

All.—We cannot, Prince. God forbid it!

Prince Evo.—Take it back, and if I need it I will ask it of you. *(No one comes to take it. The trumpeting and shouting sound nearer and nearer.)*

Sheesho.—He comes with zurlle and drums as if he were conducting a wedding party.

Prince Evo.—Yes, Petronia, they are the wedding guests and it is we who are providing the dowry.

Militch (Watching at the gate).—Prince, they are here!

FIFTH SCENE

Trumpets Sound. The ELDERS clear the way for KULIN, but EVO gives no heed, sitting with bowed head in thought. Servants of KULIN enter first, and then KULIN accompanied by some Turks.

Kulin.—Are guests welcome, Prince Evo?

Prince Evo.—Good guests are always welcome.

Kulin (To one of the elders).—Go there into the yard, and with you two or three others, and exercise the horses.

Prince Evo.—Kulin, I have servants for such tasks. These men are elders. The elders of Semberia have not, since I became Prince, attended men's horses.

Kulin.—For others they have not done so, perhaps; but for Kulin they must.

Prince Evo.—If Kulin demands it, they will do it; but Kulin will not permit the elders of Evo to care for his horses.

Kulin.—It is better that we should not quarrel, Evo. I love you, and we are friends, and you can say to me what no one else might say.

Prince Evo.—It is so.

MILITCH has meanwhile brought the carpets and spread them out, and brought pillows for reclining.

Prince Evo.—Be seated, Beg, and rest: you have travelled far.

Kulin (After seating himself and rubbing his hands).—Aha! *(A servant of KULIN brings his pipe, fills it with tobacco, gives it to*

KULIN, *then runs to the house and brings a coal of fire which he puts in the pipe, holding his left hand to his breast.*)

Kulin.—The journey has been long, and it is hot, and we are weary. But this morning, after we had crossed the Drina, your man came to me, he who stands behind you, bringing your message, and asking that I should not conduct my captives through Semberia, but dismiss them to their homes, and desiring me to say what sum would be acceptable for their ransom.

Prince Evo.—I sent him thus. Till now I think we have been friends, and I think you will not demand so much that I cannot secure it from my poor people. See, (*pointing to the mantle on the ground, on which the money lies.*) This is the tribute my poor people have brought; and I too will give as much as I can for the ransom of my brothers and sisters. If you had not come this way it would have been easier for me; but I cannot let my district Semberia shed the tears of brothers and sisters. Tears like that would burn our acres, parch the ground, and blight all good. The land that causes tears to flow shall have no fruitfulness. My land shall not cause tears while I am Prince.

Kulin.—You speak well, Evo. Only pay what I demand, and the captives shall be freed. (*MILITCH serves coffee to KULIN in a cup without using a tray.*)

Prince Evo.—You demand much.

Kulin.—Three hundred and three captives!

Prince Evo.—Much! Much, you demand. So much that I cannot pay it.

Kulin.—I lost twenty of my best men. The Serbians killed them, and I must have recompense for their blood. And I have not mentioned the ten or fifteen who were wounded.

Prince Evo (Pointing to the mantle).—See, I have demanded from my poor people all that I could. I have wrung them; and everyone has given what he could, and as for the rest, I will give what I have; but all will not be so much as you demand.

Kulin.—Evo, in a hard walnut there is one drop of oil, but only he who is skilful can squeeze it out. Give as much yourself as you purpose to give, and all will see. Then do you require of them, and they will give more than you think.

Prince Evo.—Shall I give then as I have purposed? I have purposed to give all that I have. Not one penny am I withholding.

He enters the house.

SIXTH SCENE

The same, without Evo

Kulin.—So, so, Evo! (*To the ELDERS*) But why are you so niggardly, heh? Do you also give what you have, as Evo is doing, and then I will deliver the captives to you.

Elders.—We are poor, Beg: we have not.

Kulin.—Fie! I understand your poverty. Evo does not know how to do things. If he did, he would have squeezed out of you at the first as much as I demanded.

SEVENTH SCENE

Evo, BOYA, and the previous characters

PRINCE EVO comes out of the house carrying three purses. BOYA follows, but remains standing on the stairs.

Prince Evo.—See, here is all my wealth, Kulin. My father and this aged woman earned it (*Pointing to BOYA.*) Here is the first purse. (*He throws it on the mantle.*) Here is another one, Beg. (*He throws it down.*) And here is the last one, Beg. I have given all that I have. I have given all that my father and grandfather had. In my house nothing remains. Besides that here are some twenty rushpeye and some grosschens, money which the elders have collected from poor people. Is it enough, Beg?

Kulin.—Do you know, my poor fellow, what sort of captives I have here? They are not crippled and maimed. They are not old and feeble. They are sound and young. You know what sort of people are born in Jadar and drink the water of the Drina. I shall sell them as I have never sold captives before. There are less than a thousand rushpeye here? Evo, if you should see but one girl that I took from Dobretcha! any harem would give as much for her as for all the others together. Do you wish the captives to come that you may inspect them?

Prince Evo.—No, I do not wish it. I am not buying them, but ransoming them.

Kulin (To his servant).—Go and bring that girl. (*The servant goes out.*)

Prince Evo.—I have given all that I have. In my house I have not left a penny; and if I had, I would give it willingly.

*Boya (Descending the stairs).—*You have left one, my son. (*She draws something from her bosom.*) Here are eight strings of rushpeye with which I have adorned myself in times gone by. (*She throws them on the mantle.*) Son, they have lain in the bottom of my chest. I have been keeping them to adorn the wife of my son.

*Prince Evo.—*Thank you, mother. Is it enough, Beg?

*Kulin.—*It is too little, Evo. Where are the three thousand rushpeye? What is this toward such a sum?

*Prince Evo (Thinking deeply).—*Beg, you know the two acres of mine which lie adjoining each other?

*Kulin.—*I know them. They are good.

*Prince Evo.—*They also lie there upon the mantle.

*First Elder.—*Honor to you, Prince,—But what will you do in the years to come?

*Prince Evo.—*And what will those poor people do?

EIGHTH SCENE

The previous characters; and a servant leading in five or six captives bound together: two small girls, one boy, one youth, and STANKA.

*Kulin.—*See, Evo, this Stanka alone is worth three thousand rushpeye; the rest are thrown in free.

*Prince Evo (Shuddering).—*My brothers! My poor people! Beg, see here my palaces and all that surrounds them. For a hundred years the princes, my ancestors, have ruled here, and have fashioned here their nest. Here my fathers were born and here they died. Everything in these buildings is sacred to me. Here they are, Beg. These palaces, too, are yours. If you desired to make me poor, you have done so. Is it enough, Beg?

*Kulin.—*Ah, when you wish, you can speak well. (*Then to the servant who brought in the captives.*) Unbind the captives, but separate Stanka. For another man I would not do this: only for you. Three hundred and two captives you have ransomed: but the three hundred and third one, this Stanka, shall be mine. Do you consent?

*Stanka (Now unbound, approaches Evo).—*In the name of God; brother, you have given all that you have. Let me help you. See, I give myself to the Beg; so the rest of the captives shall be free.

Prince Evo (To STANKA).—Poor child! No, no, sister, Evo has yet that he can give. (*He draws out his ornamented silver pistols and knife, and unfastens the girdle with his sabre, which having first kissed he lays upon the mantle.*) Beg, you know the value of these weapons of mine—the weapons of Prince Evo. Perhaps they will make my offering seem large enough?

KULIN smiles contentedly but makes no reply. Turning aside he begins to count the money.

Prince Evo.—You are silent, Beg. Is it still not enough? Yet—Evo has yet more. (*He takes off his waist-coat and tunic and girdle, and lays them upon the mantle.*) Beg, they are of pure gold, such as a Prince has ever worn. What more do you demand?

Kulin.—But Stanka is also pure gold, Evo.

Prince Evo (Pondering).—Ah! (*He goes into the house.*)

NINTH SCENE

Previous characters, without Evo

Boya.—Kapitan, Beg! I would not hinder Evo from giving more. I could not prevent him if I could. I would help him. But how can I? With what? Do you not see that he has given all? That he has impoverished himself? What more do you demand of him? Have you not a mother, Kapitan? If so, you know a mother's tears. Here, Beg, I bring that offering—the offering of a mother's tears and add them to all that Evo has given before. (*She weeps.*) Is your heart so hard that you can feel no softening influence, that still you cannot say, "Enough?"

Kulin.—*Touched by this he rises and turns away his face, motioning her away.*

TENTH SCENE

PRINCE EVO and the previous characters

PRINCE EVO comes out of the house with uncovered head. He carries a silver candle-stick and a richly ornamented icon, framed in silver.

Prince Evo.—See, Beg, I have still this silver candle-stick, which till just now has burned in my house; and this icon framed in silver,—my patron saint. (*First he lays the candle-stick down; then crossing himself and kissing the icon he stoops and lays it gently on the mantle.*)

Boya (With a piercing cry and sob).—Evo, my child! my own! our patron saint! Our Slava! Will you destroy our house to its very foundation?—our patron saint! Evo! (Stumbling forward she falls upon her knees, begins to cross herself the three times, chokes, and kisses the icon, after which she does not raise her head again.

PRINCE EVO weeps and turns aside to wipe away the tears. KULIN is moved at the sight.

Prince Evo (Putting his hand on his mother).—Enough mother! (He tries to raise her up, but finds that she is dead.) Mother! Mother! (He sobs heavily and embraces her.)

Stanka (Crying out).—Dead? Mother! (She comes near and helps Evo to place BOYA'S body in his lap.)

Elders (Removing their caps).—God be merciful to her!

PRINCE EVO kisses his dead mother. *Becoming conscious of those around him he raises his head peacefully.*

Prince Evo.—Beg, I have given you my greatest treasure. I have given the life of my mother. Is it enough, Beg? Is it at last enough?

Kulin.—Allah rachmet ehlen! It is enough, Evo, enough, enough! *(He turns away his face to avoid the sight.)* The captives are yours. They have been ransomed. *(He goes away.)*

RIMAS, NÚMERO LXII

BY GUSTAVO BÉCCUER

Translated by Marion Lee Reynolds

Dawn, but a wavering whiteness, rises dimly,
Swording with fluctuant ray the enshadowed sea;
Flakes into fire, runs ribboning wide to splendour,
Shatters to glory—and the day stands free.

One with the conquering light is conquering gladness;
Sorrow and shadow in one failure flee:
Dawn, through my darkness—will it never lighten?
Day—never break for me?

BUDDHISM AND SOME BUDDHIST POETRY

BY MILDRED DOUTHITT HIERS

IN 1909 and 1913 the Pali Text Society published Mrs. C. A. F. Rhys Davids' translations of the Thera-theri-gatha, i. e., verses of the Elders, Brethren and Sisters. They appear under the title *Psalms of the Early Buddhists*, the first volume comprising the 73 gathas of the Elder Sisters, and the other the 264 of the *Elder Brethren*. The Pali writings of Buddhism furnish its most authoritative sources, although little has been known of them occidentally until recently.¹ They have been deciphered from the palm leaf manuscripts which Ceylon, Burma, and Siam have given preservation since the days of early and Hinayana Buddhism. Like the rest of Buddhist canonical material, however, these were composed in India.

Indian poetry is characteristically ornate. Its imagery is delicate and detailed like Indian line drawing, so that its fineness and subtle perfection suggest a careful and restrained artistry. Its thought is an intricacy and in the ancient writings, a confusion; half mythical thinking and meaningless polytheism cling to the noblest speculations of the latter, undistinguished and undistinguishable. About all that the novice is sure of after going through the Brahmanic writings, is that he has looked upon a strange, unintelligible landscape, and that it must have been of India. That is not the case with these simple, "universally infectious" verses of the *Brethren and Sisters*. One may not agree, but still he understands.

The Gathas are the utterances of those Buddhist recluse saints who, during the first few generations after Gotama's lifetime, attained to experiences undeniably genuine and lofty. Although the poems were transmitted through years before they were written down, the MS. forms carry the impress of the spirit of those men and women. At least, the frame of mind which preserved them is an historic fact. The metre may have been lacking

¹The Pali Text Society exists with the purpose of editing in Pali or translating into English all such extant writings.

originally, but probably in that age when writing was little used, the verse form was soon supplied by those who recognized the worth of such memorialization.² Prose explanations or stage settings traveled about with the verses, and remained unwritten until the 5th or 6th century A. D. when Dhammapala wrote his commentaries. Mrs. Rhys Davids is the first to use these in their entirety.

She has called the Gathas Psalms, in the sense of "spiritual songs," and the only collection of poetry to which this anthology may be compared is, indeed, the Hebrew Psalms. With some of the latter these, moreover, may be contemporary. As do the Hebrew, the Buddhist poems at once express feelings common to all men, and are still distinctively the fruit of a peculiar religion.

The Gathas are intensely unified around the Buddhist idea. Since men, women and youths from every class,—Brahmin, merchant, craftsman, caravan guide, peasant, princess, public woman, learned, illiterate,—have contributed, motley bits of personality and background of circumstance are revealed, but the same world of aspiration or realization is the meeting place of all their thought. "As the only flavor of the sea is salt, so is Salvation the only flavor of my doctrine," said the Buddha, and surely no foreign flavor is here in the confidings of his followers. There are no pleasantries, no irrelevancies, no affectings of feeling or speech. Solemnly each tells the tale of the grave joy, the "coolness" of Nibbana's peace. The Hebrew psalms carry likewise the one burden of trouble and its relief, but their God manifests himself in many ways, and the ecstasy of relief is colorful and variant. We may criticize the Buddhist greyness, and hold with right that religious attainment of a higher order is possible, but we must not presume to underestimate the spirit at work when we cannot analyze it too surely. Like all worthy achievement, "great" was "the Good,"

deep and hard to see,
Subtle and delicately fine, to which
The wise and brave do penetrate, e'en they
Who strenuous live and lofty vision gain.³

In general the Gathas are lyrical in the sense that they are personal, but those of the Brethren have the freer, richer, emotional drive. No wonder that the sisters, newly loosed from fetters to

²Cf. Mrs. Rhys Davids' Introduction to the Psalms of the Sisters.

³Psalms of the Brethren, Canto I. Punna of the Mountains.

soul, mind and body, lacked vehicle for expression. Their songs are chiefly narrative, retrospective of the thralldom which has now given way to liberty. Both volumes include exhortations and sermons, and touch here and there that which makes the reader feel himself to be in the presence of wisdom and truth, even though they be set in a realm of thought which has little power to stir his heart.

In the midst of the seriousness there is, however, one gleam of warm life. This is evidenced in an unashamed nature love. There has been a breaking away from the weight of those religious doctrines which seem to make the interpretation of life a thing more burdensome than are the facts of life themselves, and in such release there springs from some hearts a strain of carefree, innocent paganism. This is like the untheistic tone of Shelley and much else of modern poetry and experience. It might be called pantheistic as Shelley has been called pantheistic, but against the intense speculation of Brahmanism, the simpler term, pagan, suggested by Mrs. Rhys Davids, is by all means more fitting.

The appearance of such bits of verse from that time and place is surprising. Of course Buddhism cannot claim all the nature poetry of the time, but in the Gathas, the simple impression is not apperceived in pantheist scope, and the freshness of experience is not lost in artificialities of form. The pagan detachment is not so very peculiar, even though the modern age believe the attitude to be its own, for Buddhism is, in one sense, essentially agnostic. On the surface, there may not appear the most striking thing of all which is, that a love of nature should come out of this religion. Logically, perhaps not humanly speaking, there is an anomaly between its presence and the letter of the law of the Buddha.

Something similar is manifest in Buddhist and Puritan depreciation of the outward, though their philosophies on ultimate questions be never so far apart. Puritanism, beginning in literal-mindedness, developed the analytical attitude of scientific men. Buddhism, beginning in analysis, might be expected to end in literal-mindedness. In placing the world of things in the category of evils, the two seem to have placed a barrier between themselves and certain appreciations. Whatever ultimate expression may have resulted from a deepened inner life through Puritanism, we know that the Puritan age itself, did not coincide with an age of art. Of Buddhism, apparently, still less could be expected.

We are acquainted with the Puritan's mistrust of whatever placed emphasis on anything but righteousness; for the Buddhist,

the external is not only divorced from spiritual significance, but is intrinsically evil. The starting point for every candidate for arahatship in Early Buddhism⁴ was the recognition of the Fundamental Truths: that all the constituents of life are transitory, evil, and without substantive reality. Reflection on these truths was an essential part of the discipline, and was calculated to draw the attention of the monk or sister from the wholeness and permanence of a thing to the colorless, sometimes repulsive elements of its being. Thereby passivity to all objects of sensation was to be gained, and ego-consciousness, subjective and objective, was to be destroyed. In expounding the illusion of self to the emperor, Milinda, the sage, Nagasena, said,

In respect of me, Nagasena is but a way of counting, term, appellation, convenient designation, mere name, for the hair of my head, hair of my body, kidneys, heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs, intestines, mesentery, stomach, faeces, bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat, tears, lymph, saliva, snot, synovial fluid, urine, brain of the head, form, sensation, perception, the predispositions, and consciousness. But in the absolute sense, there is no Ego here to be found.⁵

Exhaustive analyses of the elements of being are given and prescribed for reflection, and include not only the body, but inanimate nature. In the Visuddhi Magga a model reflection, on the buds of the Asoka tree, is expounded for the monk in some 350 words, with the conclusion that the buds are transitory, evil, and without substantive reality. "And, having thus applied the Three Characteristics in this particular, he then in the same way reflects on all other forms of nature."⁶ Not conducive to aesthetic sensitiveness!

The normal attitude toward inanimate things is illustrated by the rebuke of a young Sister to an admirer and would-be lover:

Oh! I have seen it—a puppet well painted, with
new wooden spindles
Cunningly fastened with strings and with pins, and
diversely dancing.
But if the strings and the pins be all drawn out
and loosened and scattered,
So that the puppet be made non-existent and broken
in pieces,

⁴Something like an apostolic Buddhism is represented today in the southern countries, Ceylon, Burma and Siam; Northern Buddhism, as that of China and Japan, is of the Mahayana faith, which is a widely different development.

⁵From the Milindapanha, translated in Warren's Buddhism in Translation, page 133.

⁶From the Visuddhi-Magga, chap. XX, Warren, page 165.

Which of the parts wilt thou choose and appoint for thy
heart's rest and solace?⁷

Similarly a hermit's response to the beauty of a woman whom
he met on the road, was only

Was it a woman, or a man,
That passed this way? I cannot tell.
But this I know, a set of bones
Is traveling on upon this road.⁸

There is no exception to the scorning of the human form, but
when the beauties of the wild are thought on, consider this:

Oh (thou wilt love the life), be't on the crest
Of caverned cliffs, where herd boar and gazelle,
Or in fair open glade, or in the depths
Of forest freshened by new rain—'tis there
Lies joy for thee to cavern-cottage gone.
Fair-plumed, fair-crested passengers of air
With deep blue throats and many-hued of wing,
Give greeting to the muttering thundercloud
With cries melodious, manifold; 'tis they
Will give thee joy whiles thou art musing there.⁹

And Kassapa, who as an old man, preferred mountain jungle
to more accessible scene of meditation, defended himself thus:

Like serried battlements of blue-black cloud,
Like pinnacles on stately castle built,
Re-echoing to the cries of jungle folk:
Those are the braes wherein my soul delights.
Fair uplands rain-refreshed, and resonant
With crested creatures' cries antiphonal

Clad with the azure bloom of flax, blue-flecked
As sky in autumn; quick with crowds
Of all their varied winged populace:

Craggs where clear waters lie, a rocky world,
Haunted by black-faced apes and timid deer,
Where 'neath bright blossoms run the silver streams.
Such are the braes wherein my soul delights.¹⁰

⁷Psalms of the Sisters, Canto XIV. Subha of Jivaka's Mango-grove.

⁸From the Visuddhi-Magga, Chap. 1. Translation in Warren, page 298.

⁹Psalms of the Brethren, Canto XIX. Talaputa.

¹⁰Psalms of the Brethren, Canto XVIII. Kassapa the Great.

Such colorful, rapidly painted pictures occur often in the verses of the Brethren. The powers of appreciation, to be sure, do not seem to have been subtracted from Gotama himself. The Dhammapada, which is a part of the same Pitaka of the canon as the Gathas, is a collection of ethical sayings attributed to Gotama, and these, even in their common sense, savor of artist imagery:

Temperate ones whose goal is the freedom which comes of realizing that life is empty and impermanent: their steps are hard to track as the flight of birds through the sky.¹¹

Be silent as a broken gong: so wilt thou reach peace¹²

They who have not lived purely nor stored up riches in their youth, these ruefully ponder, as old herons by a lake without fish.¹³

No reaction against poetic appreciations is recorded in Buddhist history. Dhammapala did not seem to be disturbed by such, except in the one case of Sabbaka's poem. Sabbaka, so far as his creed is here indicated, might have been a very Hedonist, and since with this utterance the mental flash constituting release occurred, it does become incumbent upon the commentator to reconcile this frame of mind with orthodox Buddhism:

Whene'er I see the crane, her clear bright wings
Outstretched in fear to flee the black stormcloud,
A shelter seeking, to safe shelter borne,
Then doth the river Ajakarani
Give joy to me.

Whene'er I see the crane, her plumage pale
And silver white outstretched in fear to flee
The black stormcloud, seeing no refuge nigh,
The refuge seeking of the rocky cave,
Then doth the river Ajakarani
Give joy to me.

¹¹Dhammapada, verse 92. Translation in Saunder's *The Buddha's "Way of Virtue."*

¹²Ibid., verse 134.

¹³Ibid., verse 155.

Who doth not love to see on either bank
 Clustered rose-apple trees in fair array
 Behind the great cave (of my hermitage),
 Or hear the soft croak of the frogs, well rid
 Of their undying mortal foes proclaim:
 "Not from the mountain-streams is't time today
 To flit. Safe is the Ajakarani.
 She brings us luck. Here is it good to be."¹⁴

Dhammapala's language "has a touch of apology in it that is delightful:—'and because he showed herein his delight in empty places, this became the Thera's confession of *anna*.'"¹⁵

Neither many of his disciples nor the Buddha himself showed a predilection for a prescribed "emptiness" of scene for meditation such, for instance, as that required for the Earth Kasina.¹⁶ Rather, the solitude of grove, of jungle, and of lone mountain height has been sought out by the monks through history. The instinct for beauty evidenced by the early poets of Buddhism, in some way carried over with the faith into China also, for today every beauty spot over the ancient country enshrines some temple or monastery of Buddhism.

If Gotama and unnumbered followers found themselves to be children of the great synthetic nature for which the Doctrine taught detachment, we have no inclination to chide these votaries. The attendant phenomenal appearance of lyrists, the most personal of poets, among those who were attempting to lose personality, may, indeed be a fulfilment of the finding of self in willingness to lose it. The beginning of error may have been in the confusion arising from an attempt to demonstrate this truth by laboratory method; in his reliance for enlightenment on the intellect alone, Gotama sought to persuade man from himself by proving that self does not exist. If some followers were inconsistent then, it is less of sin than virtue.

In justice to the Gathas and to their translator, the latter's considerations of her task should be noted: "Where the English limps lamely (I pass over the lack in the translator of poetic gift or training,) this is in part due to a desire to put in no religious tropes and figures from Western traditions. Where they have intruded notice of the exotic element is given. Some day the Paligathas will find their William Morris, their Gilbert Murray. In this

¹⁴Psalms of the Brethren, Canto IV. Sabbaka.

¹⁵Mrs. Rhys Davids in the Introduction to the Psalms of the Brethren.

¹⁶See "The Earth-Kasina," Visuddhi-Magga, chap. IV, in Warren's

makeshift venture, I have striven to make the translation such that the English reader, mindful as he goes of wayside warnings in footnotes, might feel confident that the lines before him do not omit subject matter that is in the original, nor add subject matter that is not."¹⁷ In metre also, Mrs. Rhys Davids has attempted in the English to retain the rhythmic feeling, and when one adds to her verses the inalienable genius of an original language, and the musical qualities of the Pali, he gets a suggestion of the literary merit of the Gathas. As to their historical value these poems and similar translations of the Pali Text Society,¹⁸ with their unblemished messages recorded in their present form no later than 250 B. C., are of such worth as an open door into the actual minds of folk living in what we still consider the beginnings of history.

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Oxford University Press, publishers for the Pali Text Society, of *Psalms of the Early Buddhists*, I, *Psalms of the Sisters* (1909), and II, *Psalms of the Brethren* (1913), translated from the Pali into verse form by Mrs. C. A. F. Rhys Davids.

Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Mass., publisher *Buddhism In Translations* (1915), a translation from the Pali into English by Henry Clarke Warren and occurring in the Harvard Oriental Series, edited by C. R. Lanman.

John Murray, Albemarle St. W., London, publishers *The Buddha's "Way of Virtue"* (1912), a translation of the Dhammapada from the Pali text, by W. D. C. Wagiswara and K. J. Saunders, and occurring in the Wisdom of the East Series edited by L. Cranmer-Byng and S. A. Kapadia.

¹⁷Introduction to the Psalms of the Sisters.

¹⁸The Book of the Kindred Sayings, I, 1917, the "cum-verse" portion of the Samyutta Nikaya, and parts 2 and 3 of The Dialogues of the Buddha, 1910 and 21, both Oxford University Press, are more recent translations by Mrs. Rhys Davids of Buddhist verse.

TEARS OF DAWN

A MEDIEVAL PHANTASY IN ONE ACT

BY FAITH VAN VALKENBURGH VILAS

PERSONS

SAINT DEORA
SAINT ANNE
A PRIEST
AN ABBOT

TIME—*The Middle Ages.*

PLACE—*A mountain pass just before dawn in the month of May. The niches of two saints are seen; ST. DEORA stands in her niche extreme R. ST. ANNE on a little higher level extreme L. Her niche is back to the audience and she cannot be seen. ST. DEORA is rather young; at her feet are several little bunches of flowers in different degrees of freshness. ST. ANNE is an elderly, placid, comely saint in the habit of a nun. During the scene dawn progresses.*

St Deora (Moving in her niche and lowering her hands from their attitude of prayer).—

St. Anne, St. Anne, Oh can't you hear me call?

(She steps down from her niche.)

St. Anne, dear saint, alas what shall I do?
No longer can I hold within my heart
Its aching secret. Pray come down to me,
And with your gentle ministering hand
Turn the swift key and open wide my soul
That I may bare to you its hidden depths.

St. Anne (Coming down C).—

Why my dear child what can the matter be?

St. Deora.—

St. Anne, I am so young to be a saint.
Not young in years, but in experience.
I did not wish to die—death came by force
And loosed my unsuspecting maiden soul.
My new-made halo seems to weigh like lead

Upon my brow, and when I stand all day
 And listen to their prayers, my untried heart
 Is filled with fears of its unworthiness.

St. Anne.—

Dear child we all of us feel so at times,
 But as the hours lengthen into years
 We grow more perfectly in tune with God.

St. Deora.—

But, Oh St. Anne, I am so very sure
 I am not worthy of my holy niche.

St. Anne.—

St. Deora it is the long deep nights
 Have made you feel unfathomed loneliness.
 But keep your eyes forever on the stars,
 His altar candles, see how bright they shine
 Just before day-break? When the night has passed
 You will feel calmer.

St. Deora.—

No it is not that
 I am not lonely—would to God I were!

St. Anne.—

What do you mean? You speak in mysteries.

St. Deora.—

Listen, dear saint, I must confess it all.
 Let me unbind my aching, bursting heart
 And lay its contents at your gentle feet.

St. Anne (Sits on stone by roadside, ST. DEORA at her feet).—

What is it child? Speak on.

St. Deora.—

Alas, I love.

St. Anne.—

So do we all—we saints—our hearts are filled
 With tender love that we pass on to men,
 Maternal love, enfolding, pitiful,
 With which we try to ease their bitter lot,
 And lift their minds to thoughts of heavenly things.

St. Deora.—

You do not understand the words I speak.
 My love is not maternal, is not calm,
 It is, I fear me, an unholy love.

St. Anne (Shocked).—

Unholy love? What words are these you speak?

St. Deora.—

Oh do not draw your hand away from mine,
I need your pity and your gentle calm,
I love—St. Anne, I fear, as mortals love.

St. Anne.—

What do you say? You who have late become
One of the Lord's annointed saints, Alas!

St. Deora.—

Listen to me dear saint, oh let me pour
Into your ears the fulness of my grief.
While on the earth I lived so much alone
All the long day my weary fingers sped
The nervous shuttle through the dismal loom.
Always for him, my father, poor, and old,
That he might have a place to lay his head
And bread and porridge for his simple meal.
Never for me the laughter and the joy,
Never for me the music and the dance,
Never companions, never should I know
What other maidens felt when lovers came to woo.
Never for me the little homely gifts,
The flowers tied, the bit of ribbon gay
To weave into my hair before my glass,
The while I sat and dreamed long girlish dreams,
Nothing for me, but ever back and forth,
The restless shuttle in the hungry loom,
Till death released me suddenly, at last,
Sainted for service, they then put me here.

St. Anne.—

Oh my poor child! Still you must not forget
Your great reward. Among the saints you stand.

St. Deora.—

'Tis not for long, they soon will cast me out
When they have learned—when they have heard my sin.
Alas, I love—

St. Anne (Rising).—

But whom and when and how?

St. Deora.—

You must have seen him—just at dawn he comes
Each day, across this path with firm fast stride,
On to the church that nestles 'mid the fields

Behind that mountain whose brave curve we know.
Each dawn he stops a moment at my shrine.

(She goes to shrine and lovingly brings a bunch of faded flowers.)

See, these are his of Friday last, he lays
Them close beside my feet whence they do lift
Their tiny hearts in perfume to my soul.
I try, but try in vain, to look on him
As on a tender son, but I cannot.
I have not long enough been dead. It seems
All of the stillness of my lonely life
Breaks into music as his foot-steps call,
I was so starved for just a little love.

St. Anne.—

Child this is awful! It is blasphemous!
Love such as this is not for saints to know.
You must refrain from such wild thoughts as these.

St. Deora.—

St. Anne, St. Anne, there is yet more to tell,
Do let me speak it quickly while I dare.
Deep in the night I've thought when all is still
If only *once* his warm lips could touch mine.

St. Anne.—

Stop. What you say is sin. Refrain from speech.

(She crosses herself.)

St. Deora.—

Then maybe I would better understand
The troubled souls that come to me for aid,
Feel less unworthy if I knew the touch,
The miracle, the grace of human love
Through just one kiss, one little earthly kiss.
He is a holy man, he is a Priest.

St. Anne.—

He is a priest you say? A priest, a priest?
Oh this is awful! that my ears should hear
Of such a black unpardonable sin.

St. Deora.—

This is not all. Do let me loose the words.
That crowd and crowd within my tortured mind.
Yesterday noon a group of peasants came
On their way down to market, and they told
How every fifty years for a whole day
Each saint could have some dearest wish fulfilled.

Today's the day—since midnight I have wished
 With all my heart that he would come to me
 With lips of flame and just for a brief breath
 That I might feel his kiss upon my mouth.
 Just for one little moment. Passing years
 Could never rob me of my memory,
 My one sweet second.

St. Anne.—

Oh this awful sin,
 This sin unspeakable. Take back that wish.

St. Deora.—No, no, *St. Anne*, I will not take it back.
 (*ST. ANNE shakes ST. DEORA by the shoulder.*)

St. Anne.—

Quick, take it back before it is too late.

The cock crows. Dawn is rimming the East with crimson. The two saints mutely return each to her niche; as ST. DEORA stands motionless in place, dawn breaks in its full beauty. Enter L a tonsured priest in flowing garments carrying a nosegay of spring flowers. He is evidently much perturbed and comes to a full stop looking about him. Then goes directly to ST. DEORA'S niche, places flowers at her feet, sinks upon his knees, his shoulders moving with emotion. Suddenly and madly he lifts his arms high to ST. DEORA.

Priest.—

Fairest of saints. Have pity on my soul.
 All through the sleepless night your lips have called
 All through the night your eyes have beckoned me.

(*Starts*)

God! What is this my wayward lips repeat?
 Oh gentle saint, I think I shall go mad,
 For in my heart I hear the muttered roar
 Of flames that leap and would consume me quite.
 Pray holy saint, have pity on my soul.

(*His arms embrace her knees; she timidly puts her hand upon his head.*)

Your tender hand strays lightly through my hair.
 Oh, let me reach those lips that bloom so high.

(*ST. DEORA steps slowly down from her niche. The priest rises overcome with emotion, staggers back with arms outstretched, ST. DEORA holds out her arms to him and follows C. He falls on his knees before her, his arms about her waist. All unseen by them a figure dressed like DEORA takes her place in the niche with folded hands.*)

Oh holy one, what miracle is this?

St. Deora (Touching his eye-lids gently with finger tips).—

Lift up those lids and let our two souls rush
From out our eyes to meet in one slow glance
That makes earth tremble and the heavens reel.

Priest.—

St. Deora I lift my heavy eyes
Weighed down with love to meet your holy smile,
Oh that I dared to tell you all I feel.
How I am mad with thoughts of love and you.

St. Deora.—

Tell me your love, then ever as I stand
Within my niche the fragrance of your words
Will compass me like lilies in the night.
That send their perfume to the watching stars.

Priest.—

Let my lips give you other things than words,
Oh let them melt with yours in one sweet draught
One kiss that shall appease our thirsting souls
And live forever in your memory.

(She helps him rise. He embraces her and their lips meet in a kiss.)

Enter from right an old abbot, who stands petrified as he beholds the couple.)

Abbot.—

What do I see? Can these mine eyes believe?

(The couple separate.)

That you oh Father Clement could so far
Forget your holy cloth and all your vows
To openly transgress and like a churl
Here with this wanton boldly to embrace.
You shall be punished; you shall be unfrocked.

(PRIEST falls pleadingly on his knees. ST. DEORA moves out of ABBOT'S vision.)

This is your sentence, mark you well my words:

Today and here to excommunico.

(He makes a sign and stamps off R. The priest lifts a tortured miserable face towards Heaven.)

Priest.—

Oh God forgive and Jesus pity me.
Oh *mea culpa*, see what I have done.

In one brief moment blotted out the years
Of holy consecration and of prayer.

St. Deora (approaching him, great tears in her eyes).—

I am to blame, 'twas I that tempted you.

(She leans over him lifting his head between her hands; she looks long into his unhappy face.)

Oh God what misery for one brief kiss.

(Priest sinks on ground covering face with arms.)

What shall I do? Whatever shall I do?

(She goes slowly towards the niche; discovers it occupied; recoils.)

Oh Jesu Mary, mercy on my soul.

(She rushes across the stage to ST. ANNE'S niche, throws herself on her knees so that she is visible to the audience; addresses ST. ANNE.)

Oh sweet, kind saint tell me what I can do,
How I may right this bitter grievous wrong?
You are so wise, so many years have stood
Here on this mountain path to guide lost souls.
I am so new, is there no hope for me?
Hope of forgiveness, though I know full well
My sin looms black as Satan's hordes in Hell.

St. Anne (Calmly).—

Your sin is black, there is but one redress.
Your sinful moment you must now unlive.
It must be washed like soil from your soul.
Else will you both pay long and bitter toll.

St. Deora (Rising).—

Sweet saint, you cannot mean I must
Forego at once the memory of this—
May I not keep the fragrance of his kiss?

St. Anne.—

There is one way, my daughter, only one;
Your mind and his must be forever blank.
Clear as a page on which no word is set,
It is God's will that you should both forget.

St. Deora.—

Oh dearest saint it cannot be His will,
I have been poor and thirsty and alone,
Surely my plight would touch a heart of stone.

St. Anne.—

If you your memory keep, my daughter, then
He that you love will walk accursed of men.

St. Deora.—

This must not be, for if my act should bring
This hideous grief to him I love so well
My feet would tread the lowest paths of Hell.

St. Anne.—

Then your brief happiness both must forget;
And you must make the willing sacrifice
To buy your sainthood at your memory's price.

St. Deora.—

Yes, yes, but how since, graven by his kiss,
My burning lips must bear his brand of bliss?

St. Anne.—

I have *my wish*, *my wish* that will come true,
And for Christ's sake I give it unto you.
Down on your knees and speak the words and I
Wish their fulfillment come from the most High.

St. Deora (Kneeling C. looking devoutly up).—

Oh wash my lips of their dark stain of sin,
Oh let all be as though it had not been.
(*Figure withdraws from niche and soft music till curtain.*)

St. Anne.—

Now as your prayer your memory doth efface
From out your soul with spiritual grace
In winding circles to His throne on high
Your sacrificial incense seeks the sky.
And here on earth remembered you shall be
For as each dawn breaks over land and sea,
Your shining tears, bright dew-drops on the grass,
Shall tell your sacrifice to all who pass.

St. Deora (Still kneeling).—

Now as my prayer my memory doth efface
From out my soul with spiritual grace
My sacrificial incense seeks the sky
In winding circles to His throne on high.
And here on earth forgot I shall not be,
For as each dawn breaks over land and sea,
My shining tears, bright dew-drops on the grass,
Shall tell my sacrifice to all who pass.

Music. ST. DEORA rises, her face calm and serene, and turns to her niche which she finds empty. She slips quietly in, faces the audience, and resumes her pose. After a moment the priest rises

slowly, dazed for a second, he dusts off his garments and goes perfunctorily to ST. DEORA'S niche, making the sign of the cross and bending his knee. Then he passes deliberately down the mountain.

CURTAIN

THE VISITOR AT THE TEMPLE

A CHINESE IDYL

BY A. H. WARE

At dark of night the drum
Sobs through the temple courts. I, half awake,
Watch drowsily the candle beams that shake
Through cracks around my door. The tidal hum
Of priests at midnight vespers for the sake
Of such poor souls as mine comes to my ears.

The new-lit incense like a finger feels
My sleepy senses. Through my mind there steals
Old, half-remembered poems and flights of song
Such as Po Chui sang in days departed long.
I listen, dreaming, while the nightjar tells
Its measured sorrows to the infant moon
That ivories my latticed oyster shells.
The chants sink to a murmurous, soothing croon.

Kuan Yin be thanked I am no shaven priest,
And in this life at least
Can live and love without remorse or fears.

"Pray, gentle monks, and save my soul from sin,"
I say with sleepy yawn, and tuck my shoulders in,
And draw my padded pukai closer round my chin.

GHOSTS AT FIRST NIGHTS IN ITALY

BY WINIFRED SMITH

THE Italians are accused by one of their own chief philosophers, Giovanni Papini, of being so intent on the cult of "passatismo" that most of them, artists, artisans, intellectuals and men in the street, have no understanding of modern life and thought. However wrong the accusation may be and undoubtedly is when applied to economic movements in Italy, it is certainly to large degree justified by the present day drama there. Old material is used for nine out of ten of the most popular new plays and old methods are generally taken in the productions. A New Yorker, familiar with the experiments of the Theater Guild, the Provincetown Players and other such organizations, finds a good deal of boredom in Italian theaters just now.

For instance, what is Mascagni's *Il Piccolo Marat*, the sensation of the Spring operatic season in Rome? It is a story written obviously, in spite of the author's former connection with the socialist party, as a piece of "anti-red" propaganda: the scene, Nantes toward the end of the eighteenth century; the villain, a red-haired monster recalling in looks and deeds the Judas of the Mystery Plays; the hero, a handsome young aristocrat disguised as a "citizen" for the purpose of rescuing his beautiful lady mother from the prison to which her noble virtues and birth have condemned her and whence at any minute she may be taken with her friend to one of the famous *noyades* or drowning parties invented by the powerful villain for the destruction of the ancient regime. The plot with its prisons, its horrors, its murders and hairbreadth escapes, its filial devotion and young love's dream, derives from such romances as the *Chartreuse de Parme*; the treatment of it is inspired by love of old established order—typified by the black costume of the Marquise and by her son's reverent adoration of her—and it is equally inspired by fear of change—expressed in the animated bogies in liberty caps who form a menacing chorus of blood-thirsty citizens. The music is faithful to the spirit of the libretto, not quite so antiquated in form as that of *Cavalleria Rusticana* but

highly reminiscent in tone, echoing Mascagni's own past work and that of Verdi and of early Wagner. The staging is adequate, granted the legitimacy of the demands made by the piece for a typical village square, a sordid inn and finally a gorgeous chamber, through the window of which streams the dawn as the wounded hero, after murdering the villain, is carried off on the back of a faithful retainer to follow his sweetheart and his temporarily rescued mother to a dubious safety. "Full of sound and fury, signifying nothing!" Yet the critics on the whole have been kind, perhaps because everyone loves Mascagni, who conducted the first few performances with a good deal of verve and evident pleasure in his work.

Sly, Forzano's poetic drama, which was put on in Florence in May just after *Il Piccolo Marat* was produced in Rome and now being acted in London by Matheson Lang, is a more interesting though hardly a more vital work. It attracts Anglo-Saxons for a pure reason of curiosity, since the hero, Cristofero Sly, is no other than the drunken tinker whom Shakspeare brought from the old shrew play into the induction of his *Taming of the Shrew*. This Italian Sly, however, would never be recognized by Shakspeare; he has much stronger affiliations with the Villon of *Gringoire*. He is a genius of lowly birth, thirsty for love, always seeking his ideal and, because always unsuccessful, a prey to a melancholy which drives him to drink. His fellows recognize his genius and talk of him with affection in the lively Elizabethan tavern scene that opens the piece, they even beg a Lord and his beautiful mistress, strayed to the inn by mistake, to watch from the gallery, Sly's improvised dances and verses and his gradual comic intoxication. He comes in and entertains everyone so well that when he falls asleep at the end of his antics the Lord takes him home and follows Shakspeare's directions—enlarging on them—for the first half of the second act.

But alas for the farce which in *The Shrew* is tactfully left unfinished! Forzano's hero promptly falls in love, oh, but real love! and into tragedy at the end of the second act, for Dolly, the Lord's lovely mistress, comes to tempt him, leads him on until she herself is a little caught in the net of his fascination and is mocked with him when, at the moment he kisses her, the curtains around the room are drawn and a chorus of laughing observers is revealed. Quickly the deceived lad is stripped of his costly trappings and flung into the dark prison where the final act passes; a long monolog of bitterness leads there to his suicide in the only way possible

to him, through cutting the veins of his wrists with a bit of broken glass. The shadows of Romeo and Juliet seem to be cast on the stage when Dolly throws herself into Sly's arms, too late, with the assurance that she had not been a party to the cruel jest and that she will prove love to be truth.

There is more sincerity of feeling and freshness of expression in *Sly* than in the opera, at least there is the realization of a character not new but always appealing. Moreover, in spite of the almost intolerable sentimentality and theatricality of all of the situations and of much of the language, there are passages of real poetic beauty expressing a sensitiveness of pity incapable of feeling anything but the cruelty of the rough sixteenth century jest. In fact this pity made itself so poignant that at the end of the second act there were tears in many eyes and on many lips such scandalized and uncritical comments as, "Outrageous! They have no hearts, these English!"

One wonders if it is Italian excess of heart that accounts for the pity in *Sly* and in Luigi Morselli's *Glauco*, which has just been performed in Florence, Rome, Milan and elsewhere as a tribute of honor to its young author so prematurely and recently dead. Italians, like other races, have both hearts and brains, neither organ is distinctive or even predominant in the race as a whole. What is distinctive, apparently, is their peculiarly quick and imaginative response to old stories, with a consequent realization of the human quality in them and a power to reanimate them that is lacking in us. As Morselli retells the ancient myth of Glaucus and Sylla, he fills it with beauty and tenderness and makes it a symbol of faithful, ideal love such as he himself is said to have known, ending tragically and too soon the young lives in his fable through the malice of the goddess Circe and her handmaidens, the Fates. The play would make a lovely opera if Riccardo Zandonai, who has set to music D'Annunzio's *Francesca di Rimini* would use it for a libretto.

Probably D'Annunzio's influence rather than Italian nature largely determines the literary inspiration of the present Italian theater. His most important works are soaked in classical matter and pseudo-classical spirit, they glorify tradition of any sort, artistic or political, as their author calls on "his people" to look to their ancestors for examples of living. Yet the spirit of neither *Sly* nor *Glauco* is his; these young men's creations, full of humanity and of pain, are born of war torture and of a wish to make men feel

and hate pain. If this spirit can be carried over into more modern subject-matter, Papini will soon have to cease his Cassandra-like denunciations of Italians as half dead "passatisti."

WIND OF APRIL

BY FRANCES DICKENSON PINDER

The day is April's, and the wind
Is piping soft and low
Upon the pipes that Pan beguiled
In Aprils long ago:

Soft notes that whisper to the heart
Of half-remembered things—
Ancient lore of earth's re-birth
Through countless wistful springs;

Quaint flutings that beguile the mind
To dreaming and surprise
As exquisite as children know
That stalk a fay's disguise.

A fleeting shadow is a faun!—
The green sun-smitten shade,
Enchanted, whispers of a nymph,
A dryad, unafraid!

O Wind of April, piping low
By glade and grove and rill,
The pagan heart forgets and dreams
That Pan is piping still!

COCKCROW

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

Based on the old Scottish Ballad, "Clerk Saunders"

BY L. M. TAYLOR

CAST OF CHARACTERS

EDWARD	}	<i>Four Brothers</i>
GERARD		
HENRY		
GILES, a half-wit		
<i>A woman's voice</i>		

"Out and speaks the first of them
'A wat they hae been lovers dear;'
Out and speaks the next of them,
'They hae been in love this many a year.'

Out and speaks the third of them,
'It wear great sin this twa to twaine;'
Out and speaks the fourth of them,
'It wear a sin to kill a sleeping man.'

—"Clerk Saunders," stanzas 11, 12.

SCENE

A large massive hall in a castle of 14th century Europe. The ceiling and doorways, arched and of gray stone, are high, and there is a suggestion of rugged grandeur in the place, if only from the small part of it made visible by the burning brazier near the stairs. It is midnight. Through an arched doorway, right, a flight of shallow stone steps winds and disappears in a curve. There is a narrow high window, barred, at the back, right, and near it the great doors of the castle are dimly outlined in the gloom. To the right of the stairs, EDWARD is sitting leaning on his naked sword, which catches the light from the brazier and gleams like a shaft of arrested lightning.

GILES *having climbed up on the settle beneath the window, is looking out, craning his neck.*

Giles (*Starting and glancing back*).—What was that? Are you there, Edward?

Edward.—Keep a quiet tongue in your head. (*Silence.*)

Giles.—How still it is. You would think no soul stirred in the house.

Edward.—They sleep well before waking to damnation.

Giles.—I cannot see the moon any longer.

Edward.—Good.

Giles.—Blood looks black in moonlight, doesn't it, brother?

Edward.—When God forgot your wits, would he had forgot your tongue, too.

Giles (*Jumping down and running to him in a panic of fear*).—Oh, oh, poor Giles, poor Giles! God does not forget him. God forgets only those who sin. Do not hurt me, brother.

Edward.—Get up. I am not going to hurt you.

Giles (*On the settle again*).—Hark. (*They both listen.*)

Giles.—It was a night bird under the eaves. It has flown away. (*Pause.*) Brother!

Edward (*Between clenched teeth*).—Must I tear your tongue out? (*Silence.*)

Giles (*Beginning in a low voice*).—When Henry and Gerard have killed his groom, will they come back here?

Edward.—For the quarry upstairs.

Giles (*With suppressed glee*).—Hum, it is queer. He set the groom to watch for him, and for all his watching, the groom will be dead first. But he, he will come down this way, won't he? Just think, he will come down quite slowly, happy—and a little drowsy perhaps.

Edward.—Well?

Giles.—I was speaking of clerk Saunders, Edward. He will steal out this way. So I heard him tell our sister.

Edward.—May her soul rot, putting eternal shame upon our house and the burden of two murders upon her brothers tonight.

Giles.—Two! You will not kill her, Edward?

Edward.—The groom, and him that warps our honor.

Giles.—Ah, it seems queer, though. He will come down slowly, carefully, brother, with his shadow following him along the wall. There may be great exaltation in his heart, and all he hears, perhaps, will be the dip of his velvets, trailing like a sigh from step to step, and all he feels, sleep drawing her fingers over his eyelids,

and all he thinks of—a ride in the dawn, across the moors to his own house. Not eye, nor ear, nor thought for us, though. His breath will be warm, and his pulses beating quick, and his strides long and straight. And then, in a flash, three brown blades cutting the shadow, will make of him only a pool of black blood—in the moonlight. Perhaps because he thought simple Giles no better than a spaniel my sister kept about her when she walked over the moors.

Edward.—Be still, idiot.

Giles (Whimpering).—Idiot! Because I cannot swing a sword like you and Henry and Gerard you abuse me so. Yet you will do well to remember it was I who told you of this, how they planned meeting, and it was I who let her know that tonight you would all sleep abroad, with no one but servants on the place. And no credit you give me for all that.

Edward (Gloomily).—A credit to no one is this night.

Giles (At the window).—The stars are becoming pale. The moat water has a gray film over it. (*Jumps down and walks stealthily over to the stairs.*) Not a sound, not a sound, and the time so close on dawn. What, Edward, I say, would it be strange if he should not take this way down, if he should clamber down her window on his hands and knees, and we wait here for nothing at all, Edward?

Edward (Starts a little, then).—One day more of life will better him little.

Giles.—I hear a step.

Edward.—Where!

Giles.—Outside.

Edward (Relieved).—Ah.

Giles (Leaping up lightly on the settle).—It is Henry and Gerard.

Edward.—Quiet!

Giles.—They are coming across the bridge. They have their swords drawn. How black they are. I have seen bats look black like that, but never bats so huge and terrible. Edward!

Edward.—God, will you have me choke you?

Giles.—They have killed the groom. They must have killed him. Only things with blood on them look black like that! The groom's blood has turned them black, as death turns a man black. But how is that? They are death, aren't they? Edward, Edward, twin deaths are coming toward this house!

Edward.—Open to them, noiselessly.

Giles (Starts for the door, but covers back).—I am afraid, I am afraid.

Edward (Getting up and flinging him aside).—Ah! (*He opens the doors cautiously. HENRY and GERARD enter with their swords drawn. They are both tall, HENRY the younger, being bull-necked and blond, GERARD, slim and dark.*)

Gerard.—Not yet?

Edward.—No. You found his man?

Henry (With satisfaction).—Our hands are full of him.

Giles (Squealing).—Oh!

Henry.—What was that?

Edward.—The idiot is terrorstruck.

Gerard (Goes over to where GILES is crouching and puts his hand on his shoulder).—Be still.

Giles.—Ah, so you are Gerard. You are not death with the hollow jawbone at all. You are wet all over though.

Gerard.—Do not fear.

Giles.—I am not afraid any more. Ugh, my hand slid in your cloak, in something—warm. It is safe to feel a man's blood, knowing he is dead, eh, brother?

Gerard.—Be still. (*He turns away, passing his hand over his eyes as if to wipe out a horrid sight.*)

Henry.—Ah, let me gag the idot and stow him away until afterward.

Gerard.—Let him be. He does not understand.

Giles.—I do understand, I do understand. I see more than you. I see death standing over there in the corner. I see two deaths waiting over there in the corner. Go away, go away, deaths!

(*He makes a few uncertain steps toward the stair, waving his arm, reels, turns on himself and falls in a heap beside the brazier, near the settle. The three brothers watch him, until his wriggling body straightens out.*)

Edward.—He will be quiet now. (*There is a pause, during which the three take up their places of watching, EDWARD on the settle, HENRY at the extreme left in the shadow and GERARD at the extreme right, by the stairs. They stare gloomily before them.*)

Henry.—How cold it is.

Gerard.—Not more cold than is my soul knowing the thing it has done and the thing it is about to do.

Henry.—Hear him, Edward. It has been with him like that ever since we set foot out the door.

Edward.—How?

Henry (Venomously).—He has become delicate like the idiot to the smell of blood, it seems. It was with difficulty I had him get the stone bound tight to the groom outside that should fasten him well under water for safety's sake. He—he would sit back and be at ease, I think, to hear a miserable clerk boast how he—

(*EDWARD rises menacingly.*)

Henry (In a lower tone).—Well. The fellow outside could give a good account of his master.

Edward.—What is this?

Gerard.—If there is to be killing, for God's sake, let there be killing and not talking.

Henry.—It would please you to shield him, perhaps.

Edward (Imperatively).—Plain speech!

Henry.—As I would have, brother. (*Goes over to the stairs, then turns about fiercely.*) This is not the first time clerk Saunders has been here.

Edward (Unmoved).—No.

Gerard.—Would you take the word of that crazed groom who knew he was about to be split open, for truth?

Henry.—When our house's honor is in question—

Gerard (Stung).—You are not before me when it comes to defending that!

Henry (His voice rising).—It is needful for you to say that!

Edward.—Will you wake the idiot?

Henry (Fuming).—It makes me mad.

Edward.—Madden yourself against the despoiler, not one another.

Gerard (With suppressed feeling).—He was my friend. Do you think it strange then that from time past should stretch out a hundred dead hands to pluck me by the sleeve from this? What has happened is indeed beyond my understanding of the man. (*With sudden vehemence.*) There has been cutting of quivering flesh enough for one night!

Henry.—No son of my father spat out words like that. (*Plunges toward the stairs.*) Is this thing, then, to live?

Edward (Blocking the way).—Go break your sword in two, before you have killed a man unarmed. (*HENRY comes back slowly.*)

Edward.—Get to your places. It is almost light.

Gerard.—The east is paling— God, like the face of a boy blenching under gray water, or the hands of a boy clutching through gray water.

Henry.—Faugh.

Gerard.—Edward, are you resolved on this?

Edward.—As you will be resolved.

Henry (Cocking his head).—Listen.

Gerard.—What!

Henry.—I hear a door opening.

Gerard.—No.

Henry.—Footsteps.

Gerard.—My God! (*Pause. The three listen.*)

Edward.—It was nothing.

Gerard.—Tapestries in the wind.

Edward.—Gerard.

Gerard.—Well?

Edward.—To your place.

Gerard.—No!

Edward.—What?

Gerard.—I cannot.

Edward.—Cannot what?

Gerard.—I cannot—kill him.

Edward (Going to him and speaking rapidly).—If fear has you in the knees, go quickly and put no further shame upon this house by adding cowardice.

Henry.—There is a place there by the idiot, quite sheltered.

Gerard (Fiercely).—I am not afraid.

Edward.—Go to your place.

Gerard.—I cannot kill him, I tell you. I cannot, remembering his eyes.

Henry.—Turn your eyes upon our blackened name.

Gerard.—Black with guiltless blood shed by you and me tonight—

Henry.—Say rather with shame spewed upon us by one who dies tonight.

Gerard.—I am finished, I tell you.

Henry.—He took counsel with you how this might be done? You were perhaps their go-between?

Edward.—Spend your word prowess elsewhere. I shall meet him alone. Both of you, go.

Henry.—What, do you think there are two bastards here?

Gerard.—Ah!

Henry.—You shall not cheat me of my part in him.

Gerard.—You named me bastard then?

Henry.—It was plain.

Gerard.—Take care.

Henry.—Of what?

Gerard.—There is a sword here at my side.

Henry.—What use has a purveyor for a sword?

Gerard.—Purveyor!

Henry.—Indeed, I cannot follow in your school of knight-hood.

Gerard (With quiet fury).—Liar.

Henry.—Better for you that name!

Gerard.—Ah! (*The two brothers grapple. GERARD flings HENRY to the floor.*)

Edward (Parting them).—Are you mad? (*GERARD turns away, walks to the back of the stage and stands there, facing back. HENRY picks himself up sullenly.*)

Edward (Opens the door and stands there).—Begone, I have said already. What are you who are battling love and hate? It was required of you to strike only as the sword strikes. Go. (*He goes back slowly to his place and sits down. Through the open door, the gray morning is visible. Pause.*)

Henry (Leering at GERARD).—Traitor. (*A spasm crosses GERARD.*)

Gerard (Without turning around).—Unsay that.

Henry.—Can a man unsay truth?

Gerard (Turns about as if to rush upon HENRY, when suddenly his resolve crumbles and he stands at bay, a trembling black figure against the gray sky of the open doors).—The truth, the truth! God, that it should be you who could make the truth my damnation. That of the many million, you should find that one word which can seal peace from me forever. You are not men, but nightmares. (*With a quick movement, he shuts the doors behind him, and turns to the two men.*) Stand off.

Henry.—What now?

Gerard.—Look then. Traitor, you have called me, and it appears I must be that either to our house or to him. Therefore I choose. You may plummet your reproach to hell. For you shall have blood, blood as my ransom. Do you hear? I am going upstairs. I am going up with my sword drawn. Do you understand? You had better not hinder me.

Edward.—Stop.

Gerard (Edging toward the stairs).—Ah Edward, you were made of granite, I think, not flesh. (*To HENRY.*) And you, no doubt you envy me this blood-letting? But console yourself. To kill a sleeping man is only dull sport. For what does he do? Squirm a little in his limbs, spurt a little blood, and turning, sink into a deeper sleep.

Edward.—Stay where you are.

Gerard.—I shall not be long.

Edward.—You cannot kill a sleeping man.

Gerard.—Would you have me kill him, meeting him face to face, with a smile?

Edward (Barring the stairs with his sword).—I say you shall not do it.

Henry (Crossing his sword).—And I.

Gerard (Draws his sword, and with a swift lunge, parts the two swords and leaps to the stairs).—Already you have said too much, both of you. What should I be indeed, if I were to brook your words tonight, simply because I am not idiot like Giles, passionless like you, Edward, or like you, Henry, a monster—but a man—suddenly aghast, finding himself a slaughterer. What, have you had friends? Have you laughed splendidly with a man, ridden with him, sat long talking together in the brown light of evening? Yet in these things were we two companions. Is it easy then, do you think, with hauntings of a familiar voice and well-known turn of the head and the eye's glancing, to get ready cold steel?

Henry.—Do you forget? Do you forget?

Gerard.—No, I do not forget. What to do, then? Why, kill him—which I shall do, now and alone. And give to all of us—peace!

Edward.—Come down.

Gerard.—When I have found it, yes!

Edward.—Come down.

Gerard.—Stand off. I am going to purge you of this infamy. I will purge you. I will purge you! Stand off.

(*He levels his sword at the two men standing below and begins ascending the stairs, watching them over his shoulder. Reaching the curve, he pauses, menacing them once more. He disappears into the shadow. EDWARD and HENRY remain motionless for a time, staring after him.*)

Henry (Petulantly).—You would not let me go.

Edward.—He had his own honor to restore.

Henry.—He may play us foul.

Edward.—Not so foul as he plays the clerk.

Henry.—Ah! What was that?

Edward.—Cocks crowing.

Henry (Forcing a laugh).—For a passing soul, for a passing soul.

Edward.—So be it. (*Pause.*)

Edward (As if thinking aloud).—What shall be done with her?

Henry.—Her?

Edward.—Yes.

Henry.—What does that matter? This is a man's business. There will be days for her swept clean for prayers.

Edward.—Will prayers come easily, I wonder, to one waking warm between dead arms?

Henry (Shrugs).—What else?

Edward.—Nothing else.

Henry.—You are right. Nothing matters once his blood washes clean our name.

Edward.—No.

Henry.—Ha, he was dainty in life. It would have irked him that his linen should be spattered.

Edward.—Stop babbling. (*GILES groans in his sleep.*)

Henry.—The idiot is dreaming.

Edward.—Do not wake him. (*There is the clatter of a sword falling above stairs. The two brothers come swiftly to the foot. GERARD appears emerging from the shadow, empty-handed, backing down slowly. He does not seem to be aware of the two men below, until gradually descending, his hand comes in contact with EDWARD'S, outstretched. He shudders, emits a low cry and turns about.*)

Gerard (Looking from one to the other).—Let us go.

Edward.—Your sword?

Gerard.—It has found its sheath. Let us go.

Henry.—What of her?

Gerard.—She—did not wake. Come.

Edward.—There is a storm outside.

Gerard.—Thank God, thank God!

Edward.—What?

Gerard.—I could not look upon the sun. (*He crosses to the door with uncertainty and staggers out. A gray drizzle splashes in.*)

Edward (After a pause).—So. She will want composure. We will come back tomorrow.

Henry.—The idiot is stirring.

Edward.—Come. You had better draw the outer bolt.

(They go out. The shoving-into-place of the bolt is heard.)

Giles (*Sleepily*).—Who is penning me in? Gerard, Edward? (*He gets up, rubbing his eyes, and comes forward*) Where are you, brothers? Did you notice it, I must have dozed off for a moment, like a kitten, a very kitten. Eh, eh, well—you haven't done it yet? It sounds though as if might be raining blood under your cloak, eh, Gerard? (*He gropes around a little less confident.*) Where are you anyway? (*He goes to the window and jumps on the settle.*) Ah! (*He sees it is day, and a mystified expression crosses his face. The fragment of a laugh, soft as a ripple, breaks the stillness. GILES cocks his head, jumps down from the settle, and comes noiselessly to the stairs. At first surprised, he indicates uneasiness which swiftly develops into terror. He looks over his shoulder with sagging mouth.*) Why, is she laughing? Edward, Gerard—Henry! Where are you? (*The laughs peals out again, louder.*) She should not be laughing!

(He stops, frightened. The laughter, now harsh, metallic, terrible, rings out again. GILES retreats to the door, backing against it.) Edward, I say, Edward, what is that? Are you up there?

(Cautiously he moves over to the stairs. The laughter subsides into an eerie ripple again. GILES gains courage, and begins creeping upstairs. He pauses at the turn.) Edward!

(As there is no answer, he continues his way and disappears. Silence. A prolonged scream in a woman's voice, followed by a clatter of laughter, breaks out. GILES, his face ghastly, swings suddenly around the curve and stumbles downstairs, while the laughter, harsher than ever, broken at times by unintelligible words, continues.)

Giles (*Rushing to the door*).—Let me out, let me out! (*He discovers it is locked from without.*) Ah, you have penned me in! You were penning me in. I knew it. You have done it—you have done it while I slept—while he slept. For God's love, let me out! (*He pounds on the door.*) Do you hear her? She shouldn't be laughing, but she is. Do you hear her, do you hear her? She didn't know me, I tell you—let me out—she glared at me and grinned. Upstairs they went—the twin deaths. Death of body, death of soul. I saw them, but you didn't. One is still, and one is mowing! Oh, let me out, let out, let me out!

(He continues pounding on the door in a frenzy, his own laughter suddenly bursting forth and mingling, rising and falling with the hideous sound from upstairs.)

CURTAIN

THE SPIRITUAL HISTORY OF MODERN DRAMA

BY CLARENDON ROSS

IF there ever was an uninspired and shallow period of drama, it is the period that lies roughly between the years 1860 and 1880. During this period, the social themes *got* into drama, but they did not *sink* in. They floated on the surface. The dimly-outlined idea of social guilt had as yet created no conscience for itself; and having created no conscience for itself, it had no spiritual depth; and having no spiritual depth, it had no depth at all. This is the period of drama that lies between the stagnant backwash of romanticism and the modern realism imbued with the scientific spirit. It is the period of the disciples of Scribe. It is the period of the "well-made" play. The social themes made their entrance into drama; but the dramatist had no conception of their significance for life and society. They were merely "played with:" they were hailed as something novel for the fabrication of "intrigue" (the art of drama, in this generation which had nothing to say, being equivalent to "stratagem," "strategic architecture," terms which, by the way, are the cant of the academic and the popular treatises on "playmaking" at the present time.) Drama, according to the school of Scribe, consisted in adroitness in plotting for plot's sake. It is a melancholy task to read these plays. Even that most artificial drama of the Restoration is a revelation of the life of the times; but the drama of the Scribe school is a revelation of nothing. There is nothing to be said about it, because it says nothing. It is impossible to discuss it, because it does not discuss anything. There is no "pulse" in the "machine." There is no spirituality—the doleful deficiency in "well-made" plays of all time ("well-made" plays, of course, have always been written; they are being written now in great shoals with the connivance of the guide-books; and they will always be written, because the number of those who can make a mechanical contrivance is infinitely larger than the number of those who have something to say.) The social themes, in the school of Scribe, get no spiritual emphasis. They are in the

plays, but they are merely the vehicles for scaffolding the plot and manufacturing suspense; and the final scene—wherein the most superficial dramatist of ancient times considered it good manners to bow to an idea in the vocabulary of a moral—is just a windup of the intrigue. As there is nothing so dangerous to an idea as a “well-made” play, so there is nothing so dangerous to a “well-made” play as an idea.

After the social themes had been “played with” by the disciples of Scribe for about a generation, they began to receive conscientious treatment at the hands of those who are now recognized as the true pioneers of modern drama—such men as Ibsen and Björnson in Norway, Becque in France, and Echegaray in Spain. Of these, Ibsen—by priority in time, by the remarkable rapidity of his development, by his decisive grasp of the new ethical view, by his power as a creative technician to shape a new form for the new view, and by his transference of the social themes from the plane of intrigue to the plane of spirituality—became the chief force in the directing of modern drama. Doubtless several later dramatists surpass Ibsen as a thinker; but there can be no doubt about Ibsen’s fundamental historic position, nor any doubt about his influence, which will maintain until the day when a new ethical view is born, and a new technique is created to fit it.

Ibsen’s fellow pioneers were all deficient in one or more of the powers which he shortly possessed as a complete arsenal. Björnson, keenly alive to social problems, could not keep his earlier plays to the spiritual plane—could not end them otherwise than if he were ending the “intrigue” instead of sharpening the inner spiritual drama (see *Leonarda* and *A Gauntlet*); and to the last, his plays are marred by the technical artificialities of the Scribe school. Becque, a demolisher of the technical artificiality of the Scribe school and a prophet of the new moral view, was not deep enough as a thinker to lay hold of social themes of any great spiritual significance (see *The Vultures* and *The Woman of Paris*.) In Echegaray, from the beginning to the end of his long and prolific career, spirituality and theatricality are inseparably twined. Somewhat like the antagonistic poles of pain and boredom in the Schopenhauerian world, the nearer you approach one the farther you are from the other; but Echegaray never got so near “pulse” that he lost sight of “machine.” In the earlier plays, an intense spirituality is defeated by just one thing—a glaring theatricality (see *Madness or Saintliness?* and *The Great Galeoto*;) and the lessons of the master Ibsen availed him little (compare *Ghosts* and *The*

Son of Don Juan.) In the fully-developed Ibsen, the quality of spirituality, a firmly-anchored ethical view, and an unartificial technique are all complementary—are all *inseparably twined*. These three complements of the Ibsenesque whole were not developed simultaneously, though all were developed with astounding rapidity within the short sequence of three plays in four years. Of these three powers, the first to be fully attained was spirituality and the place wherein Ibsen attained it was the final scene of *A Doll's House*.

Pillars of Society (1877)—the first of Ibsen's plays after he had begun to devote himself exclusively to social themes—cannot critically be said to mark any advance over the Scribe school; at best, it is not as good as Björnson in *A Gauntlet*. The theme is just a vehicle for intrigue; the final scene, resting—with the dead weight of a drowning man—on the long arm of coincidence, is just a wind-up of the intrigue; and the final "moral" speech—directed to the audience—carries no spiritual emphasis whatever, seeing that all the rest of the play carries none. The final speech is the grating of a door closing upon a thoroughly "well-made" play. Nor do the first two acts, and more, of *A Doll's House* (1879)—with their stage-villain flourishing the forged papers, the coincidence-born confidante, the sentimental doctor-friend-of-the-family the plot-carrying soliloquies, and the deadly letter-box—mark any real spiritual advance over *Pillars of Society*. It is only when the theatrical tarantella is over, and the letter-box has done all it can do, and Nora and Helmer sit down to talk things over, that something begins which is like the beginning of another play, so different it is in tone from all that has preceded. The measure of the difference in tone is the measure of spirituality. Let one read as widely as he will among the disciples of Scribe, he will find nothing like this. What Ibsen did in this final scene was to lift the theme clean out of the shackles of intrigue and place it completely on the spiritual plane. The emphasis is solely on spiritual values. The final scene of *A Doll's House* was a spiritual triumph over the contemporary "well-made" social play.

That this final scene was at the same time spiritually the germ of succeeding social drama is also matter of history. There is no dramatist grown to power since the year 1879 who has lost sight of the quality of that talk between Nora and Helmer. *A Doll's House*—the pioneer play with an everlasting vitality, and certainly the most widely known, and by dramatists themselves perhaps the most revered, modern play—contained the germ of a new

drama. Henceforth spirituality was to be sought *throughout* a play; henceforth not patent *stage* devices but the struggles of the mind and heart were to form the *entirety*; henceforth the "story" the "narrative," was to be but a shell for the true drama existing within. And how well drama since 1879 has followed this ideal may be seen by the fact that the acknowledged major modern dramatists are not much referred to in popular and academic treatises on the art of "playmaking."

It may be briefly added—not with reference to the present topic but with reference to Ibsen's rapid development which it was necessary to mention above—that Ibsen's next play, *Ghosts* (1881) was a full-grown social play on exactly three scores: it was—with what happened to Mrs. Alving after she hearkened to Pastor Manders on "duty"—a clear-cut study in social guilt; it has a fully-developed technique—no more of the plot-carrying soliloquies, the coincidence-born characters, and the paraphernalia attaching to intrigue; and in it the emphasis was on spiritual values all the way through.

PORTRAITS

BY THOMAS HORNSBY FERRIL

I, as a boy in school—a wondering child,
 An hour from her and home, behind my book
 Would think and think—how was it that she smiled:
 My mother's eyes—I can't tell how they look.

And you, my lover, in this portrait here,
 I see your features framed in pleasant grace,
 Yet hours and miles have made you far, my dear;
 Your picture, yes—but I know not your face.

FAITH

A ONE-ACT SKETCH

BY MARGARET EVANS

It is five-thirty in the evening of Armistice Day, 1921.

Through a narrow window on the left side of the room, a dull gray evening presses toward the light; but in the rough plastered little kitchen the day is ending in a splash of soft warm color. In a corner near the window is a large coal range, cracked in two or three places, through which the deep red of the coals throws out rays. A row of shelves crowded with dishes, pans and cans adds to the sense of utility; this is the note of the room. At the back stands a small table with a tin pitcher and basin. Several chairs—one of them a calico-draped old rocker—are about the room. In the center is a larger table, covered with a bright red-patterned cloth. The table is set for supper, very charming in the soft light which the lamp in the center throws around it.

LISSA CRAVENS, a colored girl of twenty or thereabouts, is putting the last touches to the table. It is delightful to see her stirring about the red covered table, with her fine brown skin and quite regular features accentuated in the lamp light. ANNIE CRAVENS—LISSA'S mother—a stout old colored woman with fat wrinkled cheeks, is frying batter cakes on a flat griddle and appears flustered and hot.

Lissa.—You want me to put on the sorghum molassas, mothah?

Annie (Turning a cake and glancing up rather absent-mindedly)
—Naw, Lissa. Ah'm goin' make sugah 'lassas tanight. Youh fathah don' think they ain't nothin' like sugah 'lassas, an' Ah suah is goin' giv' him as good's Ah kin tanight. Ah bets that ole niggah'll be all tuck't out tanight!

Lissa.—Pooh fathah! He's been worrying an awful lot! I'm mighty glad he's got a job at last!

Annie.—They's one thing suah, ef he don't stop worretin' foah long, Ah'll be in mah grav'; that's whe'h Ah'll be! Youh fathah suah has got me goin' on this las' few weeks!

Lissa.—You mean 'bout fathah's acting so queer lately, mothah? Pooh fathah! He's been scared to death we'd stahv because he wasn't getting any work. As if we'd stahv as long's I'm able to teach! That was what you-all sent me to Fisk foah, so I could always make a decent living!

Annie (Turning full around from the stove with the pancake turner in her hand, facing LISSA).—Youh kin say it like that ef youh wants to, 'bout youh fathah, Lissa. Ah don' say what Ah knows it is. Ah don' tole youh to'othah day. Tain't no worretin 'bout no wo'k; not with youh fathah! (*She turns back to her frying with a triumphant air.*)

Lissa.—You're being superstitious, mothah! I was talking with Doctah Burns just yesterday. "Youh fathah's in a bad shape, Lissa," he said. "He's brooding too much about not working." And that's just exactly it, mothah. I declaih, the way they won't let a man work when he tries to as hahd as fathah! And I saw in the papah where old Mistah Shelby is spending the wintah in Egypt, now he's got his factories shut down. Doctah Burns says theah's lots of things we have to learn to take, but I declaih, I'd rathah fight, mothah!

Annie (Sharply).—Don't youh go talkin' like white folks, Lissa. Youh a niggah. Youh don' lea'n'd youh place.

There is a short silence. ANNIE concentrates on her work at the stove. LISSA stares off into space through the soft tinted table and is evidently in a world of her own, which is not shared with her mother.

Annie (Breaking the pause).—Doctah Buhns kin say it like that ef he want to, 'bout youh fathah. Ah don' knows bettah. Doctah Buhns don't sleep with youh fathah, an' Ah does. An' Ah knows that every night foah three weeks naw, youh fathah don set straight up in ouh bed jes when that ole clock don' struck twelve, an' what he see, Lissa—tain't no ole wo'k—it's hants! "Look theah, Annie," he say, an' his eyes jes 'bout comes outn his haid, "Look theah, Annie! Don't yuh see Jim settin' theah on that theah chaih?" Youh fathah he do see Jim settin' theah, an' he talk to him every night, sayin' the same thing, ovah an' ovah.

Lissa (Breathless and tense).—What does he say, mothah?

Annie (Swaying a little on her broad feet and swinging her voice into a suggestion of a chant).—Youh fathah say to him ovah an' ovah, "Why ain't they don' sent youh back heah, son, so's you kin be buried decent heah with us? Cou'se youh kain't res'

quiet ovah theah in that ole strange country, boy! Ah don't say Ah'm evah blamin' youh foah comin' back heah so worried like. Ole pappy want his boy res' quiet like, not hav' be no ole hants!" (*She breaks off in a little crying wail.*)

Lissa.—Don't cry, mothah! You know Jim's happy now, being as it says in the Bible. Why, mothah! You know theah isn't any such thing as hants! Don't you remembah, I told you that the first time I came back from Fisk!

Annie.—Ef they ain't no hants, then, Lissa, they's what youh remembahs. An' that hu'ts as bad as hants. Ah kin clos' mah eyes righ naw, an' see mah boy in his fine unifawm, laughin' fit ta kill an' ready t'knock the lights outn them ole Gu'mans. Ah kin see him goin' ta the train that las' night, cakewalkin' with his rejimen' dawn Ma'ket Street, jes laughin' fit ta kill. An' when Ah 'membahs them things, an' 'membahs he nevah kin come back heah—that do hu't, Lissa.

Lissa (Going off again into the world which her mother does not know, and deeply touched).—Oh, mothah! I wish I hadn't been at Fisk when Jim went off! But it must have been wonderful to see them going off!

Annie (Who has been crouching a little over the stove, stands suddenly erect).—Lissen! They's youh fathah, comin' up the walk. Is everything don' got on the table? Han' me that theah little ole bowl foah this sugah 'lassas. Don't youh let youh fathah see youh bin cryin', gu'l!

An outside door bangs, the shuffling sound of feet is heard along the hallway, then the door at the right into the kitchen opens and PETE CRAVENS enters. He is a tall old Negro, with a deeply lined face and bent shoulders. But his eyes—deepset and habitually sad—are lighted up this evening with an inward excitement. He is smiling broadly.

Pete.—Ah swan! Ole battah cakes an' sugah 'lassas! What youh mean, havin' a feas' like this foah an ole niggah, mammy? (*He goes over and kisses the old woman, pinching the girl's brown cheek as he passes her. He pours some water into the basin, washes his hands, carefully putting down the newspaper which he brought in with him*) This ole man's jes 'bout stavh ta death! He ain't use t'no wo'kin' like this; lazy ole niggah! (*He sits down at the table and ANNIE falls heavily into a chair opposite him, placing a big plate of the hot cakes by PETE'S place. LISSA sits down gracefully. PETE folds his hands over his plate and all three bow their heads solemnly over the soft red covered table.*) Oh Lawd, we thank

thee foah this heah bountiful repas' youh don' provide foah us, an' we asks youh t'bless it foah us fo' we don' et. We thanks thee foah thy goodness, Lawd, in gettin' me mah new job, and foah thy grace in unitin' us heah 'roun' thy table, t'wo' ship thee. An' naw, Lawd, we thanks thee from the bottum of ouh hea'ts that youh don' let the great ones of this ea'th bring Jim ta his own soil t'res', an' won't hav' t'be no ole hant no moah. Amen.

*Annie (Stealing a look at LISSA, bites her lips to keep back the trembling and hands PETE a big cake).—*Theah, theah, fathah! Don't youh go thinkin' on like that no moah! Lissa, giv' youh fathah that theah sugah 'lassas. Youh jes git sta'ted on these heah battah cakes, Pete.

*Lissa (Patting her father's arm as she gives him the bowl).—*You don't need to go worrying any more, fathah! Now you've got a fine steady job and I've got a fine steady job, we ought to get along fine now!

Pete.—Ah ain't got nothin' t'go worretin' 'bout naw, Lissa, naw Jim's done brung back home.

Annie.—Theah, theah, fathah! Youh jes eat youh cakes! The Lawd don't want us grievin' foah the blessed, fathah!

*Pete (Looking up sharply).—*How come youh all time thinkin' Ah'm grievin' foah? Ah'm not grievin' foah Jim! Ah'm prond of him! (*Pausing, he stares off at the other side of the room with reminiscent eyes.*) Youh 'membahs that time Jim say he goin' make all the coloh'd people prond o'his name? That was the time he don' come back from Fisk an' youh yes 'bout licked him good foah all that uppishness. (*Chuckling.*) May be Jim know betta'n we don', what he were goin' t'do! (*He pushes back his chair and looks at his wife with a bent, searching stare.*) Youh seen this heah "News" t'day?

Annie.—Theah, theah, fathah! Don't youh like this heah sugah 'lassas? Ah don' made it pu'pos'ly foah youh.

*Pete (Ignoring her, takes the paper from a chair and reads slowly with difficulty).—*Youh jes lissen t'this, Annie! "Nation Joins in Doin' Rev'h'nt Honah t'Unknown Sol'ja." What youh think of that, mammy? (*Lifting his voice.*) Youh jes lissen t'this! "Body of Unknown Hero Laid in it's Final Restin' Plac' in Beau'ful Ahlin'ton Cem'tary." What youh think of that, mammy? Youh nevah think of that, when youh ussa heah Jim braggin' like he done!

*Lissa (Startled, glances at her mother).—*Give me the papah,

fathah. You're all ti'ad out with working, and you mustn't think about things like this.

Annie (With a touch of fright in her voice).—What youh talkin' 'bout, Pete? Youh eat youh battah cakes. Ah made 'em pu'pos'ly foah youh.

Pete (So excited that he begins to sound angry).—How youh think Ah'm goin' eat when Ah ain't don' tole youh 'bout Jim yet? Ah tells youh Ah nevah did e'sep't nothin like this. Ah was workin' theah in that fu'nance room, an' all at once Ah know Jim's theah too. He's standin' right ovah theah by one of them li'le windows. jes like he might be standin' ovah theah by that window, an' he has on his unifawm an' the li'le cap he don wore when he went away. He lean his ahm up on the window la'j, an' he say, "Fathah, youh don' hu'd what them newsboys is shoutin'?" Ah lissens, an' shuh 'nough they's some boys out theah shoutin' this heah 'bout the unknown sol'ja. "Fathah," Jim say, "youh don't need t'go worretin' 'bout me no moah. That's me they don' shouted 'bout! It's me they don' brung back from France." Aftah he don' say that, everything got b'lack in the fu'nace room, an' when Ah looked ovah at Jim aga'n, he'd went, an' Ah jes seen that li'tle ole window aga'n . . . Rekan he hed t'go back ta his ceh'mony. It suah be a grand way foah a black niggah's boy be brung back home! (*He leans back in his chair, relaxed and smiling, but his excitement is focused on ANNIE.*)

Annie (Clearly frightened).—Whata mattah with youh, Pete? Kain't youh eat these heah battah cakes Ah don' make pu'pos'ly foah youh?

Pete (Angrily).—Ah tells youh Ah ain't goin' eat no ole battah cakes! Ah tells youh Jim's don' brung back home! What a mattah with youh, Annie? Ain't youh prowd o'youh boy? (*Turning sharply to LISSA.*) Lissa, ain't youh prowd o'youh brothah? (*There is a heavy silence, into which PETE cuts again in a low sing-song.*) Ah don' look up an' theah stands Jim, jes like he'd be standin' by that window theah . . . (*He breaks off and stares immovable at the space to the side of the little window. His eyes are deep and sad again. LISSA and ANNIE follow his gaze as as if hypnotized.*) Look theah, Annie! Don't youh see Jim stand in' theah by the window? (*His voice falls into a low and tragic chant.*) How come youh kain't res' quiet like in youh fine grav', boy? Ole pappy want his boy res' quiet like, not have be no ole

hant. He say don't his mammy know he kain't res' quiet like so long's she ain't proud o'huh boy?

Annie (Falling to her knees, stares fascinated at the space by the window. She is crying in a low minor wail).—Ah does know it, Pete! Ah believes youh, Jim! Ah's proud o'mah boy!

LISSA has remained in her chair, frightened and trembling. She stands up now, her eyes fixed on the space at the window, and goes over to her father. She puts her hand over his eyes).—Don't cry, fathah! It isn't Jim; you'h just ti'ad out tonight! (She turns to her mother, and suddenly stands erect and confident.) What ah you crying 'bout, mothah? Fathah's all ti'ad out! Why, mothah! Don't you remembah, I told you a long time ago there wasn't any such thing as hants!

THE SOWERS

THE SOWERS

BY GABRIELE D'ANNUNZIO

Translated from the Italian by Rudolph Altrocchi

The sturdy peasants plod across the field
 Leading the oxen, slow and placid-faced;
 Behind them smokes the furrow, iron-traced,
 And open for the coming season's yield.
 Then with a widespread gesture of the hand
 The sower casts the grain; the aged seem
 To lift to heaven all their prayers and dream
 Of copious harvests—if the Lord command.
 Almost a pious human gratitude
 Today honors the earth. In the faint light
 Of dusk the temples of the hills, snow-white,
 Arise at vespers, while men lift a crude
 Plain chant on high, and there is in their mien
 A sacerdotal majesty serene.

AS TO FOREIGN CRITICISM.

BY MAY HARRIS

THERE is something touching if no worse—in the way we Americans invite criticism. It is the addition to our welcome of almost any foreigner to our shores, and the response of the foreigner is always instant and ready! He presents us with there verse of the medal—in politics, in manners, and in literature. Especially literature. Our newness is our incontestable flaw and the immeasurable superiority of the visiting European in the matter of centuries, becomes emphatic when we ask his opinion.

A great many very great people of both the English and the French nations have recently been our guests, and our magazines—not to speak of our newspapers—have supplemented their platform lectures in offering us a summary of our state. This state is very bad; the expert gentlemen who take our fee for consultation, are at one about that. Climate, government, society,—they are regretful but firm. None of these is, or possibly, can be, what they are accustomed to. The atmosphere of art and culture—likewise the atmosphere of class—is lacking. The crass, outstanding fact of millions—even when used for tribute and not defence—strikes on their consciousness . . .

This is not, *a priori*, a return criticism of their attitude; nor is it a defense of what may be quite as indefensible as they suggest. It is more nearly an effort to reason with the determined American desire to battle with an untempered wind. It would seem that we positively long to be flayed alive! And the amused, if not contemptuous, attitude of the visitor is not surprising. Each man—or woman—who comes over, holds up the mirror of his reflections which we receive with cheerful complaisance in the total of our deficiencies. Our air as we do so, is quite as if we said—as a footnote to the rulings of opinion: “About what I expected! Hopelessly below the old standards . . . But—” This “but”, is the echo of the gracious postscript to foreign comment which our visitors usually give in anti-climax—like the tail of a comet! It means, if one can visualize the visiting mind, that close attention to details of mental diet and stimulating culture may, in time, result in making us on a possible par with other people. Their people, for choice!

We should really have no quarrel with this spirit on the part of our critics. It is a good spirit—for it means that their consciousness is first of all national; that it has the backbone of individual satisfaction with its conditions; that it is in fact, and in essence, secure. Security is a very profound and splendid thing, and certain great names, immortally bonded for that security, add justification for their faith. It is not possible to imagine an American visitor in London, or Paris, or Rome, besieged by eager citizens for opinions of their works and ways—their old ruins, their new factories, their famous people. They don't care the smallest fraction of their countries' currency what our opinion is! The most optimistic of Americans will see centuries of striving before he can hope to reach this self-respecting Nirvana.

For the sensitive person is not the type to build the things whose concrete word with Englishmen is "Home." American self-expression is timid in the presence of what Europe has evolved in art and literature during twenty patient centuries. The American centuries are few, and they have been impatient, and crowded with the pioneer toil for material growth which has left its mark on later generations. We receive the full inheritance of strained nerves from our hard-working ancestors, and we cultivate the inheritance! We are nervous in almost any direction about what people may think about us, and we are especially nervous about our cultivation.

This product is the one most largely in question with our critics. The habit of their vigorously criticising our lack of it, is not more perfectly formed, than is our way of treating our possible possession of it, as a garment to be cut in a certain fashion—brought up, so to say, to the standard of some great *atelier* whose label is the most expensive and desirable.

Culture, one must hasten to acknowledge, is, of course, a product of civilization, and its special flowering has been more fortunate in some lands than in others. But even in those lands it is, for all the wealth of tradition, of "atmosphere," of old things, a relative condition. It belongs, in all countries, to the few—not the many; and it is forever beyond the aggressions of Bolshevism. Culture, it may be advanced, is less a question of atmosphere and learning, than it is of a certain class of mind to which it belongs like fragrance to a flower . . . It is the rare essence of essential things, clarified to individual excellence—or second nature. Arrogance is as far from its content of purpose, as humility. It can't ever be ordinary—though its best is simplicity's self.

Criticism, it may be urged, is one of the most potent factors of culture. Very true. But criticism to be of specific value, must be self-criticism. Experience has its unswerving place in education, it is the bolt that rivets our structure of living.

We would be selective to our visitors if we could—in our passionate desire to show our best. If possible, we would colonize our intellects with our manners and our millions, to make a good impression. But the critic who takes notes at our expense for our improvement, is quite honest in refusing to be influenced by special pleading. He sees the country—not quite steadily, (he is too beset by our cries for help!)—nor does he see it as a whole; but he sees, nevertheless, too much!

We, who are never asked our opinions, when we go abroad, see what has been mapped out for us by a tourist agency, or by our own inclinations. Beauty and tradition leave us little time to consider the weak points of the English temperament, or the invisible morals of the French. We are “on business of Egypt” for the good of our own souls; and besides, we have no comparisons to offer for the dome of St. Paul’s, for Ely cathedral, for Shakespeare’s name, for Westminster’s dead. The less hurried traveller, who by letters, or prestige of his own, meets interesting people of other countries, is more handicapped still in his judgment. He realizes, if he is just, that to speak accurately of things, one must know them; and if he is a man of intelligence, he knows that his judgment in any case, must have its confusion of values. No matter how English he may be by blood and tradition, he is not an Englishman! His allegiance belongs to another government. And this points the fact, does it not, that where one’s political fealty lies, is where one’s traditions should be nurtured. The greatest difficulty with us in inculcating the most magnificent English trait—the love of country as of home—has been literature. Always, the boundless sweep of the English language, which is also ours, has made us feel that the landmarks of their literature could be claimed by us as well as by them. Our literary efforts, in effect, merge into the parent stem, and are a part of the same great growth. We feel, in a special sense, that we are right in this—for language has its own empire; but it is easy to see that English resentment has crept in through this channel. Our literature, on its own merits, would receive more impartial judgment than when considered as a portion of England’s. No American one ever heard of, lays claim to Nelson, or Wellington, or Pitt, or Burke, because of the bond of English blood and speech. These are England’s heroes—

as Washington, and Lee, and Lincoln are ours! But in the matter of their great writers, we will not let England alone! We confound in our appreciation of great things, the spiritual claim which belongs to the intelligence of the world, with the pride of possession—which can only belong to the land of birth.

If this paper were written in the spirit of defence or of defiance it would be easy for any able minded person to lay it low. It tries on the contrary, to make a simple statement of a simple case—that the growth of a literature is one with the growth of a people and that the spirit of leisure and self-criticism—the fusion of a national spirit with an individual ideal—will do more to foster the cultivation of that literature, than the detached, and in some cases tolerantly amused criticism of our visiting friends.

SUNSET

BY BARBARA HOLLIS

Twilight is falling; in the west
Its soul dispels the waiting grey—
The synonym of peace and rest—
The swan song of the dying day.

A flood of rainbows interlaced
With storms and sun and warming showers;
With Nature's brush of colors traced,
The soul kiss of her dying flowers.

The color music of one day
In concentrated glory lies
Above, below, beyond, away—
Reflected, echoed in the skies.

THE GRECIAN URN

BY ARTHUR H. NETHERCOT

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

THE URN-MAKER
THE APPRENTICE
THE DREAMER
THE BOLD LOVER
CLYTO
THE PRIEST
VILLAGERS, *etc.*

A beautiful wooded spot. In an open spot stands a small altar of white stone, outlined against the green and brown of the trees. The classicist will recognize it immediately as lying in the valley of Tempe, altho even he would be puzzled to tell you in just what part. The sward is smooth and green.

The URN-MAKER and his APPRENTICE approach along a path from the right and pause on the edge of the woods. The former is white-haired and bent, but his eyes shine as if in an ever-ending quest, the latter is still a lad, eager, with expressive hands. He seems interested in what is taking place around him, and his eyes do not shine in quite the same way as do his master's.

Urn-Maker.—

Why have you brought me here? It is in vain
That we should seek a fitting pattern here.
I will not stay! Return! These Gods—

Apprentice (Holding him pleadingly by his cloak as he turns to go).—

But Oh!

My master, where should better chance be given
Than here, in Tempe, at a sacrifice,
When all the village, lassies, lads, and priests,
The young, the old, and e'en the Gods themselves
Perhaps—

Urn-Maker (Interrupting, almost as if he had put his hands to his ears).—

Again you say "the Gods!" In truth,
 You speak as if you had not lived with me
 A single hour, and had not learned to think
 In higher terms than oracles and priests.
 And in your urns the same: you have the skill,
 But in your folly look at what you carve—
 A chubby babe that looks as tho it lived!
 You see the earth and nothing more; you live
 In Tempe, and you fetter here your mind;
 You will not learn that life is but a sign,
 A symbol of what art must make it be.—

Apprentice.—

Ah, master! Could I only make you see
 My side!

Urn-Maker (Pays no heed, but speaks scornfully; he has forgotten that the APPRENTICE has heard much the same things many times before, and he addresses an imaginary audience of Philistines).—

You prate of Gods as persons one may see
 If one is favored—and gives sacrifice.
 A comfortable doctrine, yes, 'tis true,
 And easier far than knowing the Abstract
 In worthy ways. You would not see beyond
 The outside of an urn; you would not see
 The beauty of the inner polished shape,
 All smooth and lovely in its simple curves.
 You'd leave it rough—

Apprentice (Throws out his hands in protest).—

No, master, no! You do
 Not mean, you cannot think that I would so—

Urn-Maker (Recalled to himself).—

Ah, pardon, boy! I did forget myself.
 I go too far when once I start to preach—
 And you have been a ready pupil swift
 In all but insight into truth itself,
 Which dwells above the earth whereon we live.
 But tell me now in turn what you believe
 To be the highest good of all our craft,
 And I shall listen, be it ne'er so false!

Apprentice.—

Thanks, master, for your love. I need not speak
 However, for you know my creed. But if
 You would perceive it where I learned myself,

Remain and watch the people's gathering.
 Who knows but if the Gods will not be good
 And give you inspiration for your task,
 Your master-work, your greatest urn of all?

The URN-MAKER bows his head in acquiescence, and the two seat themselves at the side while the procession files in. It is just as the young Keats described it, except that he did not understand the time-order of the two scenes. First comes the Priest in charge of the altar, leading a heifer garlanded with flowers. After him comes a crowd of villagers. Prominent among these is CLYTO, pressed on one side by the BOLD LOVER and on the other by the DREAMER, who carries a flute and reminds one of Horace's "gracilis puer." CLYTO seems distracted, turning now to one and now to the other, but answering only in short phrases. The three speak while the people group themselves about the altar, and the PRIEST prepares for his office.

Dreamer.—

. . . the trees around in budding green,
 The fragrant grass beneath our feet,
 The fondling of the breeze, the beat
 Of forest orchestras, unseen—

Ah, Clyto! might I only pass
 My life without a change from this
 I should such gold of love amass
 That none could value it but by thy kiss!

Bold Lover (Rudely; he is much like what Sybaris must have been before Lydia got him into her toils).—

Go play your flute! Why are you here?
 Go sing and love your lady while you dream
 If thus you love! You need not fear
 E'en if the sign from Artemis should seem
 To call our Clyto for her priestess dear.
 You'd find a new

And worship her afar as now you do.
 But I—well, if the Gods decide
 Against me, will I then abide
 Their judgment? Nay, I'll pluck—

He is about to anticipate Hotspur in plucking the thing nearest his heart from the pale-faced moon, when CLYTO interrupts.

Clyto (In terror at his blasphemy places her hand over his mouth. Nevertheless, she is not greatly angered, but rather happy, at this defiance of heaven for her sake).—

Oh hush!

Have you no fear? Can you not blush
At such a boaster's words? Be still!

Bold Lover (Meekly,—but he brushes her hand with his lips before she can draw it away).—

I hear and bow, until—!

But all is now ready for the ceremony, and the old PRIEST approaches to consult the principals before he begins. The URN-MAKER grows restless, but the APPRENTICE pacifies him.

Priest.—

Artemis will deign to answer
If in honesty you come,
Seek to know if by good chance her
Will would have you leave your home.
If you wish to be her maiden
Now again you must assure
Me that your desire is pure,
Nor by heavy doubts is laden.

Clyto.—

Sacred server of Olympus,
But a simple maid am I;
So upon the lap of heaven
Do I throw my fate, and cry
That my doubtings will be ended
By the Goddess's reply.

Dreamer.—

But if there should come an omen
Leaving her no votaress,
But a song-inspiring woman
Ask a sign which then will bless
Him—or me.

Bold Lover (Quickly).—

Nay, I'll caress
Clyto spite of all your wonders.
She is mine, shall answer "Yes!"
E'en tho Jove in fury thunders!

The people, shocked at the impiety, look expectantly for an avenging thunderbolt, altho the sky is clear. As nothing is heard, however, but the song of a thrush; they surge about the defier of heaven threateningly; but CLYTO throws herself between them, and the sacrifice proceeds.

The heifer is placed bleating on the altar, and the PRIEST raises

the knife. But his arm is old and his stroke is deflected, clashing harmlessly on the stone. Satisfied, he turns to the suppliant.

Priest.—

The Goddess has spoken; my office is done;
Her will is apparent; she will not receive
The sacrifice offered in duty by one
Who yet wavers, uncertain,—who does not believe
That the call in her heart was in heaven begun.
Let the wooers then strive for the prize,
Contend for her under our eyes.

Urn-Maker (Aside to APPRENTICE).—

Come, come! We waste our time in lingering here.
There's no suggestion here for a design
Which would befit the urn I labor on;
There is no meaning more than what we see
No food for thought. 'Tis real—

Apprentice.—

And there you speak
The word which I have followed all my life.—
The show is almost done.
(*Persuasively*) Await the end.
Before we give up hope of our success.

The PRIEST has approached the eternal triangle during this short colloquy, and in answer to his command the DREAMER speaks, addressing CLYTO.

Dreamer.—

The skylark asks but little from the sun,
Except that it should light him as he flies
And thru his throat pours forth Apollo's song.
So can I offer but the love of one
Who in thy presence with the Sun-God vies
In melodies divine; to thee belong
The praise and honor, for no power lies
Within me but when thou hast made me strong.
And so, I play.—

He retires to the edge of the woods and plays, accompanied by the village talent on soft pipes and timbrels. And he is indeed justified in his pride, for the whole of springtime, with its Arcadian shepherds and shepherdesses, is brought to the listener's ear by his music. Even the old URN-MAKER is exalted by it, and his poetical insight becomes clearer—as will be seen in a moment. The BOLD LOVER,

however, takes an unfair advantage while his rival is lost in the ecstasy of his own creation, and plies his courting characteristically.

Bold Lover.—

He does not love you true—
 He does not love you for yourself at all,
 But for the music he can play thru you.
 Then come with me—there, where the old leaves fall,
 Dethroned by the new.

He endeavors to seize her, but with a little cry CLYTO evades him and speeds away down the leafy path, with her pursuer close behind. The URN-MAKER and his companion alone see them as they flit past, for the others are entranced by the DREAMER'S music.

The URN-MAKER gazes an instant and then turns abruptly away.

Urn-Maker (Excitedly).—

Away! Away! I'll see no more! I have
 A symbol which will fit my master urn.
 I must not see the end. He must pursue
 Forever, just behind and reaching out
 His hand to grasp her by her floating robe;
 But never must he touch her, for she then
 Would vanish like the mist upon the hills.
 The marble will I shape into such forms
 The allegory can be read by those
 Who know the truth, for only by the few
 Can art be known. So quick!—

Apprentice (Also excitedly; but he plainly would be a follower of Tolstoi if it were not an anachronism).—

I stay!
 But do not think I mock you if I do,
 For I am gladdened by your good success,
 And love you still. But yet, I stay!

Urn-Maker (Turns quickly into the woods).—Farewell!

After a short time, during which the audience is so charmed by the DREAMER'S music that it does not become restless, CLYTO is seen returning, clinging to the BOLD LOVER'S arm. Caught, she has evidently capitulated. Their return awakes the others from their trance, and they spring up just in time to hear the BOLD LOVER speak.

Bold Lover.—

I never knew your perfectness till now!

The APPRENTICE turns away with the benignant smile of a bishop—and if John Keats had seen HIS urn, his ode would have had to undergo material changes!

NATURE AND HUMANITY

BY MARY R. BALDWIN

Recently one, on the way to a public library in passing yards freshly carpeted with the beautiful grass, perhaps more appealing in its latest appearance because of the delayed Spring, was swiftly taken by memory back to the long gone seasons when Nature came forth in her new dress.

In the library a large bowl of lilacs near the book-receiving desk attracted her attention. She spoke of them to the young woman who served her, whose face lighted as she replied, "They offer a wonderful appeal through association." Unconsciously she struck a chord that thrilled the listener who had, in her comings and goings from the South to the North, missed in many who professed to be in love with Nature signs of a recognition of meanings that went deeper than an outward view of form and color. To apply to the majority the significance of a poet's words—

A primrose by the river's brim
A yellow primrose was to him,
And it was nothing more,

might be unjust, and yet it seems to fit very many who find pleasure in Nature's varied appearances and never see beneath the outward form.

There are writers who have so lent themselves to natural influences without regard to conventional views, who discarding the lenses of even the savants, have looked into their own hearts and have spoken of this vision. George Eliot has, perhaps, expressed as clearly as any other writer her thought of Nature's associations with human experience—"Our delight in the sunshine and the deep-bladed grass to-day might be no more than the perception of weary souls, if it were not for the sunshine and the grass of far-off years which still live in us and transform our perceptions into love."

Lafacadio Hearn in his writings upon the Japanese as Nature lovers declares that the nation has discovered attractions where occidentals saw only ugliness. In his "Exotics and Retrospections" he asks—"Is it without significance that they (the Japanese)

alone have been able to make use of the Centipede?" "You should see my tobacco pouch with the centipedes of gold running over it like ripples of fire."

He says that for centuries certain localities have been famous as resorts on account of the opportunities afforded for listening to the crickets and locusts especially to the night singers. Most of his readers have learned of the facts given with regard to this race of lovers of Nature but it is one thing to learn of the mere facts and quite another to feel through them a glow through the power of the rare and suggestive meanings of an enthusiast whose imagination carries the torch through mysterious ways.

The child-like recognition of meanings that relate themselves to human experiences are worked into their literature, examples are offered in their poetry. From the insect poetry he quotes,—

Faint in the moonshine sounds the charm of insect voices,
To-night the sadness of Autumn speaks in the plaintive tones
I can never find repose in the chilly nights of Autumn
Because of the pain I hear in the insects' plaintive song.
How must it be in the fields when the dews are falling thickly
In the insect voices that reach me I hear the tingling of cold.

Always more clear and shrill as the hush of the night grows deeper.
Be waiting insects' voice, and I that wait in the garden
Feel enter into my heart the voice and the moon together.

O insect, insect! think you that harm can be exhausted by song!

In his "Fireflies and a drop of water," his stories are full of sentiment, grace, and charm as they interpret the suggestiveness of Nature related to the unseen world. Nothing of importance with regard to his subject is neglected as he describes the nature, habits and use of these insects. He says, however, that he does not mean to give an entomological discourse upon the firefly, for such knowledge he refers his readers to a Japanese Biologist—Mr. S. Watse, whose essay upon fireflies has been issued in book form, adding "The colored frontispiece showing fireflies at night upon a willow branch is alone worth the price of the book."

His information with reference to the catching, and selling of the insects is very interesting. The work of securing them is done at night. The catcher works with his long bamboo pole until about two in the morning, which he says is "the old Japanese hour of ghosts."

The fireflies are sold for use at banquets and the room overlooking the gardens where they are set free, the guests are given a full view of them.

To his description of their use he adds a rapturous monologue "Here is a firefly with its infinitesimal dynamo able to produce a pure cold light at one four hundredth part of the cost of the energy expended in a candle flame. The very wonder of the thing forbids me to imagine gods at work—no mere god could even contrive such a prodigy as the eye of a May-fly or the tail of a firefly."

The chapter upon "Frogs" proves his view often spoken or suggested that among the Japanese he found child-like, eager, devoted Nature lovers discovering attractions in even what occidentals name *ugliness*. The frog, like the insect, has a place in their literature.

He explains that the love poems will not seem so strange to readers when they consider that the lovers' trysting hour is also the hour when the frog-chorus is in full cry, and that in Japan at least, the memory of the sound would be associated with the memory of the secret meeting in any solitary place. He states that the Japanese have a proverb—"The frog in the well knows not the great sea," before quoting the lines of a young girl,

Laugh me to scorn if you please,
Call me your frog-in-the well,
Flowers fall into the well,
And its waters mirror the moon.

So many voices of frogs that I cannot but wonder
If the pond is not wider by night than by day.

Now sings the frog, and the voice of the frog is perfumed
For into the shining stream the cherry petals fall.

Sleepy the sound of the rain but your voice
Makes me dream, O frog!

And so through Nature's appearances the people discover psychological meanings beyond material environment. In studying their literature relating to the associations with the past, we recognize the childlike spirit, ready to receive, the freshness of meanings that to their unspoiled sight glow in living beauty. But are there not seers who waiting beside curtained ways, have through their insistence made a transparent corner of the screening veil and beheld Truth in its pure nakedness and untouched beauty?

Has not this glimpse worked a magical enlargement in mind and spirit and offered the key to that rhythm throughout God's creative realm that means Beauty in Me, and Me in Beauty everywhere?

And this sense of harmony—does it not teach a great lesson of relief to doubting anxious souls, telling them that theirs is no mischance in the workings of the great Divine restorative purpose—that has given importance to the most inconspicuous object in Nature and linked it even to our most sacred experiences and aspirations?

APPROACHING SPRING

BY JOSEPH UPPER

Spring is walking on the far-off hills . . .
I have caught the odor of her perfumed sandals,
And my heart is echoing the vibrations of her light footfall.

She is sending surreptitious propaganda on each breeze,
And I fear her; for I know how deftly
She steals away men's reason
With her fresh enthusiasm
And her Utopian dreams.

She is calling me to go out on the hills to meet her,
But I dare not leave the city streets.
For here I know they lie who talk of happiness,
Yet if I come face to face with this false goddess
I shall believe her.

THE DELUSION OF A HUMAN CUP

FROM THE NOH PLAY CALLED
"IKKAKU SENNIN THE ONE-HOM RISHI"

Translated from the Japanese

BY YONE NOGUCHI

Having quarrelled for power with an Archdragon, a king of
rain,
Monoceros of Varanasi Mount, born from the womb of a deer
with a horn on his forehead,
Succeeded by wizardry to imprison him and his dragons in a
cave:

Hence a drought of many months in the land.
The sovereign pitied people and thought with a scheme to send
Senda, a matchless beauty in the court,
Into the mountain in the guise of a traveller, hoping her charm
Might delude the Rishi into losing his power;
He bade a courtier to start in company with the enchantress fair.

The mountain is far from the human world: your footmarks
Will be buried under the clouds, your dream troubled
By the sudden blast through the chill forest.
The season is mid-autumn: the thickening dewdrops over the
wilds of maple leaves
Freeze even the wind which cuts one's frame.
The courtier and lady plod deeper into the mountain for many
days,
Till they smell a strange odor wafting from a shadow between
the rocks.
They behold a little hut built of creepers and pines;
They wonder if it is a retreat of the Rishi whom they seek.
They peep into the shelter, they find Monoceros soliloquizing:—

"Here in the jar is a limpid water from the glen;
I boil a few flakes of the mountain clouds in the tripod kettle.
There is nobody to be seen:

The music is done.
 The mountain trees thick in green are now coloured,
 What a delight in the autumn scene turning to red!"

Convinced that the voice is the Rishi's, the courtier knocks at
 the door of the hut;
 Rishi answers, but not opening the door:—
 "This is a place
 Where one high mountain rises upon another,
 Where no mortal ever visited before. Who art thou?"

"Strangers are we," the courtier speaks, "who have lost our way
 In the mountains. The day is going to set.
 Leaving us in distress. Pray, give us a shelter for the night!"

"Nay, this is a spot," Monoceros says, "where no human
 kind
 Should step in. Quickly begone from here!"

The courtier exclaims:—"Is this then the dwelling of a heavenly
 being
 If it be not the place for human kind to stay?
 Come, and, pray, let us see thy face!"

Monoceros, innocent of the scheme of the visitors,
 Opens his wicker-made door: what a strange figure!
 With a stag's horn on his forehead covered by unkempt hair.
 The courtier asks him if he is Monoceros, the Rishi, whose fame
 Is known even in the lower world. Monoceros says:

"A Rishi am I.
 Monoceros is my name. If my eyes deceive me not, ye are no
 common sort of travellers.
 Who is the lady accompanying thee? What a lovely lady
 With her eyebrows fragrant, like a crescent, with her robe of
 flower-like silk!"

The courtier wishes to put the Rishi out of suspicion, says that
 they are naught
 But poor travellers astray from the right road; he then asks him
 If he would taste a few drops of the wine which they carry

For refreshment from fatigue. Monoceros shakes his head,
saying:—

“I never taste wine since I am a being deathless,
Never growing older, living on the needles of pine trees,
Drinking nothing but the dewdrops, and wearing a dress of
mosses green.”

“But there would be,” says the courtier, “no harm in accepting
our goodwill.”

He makes signs to the lady with his stealthy eyes; the lady
rises

Toward the Rishi with a cup extended. The Rishi accepts the
cup saying:—

“How one ungrateful for another’s kindness would be worse than
a demon or beast.”

Monoceros repeats the cup brimming with wine that sparkles
Like the moon; the fair lady dances, and her sleeves, as if a fold
of maple leaves,

Glitter in the sunlight. How beautiful is her dance!

The dance grows merrier; Monoceros drinks more wine being
mystified.

Beguiled by her irresistible charm. In his overflowing joy,
He too rises and dances, then he totters down to the floor,
And falls in a sleep. The courtier and lady think that the scheme
Is successfully answered. Before the Rishi awakens, they hasten
back to the city.

Alas, the heaven and earth shake and tremble!

What sound is that bursting from the cave?

It is nothing but the uproar of the Archdragon and his hosts

Breaking away from their confinement in the darkest den.

When the Rishi comes to life again, it is too late,

Aghast he sees

Before his face the Archdragon who exclaims:

“What a pity!

Thou art duped by human friendship, and has lost

Thy magical power of old days. Poor Monoceros, thou doomed,
accused one!”

The mountain wind begins to roar, assaulting the blackened sky;
 The rocks and cave shiver and shudder, all the dragons
 Are abroad, pressing Monoceros to the final combat.
 Monoceros draws his sword, stands again to try his power of
 old,
 But his wizardry fails him. He is seen lying on the ground in dis-
 may.
 The King of the Dragons clad in armour of gold,
 With a dagger of a thousand gems, now exulting in his conquest
 over Monoceros,
 Calls aloud the names of the thunders and lightning to send down
 The mighty torrent of rain to the suffering world; with all the
 hosts of dragons.
 The King hurries back to his palace a thousand fathoms under
 the seas,
 Riding triumphantly over the thousand billows.
 The long drought is over; the people of Varanasi are happy.
 Their joyous songs in gratitude follow
 The Archdragon along the path where he rides away.

SOMEWHERE I CHANCED TO READ

BY GUSTAV DAVIDSON

Somewhere I chanced to read how love may die
 From too large giving. So I mused thereon:
 'Haply in this our utmost fear should lie?'
 And mindful of this caution. I read on.
 Then saw these words: 'Yet love may equally
 Abate through long neglect.' But thereupon
 I smiled, believing hereof we were free
 And would be ever, till our days were done.

Now love is dead, but how I cannot tell:
 Whether from too large giving or neglect.
 First dimmed the flame, and after that there fell
 Th' accusing silence. Yet I should elect
 Neither of these as cause, but say love died
 Out of a cold and calculating pride.

AT VERSAILLES

(In the Hall of Mirrors)

BY A. B. LEIGH

Turn back the clock—the ushers
Call out a mighty name—
A thousand tapers sparkle;
A million jewels flame;
And comes the peacock Louis
In clouds of gems and lace;
Like butterflies and roses
His cohorts fill the place.

Here Maintenon and Pompadour
And pink Du Barry rose
Like June days in their glory
New wonders to disclose.
And here in all the splendor
Shot through with roses' breath;
They danced the dance of pleasure—
And then the dance of death.

Outside the sun is shining
And glowing vistas spread;
The great old trees are living;
The great old kings are dead.
By terrace wall and fountain
Bloom flowers in vivid hosts—
But queens and lovely ladies
Come only now as ghosts.

This glittering palace rises
Mirage of other days;
Ere kings and lords and ladies
Had gone their shadow ways.

THE FOUR FISHERMEN

BY R. P. TRISTRAM COFFIN

Peter and Andrew, James and John,
Four bronzed men whom the sea beat on,
 Casting their nets till the stars went out
 And day came up on the hills like a shout!

Year in, year out, they cast to net
Only small fish that fishermen get.

 But one fine night when the moon was new
 And luck was snapping across the blue
In tails of fish that beat high glee,
They caught the Light of Galilee;
 Shook from their meshes the cold sea-things
 To fill them full of the King of Kings.

Peter and Andrew and James and John,
Fine tall men with their sealegs on,
 Sailed the world with the Son of Man,
 Doing the work that strong men can.
Over the cities and over the walls
They cast their nets for goodly hauls
 Of hearts that leaped to see the light
 After the deeps of ancient night.
There came the black day when they lost
The Master Fisher; but on they tossed,
 Going the way that He had gone,
 And dying like Him with their seaboots on.

Peter and Andrew, James and John—
Still to the end their work goes on.
 Out of the four great winds which fly
 Thick with stars down the Winter sky
Peter goes welding the sinews strong
Of men who fish the Winter long;
 Andrew gives fishermen tang of mirth;
 James such courage as salts this earth;
But John best befriends their windy lives
In giving them love of waiting wives.
 So fishermen still in their catches find
 The hearts and homage of all mankind.

FOUR POEMS OF CHANG-WOU-KIEN 1879

(Translated from the French version in "La Flute de Jade")

BY ELIZABETH S. DICKERMAN

THE MUSIC ROOM

The sweet musicians have departed
But the fair lilacs in their jars of jade
Lean toward the lutes, all tender hearted,
Still listening to the melodies they played.

THE FISHERMAN

The quiet lake mirrors the crescent moon.
Like a great fisherman in mantle blue
The mountain peak Chung Ti looks down to veiw
What fish will snap this golden hook full soon.

I WAS WALKING

Lo! across the autumn sky
In black lines the wild geese fly.
Hangs deserted many a nest
Where the little birds did rest
And the mountains dark and high
Loom more solid in the west.
I have found thy fair jade flute,
All the hours of summer mute,
Lost among the grasses green,
To our searching all unseen.
Gone the grass, my eyes salute
It shining in the sunshine keen.
Thus our love. Such scruples grew
Hiding it long time from view.

THE LAST WALK

My gift, the rich, red tulip—
Thou didst drop it by the way.
When I stooped to pick it up,
All white it lay.
In an instant snow had fallen
On our love that day.

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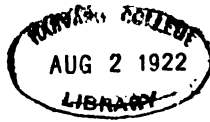
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THE AWAKENING

A FIVE ACT DRAMA

BY FRANCIS ADOLF SUBERT

Translated from the Bohemian by Beatrice M. Mekoia

CAST

KAREL, *a Count from Silesia*
JAN ARNOŠT, COUNT BEAUVALLE-LICHTENBERG
COUNTESS MARIE LUDMILA
FILIP, COUNT MILLESIMO
TOMEŠ VITEK
VRÁNA, *a small farmer*
LÍDA VRÁNOVA
VÁCLAV, *a count from Bubna*
FRANTIŠEK, BARON SCHIRNDING, *commander of the troops at Pilsen*
KOŘINEK, *a bagpiper*
HAVELKA, *a gamekeeper*
MARIE, *daughter of HAVELKA*
JAN KRÍŠTOF, *counsellor at the emperor's court*
VOJTĚCH PROKOP, *assistant counsellor*
JÍRAK, *a small farmer*
URBAN, *a magistrate*
JAN, *the castle game keeper*
Peasants, Officials, Game Warden, Soldiers, Servants and Attendants at the castle, Private Servant of KAREL, COUNT DEJMA, Chamber Maid.

SCENE, *Castle of BEAUVALLE LICHTENBERG at Pilsen*
TIME, *The year 1742.*

ACT I

To the left the game-keeper's house. The open door opens into a spacious living room. A meadow spreads out at the rear of the house, a forest looms up at the right.

SCENE I

The COUNTESS, MARIE, *the* bagpiper KOŘINEK

KOŘINEK *stands in front of the game-keeper's house, playing his bagpipe. From the rear, the COUNTESS with MARIE slowly approach together. Absorbed in their conversation, they glance up, and notice the bagpiper who is still playing.*

Marie.—My Lady, there is the bagpiper!

Countess.—The bagpiper,—the old bagpiper! Come! Let us go nearer to listen!

Marie (*Calling*).—Bagpiper, bagpiper, nobody is at home!

(KOŘINEK, *an aged man with long thin white hair, turns about, sees the ladies approaching, and makes a deep bow.*)

Countess (*Praising him*).—Well done. You play very well. If we had a group of boys and girls here, they would doubtless be dancing in a circle about you. (*The delighted bagpiper prances about, keeping time to his music with his feet.*)

Marie.—Just look, my lady, he skips about like a live, frisky young kid,—as though he were alive instead of a bellows. (*The bagpiper finishes.*)

Countess.—Where do you come from, Grandfather? You do not belong at this court.

Kořinek (*With bared head, approaches the lady to kiss her hand*)
—From Pilsen, noble lady, from Pilsen.

Countess.—And why are you here? (*Giving him a coin.*)

Kořinek.—It is the war, the war, noble lady. All the while they are trailing along the road toward Prague,—now even the French regiments are coming on, and those soldiers seem to have more loose coins about them than one could store away in a bag pipe. On my faith, it does not appear as though they were marching against us! And so I will follow them up to Prague to play for them. I will earn more there in one week than at Pilsen by playing at all the festivals!

Countess.—But they are our enemies!

Kořinek.—Enemies, noble lady? Yes, true, true, but strange kinds of enemies. There were other days, within the memory of the old folks, when war came and brought enemies in its train. They took whatever there was to take! Houses were burned, people had to flee, yes, entire villages were destroyed. I well remember the Swedes! But the Bavarians? They wouldn't harm a hair of my head. If the good Lord would but be gracious enough to always send such enemies!

Countess (Gently rebuking him).—Do not talk so, old man! However that may be, they are still our enemies. And how will you manage to talk to them?

Bagpiper (Jokingly).—Noble lady, I can talk to them, very well indeed! The bagpipe makes friends everywhere, and the enemies' coins are as good as ours.

Countess.—But take care that something don't befall you! Better remain here, within our border. There is another castle not far distant. Better stroll on toward it, and earn something there.

Bagpiper.—The Lord bless you, noble lady. May fortune ever be kind, and the fates smile upon you. (*He strikes up a merry tune, and takes his leave, sauntering to the rear toward the park.*)

Marie (To the COUNTESS).—He intends to take the forest path! Certainly it is dangerous!

Countess.—True! (*Calling the bagpiper*) Not that way! It isn't safe. You might encounter wild animals in the park! Go to the right. (*Pointing out the direction.*) It may be longer, but you will then be safe! (*The bagpiper continues to play, and gradually disappears in the wood. The COUNTESS and MARIE stand silently gazing after him.*)

SCENE II

MARIE, the COUNTESS

Marie (After the bagpiper has disappeared).—A jolly old fellow. But my lady, with so many foreign troops passing toward Prague,—do you not fear that they may come here also?

Countess.—Have no apprehensions. They march along the highways and public roads. Nowhere have they been reported for any violence or depredations they have committed. But even if they should come this way,—(*jestingly*) certainly you would not be afraid?

Marie (Gazing affectionately upward into the eyes of the COUNTESS).—I have a father,—yes, and your gracious protection, my lady.

Countess.—And is that all?

Marie (Blushing, with downcast eyes.)

Countess.—And Tomeš? Is it not true that he also would protect you?

Marie.—My Lady!

Countess.—Do not be afraid. I would not interfere. Child, I myself am somewhat fond of your Tomeš.

Marie (Kissing the hand of the COUNTESS).—My precious Countess!

Countess.—I knew how he felt when I saw him looking at you while you two danced together. Fine looking young man, to be sure.

(*MARIE shyly brushes away the tears.*)

Countess (Laughingly).—So, so; your joy has melted you into tears. Don't you have a bit of lonely longing to see him?

Marie.—Yes, joy and longing intermingled. And frankly speaking, I am deeply worried.

Countess (Surprised).—Worried?

Marie (Gazing about, adds uncertainly).—We are speaking of Tomeš, and,—he does not deny that he goes a-poaching.

Countess (Laughing).—And you are weeping about it? He appears to be a fearless and daring fellow!

Marie.—Yes, yes, but the Count! And what would happen to Tomeš were he to be caught?

Countess (Seriously).—That must not happen. Your lover must not carry his favorite pastime to so desperate an end. That would be serious!

Marie.—That is what I fear; that is why I worry about him!

Countess.—Let him indulge his whim, but warn him not to involve himself in trouble. (*Half jokingly*) But you have so much influence over him,—surely you need have no fear. (*During their conversation they arrive at the spot where the bagpiper disappeared into the forest.*) Now go home, child. Your father, the game keeper, will be coming soon. I will return to the castle. If you come to the village, stop to see me. I will delay the bagpiper there, if you wish to hear him again. (*TOMEŠ now appears, coming from the direction of the game reserve. He pauses, seeing MARIE with the COUNTESS.*)

Marie.—Thank you, many thanks, noble lady, but I doubt whether I can come today.

Countess.—Then make it tomorrow, at the latest! It is now at least three days since you have paid me a call. And I have been preparing something for you!

Marie.—How kind you are, my Lady! (*Kisses her hand.*)

(*The COUNTESS laughingly touches MARIE's cheek with her lips, and goes away. MARIE returns to the cottage of the game keeper.*)

TOMEŠ hastens to overtake her, and slips his arm affectionately around her waist.)

SCENE III

TOMEŠ, MARIE

Tomeš.—I've caught you now, my little Marie.

Marie (*With a faint exclamation*).—How you frightened me! For heaven's sake, be more careful! Suppose some one were to see us!

Tomeš.—And isn't it perfectly lawful?

Marie.—Yes, but this is not a scene for the public eye. (*Seriously*) The Countess was just now speaking of you.

Tomeš.—And what did she say?

Marie (*Holding his hand and gazing earnestly into his eyes*).—That you should not go a-poaching.

Tomeš (*Astonished*).—Marie! And how in the world did you happen to open up the subject?

Marie.—It is with me all the time,—the fear of discovery. My sweetest dreams of you at night are changed into a nightmare, and I awake with the cold sweat of fear upon me. It worries me by day, and haunts me by night. (*Earnestly*.) Promise me, to stay away from the forest!

Tomeš (*With darkening face*).—When the kingfisher above yonder brook promises you to cease from robbing the stream of its fish,—then I also will give you my promise. Do you know, Marie, the charm of the forest,—do you realize the fascination that lures, and drags man into its green depths, that pictures a thousand images there for him? In such moments, man is like a mating grouse,—he sees nothing, hears nothing; he would be indifferent if a score of game wardens were at his very heels.

Marie (*Gloomily, absorbed in thought*).—And he is indifferent even to the sacred gift of life, which he might so easily lose,—(*quickly*) to you and me!

Tomeš.—True, how true. (*Gazes ahead absorbed in his thoughts*) and still you cannot shake off that strange power, once it has you in its grip. Perhaps you have tried a thousand times . . . Hm! . . . (*gazes laughingly ahead*.) Just now the count has made new laws, making the punishment for poachers even more severe. So far, neither the count nor any one else has any well founded suspicion about me. But he intends to go after us now!

Marie.—O Tomsí, do not risk your life so foolishly! Stay away from the woods which do not lawfully belong to you!

Tomeš.—They are not mine,—true. Neither do they belong to the present possessor who claims them! Do you know, these woods, those all about us once belonged to the people settled among them? Do you realize that those people,—you, I, still have the right to claim them? Later the present masters came,—came like thieves in the night and took them,—seized whatever they pleased to claim! Now they say the woods are theirs, not ours! . . . And we must forever be deprived of our possessions, robbed of our birthright by these vandals, se ourselves oppressed, despised by them!

Marie.—Tomsí, what are you saying!

Tomeš.—Nothing but the truth! . . . (*Quietly.*) The chronicles give us the record of these stately old forests! formerly here among us, yes, all over this territory, this country,—there were other ruling masters, called the “Bohemian Counts,”—and one of them even owned this castle with its estates. But they were, (*his voice rose with rising anger*) they, including the original master of this castle, were all the victims of a violent death at Prague,—and then, whoever came, seized and held whatever he saw fit to take. (*Excitedly*) My grandfather used to talk by the hour about it; he heard the facts directly from his father. (*Quietly, and secretly*) The great grandfather of the present count,—it is said that he took possession of this estate through a crafty course.

Marie (Fearfully).—If some one were to hear you!

Tomeš (With clouded face).—One dare not openly discuss it . . . but sometimes when I think of the injustice of it all, when alone, it fires my blood and burns like fire in my veins. . . . I then feel as though I could do something wild, desperate and when I say to myself, I have as much right to hunt in these forests as the count has to live in his ill-gotten castle,—and then I straightway go into them and no one could prevent me!

Marie.—Tomeš, Tomeš, how wild you are today! And what do you hope to accomplish by this lawlessness?

Tomeš.—And though it is all in vain, (*pointing to his breast*)—if I could only ease the burning pain that gnaws at my vitals here. Just remember what the people are obliged to suffer out in the fields from these aristocratic beasts, these slave-drivers That old Vrána

Marie (Enviously).—He again,—and that

Tomeš (Taking up her sentence).—Do not go on so. Please do not talk about Lída . . . do not believe anything.

Marie.—Then why is she following you up all the time, and why are you at Vrána's so much?

Tomeš.—I truly pity the child if she cares for me. It is only her mistaken sense of gratitude . . . I jumped into the lake to save her that time she was drowning . . . (*Earnestly*) But I do not give her a thought . . . Don't you believe me?

Marie.—I do believe you, but at times my heart is heavy when I think of Lída. The Countess asked about her yesterday. And today she gave me a hint that you should guard yourself. It might go badly with you, were you to be caught hunting in the woods.

Tomeš.—The Countess,—she is very kind to us; she is still a descendant of the early Czechish rulers, and her heart is with us. But the Count . . .

Marie (Gazing into the park, and seizing TOMEŠ by the hand).—Father with the park keeper!

Havelka (Comes from the park with the warden.)

Tomeš (Steps away from MARIE)

SCENE IV

HAVELKA, the game warden, MARIE, TOMEŠ

Havelka.—Accursed fellows! If the Count had happened to come upon it . . .

Tomeš (Approaching).—Did something happen, Mr. Game-warden?

Havelka.—They killed a young roe during the night, and left it at the very edge of the park! If the Count had come across it, I would at once be dismissed from his service. Those accursed serfs don't know when they have had enough . . . they would even deprive an honest fellow of his bread.

Tomeš (Heatedly).—Some clumsy sportsman might have done it! Perhaps it won't occur again.

Havelka.—You are trying to assure me?

Tomeš (Seeing he had exposed something).—I believe that I can. I will go today to all the neighboring villages, and speak with the poachers there, and I will hold myself responsible if this same accident occurs again.

Havelka (Carefully).—You talk as though they were familiar acquaintances of yours.

Tomeš.—I talk as I do because this is a shameful piece of business.

Havelka (Suspiciously).—Very well . . . but we two, I hope, will not have a chance meeting in the forest?

Marie (Stepping up to the game warden).—What are you hinting at, father?

Havelka.—Nothing, it is nothing, my child. (*To TOMĚŠ*) Have a care. You don't want people to talk ill of you. The Countess was asking me some time ago whether I could not use you as an assistant. I would be glad to say a good word for you.

Marie.—Dear father!

Tomeš.—If I could only become a gamekeeper. I would give up everything else on earth to do it!

Havelka.—Your desire may be fulfilled. Just now, do not be so rash. Did you come to see me,—or, (*laughing as he smoothed his daughter's hair*) did you know I was not at home?

Tomeš.—I came to pay my respects to you, and instead I found Marie here.

Havelka.—And you surely were not disappointed. What did you wish?

Tomeš.—They will very shortly send you a message from the castle.

Havelka.—From the castle?

Tomeš.—Yes. You are to go up there. They are holding a council.

Havelka.—About what?

Tomeš.—About the poachers.

Marie
Havelka } The poachers!

Havelka.—And what did they say?

Tomeš.—The count was angry, and grew greatly excited because a little poaching had been going on in these forests. He wants to take harsh measures to put an end to it. (*With rising voice*) He has heard that in these very woods (*pointing around him*) they once erected a gallows for the poachers,—

Marie (With great agitation).—Tomsí!

Tomeš (Continues).—and that they will hang upon them the first poacher, without even a trial, that is caught from now on!

Marie.—A contemptible death on the scaffold!

Havelka (*Shrugging his shoulders*).—It has been long discussed.

Tomeš.—The poachers are frightened. So our Count wants to enlist their services while they are scared out. Some of them have rifles hidden away in the game reserve,—the Count wants them to shoot any one of the suspected who may even be seen in the park!

Marie (*In the rear, wringing her hands*.)

Havelka.—It may put an end to the poaching. But how do you come to know what was discussed at the castle?

Tomeš (*Carelessly*).—Oh, I just knew it, and came to you before any messenger could arrive. The Count will be glad to see you at once. He is very angry today.

Havelka.—I will go to the castle at once.—But, Tomsí, is it all true?

Tomeš.—It is. What else they have planned I do not know. I am here now quite a while.

Havelka.—I am deeply grateful to you. And now I must go. (*Preparing to leave*.)

Marie.—Here is the Count himself!

(*From the park proceeds the COUNT BEAUVALLE, a magistrate, and COUNT MILLESIMO, dressed in travelling clothes, and talking to BEAUVALLE. The gamekeeper makes a deep obeisance to them. The COUNT nods, but MILLESIMO ignores him, absorbed in conversation with the COUNT. TOMEŠ leads MARIE to the cottage which he enters, then he leaves by the wood road.*)

SCENE V

BEAUVALLE, MILLESIMO, *magistrate*, HAVELKA

Millesimo.—I don't know what I would do just now if I had to remain in Prague. (*Laughing*) Think of it, Count, I was just sitting at breakfast, eating a tender bit of grouse,—from your game reserve, by the way,—when a serving man, all breathless with excitement burst into my presence. Your Grace, he calls out, the French and Bavarians are here. (*From the rear come the game warden and magistrate so deeply absorbed in conversation that they do not hear the COUNT and MILLESIMO.*)

Beauvalle (*Surprised*).—In Prague?

Millesimo (*Laughing*).—Where else, dear friend, but Prague? Why, in Prague we actually have the general, Count Ogilvy,—

he had, all told, some two thousand soldiers! (*Ironically*) Then how could the enemy find themselves in Prague!

Beauvalle.—Strange anxiety this is, about the capital city of our country. (*Shortly*) Two thousand soldiers, you say?

Millesimo.—Yes, it is so. There were more of them, but other generals took whatever they wanted. They tramp about Bohemia with their troops, one here, another there,—all of them waiting for the enemy to send notice of their arrival, and ready to present their compliments. (*Laughing.*) In the first alarm, I dropped the grouse,—it was the best white meat of the fowl. And here comes a second servant, and breathlessly announces, The Saxons are here!

Beauvalle.—The Saxons on the same day, and also at Prague?

Millesimo (Jestingly).—Truly, as though it had been arranged,—the troops of the enemy from both sides, and approaching in just that moment when I wanted to finish my breakfast. And would you believe it, Count, I did not finish, I did not finish my breakfast. I just left everything on the table and at once ordered my horse and rode away,—at once, contrary to all my customary habits.

Beauvalle.—You shall be my guest. It is unnecessary to expose yourself to danger, or a possible siege at Prague.

Millesimo (Laughing).—Besieged, besieged,—I besieged! That would be a strange freak of chance, indeed!

Beauvalle.—Here you will be protected and have peace. I only regret, that meeting you unexpectedly on the way, I could not conduct you at once to the castle.

Millesimo.—Do not speak of it. It is a small breach of hospitality, indeed. You wish to give some instructions here. I came across you so unexpectedly, and moreover I have bored you with a recitation of all the events that occurred . . .

Beauvalle (Interrupting).—In just a moment Count. I will join you in a minute.

Millesimo.—Do not let me detain you. (*Gazing around.*) It is very beautiful, all is well kept. The park, the cottage . . .
(*Looks over everything, then goes to the game warden's cottage.*)

Beauvalle (To the game warden).—Havelko!

Havelka (Advancing).—I was just now on the way to see your grace.

Beauvalle.—Within two days, you must learn and report to me who is poaching in my park.

Havelka.—I will discover and report to you whatever I can learn.

Beauvalle.—Not what you can learn,—I must know everything! I must put an end to this poaching which is robbing my parks and forests. (*Forcibly*) And from you I shall expect greater concern and more watchfulness in the future!

Havelka (Frightened).—I serve your grace as faithfully as possible. My life is in daily danger while spying upon the poachers.

Beauvalle.—You have now learned my command. (*The warden bows and steps back.*)

Magistrate (To the warden).—There is no help for it. Better let a few of them hang, then there will be an end to it. (*The warden walks off to his cottage, the magistrate to himself.*) If they but knew that I buy game from Tomeš. But why is the Count so stingy?

Millesimo (Gazing through the window of the game keeper's cottage).—Ha! This is a delightful surprise! Count, such a beautiful girl here!

Havelka (Wishing to protect his daughter, steps up).—That, your grace, is my daughter! (*MILLESIMO turns to the magistrate as HAVELKA enters the cottage.*)

Enters VRÁNA, TOMEŠ, and LÍDA.

SCENE VI

BEAUVALLE, MILLESIMO, *magistrate*, VRÁNA, TOMEŠ, and LÍDA.

Tomeš (To VRÁNA).—He is right here. (*Points to the Count*) Go directly to him and do not be afraid.

Vrána (Timidly).—Your Grace, noble Count,—

Beauvalle.—And who are you?

Vrána.—I am Vrána. I have a little house over there by the park. And your noble grace, I hardly ever reap anything.

Beauvalle.—Is it my fault, that you bring your complaint to me?

Vrána.—No, Your Grace, indeed not,—but the animals in your parks.

Beauvalle.—Animals?

Vrána.—Yes. They devour everything. From the forests and the parks come the deer, and great black beasts,—they take it all,—all that we sow; I will not have a straw or grain of wheat left.

Beauvalle.—I cannot help it. Watch with greater care and it will not happen.

Vrána.—No, to your grace, there is no damage,—but to me, to me! My whole harvest is again destroyed. It is now three days,—the wild boars broke through my woven hedge,—trampled up the fields, chewed and destroyed the crops, then other wild beasts came in and completed the damage done.

Beauvalle.—And why come to me?

Vrána.—I beg your noble highness, make me some small amends to keep us from starving. And then a stronger hedge. It would greatly help.

Beauvalle.—You would hold me responsible for the damage? To whom belongs these fields, the meadows, your house, even you miserable life? To whom except myself? And you come to me to make amends for the damage.

Vrána.—Just a living is all I beg of you, noble highness. We work like serfs from morning till night for that little bit of land and our tiny house,—our living is all tied up therein.

Beauvalle.—Your bondsman's service I will excuse you from for one month, no more. And with such a demand, never appear before me again. (*Turns away.*)

Vrána (*Makes a sign of abject hopelessness, and his head drops.* *LÍDA, slow to give up hope, wishes to drag him anew to another plea before the COUNT.*)

Lída.—Your Grace, I beg you, a thousand times I beg you, listen to our humble petition!

Beauvalle.—And what daring is this?

Lída.—My father here,—we scarcely have the means of livelihood. And in the forest and game reserve, where not only we but the people from the village are obliged to pass,— . . . well, our very lives are in danger. No one is protected from the wild beasts and several have already been attacked.

Vrána (*Emboldened again*).—Especially those two wild boars,—our lives are daily in danger.

Beauvalle.—What are you trying to tell me now? I told you once to go!

(*MILLESIMO approaches LÍDA, gazing intently at her.*)

Tomeš (*Suddenly steps up*).—Noble Count,—these poor people are truly in terrible straits. I beg you, make some amends for their loss; fortify their hedge in such a way that the wild beasts cannot trample their garden. And the fiercest of the animals,—I beg you, have them destroyed!

Beauvalle (*Stepping up to him amazed*).—What is your name? Gamekeeper, who is this man?

Game Warden (*Frightened*).—He is,—Tom—

Tomeš.—Tomeš, your grace, at your service. But it does not matter who I am,—these unfortunate people (*pointing to VRÁNA and LÍDA*) are in a desperate condition. Give them some help, I beg of you.

Beauvalle.—You'll get some help—and they also. Out of my sight! And you (*To Tomeš*), report at the castle for work unless you wish to be arrested and brought over.

Vrána.—All in vain, and all is in vain!

Tomeš (*Quietly to VRÁNA*).—I will help you, be quiet now. In two days, at the very latest, neither of those wild boars will break into your garden again. (*BEAUVALLE talks with the game keeper.*)

Lída.—You would, Tomsí . . .

Tomeš.—Be quiet,—I will take care of everything. (*Something is heard stirring in the forest. TOMEŠ listens keenly.*) That is a wild beast,—it is chasing a pursued deer! . . . (*He listens a moment, then slips away. VRÁNA follows him with LÍDA.*)

Millesimo (*Gazing after LÍDA*).—That is indeed a lovely girl! They seem to thrive in these parts. (*Stands looking after her.*)

SCENE VII

BEAUVALLE, MILLESIMO, *the magistrate*

Beauvalle (*To the magistrate*).—Is it worth the effort to catch the bold fellow?

Magistrate.—Give your order, and all shall be accordingly done.

Beauvalle.—And where is the game warden?

Magistrate.—He went into the cottage. (*BEAUVALLE goes into the game warden's house.*)

Millesimo (*Gazing after the departing LÍDA*).—Count, you have some rare female specimens of game here. Already two does,—two does I have seen while here, (*turns to the magistrate*),—Ah, but this is not the Count. I thought I was speaking to the Count, and he has slipped away.

Magistrate.—He went into the game warden's house.

Millesimo.—Into the cottage after that first doe?

Magistrate.—The noble Count is inclined to jest. His Highness—

Millesimo.—No excuses, no excuses; we understand each other.

Magistrate.—Certainly, Your Highness. The wife of the game keeper was a young girl, raised with the Countess, and later became one of her attendants. When later she died, leaving a little daughter, the Countess developed a great interest and real affection for the child.

(COUNT DEJM steps out from the left: a wrap is cast over his shoulder. He is accompanied by a servant with his baggage.)

SCENE VIII

MILLESIMO, *magistrate*, COUNT DEJM, *servant*, later BEAUVALLE and HAVELKA.

Dejm.—We will make better time to the castle this way than by taking the carriage and following the high road.

Millesimo (*Seeing the new arrivals*).—The noble, superb,—Count Dejm!

Dejm (*Astonished*).—Millesimo,—what are you doing here!

Millesimo.—Yes, what a meeting! Two wanderers in the wood! How idyllic. (*Laughing*) How lucky! As though purposely designed by us. This is really very unusual.

Dejm.—But just tell me, where did you come from?

Millesimo.—I? Where else than from Prague? I run away, escape with an unfinished meal before me, to seek protection with Beauvalle from the enemy.

Dejm.—Then are they near us?

Millesimo.—Yes, there in the cottage,—there you will find a fawn, a young, shy fawn.

Dejm.—That is splendid, indeed!

Beauvalle (*Coming from the cottage, talking to the game keeper who escorts him three steps, makes a bow, then returns to the house again. DEJM approaches BEAUVALLE.*)

Dejm.—Beauvalle,—do you welcome your new guest? (*Goes up to greet him.*)

Beauvalle.—Aj, Dejm! (*Greets him.*) Today we are exceptionally favored.

Dejm.—I come from your neighbor, Furstenberg, to discuss some weighty matters with you.

Beauvalle (*Carefully*).—What is this, so important that you speak of?

Dejm.—I will tell you everything. Before old Millesimo here, it is impossible.

Beauvalle.—You arouse my curiosity. I must know at once. (To MILLESIMO.) Pardon, Count, but I shall yet be delayed a few minutes.

Millesimo.—Aj, one will never get away, waiting upon you. (Laughing) And you forget that for three whole hours I have not eaten.

Beauvalle.—If you wish to go, the magistrate will conduct you to the castle,—at the very latest, I will leave in a half hour.

Dejm (Giving the servant his wrap).—Go also up to the castle.

Millesimo.—The Countess will be overcome with surprise, quite overcome,—but I will entertain her royally,—I will give her a detailed account of my flight from Prague. That will please her, no doubt. (Leaves with the servant and the magistrate.)

SCENE IX

DEJM, BEAUVALLE

Beauvalle (After the departing MILLESIMO).—Eternally childish. Whatever may occur, one can never depend upon his counsel or judgment. But what is up now, my dear Dejm,—what news do you bring me?

Dejm (Seriously).—Concerning the entire country, Count, and most of all it concerns us, our order, whose representatives we happen to be. The game for the possession of our country has now been played for several centuries. Do you know that the throne of Bohemia will soon undergo a change?

Beauvalle (Overcome, but calm).—What an idea! I know however that the hordes of the enemy are pouring into Austria to divide the country and tear it into pieces! But they will not accomplish their aim!

Dejm.—Prepare yourself, Count, for the fact that your supposition is unsafe. Look at everything clearly; ask yourself if it is possible for the ship of state to survive the stormy waves which seem to be tearing its timbers asunder.

Beauvalle.—It is surely in great danger, but I still have hope that the country will survive this storm.

Dejm.—You might have been justified in your faith at the beginning; we have arrived at another hour. Where can the power of the queen reach,—weak, torn by dissensions,—against such

hordes of the enemy. Any moment might bring us the news of the fall of Prague. (*With stress*) and with the fall of Prague, the entire state will be torn asunder!

Beauvalle.—You see things through a dark glass. If all the troops of Marie Teresa will but unite, they can yet defeat the enemy!

Dejm.—Excuse me, Beauvalle, if I cannot share your opinion. If it were only Bavaria and France against us,—perhaps, then, our forces would be sufficient to overpower them.

Beauvalle.—They are powerful enough. There are no other enemies.

Dejm.—Within five days, Frederick of Prussia fell into Silesia.

Beauvalle (*Overcome*).—Frederick of Prussia made peace with Marie Teresa!

Dejm (*With emphasis*).—And violated the treaty! And do you realize that France is continually increasing its Anti-Austrian Society? Do you realize that with France are now combined the powers of Saxony and Bavaria, Poland, Spain, Sicily and Sardinia? Do you not know that the powers of the enemy will continually increase?

Beauvalle (*Astonished*).—That is news indeed! Into our remote province, reports travel very slowly!

Dejm.—And even if the forces of Marie Teresa could prevent the taking of Prague, even then the throne is doomed and is bound to be overthrown. It is to our advantage to choose, in place of the Empress, whomever we see fit to select for king.

Beauvalle.—King of this country?

Dejm.—That is the case,—and our decision must not be long delayed.

Beauvalle.—A changed dynasty,—an overthrown throne! Then the state will have but a short time to outlive the last descendant of the Hapsburgs!

Dejm (*Seriously*).—King Charles died, and with him the whole state is dying! And from her grave is springing up a whole series of states, out of one former power. And it behooves us, Count, it is an advantage that belongs to our order, to hasten the resurrection of our state.

Beauvalle.—And upon whom, think you, the leadership should fall?

Dejm.—Charles Albert will accept and hold it. He is to be our future King!

Beauvalle (Greatly astonished).—And shall we stand by the side of a Bavarian prince? Is the order of the entire world falling to pieces? (*Hears some one coming.*) Quiet! (*Looks toward the castle.*) Who is with the magistrate?

(*Enter JORDÁN with the magistrate.*)

SCENE X

BEAUVALLE, DEJM, *magistrate*, JORDÁN

Magistrate (Introducing JORDÁN).—A representative from Jordán, from the highest council.

Jordán (Greeting BEAUVALLE).—Excuse my boldness, Count, in looking you up. I did not find you at the castle.

Beauvalle.—I must ask your pardon that my guests are obliged to seek me from home.

Jordán.—Count Millesimo brought news to the castle that you would be delayed here awhile. I had a matter so pressing that I could not await you longer at the castle. If this is a bold stroke, let not my person but the cause for which I labor make the excuse.

Beauvalle.—Surely it will be possible for me to fulfill your request, Mr. Court Commissioner.

Jordán.—I am fleeing from Prague.

Beauvalle.—It is surrounded, besieged.

Jordán.—Even worse (*with emphasis*) Prague has fallen!

Dejm.—Prague has fallen?

Beauvalle (With surprise).—What are you saying!

Jordán.—It fell yesterday.

Dejm.—Prague is then in the power of the Bavarians?

Jordán.—The Field Marshal of France with the Duke of Saxony struck at the gates of the city and captured it almost with one blow. The Saxons took the Staré Město (*Old Town*) under their general Rutkovský,—and today Prague is ruled by Charles Albert of Bavaria who calls himself Charles Albert.

Dejm (Joyfully).—He accomplished it easily! The rule of the queen is overturned. A new king in Bohemia!

Jordán (Surprised).—I hope, Count, that you are not going to applaud such news!

Beauvalle.—Surely, Mr. Court Commissioner, there is no need for you to be afraid. But your report is so overwhelming that one might become paralyzed with surprise.

Jordán.—It is overwhelming, Count. The forces of the empire did not combine,—and so today, where for two ages the Hapsburgs have ruled, Wittelsbach of Bavaria, has built his throne.

Beauvalle.—And so the entire state is lost!

Jordán.—Certainly not. But there will be a great struggle, and it will become necessary for everyone who does not wish to be called a rebel to fight with life and property for our overthrown queen and deserted ruler.

Dejm (Sarcastically).—It seems to me that first of all it is necessary for those who rule the country in her name to remain loyal to the queen, is it not so, Mr. Court Commissioner?

Jordán.—Yes, I think so, but—

Dejm.—Is that not happening?

Jordán (With suspicion and doubt).—You, my lords, know more than I supposed.

Dejm.—I am Count Charles Dejm, and I left Prague a week ago. So I surely know less than you do, Mr. Court Commissioner.

Jordán (With excuses).—Excuse me, Count. I am greatly agitated by these recent occurrences,—and to tell the truth, the loyal are but few.

Dejm.—What are you saying?

Jordán.—Almost all the officers of the country, the army officials, and most of the nobility of Bohemia have evidently fallen away from the Empress, and openly pledged their allegiance to the Bavarian.

Dejm.—So enormous is his power in Prague?

Jordán.—And it seems, Count, to extend throughout the entire empire. Most of those who have remained loyal seem to be turning toward Pilsen. Baron Schirnding is trying to stir up Pilsen against the Bavarian intruder.

Dejm.—The Reservists?

Jordán.—It is so. (*To BEAUVALLE*) And without doubt, Count, you also will give your support to Her Majesty?

Beauvalle (Evasively).—Baron Schirnding, did you say, Mr. Court Commissioner?

Jordán.—Baron Schirnding. A brave and tenacious warrior.

Beauvalle (Still evasive).—Yes, of course. But you mentioned Mr. Court Commissioner, a matter in which I might be of service to you.

Jordán.—I have one request.

Beauvalle.—And that is?

Jordán.—My present horse will not endure a hard fast ride.

Beauvalle.—I will loan you another. But first take a breath at my castle.

Jordán.—I am in a great hurry, Count. I can only thank you for your extended hospitality.

Beauvalle.—We will take you away. (*In the forest is heard a scream.*) Count Dejm, is it your pleasure? (*Invites them to depart. In the forest is heard the report of a gun. Then another scream. BEAUVALLE in the greatest excitement . . .*) Who shot? Gamekeeper, the warden at home . . . (*Excitedly*) That the shot of a poacher . . . Gamekeeper, Warden!

SCENE XI

BEAUVALLE, DEJM, JORDÁN, *the gamekeeper*, HAVELKA, *coming out from the cottage*. MARIE, *frightened*, behind him.

Dejm (Pacifying BEAUVALLE).—Count, calm yourself!

Beauvalle (To the game warden, without listening to DEJM).—Who is in the park,—who is in the forest? No one went in from the castle! They must be poachers!

Havelka (With fear, yet firmly).—I will at once trail the poacher. Heaven pity him if I catch him today!

Beauvalle.—My gun, (*the game warden runs for one.*) I will go with you! He must not escape!

Dejm.—Calm yourself, Count, your blood is heated now! Do not lose control of yourself! (*Game warden brings weapons.*)

Beauvalle.—Excuse me, Count, and you, Mr. Court Commissioner, (*taking a hasty leave of them*)—there is need of swift and decisive action here. I beg you, go now to the castle and excuse me for a while. (*To the warden*) You go quickly along the road, (*pointing to the right*) and I will take the park road. You, (*to the magistrate*) come with me. We must get him, and heaven have mercy upon him!

(*The warden goes as he is directed, BEAUVALLE and the magistrate disappear into the forest. DEJM with JORDÁN take the road to the castle.*)

Marie (Who remained unnoticed).—Heaven protect him,—What if Tomeš fired that shot! (*Wringing her hands, hastens into the wood.*)

ACT II

Castle, at the right, a sloping lawn before it, decorated with flower beds, a playing fountain in their midst. A garden in the rear. Forest to the right, a conspicuous tree at its edge. Garden tools, a bench and chains under the tree.

SCENE I

TOMEŠ and LÍDA at the edge of the forest.

Tomeš (To LÍDA, who holds his hand between both of her own, and gazes fearfully into the forest).—Do not be afraid. That wild boar will never trouble you again.

Lída (Excitedly).—You have killed it,—you have really shot it?

Tomeš.—It lies there cold and stiff by this time. I heard it tearing through the underbrush. I couldn't help it,—I had to go after him. Then I heard you and your old father scream. And I jumped for my rifle,—(in a whisper) I have two of them hidden in hollow logs in the wood, and I shot the boar just as he was ready to rush upon you.

Lída (Drops the hand of TOMEŠ, and steps back into the park).—Truly, you have killed him. He rushed after me, here, to the very edge of the park.

Tomeš.—But I was greatly alarmed when I heard your scream after my shot. I thought that in my haste I had accidentally shot you instead of the beast.

Lída (Gazing at TOMEŠ, is silent, then fixes her gaze upon the ground. She sighs deeply, then gazes at him with pained eyes).—And if your bullet had reached my heart,—yes, I would die with a smile upon my lips.

Tomeš (Laughing).—What nonsense! You would be glad if I had deprived you of your youth, your life? Lída, what are you saying?

Lída (Turns swiftly toward him).—Tomsí,—Tomsí,—(with deep feeling) from you I would welcome pain, anything,—yes, even death.

Tomeš (Looks intently at LÍDA, with his right hand removes his hat, and passes the left hand over his heated forehead. Then he approaches LÍDA, takes her by the hand as she draws closer to him and earnestly says to her).—Lída, my poor Lída, thrust me out of your heart and from your thoughts.

Lída (Wringing her hands with pain).—Tomsí, this blow is more painful to me than if your bullet had by chance reached me. (*Sobbing*) Tomsí, do not drive me away from you! Twice you have saved my life,—do not now drive me to a desperate death! (*MARIE steps out of the forest, and sees the two standing together.*)

SCENE II

TOMEŠ, LÍDA, MARIE

Tomeš.—Your protector I will gladly be, *Lída*, and always a friend, (*taking both her hands*) but more,—

Marie (Rushes swiftly toward them. Painfully).—And with her again,—there must be truth in what they say! (*TOMEŠ and LÍDA step away from each other surprised.*)

Tomeš (To MARIE).—You here, *Marie*!

Marie.—*Tomeš*, it was unnecessary for you to lie to me!

Tomeš.—Have you heard one untruth from me?

Marie (Angrily).—I have,—a thousand of them,—for (*pointing to LÍDA*) here is *Lída* herself!

Tomeš.—And look at her, *Marie*, to see if joy is glowing in her cheeks.

Marie.—It is evident that she is gloomy. I came here, I came (*in tears*) to find you. I wanted to warn you,—and I find you here with her!

Lída (Forgetting everything else).—He should save himself? they are following us, then?

Marie (Angrily to LÍDA).—You do not need to ask!

Lída (With rising enthusiasm).—Then you have doubts about *Tomeš*, you are not sure that he cares for you then?

Marie (Seizes TOMEŠ by the hand).—He belongs to me,—do not come near him! (*TOMEŠ embraces MARIE, pressing her head to his breast. MARIE cries out, drawing away, as she sees LÍDA turn pale, and sobs aloud. TOMEŠ takes a step toward LÍDA.*)

Lída.—*Tomeš*, I cannot thank you now for saving me from a violent death. You love her, (*pointing to MARIE*) so go, save yourself now; they might come upon you any moment. If they should find me, and I were to tell the truth, it would go ill with you. But *Tomeš*, I am going to lie,—I will protect you,—if I lose my own life, if they hang me instead upon that scaffold . . . anyhow, why should I live? What have I to lose even though I sacrifice my life? . . . (*Slowly walks away toward the castle, absorbed in her thoughts, her eyes fixed upon the ground.*)

Tomeš (Starts after LÍDA).—Unfortunate child. (*To MARIE*)
See how unhappy she is!

Marie.—The cold chill crept over me while she was speaking.
O Tomeš, I hurried so, to give you warning in time!

Tomeš.—Thank you, my Marie. But no one has seen me.

Marie.—But they are at your very heels,—and if they were
to catch you,—Tomeš, you know the Count does not threaten in
vain!

Tomeš.—Have no fear for me. I will go directly home. No-
body must say a word to me. And you go at once to your cottage
so they will not suspect us! (*He slips cautiously around the castle.*
*MARIE loses herself among the trees. LÍDA steps out from the di-
rection of the castle.*)

Lída (Half aloud to herself).—As though it were my fate,—I
cannot give up the idea; I must follow him up! (*Aloud wildly and
painfully*) And if I see him embrace her again, (*with desperation*)
then Heaven shield them and help me! (*Slips around the castle.*)

(*From the forest emerges BEAUVALLE with the game warden who
has his gun over his shoulder while he carries the weapon of the
COUNT in his hand.*)

SCENE III

BEAUVALLE, *game warden, then the COUNTESS with DEJM,*
later MILLESIMO.

Beauvalle (Shortly).—He has escaped! Disappeared! We
looked for him in vain. I will punish every one responsible for
guarding my forest! (*The COUNTESS steps out from the castle with
DEJM, with whom she is talking. Hearing BEAUVALLE, she stops
to listen. BEAUVALLE to the game warden.*) Go into the forest,
find my park keeper. Tell him if he does not find that poacher
he does not need to report for service again. (*HAVELKA disappears
into the forest.*)

Countess (to DEJM).—Thank heaven, the poacher is not
caught! (*Goes with DEJM to BEAUVALLE, offering him both out-
stretched hands.*) Why so violent, Count! I am delighted that
you have so quickly returned!

Beauvalle.—I went through the forest, and searched carefully
everywhere. Those accursed poachers are now so bold that they
dare shoot at my very castle gates, and I can't catch even one of
them! (*From the castle comes MILLESIMO.*)

Millesimo (Laughing).—Count Beauvalle, Count Dejm, the
Countess, lovely, gracious countess!

Beauvalle (Irritably).—Well, what has happened, Millesimo?

Millesimo (Laughing).—I escorted, His Highness, the Court Commissioner to his very equipage, his carriage, and now I am rewarded! Do you wish to know, Count, and you also, Countess, what that Jordán proposed to me, that cavalier of bunglers? Can you for a moment guess what he is trying to drag me into?

Countess.—Surely something interesting!

Millesimo.—Just try to imagine something very ridiculous, yes, extremely ridiculous, and then superlatively ridiculous,—that will be the creation of Jordán!

Countess.—Come, share the joke with us; do not keep us so long in suspense!

Millesimo.—That courtly Jordán,—no, I wish to say, Baron Schirnding,—heaven knows how the idea came to him,—wants to raise a landsturm, Reservists in Pilsen. That Jordán from the court told me! And do you know what he proposed? (*Laughing*) That I, Count Millesimo, should also join that landsturm and they will create of me,—Jordán and Schirnding,—a captain, an officer of the Reservists! (*The COUNTESS and DEJM join the laugh.*)

Dejm.—And you have accepted? We must give you an official patent. Millesimo, Millesimo, you will yet become a great military genius!

Millesimo.—A General, Dejm, a general. Ogilvie is already despatched, Neipperg, Lobkovic and the Grand Duke Toskánsky are having a merry time of it, outvying each other in giving a wide berth to the enemy, and so it has finally fallen upon me to become a leader, a general! (*General laughter greets his words*) Excuse me. I must slip away somewhere, so I can forget about that buffoon, Jordan,—I know not, whether his remarkable idea will not deprive me of reason! Jordán, you Jordán! (*With laughter, pausing now and then, he proceeds toward the castle.*)

SCENE IV

DEJM, *the* COUNTESS, BEAUVALLE.

Dejm (Looking after MILLESIMO; sarcastically speaking).—Even among us there are heroes with a sense of duty. What an interesting struggle, with such live warriors!

Countess (Invites DEJM and BEAUVALLE to be seated).—Fate listens to those who act and are strong of soul. (*To BEAUVALLE, half jesting, half seriously*) I promised your name to Count Dejm, that you would align yourself with Charles Albert!

Beauvalle.—I hardly know but what you promise is a bit premature. I have been a mere onlooker, gazing at occurring events; I doubt whether I could, in the end, be anything else.

Dejm.—You must, Count, but you must! Now, today, every individual must come to some decision, and determine how he stands with regard to his country's welfare. An onlooker, a mere witness of passing events, you no longer can continue to be! You are a citizen of this state; you must align yourself with one side or the other!

Beauvalle.—I know not whether I would be actuated by the same motives that seem to prompt others!

Dejm.—Aj, I do not know, indeed.

Beauvalle (Advancing).—You, my dear Dejm, you belong to the old nobility,—my family is settled here a little more than a century.

Dejm.—Yes, your family is settled here over a century, and yet you would not think and feel as any one of us do? We hold to the state, we represent a branch, a mighty order of the empire; we were raised here, and we must continue to represent the highest nobility of the country,—and one grave concern that the moment must decide is this,—whether in a year, or in a thousand years, this one or another order will be ruling here.

Beauvalle.—And who are the others,—those who wish to aid in the overthrow of the Empress?

Dejm.—There is a great number, half of the entire nobility!

Beauvalle.—The leaders?

Dejm.—Bechyně from Lazan, Cernin, Kolovrat, Count Bubna, both of the Lazanšti, Count Felix Vršovec, Martin Michna, Count Vrbna, Dohalský from Dohalic, the highest counsellors—

Beauvalle (Interrupting with a laugh).—So far, these represent old Bohemian families, native to the country. But you have not as yet mentioned one family which has, like mine, come in from foreign parts.

Dejm.—Aj, I will now come to one; Count Schaffgotsche—
Countess (to BEAUVALLE).—The highest burgrave.

Dejm.— . . . Counts Morzin, Mansfeld, Kuenburg, Poeting, General and War Commissioner, George, Count of Kaiserstein, Count Bouquoy—

Beauvalle (With surprise).—Count Bouquoy Longuevalle?

Dejm.—Yes, the descendant of Karl Bouquoy, who, ages ago, overthrew the rule of the Bohemian king, Ferdinand. Even he is

with us, for he knows that in the present condition of the state, there is nothing else to do!

Beauvalle.—Then what advantage do you think is to be gained, in this country which is trying to drive out the old dynasty, in power here for more than two centuries, and which overthrew the native house which ruled here before it?

Dejm.—And who represents the ruling dynasty? One woman, and a weak woman at that, who cannot hold the empire together or bring prosperity to the country which she rules. Marie Teresa holds the title of Empress handed down to her by Charles, but in truth she is only the Grand Duchess, Toskánskou.

Beauvalle.—Aj, not at all, not at all.

Dejm.—It is uncertain now, no one really knows,—Tomorrow may find her in that station.

Countess.—Marie Teresa cannot defend herself, and save a vestige of her inheritance.

Dejm.—And not the least power is this kingdom, in which four powers are now at war,—and in which we also exist. Or do you want to leave this country to the rapacity of a dozen princes, and should we not be seeking one such ruler who would be powerful enough to renew and hold the independence of this kingdom?

Beauvalle.—And do you think that Charles Albert is such a prince?

Dejm.—I am certain of it. For that reason we summoned him to Prague,—

Beauvalle.—You yourselves?

Dejm.—We ourselves. We called him here to accept the throne of Bohemia. Charles Albert is fiery, and an enterprising hero. He will meet our expectations. He will establish a new state in central Europe. Bohemia will be at the head, and besides our country there will be Moravia, half of Silesia and Bavaria.

Countess (With spirit to BEAUVALLE).—Count, believe us, and permit yourself to be convinced. Marie Teresa will not be able to keep the autonomy of the state,—Charles Albert will restore our country to its former brilliant splendor, which it enjoyed under former reigns, while it was independent, were it under the house of the Přemyslows, under the reign of the Lucemburghs, or Hapsburg up to the reign of Matthias. Its greatest glory was witnessed by my house, and we shall see it again, newly restored. We shall step at the head of the group of surrounding countries. And as formerly, the entire German state was only her princely mantle, likewise it will now happen under Charles Albert. The

German princes are offering him the power of Emperor. He will be announced and crowned as Emperor of our country, that subjected and fading kingdom,—it will again lead not only its sister countries but the entire German empire.

Beauvalle (To both).—And are you sure of your calculation?

Dejm.—I am certain of it.

Beauvalle (Warningly).—Have you then forgotten how the revolution ended a hundred and twenty years ago? (*DEJM denying with gestures.*) Have you forgotten about the nobles done to their death in Staré Město (*Old Town*) and the thousands of families exiled from country and home?

Dejm.—You cannot frighten me now. At that time, one great mistake undermined all that was undertaken.

Beauvalle.—What do you mean?

Dejm.—The nobility forgot that it had but little power without the support of the people,—and for that reason, it fell.

Beauvalle.—You would appeal to the people in vain. They have no soul, no courage, and no knowledge. What would you do with the hordes,—not a soul among them would dare stand out against the meanest of my serfs! How can you expect these people to risk themselves for something strange, unknown to them? (*He rises; DEJM with the COUNTESS at the same time.*)

Dejm.—We are arriving at a new era. All over the country, the people are awaking, stirred to new life. They are beginning to have a clearer and truer vision, new strength is springing up among them, as the earth stirs up, feeling the first pulse of spring.

Beauvalle.—I fail to see the signs. I do not know why you have such faith in the people, or take up the cudgel in their defense so suddenly.

Dejm.—We cannot see our dream realized unless we ourselves are willing to help uplift the people; otherwise the independence of our country will never be gained. We must first lift the people out of this crushing bondage, which I believe is distasteful even to you. That is why I am drawing closer to the masses; we must look to them for strength and support.

Beauvalle.—Vain ideals, vain indeed are your dreams. Count Dejm, they regard me as a stern, rigid man, who desires only to oppress and drive them. Heaven knows, I am what I appear to be because I see only the slavish soul, the unwilling spirit. I do not believe it could change. Here are twenty villages. But in all of them there is not to be found one man of spirit, brave, courageous, and independent. They all glide away

at the very sight of me. At home, under cover they may heap abuse and curses upon me, but not one dares come out and openly express himself to my face. What can you expect of such as these.

Dejm.—Do not judge them, Beauvalle, or deny unjustly that they have spirit and courage because for the moment you have failed to see it. Stop to consider that for a hundred and twenty years these people have been serfs, and before that period, war was waged among them for thirty years,—war whose iron hoof turned not only the tide of fortune and events, but crushed all hope, all spirit among the people. And this unwilling subjection, this rebellious state of bondage had to end in that which the terror of war, of the fallen state begun.

Beauvalle.—Let there be what cause for it you may find, I still must judge according to what I see. (*With emphasis*) Show me one man in all my estate who still displays a manly and courageous bearing, a spirit such as I vainly look for here,—and I shall think otherwise of these subjected people.

Dejm (With spirit).—We will convince and show you that you are mistaken about these people, that a new spirit may yet be breathed into them; we will show you what can be done for them if the helpful hand of fellowship be extended to them in the right spirit. We must lead the people, stir up their latent strength, adapt them for the purpose we have in view, and draw them on, weapons in hand, to accomplish that which will be of advantage to our entire kingdom.

Beauvalle (Overcome).—You then are plotting and planning a Revolution that would sweep the country, you want to place the armed people side by side with the Bavarian and French troops?

Dejm.—That is the situation. Each of us will equip and arm as many of his people as he is able.

Beauvalle.—I have none at your service.

Dejm.—We expect two hundred people from your estate. In a week's time, your serfs should be equipped for Prague. (*At the castle loud voices are heard.*)

Beauvalle.—I think you will yet see the seriousness of this! But what is this uproar?

(*Enter a troop of country folk, men and women, lead by TOMEŠ. Among them are JÍRAK, VRÁNA, and the bagpiper KOŘINEK.*)

SCENE V

BEAUVALLE, COUNTESS, DEJM, TOMEŠ, JÍRAK, VRÁNA, KOŘINEK, *later* COUNT VÁCLAV *with* BUBNA.

Beauvalle (Surprised).—Why are you coming here? (To TOMEŠ) What are you leading them to?

Tomeš (With emphasis, but courteously).—You commanded me, noble count, to stop at the castle. I have come.

The Crowd.—We with him, we are with him!

Beauvalle.—What is the meaning of all this?

Jírak (Stepping out).—Your Grace, we are working in bondage many more hours than we need to do. We are willing to be your serfs even longer, but Tomeš we will not give up.

The Crowd.—We will not, we shall not.

Beauvalle.—What has gotten into these people? Who started this?

Tomeš.—They have heard that something terrible threatens me, because I stood by Vrána. So they came to give me their support.

Jírak.—And we are willing to give good service and be as much alive as before, but (*with threats and the following words*) we beg of you, most earnestly do we beseech you, that we should no longer be oppressed, neither that violence should be done to any one of us. (DEJM *steps up to* BEAUVALLE *and talks earnestly with him and the* COUNTESS.)

Kořinek (Half aloud to the people).—Do not give up! The French and Bavarians everywhere are protecting the enslaved people, and it is reported they have come to bring us freedom. Serfdom and bondage must go with the old order!

Beauvalle (Will not relent to DEJM who is trying to persuade him to something. To the people) To this act of yours, the magistrate and the people from the castle will answer.

The crowd.—Not now, not now.

Beauvalle (To TOMEŠ),—You will stay here to await the penalty.

The crowd (Surging forward).—He shall not stay. We will not let him stay!

The Countess (Aside to the COUNT).—Forgive them! It is an insignificant thing.

Dejm.—This is an inopportune time for violence. You have no protection here anywhere, and we are now in need of them.

Tomeš (Stepping forward).—You have the power, Count, to do whatever you will. But all these are loyal to me. If you would carry out your threat even I cannot now hold them back.

Beauvalle.—You talk exactly like a rebel.

Tomeš.—Like one who would shield himself and others also.

Dejm (Aside to BEAUVALLE).—Listen, Count, I beg you!

(Enters COUNT BUBNA in the costume of a messenger.)

Bubna.—Count Beauvalle! *(Sees the COUNTESS and DEJM, greatly surprised. Introduces himself to BEAUVALLE.)* I come as a courier from the king.

Beauvalle (Surprised).—From King Charles? *(DEJM speaks to BUBNA.)*

Tomeš (To BEAUVALLE).—Count, then I do not need to come again to the castle?

Dejm (Quickly to BEAUVALLE).—Dismiss him and the people. Count Bubna has important tidings.

Beauvalle (To TOMeŠ and the people).—This time I again forgive you. But see to it that a similar occurrence does not happen again. *(Turns to BUBNA.)*

The crowd (Shouts).—Aha! Tomeš has been released!

Vrána (To the others).—Nothing will happen to him.

Voices (In the rear).—The Count let him go! *(They depart with shouts of delight.)*

Voices (Behind the scene).—He is released! *(All the country people depart.)*

SCENE VI

DEJM, the COUNTESS, BUBNA, BEAUVALLE, later JAN, the game keeper at the castle.

Beauvalle (Stamps with anger, hearing the shouts of the people)—I gave in to them? Are they laughing at me?

Countess (Calming him).—No, no, do not take their joy amiss. *(Reminding him)* Count Bubna is here!

Beauvalle (Collecting his thoughts).—Yes, yes. *(Still angrily to BUBNOV.)* Sent to me, with instructions?

Bubna.—Not with instructions,—only an announcement. Our accepted king desires to see you, Count, and bid me tell you to appear before him. He firmly believes that you will not ignore his request.

Beauvalle (Frightened).—His bidding! And he is not yet the king!

Bubna (With a clear, calm voice).—Yesterday he was announced, in all the Bohemian cities, as the Bohemian king, and the future ruler of these Roman states.

Dejm.—The fulfillment of our hopes!

Beauvalle.—And who has recognized and accepted him?

Bubna.—Four hundred nobles, led by the prince archbishop Arnoštem Moricem of Manderscheida, did homage to him in Prague. All the others are summoned to his court, and expected within a week to make their appearance.

Beauvalle.—And if they should refuse to appear?

Bubna.—Then they will not be considered friends and loyal adherents of the king and state.

Beauvalle.—But as enemies,—I understand, I understand. Even the new king does not fail to begin his reign with threats. But who will assure me that the new ruler will last longer than the winter king, Frederick did?

Bubna.—The assurance is given by these states newly united under Charles.

Beauvalle.—But the proximity to Pilsen. Do you expect allegiance from those near Pilsen, under Baron Schirndingen? And my estate. . . .

Dejm.—Have no fear. The power of Schirndingen and his adherents will be scattered and broken, as when the wind blows into a heap of dry chaff.

Beauvalle (Greatly incensed).—Count Dejm, and you, Count Bubno, is no exception made of those who do not feel prepared for this step?

Dejm.—There is no exception made, and really none should be necessary. You are the Count Beauvalle Lichtenberk, of two great states, in France and in Germany your family name is well known and more than once proclaimed,—you have no need to be afraid of this decision.

Countess (To BEAUVALLE).—Count, you must take your stand for the united powers. I announce myself a subject of the new ruler, and am certain that Count Beauvalle Lichtenberk will do the same!

Dejm.—I thank you, noble lady!

Bubna (Stepping up to the COUNT).—And you Count?

Beauvalle.—I now see there is no other course for me to take.

Dejm (Advancing from the other side).—You are with us?

Beauvalle.—I am called upon to make a great decision, to make it hastily; a decision which must affect the entire future of

my house. But I must not rest under the shadow of failing to give my allegiance to those who are striving to fortify the country for its united strength for the future. (*To DEJM*) Accept then, my word and that of my wife, that we have taken our stand with the new king, which our order has summoned into the country.

Bubna.—Then you are ours, and the king may announce your allegiance!

Dejm (*Pressing the hand of BEAUVALLE*).—I knew you would finally come to this decision, and was not discouraged by your excuses.

Bubna.—And now the support he needs! The king expects you, all the other nobles, to summon your serfs and equip your people for military action!

Beauvalle.—Do not make this demand,—spare me this one thing!

<i>Dejm</i>	}	It is inevitable!
<i>Bubna</i>		

Countess (*Aside to the COUNT*).—You had better consent to do it.

Beauvalle (*To DEJM and BUBNOV with emphasis*).—Then I shall prepare and equip two hundred people. You may announce it to your king.

Bubna.—And lead them yourself?

Beauvalle.—That is asking too much. I will not consent to such a demand.

Bubna.—Then at least give them a leader!

Beauvalle.—But where shall I find one?

Dejm (*Nods his head as a new thought comes to him*).—You have one here, at hand now!

Beauvalle.—Whom have you in mind?

Dejm.—The youth who was just now here.

Beauvalle.—Splendid!

Countess.—But I cannot spare him!

Beauvalle.—Why? (*The game keeper, JAN appears at the castle.*)

Countess.—It might spoil the future happiness of his life and that of another.

Beauvalle.—Pah! This is a time when I must forget my own good fortune and happiness; I cannot now consider the interests of another. Excuse me, Countess. (*Sees JAN.*) Here, Jan! Go at once to find Vitka Tomeš, and bring him here to me!

Countess (To JAN).—Stop! (*To BEAUVALLE*) And suppose he were to be afraid to appear here?

Beauvalle (To JAN).—Tell him he need not be afraid to come. I have a matter to propose to him. (*JAN departs. To DEJM*) That was a happy suggestion. I, at the same time, will rid myself of a man who is getting to be a thorn in the flesh here.

(*At the edge of the park appears HAVELKA with the park keeper. HAVELKA gazes seriously once more at the dead beast, then turns to BEAUVALLE.*)

SCENE VII

HAVELKA, *park keeper*, COUNTESS, BEAUVALLE, DEJM, BUBNA, *later* TOMESĚ, LÍDA.

Havelka (Drops on one knee before the COUNT).—Your Grace, I beg you, do not drive me away!

Bubna.—What has happened?

Countess.—Havelko!

Beauvalle.—What news do you bring?

Havelka.—I found a dead beast!

Beauvalle (Angrily).—A dead animal?

Havelka.—One of those two wild boars has been shot!

Beauvalle.—Shot?

Havelka.—It lies here, near by,—it managed to get this far. (*He points to the forest. BEAUVALLE hastens there. All gaze after them.*)

Beauvalle.—Shot,—that animal has been shot! Do you know who killed it? Tell me, if you do not wish me to hold you responsible.

Havelka.—I do not know for a certainty. I have a suspicion.

Beauvalle.—Who was it?

Havelka.—I will tell, I must protect myself. I saw a man hurrying from the park soon after the shot was fired, though I could not catch up with him. He might have fired that shot.

Beauvalle.—Who was he?

Havelka.—TomesĚ,—more I do not know.

Beauvalle.—TomesĚ? Oh, I shall punish him, I shall punish him as no one yet has been punished.

Countess (Frightened).—You promised him your protection!

(*From the castle steps TOMESĚ, behind him, unnoticed comes LÍDA.*)

Beauvalle (Sees TOMESĚ).—That is he! Seize him!

(*Park keeper seizes rifle, and rushes after TOMEŠ. HAVELKA does the same. LÍDA, with a scream rushes upon HAVELKA, throws herself at him, and seizes the weapon. TOMEŠ wrenches away the rifle from the park keeper pushes him away, leaps to the tree, and aims at the COUNT.*)

Tomeš (*Calls out mockingly*).—Easy, go easy, I am still here.

Beauvalle.—But you shall not escape. (*Goes toward TOMEŠ.*)

Tomeš.—Back, back Count, I never miss my aim.

Beauvalle.—And if I insist on coming?

Tomeš.—Then you will surely be a dead man. (*COUNTESS holds back the COUNT.*)

Beauvalle.—And then you will surely die!

Tomeš.—If I die, you shall also!

Countess.—You had promised him your protection!

Dejm.—That is a courageous boy. (*To BEAUVALLE*) Keep your word, Count!

Bubna.—Him and yourself save also!

Beauvalle (*Gazing intently at TOMEŠ*).—By my faith, that is a brave lad! I forgive him! (*TOMEŠ drops his weapon.*) I summon you to nobler deeds!

ACT III

A room in the castle of BEAUVALLE; a window to the right; door to the left; to the rear, three high doors. To the left, a table with chairs, screen, arm chair.

SCENE I

DEJM, TOMEŠ

(*Dejm Sitting at the table beside TOMEŠ, with a rifle in hand*).—You now know, what is up. The Count wishes to place you at the head of all the armed forces from his estate, and if necessary, you are to lead them into action. Can you do it?

Tomeš.—You paint in alluring colors, Count, and your speech makes the red blood course faster through the veins. But,—(*looks sharply at the Count and falls into silence.*)

Dejm.—You cannot, or dare not,—or are you afraid?

Tomeš.—Several causes.

Dejm.—Then why reject honor, recognition, reward? What is holding you back?

Tomeš (*With a laugh, looks intently at the Count*).—Your insincerity, noble Count.

Djem (With wonder).—My insincerity? Do you mean that I am not sincere in what I say,—I, Count Djem?

Tomeš.—You are concealing something from me!

Djem.—I do not understand. I told you everything.

Tomeš.—Yes, enough,—(*With emphasis*) but you did not tell me who is to have the greatest reward from the struggle. You did not tell me what advantage will be gained by the nobles who drive us into this, the authorities above us who want to equip us for this conflict,—

Djem (Laughing, and guessing what is in the mind of TOMEŠ).—Aj, faithless son of the village! The Counts and nobles will only gain such advantage as will be acquired by all the people and shared by all the states of the empire.

Tomeš (Noticing the COUNTESS; unbelievably).—And still they would rush into it?

Djem (With fire).—Our country is in danger, our country which is theirs as much as yours. They would make it independent, elevate, beautify the land.

Tomeš.—And that is why they turn to us, because they would have us serve as volunteers?

Djem.—How could it be otherwise? Do you want the country to belong exclusively to us, the official class, you, tens of thousands of you who have been born here, who live here, who will be buried here? Have you not the same right to the land, and the same duties as we?

Tomeš (Denying his words with a wave of his hand. With anger).—Yes, Count, we have the same right, the same privileges as you; that is, we ought to have them. I know it; I have felt it in my blood. Ours the country is, it has been. And when we recognize the fact that it is really in danger, we will gladly give our lives in its defense if necessary.

Djem.—Well, then how is one to interpret your words? What is holding you back?

Tomeš.—We can not, we do not believe in the aristocracy! (*DEJM stirs uneasily*) When have we recognized friendship, good fellowship toward us among them? When have we ever heard from them, such words as I now listen to from you, Count?

Djem.—There was no opportunity, no occasion for it.

Tomeš.—But there was. Were there not a thousand other occasions as important as the present? And so long you held us off at a distance, and kept us out of your confidence. That Count

of ours . . . and now for him we are supposed to go to battle, to risk our very lives?

Dejm.—Not for him or any other one individual. We, all together, and first of all, you, should consider that you are fighting for yourselves.

Tomeš (Stirs with gleaming eye).—For ourselves! O Count, it will come, it will happen, that we will arise to fight for our rights and protect ourselves. But at that time, we will not be with you. Then we will go forth to the scene of conflict, go forth to die (*DEJM listens with growing attention.*) but by ourselves, for ourselves alone. Even though as yet we are subjected people, only weak, helpless cattle, that dumbly endure, or fall under the burden of their yoke! But there will come an hour, and when we arise, who can stem the stream, who will try to stand against us!

Dejm.—By my faith, youth, you have a courageous spirit such as is indeed seldom found. Listen, you have the mistaken idea that the nobility will not play fairly with you, that we want your support for our advantage alone. Listen then, you subjected people will gain more by this struggle than we, for you will gain that liberty for which you have so far longed!

Tomeš (Silent, then coolly).—Do you want to tell me a fairy tale, or build castles in the air?

Dejm.—But I am telling you the truth. Before many days have passed, the new king will issue a command which will lift you all out of bondage.

Tomeš (Astonished).—The new king!

Dejm.—The new king we have chosen will do so. Those French and Bavarian regiments which have arrived,—they have come to free you, to give liberty to the subjected people.

Tomeš (In doubt).—That is not possible, that cannot be!

Dejm.—Is deception speaking from me?

Tomeš.—The nobility will never permit it!

Dejm.—The freeing of the people is the first step planned. Proper amends will be made to the nobility for the loss of their service, and you will find yourselves freed men!

Tomeš (With uncertainty).—But that sounds like a bait,—a bait to catch us so we would arise and go after you to battle!

Dejm.—You must have faith in others if you would that others have faith in you! In a few days the order will come from the king to have all servitude cancelled, done away, and freedom will be granted to all who will rally around the cause of Charles

Albert! Help the cause of freedom, you, all of your people,—fight for this freedom with your lives, your blood!

Tomeš (Convinced, joyfully).—I believe, Count, that I can indeed have faith in you. I believe you indeed! Just point the way, show me where to go, where to lead our people, and they will follow! Be now the helper of these enslaved serfs, and be assured, the freedmen will lead you, your cause, the entire country to victory!

Dejm.—I believe in that victory ultimately, (*Takes TOMEŠ by the hand*) for in your eye I see enthusiasm for the cause, I believe the people will share the same burning joy when they see liberty and freedom before them. Step out from this environment in which you have been raised, out of these woods and wild fields, appear now upon the scene of action, be a warrior for yourself and your people. In the same rank and file, we will all fight together! (*In the door appears the COUNTESS with BEAUVALLE*) We will all risk our lives for the same cause!

SCENE II

COUNTESS, BEAUVALLE, DEJM, TOMEŠ

Countess (Steps anxiously to the front).—Is it all decided? (*To TOMEŠ*) Do you wish to lead our people to Prague?

Tomeš.—I will lead them, gladly will I lead them! (*To BEAUVALLE*) Count, (*pointing to DEJM*) you have invited me to this enterprise, and I will gladly do as you bid me.

Beauvalle.—I wish it so. (*Gives him his hand. DEJM speaks to the COUNTESS.*)

Tomeš (Taking the hand of the COUNT).—Just this morning we were opposed to each other, Count, ready to sacrifice our very lives in mutual hatred. We have come to understand each other better now, and I trust that the thorn in the flesh which worried us has disappeared. You are drawing closer to us now, to your people, and be assured, Count, that I shall gladly go to war for you if it seems best.

Countess (Stepping from DEJM to TOMEŠ).—You have made your decision. But have you, in the excitement of the moment, thought that it will be necessary to leave some one behind, have you thought about the game keeper's lodge, and your own little cottage?

Tomeš (Overcome with surprise, retreats a step, and whispers).—Marie! And my mother! I have not forgotten them!

Beauvalle (Irritably).—Countess, why are you trying to undermine his courage, his decision?

Countess.—So he would remain firm, if he intends to go, and not give up at the first longing to see those he must leave behind.

Tomeš (To BEAUVALLE, with a firm voice).—Have no fear, Count, I shall not turn my back upon the enterprise I once enlist for. (*To the COUNTESS*) You will remain here, noble lady, and while you are here, I can go away contented. Accept them both into your protection, both Marie and my aged mother. If I but know you will do this,—

Countess.—They are now, and will remain under my care all the while you are away from them.

Tomeš (Kneeling to kiss the hand of the COUNTESS).—Oh I thank you, my Countess, you have always been so kind to us. (*The COUNTESS raises him by the hand he kissed.*)

Dejm (To TOMEŠ).—Are you certain, then, that the people will go with you?

Beauvalle.—We can determine that easily enough. There below, a crowd has gathered, (*to TOMEŠ*) evidently afraid for you. They have already heard the news. Go to them, and ask them if they are now willing to follow you.

Tomeš (With spirit).—They are not in my power! But in their hearts as well as in my own there is that spark which may be yet kindled,—the spark that burns in their liberty-loving souls! With me they will go to war! (*Goes to the right.*)

Dejm (Looking after TOMEŠ).—There is a heroic spirit asleep in the soul of that youth. (*To BEAUVALLE*) A people that breeds such sons deserves your faith, Count!

(*From the left MILLESIMO appears panic-stricken, propping himself for support against a table.*)

SCENE III

BEAUVALLE, COUNTESS, DEJM, MILLESIMO

Millesimo (Breathlessly comical).—What in heaven's name is happening here? Below shouts and an uproar,—something about Prague,—about the Bavarians,—that they might be induced to go with them! Dejm, (*Dejm with the COUNTESS advances to the window,*) Count Beauvalle, listen to me, what is it all about? (*Sits himself in a chair at the side of the table.*)

Beauvalle. Do not get so frightened,—there is no occasion for you to worry!

Millesimo (Pacified for the moment) I think so, myself. (*Wiping the sweat from his forehead*) I would not go anywhere, either to the support of the French or the Landsturmiers!

Voices (Under the window).—We will go with you, we will follow!

Countess (At the window).—They are declaring themselves, and he scarcely spoke a word to them!

Beauvalle.—There was no doubt.

Millesimo (Again uneasily).—And to what, to what cause are they declaring themselves?

Beauvalle.—We will know in a moment. (*Looking out of the window*) Just see, how many there are!

Voices.—Upward, upward!

Millesimo.—Many, very many. And they hum and roar,— I have been almost overcome by it. (*TOMEŠ steps out. The people behind him*) What is it, why am I here?

SCENE IV

BEAUVALLE, COUNTESS, DEJM, MILLESIMO, TOMEŠ, *people*, LÍDA *in their midst*, JÍRAK, VRÁNA. *Later* MARIE, HAVELKA, JAN.

Jírak (Advancing with TOMEŠ to BEAUVALLE).—Your Grace, if it is true that we are to go for a time to war, with Tomeš as our leader, gladly, then gladly indeed will we go. Just arm us; let us have the arms!

People.—Arms, arms, we have no arms!

Other Voices (Simultaneously).—We will all go!

Tomeš.—And such as these, noble lady, be assured that others may be secured, as many as we need. Speak to them, Count, let them know what you desire!

(*COUNTESS speaks to DEJM, then disappears by the door at the left.*)

Beauvalle (To the people).—In place of myself, your Tomeš Vitek shall lead you. Do you wish to follow him?

People.—We do, we do!

Beauvalle.—Will you go wherever he sees fit to lead you?

People.—Anywhere, anywhere!

Tomes.—Even into war, into action?

People.—Even into war. Gladly will we follow!

(*COUNTESS returns with a long red banner.*)

Beauvalle.—Then I announce Tomeš Vitek as your leader and captain; and expect heroic deeds under his leadership. He will lead us all to victory.

People.—Long live the Count!

Other Voices.—Long live Tomeš!

Beauvalle.—Tomorrow you must be ready to go. The arms will be given you from my armory and hunting lodge. Whoever has one of his own, take it along.

Voices.—Let us arm ourselves! (*Three men leave for the arms.*)

Countess (*Coming to the front*).—Your leader should have some sign or insignia of his office. This banner, Vitku, comes from my hands. (*Tomeš kneels while the Countess passes it across his breast.*) By accepting it, you raise yourself to the high office which you take upon yourself. Always bear in mind the protection of this, your native land, the land of your fathers. Be ready to give your life for it,—be proud of the cause for which you are taking up arms!

People (*Joyfully waving hats and caps*).—Long live the noble Countess!

Other Voices.—Long live the Countess!

Tomeš (*To the Countess*) (*Kissing her hand*).—I must not and will not disappoint you. When I return, you shall hear, noble lady, that I have kept my promise.

Beauvalle (*Handing him a saber*).—With this saber accept yet a poinard, so you will be completely equipped.

Tomeš (*Gazes at the poinard*).—This slight weapon is not suitable for me. I could not even use it. The rifle is my weapon and with it, I go forth to battle. While I am alive its voice (*points to the rifle*) will be heard in battle, leading forth our people. I am a poacher, I have always been a poacher, and with my chosen weapon I will now go to war!

Beauvalle (*Laughing*).—You do not deny your blood. Well then, fight, conquer with your rifle!

Countess.—But from me, you will surely accept something else?

Tomeš.—Noble lady, I am burdened already with your good gifts.

(*Countess steps to the door at the left, quickly opens it. MARIE steps forth in a beautiful gown, HAVELKA with her.*)

Beauvalle (*Waving a hand toward MARIE*).—Look here!

Tomeš (*Overcome*).—Marie, my Marie!

(*All gaze at MARIE. Countess waves the people back.*)

Millesimo.—Ha, how beautiful!

(*People whisper MARIE!*)

(*TOMEŠ steps toward her as though he wishes to say something.*)

Countess (Holding him back).—She knows all. At first she was drowned in tears. But the veil of sorrow has been rent by the pride she feels in knowing she is to belong to one who will make himself glorious in such a cause. With her father's consent, she will promise you, you give your promise also, that you will remain faithful to each other

Tomeš (Puts aside his rifle, and steps toward MARIE).—My Marie, I am now, I shall eternally be your faithful Tomeš.

(*LÍDA, who made her way forward through the crowd, gazes sadly at them.*)

Marie.—I am yours, I wish to be forever yours!

(*LÍDA, whirls dizzily about and falls. People carry her away, following after her.*)

Marie (Frantically seizing TOMEŠ).—It is Lída! That is an evil sign, Tomeš!

Tomeš (Controlling himself).—A pity! Who is to blame for the unfortunate child!

Beauvalle.—What has happened?

Dejm.—What is this? Who is the girl?

Countess (In ignorance of what has occurred).—What is this disturbance?

Millesimo.—A Woodland romance this! At the castle . . .

Tomeš (To the COUNTESS).—I will explain all!

(*In the courtyard is heard the rattle of arms.*)

Beauvalle (Overcome).—Troops! (*At the window*) Troops of the Empress!

People.—The dragoons! The dragoons of the Empress!

Beauvalle.—Six riders,—one leader in charge!

Tomeš (Seizes his rifle.)

Dejm (Gazes out surprised).—It is Baron Schirnding! At this very moment!

Beauvalle.—What are you saying?

Countess (Frightened).—Baron Schirnding,—here!

Dejm.—He is asking questions,—coming forward. (*DEJM to BEAUVALLE, gaining self control.*) Do not give up!

Countess (To MARIE).—Go away for a few minutes. (*HAV-ELKA with MARIE leave by the door at the left.*) It surely is nothing serious! But if necessary,—other troops will be coming,—we must instantly arm all our people! (*To DEJM*) Here is the key to

the armory. Go with Vitek, give out the arms! (DEJM and TOMEŠ go after the people.)

Millesimo.—This is dreadful! This is terrible!

Jan (*Making room among the crowded people*).—Step back! (*Announces*) Baron Schirnding, newly arrived from Pilsen!

(*From the rear approaches Baron Schirnding, a haughty military figure with white hair and beard.*)

SCENE V

BEAUVALLE, SCHIRNDING, COUNTESS, MILLESIMO; later TOMEŠ with the people.

(BEAUVALLE overcome, leans against the table.)

Schirnding (*Steps forward, greets the COUNTESS*).—Pardon, I beg you, in these disturbed days, my unexpected appearance!

Countess.—To our guests and (*pointedly*) our friends, our home is always open!

Schirnding (*Not getting the meaning of her words*).—The Count your husband, is he not also here? (BEAUVALLE approaches toward him.) Here in his own person! For an instant I failed to see you. (*Shakes hands with BEAUVALLE.*)

Beauvalle (*Carefully*).—I have heard that you took possession of Pilsen?

Schirnding.—It was a great undertaking, in which, Count, I greatly desire your assistance.

Beauvalle (*Coldly*).—And how could I assist you?

Schirnding.—I came to request that, which to my great joy I see that you have already done. (TOMEŠ leads the armed people to whom SCHIRNDING points. BEAUVALLE stirs uneasily.) You have already gathered together your people and armed them!

Beauvalle.—That is so,—but,—

Schirnding.—Yes, the forces of the empire are yet far distant. Take your people to Pilsen. (*With emphasis*) In fourteen days I will assemble there the kernel of the Reservists! Our regiments will soon be prepared to go against the French and Bavarians, and surely they will scatter them! We will scatter the last of their troops from Pilsen! (*Sees TOMEŠ*) You, brave youth, will you lead forth the armed people? (*Points to them.*)

Tomeš (*Advances nearer*).—That is the case, Colonel, and we firmly believe that victory will be ours! (*Shouts as he waves his hat*) Long live His Highness, our Bohemian king!

People (*Shout*).—Long live the king!

Schirnding (Overcome with astonishment).—Traitors to the country and to the Empress!

Tomeš.—Traitors are those who refuse to recognize our king! Colonel, (*stepping toward him*) you are ours!

Schirnding (Overcome).—Are you all bereft of reason, or am I the victim of a plot?

Beauvalle (Angrily to the COUNTESS).—I dare not relent!

Countess.—Leave him alone! He has made his decision!

Beauvalle (To TOMEŠ).—Wait! What are you doing?

Schirnding.—Count Beauvalle, where am I? What madness is this?

(*COUNTESS hurries toward TOMEŠ.*)

Beauvalle (To the people).—Retreat! (*To TOMEŠ*) Not a hand must be raised! (*To SCHIRNDING*) Forgive the people. They know not,—what they are now doing,—

Countess (Advancing from TOMEŠ to SCHIRNDING).—We accepted you as a guest, and as such we must protect you. But do not delay, colonel, longer here. We ourselves do not know how long we can keep our pledge to protect you.

Schirnding.—Then it is true,—you and the Count here,—you are both on the side of the Bavarian intruder! (*Threateningly*). In Pilsen are the troops of the Empress, and from Pilsen we can make a rapid march here!

Tomeš.—And if it seems necessary, we will appear in Pilsen itself!

Schirnding (To BEAUVALLE).—Stay with us, I advise you! The daughter of Charles is going to conquer. You will not only lose your castle and estates but your very life!

Tomeš.—You had better leave now, Colonel, if you expect us to consider the pledge given you by the Countess! I am now leading these people; if it seems best, my command will be obeyed!

Schirnding.—I can easily protect myself and rid the count of you! (*Draws his sword, the COUNTESS screams, TOMEŠ wrenches the sword away and aims his rifle at SCHIRNDING.*)

Tomeš.—And who can now save your life!

Countess (With stern voice).—I can still! (*To SCHIRNDING.*) Go, go now! I can no longer assure you protection!

Schirnding (Frightened).—I go, noble countess, and express first my gratitude for your gracious protection! But those days which are coming upon you and your castle, Beauvalle, those evil days I cannot ward off! (*Disappears. People follow after him.*)

SCENE VI

BEAUVALLE, COUNTESS, TOMEŠ, MILLESIMO, *later* DEJM
and the people, then the magistrate.

Beauvalle.—He must not leave! (*Starts after* SCHIRNDING.
COUNTESS *holds him.*)

Countess.—What are you thinking of?

Beauvalle.—I must speak with Schirnding!

Tomeš.—Count, do not be frightened by his threats! He has not the power to carry them out!

(COUNTESS and TOMEŠ *talk to* BEAUVALLE *who is angrily waving them away.*)

Millesimo.—I must not, I dare not stay here longer! I will go,—to Budejovic and further,—where there are no troops, no struggle, no bloodshed! I will not stay here! (*Slips off unnoticed*)

Tomeš (*To* BEAUVALLE).—Count, be calm! We can gather together between four and five hundred people! I will equip them, and furthermore the Bavarians will arrive sooner than the troops from Pilsen can get here!

Beauvalle (*Excitedly*).—And who will protect me, if the Bavarians fail to arrive in time? What can you do, you country people, against the trained forces of the Empire? And to lose my title,—my estates, my very life,—Count Dejm (*angrily*) where is Dejm? (*Enters* DEJM *with a letter in hand*) Count Dejm, have you heard the colonel?

Dejm.—I was not present. But here is a message from Beshyn of Lazan. It came suddenly. The command must be instantly fulfilled.

<i>Beauvalle</i>	} What does he ask?
<i>Countess</i>	

Dejm.—The forces of the Empire have been greatly increased by the adherence of Hungary and Croatia. So we must send to Prague, as quickly as possible, all the people we can equip here!

Tomeš (*Excitedly*).—We will pull out no later than tomorrow noon! The people are armed, they only need to get ready, (*goes to the window to wave to the people.*)

Beauvalle.—My own people are to go away and leave me, unarmed, alone, a traitor to the Empress! It must not be! (*To* TOMEŠ) You shall not go one step,—and these people must be instantly disarmed!

Dejm (Overcome but firm).—Count Beauvalle, you do not really mean what you are saying?

Tomeš (With decision).—What a command! But I cannot, I will not obey it!

Beauvalle (To TOMEŠ).—I command and warn you! Your head is my security!

Tomeš.—With my head, my life at stake, I promise you to fulfill and accomplish that which I undertake to do! I have the people, I have the arms, I have my life and shall have it in my own keeping!

Beauvalle.—I will not stand by the Bavarian! I was frightened, overcome with apprehensions!

Tomeš.—Then I must take everything upon myself, upon my own responsibility! If you are afraid for your life, your estates, then step aside! You will be secure, spare yourself any possible punishment, and I will risk my own life instead!

(The people crowd toward them.)

Beauvalle.—I will not give in! *(Seeing the people)* What do these people want? *(Calls)* Put away your arms! Instantly disarm! *(Uproar among the people.)*

Tomeš.—You are without the power, Count, to give such a command now! I with these people will go forth into the field of action, and nothing can prevent us!

Beauvalle.—I still am the master here. *(To the people)* Disarm Tomeš at once!

People (Six men leap to the side of TOMEŠ to protect him).—Shield him!

Tomeš (Ironically to the COUNT).—This is your power! *(To the people)* The Count forbids us to leave for Prague, to join the ranks of the new king who would give us our freedom. I am going forth. Who will voluntarily join me?

The People.—All of us! To Prague! To Prague! Down with serfdom!

Beauvalle (To himself).—And if serfdom is abolished, I could no longer be master over my own people!

Tomeš (To BEAUVALLE).—No one can hold us longer in subjection. From the very grave we have risen again, and if we wish to live once more, we must earn our freedom by fighting for it. *(To the people)* For the present the field at Vrána's must be our camp! As soon as all the brothers have assembled, we will start for Prague!

*Beauvalle (Seats himself hurriedly at the table. Takes up a pen and begins to write. Talks to himself).—*I can prevent it yet. Pilsen is yet here, baron Schirnding, and the troops of the Empress! (*Calls*) Magistrate! (*Magistrate answers.*) The couriers are to take their horse this instant, and follow up Schirnding with this message! I ask for troops! I will suppress this rebellion in its very birth!

Countess }
Dejm } Count Beauvalle!

*Tomeš (To the people).—*Seize the couriers, and whoever would try to break our lines, and go to Pilsen, will pay with his life for the deed! And if Baron Schirnding attempts to return here, we will, with the support of the Bavarians, welcome him with fire and blood! Forward, brothers, forward! The fall of serfdom is at hand! The sun of liberty is rising, and by our struggle we will welcome its warming rays!

*People.—*To battle— Forward, to battle!

(*BEAUVALLE steps forward as though to hold back TOMEŠ. The COUNTESS and DEJM step toward him.*)

ACT IV

Forest. Cliffs in the rear. A cross, nailed to a tree, at the left of the road.

SCENE I

TOMEŠ, JÍRAK, VRÁNA, later DEJM, crowd of armed serfs, KOŘINEK.

TOMEŠ stands on a cliff gazing into the forest toward the right. In front to the right, VRÁNA, rifle suspended on his arm, to the left JÍRAK, rifle on shoulder.

*Tomeš (To VRÁNA).—*Go quickly to the guards on the edge of the forest! Let some one find out without loss of time, whether the soldiers of Schirnding are now in the castle, or whether they will come!

*Vrána.—*Stepánek will do that very well! If my feet were only lighter, I would go myself! (*Goes to the right*) I can more readily break the helmets of a few dragoons!

*Jírak (To TOMEŠ).—*We caught a number of those couriers,—and still one of them must have escaped us!

Tomeš.—I doubt whether one escaped us. Schirnding did not even wait to be invited by the Count to come! He saw what was up, so he came back with his troops!

Jírák.—He wants to smother the flame we started before it is fanned into something beyond his control. That Count of ours, the devil take him, is giving all the help he possibly can! (*Steps are heard to the right. JÍRAK looks in that direction, and seizes his rifle.*) Some one comes!

(*Enter COUNT DEJM, covered by a cloak.*)

Tomeš.—Count Dejm! (*Descends from the cliff and approaches to greet him.*) Count!

Dejm (Extending his hand).—At last I have found you!

Tomeš (Taking his hand).—And are you not endangering yourself?

Dejm.—It does not matter. I leave in an hour. By that time the soldiers of Schirnding should arrive here from Pilsen,—and it is even possible that the first company will be here sooner!

Tomeš.—The work of the Count! But the Count and Schirnding are taking the wrong course!

Dejm.—Do not be mistaken! You cannot attack Schirnding!

Tomeš.—No, not yet. There are but a few of us as yet, and we can only defend ourselves. We will not descend into the field against him now, and if he wishes, let him look for us in Vrána's low lands. But by this evening, there will be at least three hundred more added to our forces, and then it will be possible, I think, to surround Schirnding and keep my promise!

Dejm.—If you could attack them here, it would of course be splendid! But remember, brother, the first step is to hasten to Prague as soon as possible, to strengthen the forces there! Do not delay longer than is necessary!

(*From the left appear a crowd of serfs led by KOŘINEK. On their shoulders they carry scythes, rifles, forks, etc. They march along, talking eagerly to each other, across the right of the scene to the cliffs.*)

Tomeš.—I shall see how many men Schirnding will bring with him. If it is impossible to attack them, we will march for Prague tomorrow.

Dejm.—How many rifles have you?

Tomeš.—All that we found in the armory, or whatever we had at home.

Dejm.—I will see that you are equipped better. I am now

on the way to Beroun, and I will send you a division of cavalry with more ammunition.

Tomeš.—Many thanks to you, Count.

Dejm.—Just try to protect the lives of all your people. (*Gives him his hand.*) I must go now.

Tomeš (Quickly).—Just one more question, Count. Is Marie still at the castle?

Dejm.—I do not know. I could not and dared not talk further with either the Count or the Countess. I only know that the Countess went off a short time ago in the direction of the game-keeper's lodge. So God protect you now, noble youth, and be not only heroic but cautious as well. Near Prague, if not in Prague, we shall meet again.

Tomeš.—Goodbye, noble Count. You will hear from me soon! (*DEJM departs*) Now to the field, so that all will be made ready!

Jírak.—The count was speaking about arms. I believe there will be enough of them. We have about eighty rifles in all, and in close-range conflict we must depend upon the weapons we are accustomed to using.

(*Departs to the right among the cliffs. LÍDA approaches toward him with slow steps, her face pale, looking downcast.*)

SCENE II

LÍDA, TOMEŠ, JÍRAK.

Tomeš.—Lída, are you here? Whom are you seeking?

Lída (Raising her eyes, fixes them upon TOMEŠ with a long look).—Since you ask me, I must tell you . . . (*her eyes drooping to the ground*) my father!

Tomeš.—He went away, but he will return at once. (*Motions to JÍRAK to go among the cliffs.*) I will follow you at once! (*JÍRAK disappears, TOMEŠ to LÍDA with lowered voice.*) If you wish to go with me, you will find your father in the camp in Vrána's field.

Lída (Painfully).—If I wish to go with you? (*Glancing at the departing JÍRAK*) Tomsí, it was not destined that I should go with you, I must be satisfied to follow after you. Just like the cur that you drive away with stones a hundred times, and yet he returns to your very heels . . . (*quickly and wildly*) Tomsí, why must I bear such cruel and undeserved pain for you? Why

should I suffer so cruelly! What I was obliged to witness at the castle . . . it dried out my last burning tear, killed my very soul!

Tomeš.—Dear soul, may you overtake that peace which I did not intentionally disturb!

Lída.—It will not come . . . I cannot find peace . . . and this burning pain will not be allayed. Only then . . . but fear not that I want you now . . . that I would . . . have what cannot be.

Tomeš.—What did you wish to say to me?

Lída (Seriously).—Tomeš, you have the power to save me. I know you are not for me . . . but listen, you shall not belong to her either! Run away, escape from us both, but do not marry her!

Tomeš.—You know my promise,—but even more, you know how dearly I love her . . .

Lída (Calls out sharply).—Do not finish. Go, Tomeš, go away! I cannot talk to you further . . . But, Tomsí, (*with frenzied laughter*) neither shall she belong to you! (*Walks away, gazing at the ground, and talking to herself.*) No, he shall not have her!

Jirak (Returning).—Tomsí, from the village comes the news that the Count and some one else from the troops have left for the forest. A troop of soldiers in the hunting lodge . . . our men calling for you! It looks as though we are to be attacked!

Tomeš.—I am coming, coming at once! (*Takes a couple of steps, then pauses to look at LÍDA, standing motionless. His face is full of sympathy. He waves goodbye to her, then goes away.*)

Lída (Steps up to the tree on which the cross is hung, talking to herself).—No, she shall not be his if I were to lose my life and very soul to prevent it! (*Collapses in a heap under the cross.*)

(*From the right advance BEAUVALLE with SCHIRNDING, looking around cautiously. SCHIRNDING is wrapped in a heavy cloak.*)

SCENE III

LÍDA, BEAUVALLE, and SCHIRNDING; later HAVELKA, park keeper and a troop of soldiers.

Beauvalle.—This is the only place where you can make a stand with your troops. Elsewhere the access is difficult and almost impossible.

Schirnding (Gazes at the cliffs).—Difficult to advance here! (*Stamps his foot with disappointment*) I would give a hundred florins were that criminal in our hands, or shot!

Beauvalle.—Believe me, captain, I would add another hundred gladly.

Schirnding.—I believe you. It would be greatly to your advantage if this uprising could be quickly crushed! If the Empress is victorious, it is hard to tell what will be the result of your hasty decision!

Beauvalle (Quickly).—I will do anything you say. But if you now wish unnecessarily to look at the road to their camp, I must send at least the game warden and a number of soldiers. I have sent for them (*Looks to the right*) They are here now.

(*From the left appear HAVELKA, park keeper and a troop of soldiers. All are armed, ready to fire. Soldiers form a chain, looking up at the cliffs and the frowning forest.*)

Schirnding.—Well, do not give yourself any great concern about me. (*Goes to the soldiers to give instructions.*)

Beauvalle (To HAVELKA).—Is the Countess in the cottage?

Havelka.—She was gracious enough to come after my daughter.

Beauvalle.—She did not know the troops are here. (*To SCHIRNDING.*) I will step over to the game warden's cottage for the Countess. We will await you at the castle.

(*Soldiers, SCHIRNDING, HAVELKA, and park keeper to toward the cliffs. BEAUVALLE wishes to pass by the tree with the cross to the cottage. He sees LÍDA advancing toward him. She has all the time been looking intently at him while she meditated.*)

SCENE IV

BEAUVALLE, LÍDA.

Lída (With burning eyes).—Noble Count!

Beauvalle (Astonished).—And who are you?

Lída.—That I cannot tell you; I am not who I used to be.

Beauvalle.—You are Lída, the daughter of old Vrána!
And your father also is in the camp of the enemy!

Lída.—Perhaps he is. And if I could handle a rifle and were not Lída, perhaps I also would be there.

Beauvalle (Suspiciously).—You are a spy!

Lída.—I wish to become a spy for your cause,—but only if I am rewarded, well rewarded!

Beauvalle.—I will repay you well. (*Reaches for money.*)

Lída.—Keep your gold and silver. I will not be lured by your vile money!

Beauvalle.—You bold lizard!

Lída.—Condemn me, revile me, it is safe . . . ours (*with sarcasm*) are now at a safe distance. But listen, and promise me to fulfill your promise if I now do you a great service.

Beauvalle.—What do you want, refusing my money?

Lída.—I want even more. If I were today, tomorrow, at some time before he leaves . . . if I were to place Tomeš into your hands . . .

Beauvalle (*Overcome, but anxiously*).—And you can do that?

Lída.—And if I could, I say, if it is possible. I do not know if fate will be with me . . . (*placing her hand on her head*) I feel strangely here . . . might if I could succeed in placing him in your power . . . Count do you promise me not to put him to death?

Beauvalle.—If the people will become quieted and scatter . . . I will not put him to death!

Lída (*With clear decisive voice*).—Without Tomeš, not one arm will be raised, without him, not one man will leave this place!

Beauvalle.—If that is the case, accomplish your purpose . . . put him into our power.

Lída (*With lowered voice and shifting eyes*).—If by that time, my reason does not altogether desert me, perhaps I can do it. I am ever at his steps . . . I know where he goes . . . every move he makes . . . (*to herself, lost in her thoughts*) and I must manage to keep him away from her.

Beauvalle.—What are you saying?

Lída (*Surprised*).—Did I say something?

Beauvalle.—You want to prevent some one else from getting him!

Lída (*Placing her hand over her heart*).—She must not get him . . . she must not . . . if I myself must pay the penalty with my life. (*After a moment she quiets down.*) Just promise me, give me your word, noble Count, that after it is over, she shall not have him!

Beauvalle.—Of whom are you speaking? Of Marie? (*Points to the cottage.*)

Lída.—You are, noble Count, in authority here. We are all in your power. Without your consent, Tomeš will never dare marry that one from the cottage. Promise me, that you will

spare his life, and forbid him to marry,—and I will give you Toměš perhaps very soon, I will make him your captive!

Beauvalle (Impressively).—All that you ask I shall grant you!

Lída.—You mean it?

Beauvalle.—My word is sufficient. And furthermore, I will spare your father.

Lída (With indifferent voice).—Father, a parent, and I yet have a father . . . I had forgotten about him!

Beauvalle.—And I will grant all you request. (*A shot is heard in the forest in the direction in which SCHIRNDING went. Then an uproar. BEAUVALLE is frightened.*) They are attacked! (*Draws his poinard, stands with his back to the rocky cliff*) Who is here? (*To LÍDA*) Run to the cottage. (*From the cliffs runs forth a soldier.*) What is happening? (*A second, then a third appears, followed by HAVELKA.*)

Havelka.—A rifle was accidentally discharged. The shot has aroused the camp and the people are flocking after us!

(*Enter SCHIRNDING, and other soldiers.*)

Schirnding.—Run, Count, away to the cottage. There are a few too many for us!

Beauvalle.—I warned you,—run quickly (*To LÍDA*) Do as you have promised. You shall have whatever you wish.

(*All disappear. LÍDA alone remains. On the road from the direction of the cottage appear the COUNTESS with MARIE, attended by a maid.*)

SCENE V

COUNTESS, MARIE, *maid*, LÍDA; later VRÁNA, JÍRAK, *the armed serfs*, last enters JAN.

Countess.—I heard a shot, and the forest is filled with shouts and cries!

Marie (Anxiously).—Protect yourself, Countess, let us return to the castle (*Points ahead of them.*)

Countess.—This girl here,—Lída! (*COUNTESS goes toward LÍDA while MARIE remains unnoticed.*) What has happened?

Lída (Without taking notice of the countess or hearing the question).—No, she does not come yet!

Countess.—Answer! Where is the Count, where is Baron Schirnding?

Lída (Looking up).—Countess!

Countess.—I am asking you a question.

Lída.—I did not hear you. I have not as yet seen Tomeš.

Countess.—Who fired? Where is the Count?

Lída.—They went away. The shot was accidental.

Countess.—But there is an uproar!

Lída.—They are rushing after them.

(*COUNTESS, steps back, from the cliffs step out three armed serfs trying under cover to locate the soldiers and the game keeper; behind them appear JÍRAK with VRÁNA. Later three more serfs from the forest come to the front.*)

Jírak.—He must be here!

Vrána.—They are not far away.

Voices from the cliffs.—After them, after them! (*From the cliffs appear ten other serfs, crossing the scene to the other side of the forest.*)

Countess.—They will be killed. (*Calls*) Listen, listen to me!

Vrána (Turning around).—Who is calling?

Jírak.—It is the Countess.

Vrána (Laughing).—The title of the Countess is not now held in great esteem. (*Approaches the COUNTESS.*)

Marie.—Save yourself! (*Runs to the COUNTESS. LÍDA sees MARIE, and stirs uneasily.*)

Lída.—Again in front of me! Heaven, it shall be the last time.

Vrána (To the COUNTESS).—And what do you wish, noble lady?

Countess.—Do not attract the attention of those who were here. The Count is somewhere among them.

Vrána (Turns about and calls).—Quickly after them! The Count is with them! Seize or shoot the Count!

(*All the serfs disappear into the left edge of the forest, JÍRAK alone remaining in the midst of the center of the scene.*)

Countess.—Merciful Heavens, they will be killed!

Marie.—I will try to save them. (*Runs to JÍRAK who stands with drawn rifle gazing into the wood.*) Where is Tomeš?

Jírak.—Back, retreat! Leave us alone and go away from this place! (*Goes into the forest.*)

Countess (In despair).—All is in vain!

Lída (Sees what is taking place, stirs uneasily, places her hand on her forehead, then to herself).—I will bring him, I will bring him here; she shall hold him, she herself! (*Quickly advances toward*

the Countess.) Noble lady, do you wish me to find Tomeš and bring him here?

Countess.—At this time? In such a moment? Can you find him?

Lída.—I know where he is. Wait for him here. I will surely bring him back.

Countess.—Can you do it? Oh, bring him back!

Lída (Wildly to herself).—I will surely bring him! (*Disappears.*)

Countess.—Marie! Lída will bring Tomeš to us!

Marie (Jealously).—Lída?

Countess.—Yes, yes. If she could but find him! If she would bring him quickly! Why did the Count go into the forest, why has he been so rash?

Marie.—How terrible it is here,—how oppressive the atmosphere; and this is only the beginning of the struggle!

Jan (Comes out quickly from the right. Sees Countess, is surprised).—Noble Lady, what are you doing here?

Countess.—Has something happened at the castle?

Jan.—I am seeking the Count and the Baron. New troops have now arrived. They wish to know whether they should hurry here after the Colonel.

Countess.—Go quickly and send them to the game keeper's cottage. (*JAN goes away.*)

Marie.—And suppose Tomeš were to go to the cottage also! He would be attacked!

(*From among the cliffs appears TOMEŠ, LÍDA, and a number of armed serfs.*)

SCENE VI

TOMEŠ, *serfs*, MARIE, COUNTESS, LÍDA.

Tomeš.—Where are our men?

Lída.—They ran into the forest after the Count! But listen, here is the Countess with you—

Countess (Sees TOMEŠ. Hastens to him).—They are following up the Count! Save, protect him!

Marie.—Tomsí, do not permit them to kill the Count!

Tomeš (Sharply).—How can I place into your hands, one who is now probably in the hands of my people! . . . (*Considering*) But to you, noble lady, I must be eternally grateful. Ask whatever you wish!

(Disappears with his men into the forest.)

Lída (Looking after him).—If they were to burst out and take him! *(Stands a moment at the edge of the wood, then climbs a cliff, the better to look down into the forest.)*

Marie (To the COUNTESS).—If he reaches the scene of action!

Countess (Listening sharply).—I hear as yet no firing!

(From the left appear JÍRAK with VRÁNA and four armed men.)

Jírak.—Impossible to reach the cottage! It is surrounded!

Vrána.—And yet we might have fired upon those who were here! The devil take it! I was all ready to go after the Count!

Tomeš (Steps out with the others).—Quickly, quickly! How easily they could lure you all into a trap! Go down to our camp and double the guards!

(The men disappear into the cliffs. VRÁNA remains talking with JÍRAK.)

Marie (Hurries with COUNTESS toward TOMEŠ).—Tomsí, Tomsí!

Tomeš (To the COUNTESS).—The Count is safe.

Countess.—I thank you!

Tomeš.—Do not delay here longer, Countess, and you also Marie, so you are not injured here! *(MARIE hesitates, TOMEŠ talks to the COUNTESS)*

Lída (Angrily, looks first at TOMEŠ, then into the forest; to herself half aloud).—Almost every one has gone, and yet those *(pointing to the left)* do not come, to capture their choicest prize! I will go after them! *(Looks at TOMEŠ and MARIE)* Just stay here a moment, only a moment longer! *(Vehemently, but half aloud to MARIE as though cursing her.)* Bewitch him, hold him in your power so he will hear nothing, see nothing, and gaze only at you! Be beautiful as you have never been before, and talk to him enticingly—but hold him, just keep him now,—I will run a race with the wind,—*(wildly)* and like a flash of lightning I will return! *(Disappears to the left toward the cottage.)*

Vrána (With JÍRAK goes into the forest).—We are leaving now. Do not stay longer here!

Tomeš.—I will come after you in a moment!

Jírak.—No, we will stay here with you till you are ready!

Vrána (Calling).—Hej, boys, three of you remain here. *(Three armed men return. JÍRAK takes his stand to the left facing the game keeper's cottage, VRÁNA to the right toward the castle. The other three stay in the forest toward the right.)*

SCENE VII

TOMEŠ, MARIE, COUNTESS, JÍRAK, VRÁNA

Marie (To TOMEŠ).—This struggle frightens me! Leave these people go! Return to us!

Tomeš.—It is now impossible! Not one, not one of our men will now return to his former life without a struggle! Since Count Dejm has spoken to me, I feel as though a new heaven and new earth were about to open to us! We will never again subject ourselves to the degrading condition of serfdom! Rather would we all perish and die here now!

Marie (Anxiously).—And how terrible are your words, how frightful will this conflict become! You have not even left this place, and see! how terrifying the aspect of things has become! How can any good arise from this!

Tomeš.—With certainty good must come of it, my Marie. And all who go to war are not going to be killed! We shall return victorious and a happier day will dawn for you and me after the conflict is over!

Marie.—You must not go! I am frightened for your safety!

Countess.—Just consider well one thing. All the troops of the Empress disappeared at the coming of the new ruler. And today, his retainers fear that Prague will be besieged,—and the new king, no one seems to even know where he is!

Tomeš.—But that is not a sufficient cause for deserting him. He is fighting not only for himself, but also for us, and we,—we must win something from this conflict for ourselves and not depend entirely upon him!

Vrána (Approaching).—Tomsí, we are here all alone. Do not delay longer. Who knows what the Countess and that child with her are trying to convince you to do! Come to your men! They need you. They are now alone!

Tomeš.—I will guard you and myself also. And you, in the meantime, do not conduct yourself so surlily toward the Countess and my betrothed!

Vrána.—Well, well, I suppose I can say what I think! (*Goes away.*)

Countess.—Your people entertain fears for your safety. We must not keep you here longer.

Marie.—Oh Tomeš, will you ever return to your little cottage and to us?

(In the forest a cracking of dry sticks and underbrush is heard. JÍRAK looks in that direction, and walks hither.)

Tomeš.—I will return, but not at once. First I must accomplish something, first I must keep the promise to my people from which I cannot retract.

(MARIE begins to weep, with her head on the breast of TOMEŠ. From the rear, LÍDA appears upon the cliff, behind her, the soldiers are trying to conceal themselves in the brush.)

SCENE VIII

LÍDA, SCHIRNDING, *soldiers*, TOMEŠ, COUNTESS, JÍRAK, MARIE, BEAUVALLE, HAVELKA, *park keeper*.

Lída (With glaring eyes).—And still they are here!

Schirnding (Steps out from the rear; half aloud).—No one is to fire upon Tomeš; no one, understand!

Lída (To Schirnding).—Let a number of your men remain here. I will lead a troop of them around, block the road, then he cannot escape!

(LÍDA, SCHIRNDING and soldiers step back again into the forest.)

Tomeš (To MARIE).—You weep upon my breast, and heaven seems to open up to me! See, I am going into valiant service, service which I have heard of, dreamt about, but never supposed I could participate in. I must step forth from these woods in which I was reared, to take my stand at the head of these men gathering about my standard to fight for their freedom! Oh do not cloud with your tears that glorious road, the path to victory and glory, which I shall so joyfully take!

Jírak (Sees something in front to the left).—Some one is here! Who is it? *(Three soldiers leap upon him, bear him to the ground and drag him into the forest.)* Tomsí, Tomsí!

Tomeš (Frightened, to MARIE and the COUNTESS).—Go at once! *(Steps forward)* What is happening? Jíráku! *(A shot is fired, and three countrymen with Vrána rush forth.)*

Vrána (With the serfs to TOMEŠ).—We have been trapped!

(MARIE and the COUNTESS hasten toward the right. At the same time, from the left, SCHIRNDING appears with the soldiers upon the cliffs. BEAUVALLE with HAVELKA appear on the road by the cross.)

Schirnding (Appears before TOMEŠ with the soldiers).—You are our prisoner!

Tomeš.—You are mine! (*Fires at SCHIRNDING who falls, wounded. The soldiers leave TOMEŠ alone, and kneel beside SCHIRNDING.*)

Beauvalle (*Who saw TOMEŠ fire.*)—Tomsí!

Tomeš (*To his men.*)—Rush to the camp! Below!

(*TOMEŠ with the serfs disappear to the right. BEAUVALLE hastens to SCHIRNDING.*)

Lída (*Steps out, barring the road.*)—You are mine and you shall not escape. (*To the soldiers*) Seize him!

(*The soldiers rush upon TOMEŠ struggling with him; others seize VRÁNA, and three serfs rush into the forest to the right.*)

Beauvalle (*Above the body of SCHIRNDING.*)—I now declare that Tomeš must die the most violent death! (*Looks at the struggling group.*) Bind him!

(*TOMEŠ is overpowered, in the midst of a group of soldiers; LÍDA joyfully feasts her eyes upon him*)

Lída.—Taken, taken, Tomeš, you are now a prisoner, my prisoner, for I betrayed you! You shall not die, you will remain eternally bound; but Marie, she cannot, she shall not have you!

Beauvalle (*Steps to the front.*)—No, no one shall have him now! For he is going to be hanged!

Lída (*Wildly.*)—You lied to me! You promised me that his life would be spared!

Beauvalle.—And if I made a promise, murder, (*pointing to SCHIRNDING*) knows no mercy!

Lída (*In desperation.*)—Tomeš, Tomeš, you are going to the scaffold!

Tomeš.—Due to your treason, your villainy!

Lída.—Release him! For the mercy of heaven, let him go! (*Rushes upon the soldiers.*)

Beauvalle.—Back, you lunatic!

Tomeš.—May you be cursed, eternally accursed!

Lída.—Woe, woe upon me! (*Collapses upon the ground as the soldiers lead TOMEŠ away.*)

ACT V

The hunting lodge at the castle where the weapons are kept. To the right, an old fashioned table, bench, and wooden chairs; to the left a smaller table. On the left side of the lodge, a door leads into a neighboring room.

SCENE I

BEAUVALLE, COUNTESS, *later* JAN

(*COUNTESS and BEAUVALLE dressed in black. COUNTESS is seated at the table to the left, BEAUVALLE at the large table wrapped in thought.*)

Countess.—Count, are you going to hold Tomeš as a prisoner? Won't you let him out under some sort of penalty instead?

Beauvalle (Icily).—You advise me to let him go?

Countess.—You dare not let him go free! But release him under a penalty, under some sort of a bond!

Beauvalle (Sternly).—Consider your own advice,—you might be obliged to sacrifice your own head or mine were it carried out.

Countess (Deeply hurt).—This is worse than severity!

Beauvalle.—I only regret that you cannot see how impossible it is to grant your request.

Countess.—You fear the result of the uprising more than is really necessary. The insurrection is quelled, the people suppressed before they could reach the Bavarians.

Beauvalle (Rising, icily).—Yes, you are right. The people are scattered. But it is necessary to be prepared for them. We must be armed, ready for an attack at any moment . . . And nothing has happened? What have I done? Nothing at all, only risen against her Majesty, the Empress, who now seems to be victorious! Only caused an uprising on my own estate, among my own serfs . . . only caused the inevitable death of Baron Schirnding, who by his death will greatly weaken the cause of the Reservists upon whom Her Majesty greatly depended . . .

Countess.—But surely Schirnding will recover?

Beauvalle.—We will know very soon. (*Rings. Enter JAN*)
How is the Colonel, Baron Schirnding?

Jan.—The physician has given up all hope.

Countess (Frightened, stirs uneasily.)

Beauvalle (To the COUNTESS).—Well? (*Motions JAN away*)
Are you beginning to believe that all is not well with us?

Countess.—And still I believe you fear the penalty too much.

Beauvalle (Coolly).—And what manner of punishment is liable to fall upon me? Only such as befell a group of nobles more than a hundred years ago, after the Old Town uprising in Prague when they were put to death in a wholesale massacre . . . nothing more. We have stepped into this castle to fill the place of one who

lost his head at that time. Every day the power of the people against the ruling class is increasing . . . so why be afraid? Nothing worse can overtake us than the executioner's ax! (*Falls into the chair, deep in thought.*)

Countess (Rising with burning eyes).—And even though the fault and its penalty were as great as your fear imagines . . . would the sacrifice of a human life diminish it?

Jan (Enters the room).—Count Dejm!

SCENE III

DEJM, BEAUVALLE, *later* COUNTESS, *magistrate*, JAN.

Beauvalle (Unfriendly).—Count Dejm, you are here again?

Dejm.—I felt it my duty to return.

Countess (Returning to the room; DEJM sees her.)

Countess (Frightened).—Your appearance here, it means you bear evil tidings?

Beauvalle.—Where are the allied forces? Where is Charles Albert?

Dejm.—Prague is enclosed by the forces of Marie Teresa. General Belleisle is scarcely able to hold his stand, and the Bavarian is fleeing from Bohemia! (*Falls into a chair. COUNTESS shows emotion.*)

Beauvalle.—Defeat to the cause everywhere, and what is to happen to us who are now regarded as traitors?

Dejm.—Do not be afraid. I urged you to stand by the Bavarian, and I am now ready to take upon myself all the blame, and the penalty which might befall you, I myself will bear. You can and must say that Tomeš Vítek and I, against your will, caused the uprising on your estates.

Beauvalle.—I will not permit you to be punished for me.

Dejm.—I have not said I will give myself up to a court, to be tried. Our cause is not entirely lost as yet. We will exert all our strength to save it. But if it comes to the worst,—

Beauvalle.—Oh, do not deceive yourself!

Dejm.— . . . then I will give up my castle and estate and flee from the country. But whether here or in a foreign land, I take upon myself all the blame! But I ask you to do one thing according to my request.

Beauvalle.—That is?

Dejm.—Release Tomeš Vítek . . . his neck is in danger.

Beauvalle.—What insanity . . . I must sacrifice myself to do it! I expect to be called to account at any moment, and you want me to testify to my own guilt? (*Calls*) Magistrate! (*To himself fearfully*) If Tomeš were to escape! (*Sits himself.*)
(*Magistrate enters.*)

Beauvalle.—How is it with Tomeš? Is he carefully guarded?

Magistrate.—Have no worry concerning him. Two guards are stationed at the door of the dungeon, and he can hardly move his limbs in the thongs that bind him.

Beauvalle.—How is he conducting himself?

Magistrate.—Like an eagle or a hawk with a wing crippled by a bullet. He sits wrapped in gloomy thoughts, he looks at no one, and seems to be consulting with himself all the time. (*Laughing*) No doubt he thinks he would move about more freely were he now at Prague, fighting against the Empress! (*BEAUVALLE gazes at the ground, the COUNTESS is touched, DEJM is angry*) But he must hold himself down at times. There are moments when his wrath explodes, and he strains to break his bonds, and his cries are terrifying, angry, as though he must break away or pull down the arches of his vault! (*With laughter*) But it is all in vain!

Countess (Angrily).—Stop! Only brutality or something even worse can talk thus!

Magistrate (Frightened).—I . . . your noble highness . . . I am . . .

Beauvalle.—I have heard enough. Guard Tomeš carefully. (*Motions to the magistrate to leave.*)

Dejm (To himself).—This seems to be the end of this heroic youth, and only an extreme measure can now save him! (*Wrapped in his thoughts, he looks up at the entrance of JAN*)

Jan (Enters).—The Court Commissioner from Jordán!

Beauvalle (Rises frightened.)

Jan.—He has come with two other gentlemen, and wishes to be presented to you at once!

Beauvalle (Frightened).—Jordán! Why has he come!

Countess.—Leave at once, Count Dejm, so he does not see you.

Dejm.—I will wait for him also.

Beauvalle (Angrily).—I won't let him in!

Dejm.—Why so? You don't even know what news he is bringing! And better learn his mission here now than later!

Beauvalle (To JAN).—Let him enter. (JAN *disappears*.)
Dejm, stay with me now! I must not be left alone! (*Sinks into his chair*. Enter JORDÁN.)

SCENE IV

JORDÁN, COUNTESS, DEJM, BEAUVALLE.

Jordán (In official dress with a poinard at his side, a portfolio under the left hand, bows to the COUNTESS, who advances toward him.)—Pardon, Countess, my sudden appearance. Sorry. (*Sees DEJM, looks surprised, but remarks dryly*) Count Dejm, have I prevented your disappearance?

Dejm.—Not at all, Mr. Court Commissioner, I am not going to leave!

Jordán (*Sharply*).—You then consider it advisable to remain longer here at the castle?

Dejm.—If I am not an obstacle, and as long as I have the permission (*bowing to the COUNTESS*) of my gracious hostess, I will remain here!

Jordán (*With a forced smile*).—You will be no obstacle, Count, to my transaction.

Beauvalle (*Rising to JORDÁN*).—Your mission here . . .
You are commanded, Mr. Court Commissioner . . .

Jordán.—Pardon, Count, my respects to you . . .

Beauvalle.—I welcome you. May I know what it is that gives me the honor of your visit?

Jordán.—A very important mission, Count.

Countess (*Frightened*).

Dejm (*Stirs uneasily. Takes the COUNTESS by the hand*).—Calmly, Countess, we must compose ourselves.

Jordán (*On the side to BEAUVALLE*).—In your castle the leader and warrior Schirnding lies injured unto death. There was an uprising on your estate, the result of your default from her Majesty, Marie Teresa. I received a stern command to investigate the matter, and make a complete report to the Chancellor's Court.

Beauvalle (*To himself*).—Then I am lost.

Countess (*To DEJM*).—What is he saying?

Dejm.—I cannot catch his words.

Jordán.—It is my first duty in common with yourself, to hold a trial, and bring to justice all the revolutionists on your estate.

Beauvalle.—With me?

Jordán.—To you as a noble and magistrate belongs the power to call these people to account. But it must not be left to you alone, as you also are charged with treason against Her Majesty.

Dejm (Hearing the last words).—Pardon me, Mr. Court Commissioner, if I express my opinion, but I believe your order is somewhat premature.

Jordán.—And why so, Count?

Dejm (Fearlessly).—Because, according to my knowledge, it is not yet decided who shall rule over this land, whether it is to be the Grand Duchess, Marie Teresa, or the new king, Charles Albert.

Jordán (With sarcasm).—That may be your presumption, Count, but it is not the case according to the knowledge of others. (*With emphasis*) General Belleisle has abandoned Prague, (*DEJM and BEAUVALLE stir uneasily*) the forces of Her Majesty, our Empress, Marie Teresa have overcome the troops of the allies who are now fleeing from Bohemia.

Beauvalle (Aside).—Then I am lost!

Jordán (Half aloud to BEAUVALLE).—You were gracious to me, I have not forgotten it. But I am guarded by two other judges.

Beauvalle.—What shall I do?

Jordán.—On the side, I give you this friendly advice: save yourself as much as is now possible. Do not allow another shadow to fall upon you. Great are the penalties which will fall upon the leaders of the rebellion.

Beauvalle (Despairingly).—I understand . . . I understand . . . but who will bring a charge against me?

Jordán (Aloud).—Count Millesimo went directly to Vienna, and there blubbered out everything that happened here. Then followed the report of the uprising and the assault upon Schirnding.

Dejm (To the COUNTESS, Half aloud).—There is yet help . . . but it will require courage. (*Talks with spirit to the COUNTESS*)

Jordán.—I have but a few minutes to talk with you alone. Give us, I pray, without further delay, the leader of the uprising, the young poacher, Tomeš.

Beauvalle.—Give the order, Commissioner, in my name. Let him be freed of his chains, and brought here for trial.

Jordán (Quietly).—I again repeat, protect yourself if you wish to be saved. (*Departs.*)

Beauvalle.—All, all is lost! Upon my head will fall the blow aimed at serfdom! I, lunatic that I am, allowed myself to be perverted, deprived of my reason, and I drew forth the sword that now will be raised against my own head!

Dejm.—Count Beauvalle! (*Wishes to approach.*)

Beauvalle (Breathing heavily).—Back! Leave me alone!

Dejm.—Count Beauvalle!

Beauvalle.—You alone are the cause of my destruction . . . these orders coming in from all sides seem to pulverize me as a wild boar pulverizes a bone in its mouth. (*Rising*) But is it decreed that I must perish, is it possible that I, I, must subject myself to these humiliations raining down upon me! But I still feel in my vitals the strength to avert a portion of that fate. . . and if it is not possible, then with my fall, shall fall and be scattered all that stood with me!

Dejm (Approaching BEAUVALLE; half aloud).—Be merciful to Tomeš, and act cautiously. If you will say the word, I will bring the armed people to arrest the officers and the soldiers.

Beauvalle (Half aloud).—This is the greatest folly you have yet invented. Think of your own safety, now, and do not disturb me further with your crazy advice. (*Steps away from DEJM.*)

(*The door opens. The soldiers appear with TOMEŠ.*)

Countess (Horried).—They are leading him here!

(*Enter two soldiers, bringing in TOMEŠ, in the same clothes in which he was captured. He lacks only his banner and sword. Behind him come JORDÁN, HOPFLING, magistrate; two soldiers in the rear, stand outside by the door. JAN carries writing material, and places it on the table. The COUNTESS in the door at the left gazes at TOMEŠ, who bows to her with a pained smile.*)

SCENE V

TOMEŠ, BEAUVALLE, JORDÁN, DEJM, HOPFLING, magistrate, a troop of soldiers.

Dejm (Approaches TOMEŠ, and unnoticed says).—I am present. In the greatest crisis, depend upon me.

(*TOMEŠ speaks quietly to DEJM. JORDÁN looks at him, also at DEJM. DEJM walks away. TOMEŠ stands in the center of the room before the table; behind the table, sit BEAUVALLE with JORDÁN, to the left of the table HOPFLING, to the right, the magistrate. To the*

left, in the rear, are JAN, in front near the door, DEJM. A troop of soldiers in the rear behind the door.)

*Tomeš (Advancing to the table; aloud).—*I do not know why I was summoned here, unless, (*motioning to the table*) my trial awaits me.

*Jordán.—*You are not mistaken in your supposition.

*Tomeš (Surprised, steps back a step, then recovering himself looks at BEAUVALLE).—*And you, Count, what are you doing behind this table?

*Beauvalle (Incensed, afraid that TOMEŠ will implicate him).—*Be silent! I am your lord, your judge, and you are in my hands!

*Tomeš (Overcome with surprise).—*My lord . . . my judge? . . . I see, Count, so you are going to condemn me as a criminal . . . (*BEAUVALLE angry.*)

*Jordán.—*You are to answer the questions put to you.

*Tomeš.—*I will gladly do so. Without any shame I acknowledge myself the leader of the uprising people on this estate . . . I admit that we were going to Prague to join the ranks of the new king.

*Jordán.—*You are not to call that enemy of the country a king again; and listen . . .

*Tomeš.—*And still he was our real king, a ruler of our choice. For he wished to bring us freedom, not only here, but to all the countrymen in the land. And for that freedom which is ours and yours, Count, (*gazing at BEAUVALLE*) we arose, and made a united struggle. For that long sought freedom, we armed ourselves with rifles, with cutting scythes and weapons of the fields such as we had, and for the liberty of our country gladly aroused those (*gazing reproachfully at BEAUVALLE*) who hardly knew how to prepare themselves for war.

*Beauvalle (Uneasily).—*Whom are you trying to blame? You alone are the cause of all this trouble!

(*HOPFLING seated on the left side of the table arises and steps behind BEAUVALLE and JORDÁN to the magistrate who is writing. He seats himself beside him, looks at TOMEŠ and BEAUVALLE, and begins to talk earnestly. BEAUVALLE frightened, sees that the magistrate is looking steadily at him.*)

*Tomeš (With self confidence).—*I alone! Yes, with pride I accept your testimony, Count! With pride I acknowledge that I remained firm, true to the cause, after the fire which was cremating my vitals had once burst into a flame; true to the cause for which I, and these helpless serfs stood out as long as we were able,

when you, for fear of losing a piece of land, or perhaps your worthless neck, withdrew and abandoned us to struggle for the cause of liberty as best we could. I, a woodman from the forest, felt the enthusiasm, the fire which lead us on; I, an humble servant, who knew no other world than the remote one which lies here around us. Oh with what a fierce joy, what uncontrollable fire I would have fought had I, like yourself, belonged to that nobility which holds all this land, claims it, when the country is in danger!

Jordán.—You admit that you are guilty.

Tomeš (With a clear voice and erect head).—I admit it, and only regret that we were unsuccessful.

Hopfling.—And do you not then fear that you will lose your life?

Tomeš.—And suppose I do? I am one man in the midst of thousands of others . . . the loss of one such life . . . who will even feel it?

Hopfling.—And the punishment that must fall upon all the people you drew into this struggle with you?

Tomeš.—That they must endure and outlive. For they have been enduring an endless punishment, and suffering through no cause of their own. (*With erect head.*) And if finally, all of us were to be sentenced to death, all who started this uprising, what would you gain by it? We are making one step forward in the advancement of the race, the thousands who follow us take a second step forward, and a third and fourth will fall to the destiny of future generations! And if we all, all our generation were to perish, this uprising is a step forward and finally the people must arrive where we have slowly been advancing . . . no power on earth can prevent them from ultimately attaining the goal toward which we have been striving!

Dejm (Carried away).—It is so, it is so!

Jordán (Reproachfully to DEJM).—Count!

Hopfling.—Just wait, Count! It is only too evident that such ideas did not spring up alone in the imagination of this poacher! (*To BEAUVALLE*) Count, it is now your duty to bring to justice these rebellious subjects of yours. (*TOMEŠ and DEJM look uneasy.*) But first permit me to ask him a few more questions which concern you!

Beauvalle (Despairingly to one side).—It is all up with me! (*To HOPFLING*) Carry on the trial!

Jordán (To BEAUVALLE).—They are after you now. Act coolly and try to protect yourself.

Tomeš.—Count . . . you are now evidently against me
. . . do you wish to decide my penalty?

Beauvalle (Terribly excited).—I am your lord and your judge. It is my duty as your master to sentence you, and I shall not swerve from my duty! I truly did, Count Dejm, listen to your counsel for a time . . .

Dejm.—You are mad! Who is charging you?

Beauvalle (Confused).—You, Tomeš . . . all these present . . . But I have again recovered my senses and only this one here, (*pointing to TOMEŠ*) remained in open rebellion! I then have the right, the power . . . it is a duty I must fulfil to sentence him as a rebel, the murderer of Schirnding, a traitor to the ruling power, and finally as a poacher, who long ago deserved the death which is now awaiting him.

Tomeš (Is silent for a while, then calmly and intelligently to BEAUVALLE).—Am I suddenly guilty of so many crimes, Count? (*With rising anger*) Well then, exercise your ill-gotten power, and sentence me to death to save yourself!

(*Below in the court is heard an uproar, screams and the sound of a struggle between the soldiers and the people.*)

Beauvalle (Greatly aroused).—I hereby sentence you,—yes, to death itself I sentence you!

(*At this instant, LÍDA bursts into the room, a dagger in her hand, and overhears the last words of BEAUVALLE. Behind her are a number of serfs, the soldiers rushing in behind them. All arise. A growing uproar and clamor under the window.*)

SCENE VI

LÍDA, BEAUVALLE, DEJM, TOMEŠ, JORDÁN, HOPFLING, magistrate, park keeper, JAN, and three other servants.

Lída.—You shall not sentence him,—I am here now!

Beauvalle.—Lída!

All.—What an uproar!

Lída (To BEAUVALLE).—I gave him up to you,—but not unto death, and I must now take him back again!

Beauvalle.—You are mad!

Lída.—You picked him out, called him from his cottage to go to Prague to fight in your place.

Beauvalle (Wildly).—Hold her . . .

Lída.— —and now you would sentence him, murder him! Your will shall not be carried out! These scattered people were once more moved to an act of desperation and are now struggling with the troops! Tomsí, here is a dagger . . . defend your life and mine! (*Presses the weapon into his hand. TOMEŠ at first hesitates to accept it*) I failed to find another weapon! (*TOMEŠ takes the dagger.*) I will yet save you . . . I must not be eternally under your curse! (*TOMEŠ talks excitedly with LÍDA.*)

Beauvalle.—What devil brought in this lunatic! (*Rings*) Jan, magistrate, where is everybody! (*Enter magistrate and JAN both greatly excited*) Where are the other troops? (*The sound of trumpets and drums is heard.*)

Magistrate.—The soldiers are coming to the castle on a run! It is terrible down there! The people are fighting with the soldiers striking down everyone who comes in their way!

Dejm (*Coming forward*).—Prevent the useless shedding of blood! Let Tomeš go, and all will be quiet again! (*Enter three servants.*)

Tomeš.—Aj, once more liberty and battle in sight!

Beauvalle (*Pointing to TOMEŠ and LÍDA*).—Bind them both!

Tomeš.—Back, I say! Woe to the one that touches me!

Lída.—Quick! Go down below, and be saved so you can avenge yourself upon all your murderers!

(*TOMEŠ tries to break away. Magistrate and servants rush toward him. TOMEŠ is ready to attack one with the dagger.*)

Beauvalle (*Seizes a pistol from the wall*).—Stand, you shall not escape! (*Aims at TOMEŠ*)

(*Cries from below. Tomsí. Tomsí*)

(*LÍDA sees what BEAUVALLE is about to do, and rushes toward him with a cry to prevent it. TOMEŠ turns toward him; the magistrate pulls LÍDA away, the COUNT fires.*)

Tomeš (*With his hand on his breast*).—That was well aimed! (*Falls; DEJM leaps toward him.*)

Lída (*Leaps toward TOMEŠ, in despair*).—Wounded? Tomsí . . . (*wringing her hands*) then I can't save you?

Tomeš.—Wounded,—unto death!

Lída (*Cries out; kneeling at the left of TOMEŠ, turns toward BEAUVALLE*).—That curse which fell upon me, may it eternally, eternally rest upon you . . . by me, and this poor youth whom you mercilessly killed, may you be everlastingly accursed! (*Below is heard the fresh sound of trumpets.*)

Voices below.—Troops! The soldiers! (The sound of drums and trumpets, then the screams of the people, as they flee, until all becomes quiet again.)

Beauvalle (With the smoking pistol in his hand, points to LÍDA)—Seize her! (The servants rush toward her.)

Lída.—I know of but one means of escape! Goodbye, Tomeš in a short time we will meet again! (Rushes through the crowd to the open window, and leaps out.)

Dejm.—Hold her!

Jordán (Who with HOPFLING rushed to the window after her).—She was dead as soon as she struck the ground!

(Enter the COUNTESS with MARIE.)

SCENE VII

COUNTESS, MARIE, BEAUVALLE, DEJM, TOMEŠ, JORDÁN, HOPFLING, magistrate, the park keeper, JAN, servants, later the troops.

Marie (Sees TOMEŠ, seems at first to be paralyzed).—Tomsí, Tomsí! (Rushes toward him) Murdered!

Tomeš.—Marie!

Countess.—Count Beauvalle, what criminal committed this deed! (Kneels at the other side of BEAUVALLE.)

Beauvalle.—Isn't he dead yet . . .

Tomeš.—Be at peace . . . I will be before long. (Rises and looks at BEAUVALLE) And I was prepared to do battle and die for you . . . and now at your hands I accept my death! (Sinks back) *Dejm* . . . *Marie*, my . . . I have finished the struggle! (He dies. MARIE screams.)

Dejm (Approaching BEAUVALLE).—Beauvalle, this was murder . . . foul murder! Both you and I were far more to blame than this boy!

Jordán (To DEJM).—Count Dejm, others beside yourself are convinced of your guilt! (Draws out a long sheet.) By the power of this edict, you are now my prisoner!

Dejm (Surprised, composes himself at once).—Well then, here is my answer! (Draws a dagger.) Defend yourself! (Three soldiers with drawn swords step to the front, and face DEJM.)

Jordán (Calmly).—Give me your weapon! As a leader and arch rebel in this uprising, you are now deprived of your title and estates, and only by the mercy of the Empress, Marie Teresa,

saved from a violent death. You are now sentenced to life-long imprisonment in the prison at Temesvár!

Dejm (*Calmly*).—I am even prepared for death! (*Hands over his dagger. The soldiers take him in charge. As he passes the dead body of TOMEŠ, he pauses, looking down sadly.*) Till we meet again, my dear brother and friend. Fate has been kinder to you than to myself. Only what a pity that with you and to your people is lost that freedom for which you died!

Jordán (*Shrugging his shoulders*).—It is not lost, Count. (*To BEAUVALLE*) Not for you, but for the people, I bring one gleam of joy! Her Majesty, the Empress, Marie Teresa has abolished serfdom and all servitude in her empire!

<i>Dejm</i>	}	What are you saying?
<i>Countess</i>		

Jordán.—Our ruling Empress wishes to avoid further uprisings, such as are taking place here, and all over the Empire, among the people who desire their freedom. In a few days, un-repealable patents will be issued, which will accomplish the abolition of serfdom, and grant freedom to all the people!

Countess (*Kneels beside TOMEŠ, and with feeling lifts his head*).—Listen, you fallen hero, and if your soul is still present, be cheered once more! Fallen, you are yet victorious! Above you, from your blood, the freedom of your people has blossomed forth! Oh hero of a little wood hut, how glorious is your sorrowful ending!

Curtain.

DANTE IN THE DRAMA CLASS

BY LUCY LOCKWOOD HAZARD

SEPTEMBER, 1921, the sexcentenary of the death of Dante Alighieri, found Mills College, in common with other colleges and universities throughout the world, engaged in bringing before her students an appreciation of the life and character of the enduring Florentine. September, 1921, also found an English instructor in Mills College engaged in bringing before her students in an elective upper division course in Dramatic Composition, an appreciation of the technic of the one act play. The students of Mills College attended chapel lectures on Dante—and remained unmoved. The students of Dramatic Composition attended classroom lectures on the technic of one act plays—and remained unmoved. Now neither Dante nor Drama should leave college students in their sophomoric state of complaisant calm. Something must be done. And this is what we did.

We decided to write a cycle of one act plays presenting phases of the life and work of Dante Alighieri. Or rather the instructor decided, and the eight members of the drama class registered a despairing protest, "But we don't know anything about Dante." This was indeed, all too true, for a preliminary questioning of the class to ascertain the extent of their information about Dante, drew forth some startling commentaries. "He wrote *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*," hazarded one student. "Beatrice died and he went down to hell to bring her back, but just as they reached the upper world, she looked back and was turned into a pillar of salt," was the version given by another. Small wonder that these aspiring playwrights saw little material for dramatic composition in the life of a man safely dead these six hundred years and entombed with the shadowy classics. He was no more real to them than the bereaved husband of Eurydice or the inquisitive wife of Lot. Nor did Dante appeal to them as a romantic figure, for the spiritual idealization of love manifested in his distant adoration of Beatrice, seemed comic to Californian College girls. "*Noli me tangere; c'est le mot des belles amours*," but it is not the word which stirs an immediate response in a generation accustomed to the amatory methods of Douglas Fairbanks and Wallace Reid. And the girls thought of Dante only as the lover of

Beatrice. Of Dante, the lover of Florence, Dante, the dreamer of world union and world peace, Dante, the audacious rebel, Dante, the broken-hearted exile, Dante, the spiritual adventurer—of this Dante, who unflinchingly traversed hell and purgatory and scaled the heights of Paradise, lured ever upward by the light of the eternal stars, they spoke truly in saying, "We don't know anything."

But it is always possible for college students, like Kipling's mongoose to "run and find out." The English 59ers were encouraged in their search by discovering that a very effective play may be built on very meager historical data. They analyzed a group of plays in which Shakespeare figured as the center of interest: Robert Emmons Rogers' *The Boy Will*, Hubert Osbourne's *The Good Men Do*, Josephine Preston Peabody's *Fortune and Men's Eyes*, Shaw's *The Dark Lady of the Sonnets*, Dunsany's *If Shakespeare Lived Today*. They saw that to the making of a play with a historical protagonist, must come knowledge, technic, and imagination—but that the greatest of these is imagination. After reading the Shakespeare plays, writing the Dante plays seemed a less terrifying undertaking. "If Shaw and Dunsany did it with Shakespeare, you can do it with Dante," the instructor assured them; and if the syllogism was fallacious in logic, it was fruitful in encouragement.

After a week of background reading in *The Vita Nuova* and *The Divina Commedia*, supplemented by such information as is found in J. A. Symonds' *Introduction to the Study of Dante*, Charles Allen Dinsmore's *Aids to the Study of Dante*, and Vincenzo Bottà's *Introduction to the Study of Dante*, the class were sufficiently oriented to choose the themes around which they were to build their plays. No longer was Dante to them merely a lugubrious lover, and author sufficiently dead to be labelled as a genius. Some of the students had discovered contacts between Dante and the present. An ardent Wilsonian, delighted in discovering the Fourteen Points sympathetically anticipated in the *De Monarchia*, brought Dante back to earth in 1921 to attend a secret Washington Conference between Harding and Trotsky, scathingly to denounce both the dictatorship of the Russian Proletariat and the temporizing of the American Opportunists, and triumphantly to vindicate the rejected leadership of Woodrow Wilson—like Dante, a prophet without honor in his own land. A satirically minded senior also proposed to bring Dante back—not to the Washington Conference, but to the Mills Campus, where his hopes of winning

his reward in the appreciation of posterity would meet a cruel disappointment upon his discovering that posterity, in the person of Mills undergraduates, was "bored to tears" by the well-meaning efforts of President and professors to commemorate the Dante Sexcentenary.

Other themes drew their inspiration more directly from incidents in Dante's life. One girl chose to portray the childhood meeting of Dante and Beatrice at the May Day festival given at the Portinari home—to the Portinari and Alighieri, merely one event of a round of social gayeties, to the sensitive, impressionable boy, "the beginning of a new life." Dante's refusal to accept the humiliating terms of pardon under which he might have reentered Florence, was treated from two altogether different angles. One development appears in *The Exile*. In the other, the transfigured Beatrice appears to the despairing Dante and bids him think no more of the city of Florence, but of the city of God, reminds him of the promise he had made to her years before "to write for her what for no other woman, man has written", *The Divina Commedia* which is to "lead men from a state of wretchedness to a state of blessedness." Curiously enough, this theme was the only one to employ Beatrice as the conventional *Ewig Weibliche*. The class as a whole, were rather skeptical as to whether Beatrice ever existed save as the poet's idealization of an extremely human young person, and their sympathies went out to Gemma, as is shown in both *The Wedding Guest* and *The Lady Compassionate*. No attempt was made to quarrel with any character interpretation a student wished to make. Is not the Anne Hathaway of *The Boy Will* an altogether different woman from the Anne Hathaway of *The Good Men Do*? as different as perhaps they both are from the Anne Hathaway whom Shakespeare married in boyhood and returned to in middle age. And when, not three hundred, but six hundred years lie between us and the actors in the human drama to which we are giving imaginative recreation; when Boccaccio tells us that Gemma was a shrew, and Bruni that she was an angel, when Botta tells us that Can Grande was a "churlish host," and Symonds tells us that he was a generous and understanding patron, when one commentator tells us that Beatrice was Beatrice Portinari, and another tells us that Beatrice was a real woman, but neither Beatrice nor Portinari, and another still more iconoclastic, tells us that there never was any Beatrice at all—then, when doctors disagree, let dramatists decide, and even an amateur dramatist has a right to decide upon her own imaginative conception of her characters.

Shakespearian license was also permitted in the manipulation of historical events and characters. For instance, in *The Exile*, Guido Cavalcanti and Corso Donati appear in action at a period some ten years after the historical date of their deaths, while Fra Beltrando anticipates by twenty years his denunciation of Dante's "blasphemous treatise, *De Monarchia*." The class were encouraged to incorporate in their dialogue any appropriate passages they came across in Dante's poems and letters. Following the classic example of Homer, "whate'er they thought they might require, they went and took," with the result that many of the speeches of Dante, as in *The Wedding Guest* and in *The Exile*, are a mosaic of his own words gathered from various sources, and spoken sometimes in other connections than those in which they appear in these plays.

With the facile optimism of youth, the embryo playwrights felt that once the theme was selected, the writing of the play would be a simple matter. The meaning of Edison's grim epigram "Genius is not inspiration; it is perspiration," came home to them when, after hours of writing, the entire draft proved inadequate and drastic revision was found necessary to the third and fourth version. Perhaps in ages yet unborn, some student of ancient drama may unearth these manuscripts among the ruins of our campus, and may write his thesis at some University of Weissnich-two on a comparative study of the various folios through which our plays passed in process of revision. I hope the comparison will prove as illuminating to him as it did to us. I hope he will discover that in each successive version, the characterization became surer, the action more dramatic, the interweaving of historical data and citation more skilful.

The English 59ers learned much about the technic of drama by writing and rewriting their plays; they also learned much about Dante. It's astonishing how swiftly facts slip through your head, when they're merely information passively received from lectures; soon they become a permanent mental possession if you ferret them out for yourself for use in a product of your own. After six weeks with Dante in the Drama class, instructor and students alike are convinced that the technic of dramatic composition is learned, not from textbooks and lectures, but from the writing and rewriting of plays; that the appreciation of Dante is acquired, not through listening to lectures on his portraits but through reproducing some phase of his life in the medium of living portraiture—drama.

THE WEDDING GUEST

BY ROSIALEE KERLEY

CHARACTERS

SIMONE DE BARDI
BEATRICE
GEMMA DEL DONATI
DANTE
GUIDO CAVALCANTI, *friend of DANTE*
FOLCO PORTINARI *and his wife*
RICACCIO, *friend of DE BARDI*
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, A PAGE

PLACE: *Wedding feast of BEATRICE and SIMONE DE BARDI.*

SCENE: *Large hall of an old Italian villa. At left a long table, guests on either side, DE BARDI and BEATRICE at the end. Back of table and forward center, stairs ascend. Back center right is dias, where BEATRICE sits to receive gifts. Entrance at right, where guests approach. Whole center of stage is free, so guests can dance. Music comes from conservatory, seen through entrance at back of stage.*

(There is an undercurrent of jolly talk. Everybody is looking toward BEATRICE and DE BARDI.)

Gentleman (Rising, and lifting wine goblet).—Let us drink to the perpetual happiness of our worthy friend, De Bardi, and his beautiful bride. (Company rises; glasses clink) De Bardi, you are to be congratulated as being a most fortunate man, to have won so lovely and charming a lady. (Smiles and murmurs of approval and admiration are heard among the guests. DE BARDI beams on BEATRICE, and she smiles and nods prettily.) And you, madam, have indeed chosen happily, for in all Florence there is no more admirable and noble a gentleman than Simone De Bardi. (More murmurs from guests. DE BARDI takes BEATRICE's hand, and they both rise.)

De Bardi (Looking caressingly upon BEATRICE).—Friends, we thank you. (Lifts his wine glass, looking at BEATRICE) Beatrice De Bardi! (Drinks) (BEATRICE gazes fondly into his eyes. Both sit.)

Gentleman (Continuing).—May you experience together all the happiness life can hold. (He sits. Amid much enthusiasm

and applause the guests reseal themselves. Conversation is again taken up.)

Folco Portinari (Rising).—Both Beatrice's mother (*nodding upon wife*) and I feel that there can be no reason why our daughter and her excellent husband should not each bring joy to the other, nor why they should not enjoy a long and fruitful wedded life.

(*More applause. DE BARDI seems to swell with pride. BEATRICE blushes in a proper and embarrassed manner. Conversational undertone goes on.*)

Page (Coming just inside doorway)—Signor Guido Cavalcanti, Signor Dante Alighieri!

De Bardi (Laughingly).—Here comes the dreamy Dante. I wonder that he found courage to drag his gloomy countenance to the scene of such festivity. But, my love, (*he looks possessingly at BEATRICE*) there are many of us who are not able to withstand your potent charm.

Beatrice (Shrugging her shoulders).—Poor Dante! He is too droll—always gazing at me from afar as though I were an image of a Blessed Saint. And always tongue-tied when he approaches me.

(*Enter DANTE, about twenty-two, pale and dark. He comes in with a friend, GUIDO CAVALCANTI. An expression of intense pain contends with one of joy in his face—joy at the very sight of his beloved, and pain at the realization of the circumstances.*)

Dante (To GUIDO).—To what avail should I torment myself by attending the wedding feast of her who is more than life to me? To what end are we come among these people?

Guido.—To the end that they may be worthily served. Remember, Dante, that the Portinari have long been friendly to your house, and the De Bardi are a most influential family. It would be most impolitic, nay, even discourteous, were we two not to come. Control yourself, dear friend, and play the man. And let mingle us with the joyous crowd.

(*As they are talking, the guests break away from the table. DE BARDI leads BEATRICE over to a mounted dias, and then comes over to DANTE and GUIDO. Guests are in groups, talking, many clustered around BEATRICE.*)

De Bardi.—Welcome, gentlemen. We are sorry you did not arrive in time for the feasting—'twas most excellent—but we trust you may enjoy the dance.

Dante.—I seek no feasting, save to feast my soul.

Guido (Hurriedly).—We are grateful, De Bardi, but do not let us detain you.

(DE BARDI nods, and moves away. DANTE seems to be faint and leans against painting on walls of room.)

Gentleman (*With his Lady on his arm, approaches BEATRICE*).—Come, let us greet with gifts our lovely bride.

Lady.—A bit of lace, dear Beatrice. (BEATRICE smiles.)

Folco Portinari.—Sweet daughter, these pearls are but an expression of our perfect love for you.

De Bardi (*Draws forth a handsome ring. Takes BEATRICE's hand, kisses it, slips ring on*).—My sweet one! (*He looks lovingly on her. BEATRICE is overjoyed.*)

Gemma.—A piece of linen for your lovely home, Beatrice.

Beatrice.—Many thanks to each and every one of you.

Guido (*To DANTE*).—Come, it is time for us to present ourselves.

Dante.—Present ourselves? What have I left to give? She has my all now. What are laces, jewels, rich gifts? (*He draws forth a manuscript.*) Here is a gift far richer than them all. These words shall live when laces rot in dust. These words shall shine brighter than any jewel. For in these singing lines I tell my love—I tell my Lady what she means to me.

(*With GUIDO, he hesitatingly steps toward BEATRICE.*)

Guido.—Fair Lady, may I add my humble wishes for your joy? (*He hands her a small packet. She thanks him.*)

Dante.—Glorious Lady, when first I perceived you, a tender glowing child, the spirit of my life, which hath its dwelling place in the secretest chamber of my heart, began to tremble so violently that the least pulses of my body shook therewith, and I was filled with wonder. From that time forward Love has quite governed my soul. Thy image hath been with me always. And now I tearfully beg of thee, gracious one, to accept these few sonnets wherein my feelings are set forth in poesy. (*Hands manuscript to her, all the while looking hopefully into her face.*)

Beatrice (*Formally, as the occasion demands*).—I am proud to be the subject of your writings.

(BEATRICE starts to unroll the manuscript. DANTE is overjoyed, even trembling. People all look rather curiously at him—his evident absorption in the incident. BEATRICE, however, is distracted by the fact that another gentleman, RICACCIO, comes up.)

Ricaccio.—Madame, while I know you only slightly, I beg that as the wife of my dear friend, Simone, you will accept this tiara. May your joy be complete.

(*BEATRICE happily reaches for the jewels, letting manuscript fall unheeded to the floor. DANTE turns pale, trembles violently, and so noticeably that guests all stare at him, smiling and commenting to each other over his condition.*)

Dante.—My sonnets lie unheeded at her feet. She did not even read them.

Guido.—Dante, what ailest thee?

(*DANTE stares at BEATRICE unbelievably, seemingly unconscious of the jests he is arousing.*)

Lady.—Just perceive the man!

Gentleman.—He is like to swoon as would a lady.

Beatrice (To DE BARDI.—Look, is he not amusing? What can ail him, dear? Look at those eyes fixed on me so somberly. Dante never did know how to behave at a feast. I recall now, when we were children at a May Day celebration in my father's gardens, he stood about and stared at me, and acted as though the merrymaking were a funeral. Oh, it caused me to shiver. He is always thus.

(*She makes a droll long face at her husband, imitating DANTE, and laughs. At this DANTE breaks down, and GUIDO takes his arm and draws him away from throng. They continue to smile and mock.*)

Gemma.—Poor man. He is so hurt. Why need you make such sport of him? He is a far more delicate nature than the rest of us. (*Guests laugh at this.*)

Guido (To DANTE).—Dante, command thyself. I understand. Did I not write the most appealing sonnets to Joan? I felt all that you now feel, but look! I am fully recovered. There are many other ladies. You will soon cease to remember this, and in a year or so, all will be the same.

Dante (After long pause).—The world can never be the same again. Of a surety I have now set my foot on that point of life, beyond which he must not pass, who would return.

Guido.—What meanest thou? (*Taking DANTE's hand*) Is thy head clear? What are people thinking?

Dante.—Guido, she mocked me. What care I for the vulgar crowd? But she, my Beatrice, she laughed! How can I bear it?—Beatrice, Spirit of Tenderness—of Pity. How could she have done it. But Guido, if this Lady but knew of my condition she would not mock me thus. Nay, I am sure she must needs feel some pity.

(*BEATRICE is conspicuous as the center of a laughing, noisy group. Both DANTE and GUIDO look toward her.*)

Guido (A little reluctantly).—Well, if we bring but dark faces, and sad bearing, let us leave. I will take thee home, since thou art ill.

Dante.—Dear friend, let me not spoil your pleasure. Guido, thou shouldst return to the dance. Leave me in solitude. In my weeping I bethink me of certain words, in the which, speaking to her, I shall signify the occasion of my disfigurement, telling her also I know that she has no knowledge thereof.

(GUIDO looks uncertainly from DANTE to the dancers, and perceiving him about to write, leaves him.)

Guido.—I know well that of a certainty thou will ere long be recovered if thou art writing. *(Goes back to dancers, who are now enjoying an intermission.)*

Gemma.—How now seemeth the spirit of your friend?

Guido.—Oh, he is about to write.

De Bardi (Laughing).—Shows he is much improved, eh?

(All look toward DANTE, who is lost in his writing. Music has started, and most of the people go to dancing. BEATRICE and GEMMA are together.)

Gemma.—Sweet Beatrice, see how you have hurt him.

Beatrice (Surprised).—I? Whom have I hurt?

Gemma.—Dante. Those sonnets meant so much to him. Could you not see it?

Beatrice.—But I had other fairer, finer gifts. And besides Signor Ricaccio addressed me but then, and Gemma, he is a dear friend of Simone's, and a most wealthy man. I could not offend him. You see, dear. Besides, forsooth, some day I shall read the sonnets.

Gemma.—Why could you not go now and address a few words to Dante? Look at him, poor fellow. *(They both glance at DANTE.)* They would so comfort him.

Beatrice.—But why should I? He would only weary me with long, sad speeches which I cannot understand. And besides, this is my wedding feast, and I had far rather dance. See, here comes my dear husband. Oh, Gemma, how I love to say those words. Just think, I am a married woman now.

(DE BARDI approaches, gazing fondly upon BEATRICE. She melts into his arms, and they then dance. She smiles over his shoulder happily to GEMMA. GEMMA sighs, looks compassionately at DANTE, and goes over to him just as he finishes writing.)

Gemma.—Always have I admired your writing. What a wonderful gift such a talent is.

Dante (Abstractly).—Writing has ever been to me a solace—a great comfort whereby I can ease my troubled feelings.

Gemma.—Read me what you have but now written, dear sir, if it does not cause you pain.

Dante (At first he does not seem to comprehend—then he speaks slowly and gently).—These words have I addressed to our gracious lady, thinking should they peradventure come into her hearing she could not but pity me. (*Reading*)

Even as the others mock, thou mockest me;
 Not dreaming, noble lady, whence it is
 That I am taken with strange semblances,
 Seeing thy face which is so fair to see
 For else, compassion would not suffer thee
 To grieve my heart with such harsh scoffs as these.
 Lo! Love, when thou art present sits at ease,
 And bears his mastership so mightily,
 That all my troubled senses be thrust out,
 Sorely tormenting some, and slaying some,
 Till none but he is left and has free range
 To gaze on thee. This makes my face to change
 Into another's; while I stand, all dumb,
 And hear my senses clamor in their rout.

(*Silence for a moment. GEMMA looks on DANTE pityingly. DANTE gazes rapt at BEATRICE flitting about with her husband in the dance.*)

Gemma.—Truly it is marvelous to write so easily and quickly, such beautiful words. (*DANTE does not appear to hear her. Sweetly and gently, just a little wistfully, she continues.*) I am not like the others, though, I have not mocked thee.

Dante.—Truly thou hast not. But (*agony in his voice*) my Lady has. (*Resignedly.*)

Gemma (Just a little bit piqued).—Dante, to what end lovest thou this lady, seeing that thou can'st support her presence?

Dante (Looking at GEMMA for the first time).—Why do I love her? As well ask the fledgling why it attempts to fly,—the moth, why it beats out its life seeking the all-consuming flame; the dancing water why it flows to the sea, as ask me why my whole heart and soul and being cries out for her. But I ask no return. The end of my love was but the salutation of that lady of whom I conceive ye are speaking; wherein alone I found that beatitude which is the goal of desire.

Gemma (Compassionately).—But if the lady is not conscious of thy feelings? Does not appreciate thy sentiments?

Dante (Slowly and softly).—Can the Saints answer every earthly prayer? It is enough for us that we may adore them in their perfect beauty. Why should we vex them with our vain desires? How can mere mortal love touch Beatrice, who is not as woman but as god?

(Music stops.)

De Bardi (Loudly and masterfully).—Come, Beatrice, 'tis time that we retire.

DE BARDI, arm about his bride, and BEATRICE go forward to the stairs. Expressions of mirth and joy from guests.)

De Bardi (Standing on first low landing of stairs, BEATRICE in his arms, looking lovingly at him).—Dear friends and guests, we thank you for the honor you have done us by gracing our nuptial feast. And now we request that you allow us to withdraw from the festivity and seek the silence and joy of our apartment.

(Laughter and quips from guests. Ladies take flowers off and pelt the bridal couple with blooms.)

First Guest.—Of a certainty.

Second Guest.—Do not let us detain you.

Third Guest.—Fortunate Bardi!

De Bardi.—We hope that you will continue to enjoy yourselves. Come, *(looking possessingly upon BEATRICE, who blushing and joyful, hides her face in his arm for a moment)* Come, my wife.

(Guests have clustered, about center, around steps. DANTE comes over, followed by GEMMA, as far as the dias BEATRICE had occupied—stops.)

Dante (Softly).—His wife, but my adored. *(Leans down and picks up sonnets.)* Frail, whining sonnets of my wounded heart, you were unworthy of my Beatrice. She is to me not a mortal woman, but a Blessed Saint, a symbol and messenger of Divine Love. Hence forward I shall choose for the theme of my writing only the praise of this most gracious being. For her I'll write no song of human love, but a glorious epic of that Love Divine which moves the sun in heaven and all the stars.

(Tableau of BEATRICE and DE BARDI ascending, lost to all the world save each other, and the joy about to open before them; DANTE soulfully gazing on BEATRICE, not realizing the significance of the moment, but planning to immortalize his love; GEMMA looking compassionately upon DANTE, and the guests, pleasure bent and hilarious clustering around the foot of the stairs. The music starts again, and they begin to dance as the curtain falls.)

THE LADY COMPASSIONATE

BY KATHERINE KIRKER

DRAMATIS PERSONNAE

DANTE ALIGHIERI

GEMMA, *his wife*

PIETRO

JACOPO

} *their small sons*

THE BABY BEATRICE

TIME: *About 1300 A. D.*

PLACE: *The home of Dante, in Florence.*

SCENE: *The stage shows a large, darkly furnished room, suggestive of tall ceilings. At an angle across one side is an enormous window with leaded panes, through which flows the only light in the room. By this is an old Renaissance secretary and a stiff high-backed chair. The floor is strewn with bits of paper. Through the window we may see a tiny strip of green lawn, two tall cypress trees with a little shrine between. The draperies of the windows are a heavy dark material. What little furniture there is in the room is of Renaissance period design. A massive table stands in one corner. It has a pile of several old manuscripts, and a branch candle stick stands at one end.*

DANTE is discovered writing at the secretary by the window.

JACOPO and PIETRO are seen sitting in the middle of the room, noisily turning the pages of an old manuscript.

Pietro (*The younger, eagerly*).—See this one! He is all in green and red! He must be a great knight. Do you think he is a great knight, Jacopo?

Jacopo (*With a superior air*).—How dull you are. It is no knight, but a lady, oh, a beautiful lady, with a face like a holy angel, and . . .

Dante (*Murmuring as he writes*).—Ah, Beatrice . . .
(*sighs, and writes out loud*) . . . “thus in a cloud
of flowers, that from those hands angelic rose,
And down within and outside of the car
Fell show’ring, in white veil and olive wreathed,
A virgin in my view appeared beneath
Green mantle, robed in living flame . . . ”

Pietro (Raising his voice).—It isn't! It is a knight. They always . . .

Jacopo (More loud).—Not so! It is a lady. See how beautiful she is. See how she smiles . . .

Pietro (Eagerly).—Yes, yes, like Mother since our sister's come.

Jacopo (Insistently).—No, no, stupid. Not like just Mother. Like a sainted lady, Pietro. Like the one Father speaks of all the time. I say Pietro, wouldn't you like to see her, though! Just think, to have her in the house . . . !

Dante (Writing).—" a hidden virtue from her, at whose touch,

The power of ancient love was strong within me!"

Pietro (Loudly, to be heard).—I'd rather have Mother!

(Enter GEMMA. She is a woman of medium height whose face wears an expression of peace gained after conflict.)

Gemma (Warningly).—Hush, hush, child, your father is at work. (Seeing the book) What! That precious manuscript with painted pictures of the blessed saints! You naughty ones! (Taking the manuscript and placing it on the table) And your fresh clothing all crumpled and awry . . . Shame! This is your new sister's christening day; you must keep neat.

Pietro.—Will it take very long?

Jacopo.—Of course not, silly. All they do is sprinkle water on . . .

Pietro (Shudderingly).—Ugh! Like a bath . . . (Sympathetically) And will they wet her poor little ears?

Dante (Looking up, irritated).—Peace! Peace! Even a genius cannot work in such an atmosphere! Picture, books, clothes, . . . Must a temperament such as this (beating his chest) be smothered always under trivialities . . . ?

Gemma (Apologetically).—I try . . .

Dante (Continuing feverishly).—Baths! Ears! Ugh!

Shuddering Ah, Beatrice! (He grows calmer) The morning stars sing together in one grand harmony! The sweet symphony of eternal things shuts out from you the sordidness of this my narrow life. Must I always be barred the heavenly peace? (He sighs profoundly and returns to his work.)

Pietro (Who has been listening intently).—Don't angels ever fight, Father? I do not want to be an angel if they must stand still and keep clean all the while. I want to grow up and fight with the Blanci! I shall have Grandfather's great sword . . .

Jacopo (With angry dignity).—It is I who am the oldest

Gemma.—Hush, hush, how naughty you are! You annoy your father. . . You . . .

Pietro.—What is her name?

Jacopo.—Whose?

Dante (Writing out loud).—“ . . . Beatrice has gone up into Heaven,

The kingdom where the angels are at peace;

Pietro.—My sister's, of course.

Gemma (Worriedly).—Sh-sh, I do not know yet. Your father has not decided. (*Looking sidelong at DANTE*) Speak lower, child, he is disturbed.

Pietro (Curiously).—Whom were you named for, Mother? Some friend of Father's? I was named for one of Father's best friends.

Jacopo.—And I was named for his *best* friend.

Dante (Rising in angry desperation).—Gemma, in the name of the Blessed, remove these babblers and give me quiet.

Gemma (More worried, taking the two by the arms).—They are so noisy, but mean no bother. . . It is their youth, poor little ones. . . (*She shooes them out in a troubled but loving way, as busy mothers are wont to do, and follows them.*)

Dante (Walking back and forth in the pathway of light).—They will never give me peace! All is incessant turmoil, outside and within. Men fight their brothers in the streets. Florence is torn by angry hands. . . And even in mine own house I have no rest. The pettiness of every day rises like a tide to overwhelm the only comfort left to me . . . my memories. Ah, my Beatrice! Calm and understanding spirit, ten years since you have left me, Beatrice!

(*Enter GEMMA with subdued excitement*)

Gemma.—Dante! She said your name!

Dante (Startled).—Eh! What? My name? Who?

Gemma (Disappointed).—Our daughter. She said “Da—” well, it *was* a bit indistinct, but— (*breaking off*) There now, I know you don't care. Come, dear, the ceremony of christening is but a short while away . . . We must be starting.

Dante (Surprised).—So it is today? (*With a vague hope*) I must go, I suppose, Gemma? It would not look well to the burghers if I remained at home . . . ?

Gemma (overwhelmed).—Not go to our own daughter's christening? (*She stops in amazement, a hurt look coming over her face.*)

She looks out of the window for a moment, with a sigh; then You must go. (*Soothingly, as if coaxing a child*) It will not take long. Surely you remember how short Pietro's was, and Jacopo's.

Dante.—Yes, yes, I shall go, of course. (*Sitting down at the secretary*) I shall have time to write a while longer?

Gemma.—Dante, surely you have not forgotten . . . ?

Dante.—Now what? Something else I have not done? (*looking up at her with a tired smile. He glances down and notices the scattered papers, stoops, picks one up and lays it on the desk. Then he leans up and pats her arm gently, with a wistful apologetic air.*) What is this I have forgotten?

Gemma.—If you try, dear, can't you remember, that, as yet, our newest daughter has no name? (*Impatiently*) You see, the Priest will want to know when he christens her.

Dante (Returning to his work).—Oh, is that all. I thought that was all settled.

Gemma (Delighted).—Then it is to be Donatella? Oh, my father will be so delighted, and I . . . I . . . Oh, I have always wanted to give at least one child a name of my family.

Dante (Surprised).—Is there any question but that her name shall be Beatrice?

Gemma (Drawing back hurt).—My child named Beatrice?

Dante (Not understanding).—Of course. Bringer of blessedness. Even as her sweet spirit brings Heaven closer, so shall this tiny one be to me a blessing on earth. Like a soft hand caressing a tired brow her small presence shall soothe my troubled soul, and bind my wounded heart with the remembered sweetness of that name.

Gemma (Deeply hurt, but not willing to let him see it, quietly).—That is very beautiful . . . I am glad that you love the child so much. Then I am not to name her? She is mine, too . . .

Dante (Not understanding).—Of course, Gemma. But who could want . . . Why 'tis a most beautiful name . . . Ah, it is a saint's.

Gemma (Very quietly).—True. But my family are not yet saints, and are still susceptible to the affections and desires of this, our mortal life. Are they then not to be considered? Moreover, dear, the Priest has told us that we all have new names when we pass into the After Life. (*She pauses, seeing the perplexity on his face*) You mean that you will name her?

Dante.—Why, yes, of course. Beatrice, messenger and memory of my sainted lady.

Gemma (*Too hurt to conceal it further*).—And I, am I nothing, to her, or to you?

Dante (*In quick amends*).—Why Gemma, do you not understand? You are my Lady Compassionate (*Going to her*). See I have written a new sonnet in which I tell how, "Love himself set her in my path that so my life might find peace."

Gemma (*Sitting down in a chair in the pathway of light*).—You have made a sonnet about me?

Dante (*Looking thru his papers*).—Why, yes. And here is one which I have devised in this fashion. You see, there came upon me a great desire to say somewhat in rhyme: but when I began thinking how I should say it, methought that to speak of her were unseemly, unless I spoke to other ladies in the second person; which is to say; not to *any* other ladies, but only to such as are so called because they are gentle, let alone for mere womanhood. To which end I wrote another sonnet; and it is this:

Ladies that have intelligence in love

Of mine own lady I would speak with you;

Not that I hope to count her praises through.

But telling what I may, to ease my mind.

And I declare that when I speak thereof,

Love sheds such perfect sweetness over me

That if my courage failed not, certainly

To him my listeners must be all resign'd.

Wherefore I will not speak in such large kind

That mine own speech should foil me, which were base;

But only will discourse of her high grace

In these poor words, the best that I can find,

With you alone, dear dames and damozels;

'Twere ill to speak thereof with any else.

You see, Gemma, this thought was suggested to me by the very fact that you were the first to whom I could give the expression of my feelings—What think you of it?

Gemma (*Deeply moved*).—It is like the music of Heaven.

Dante (*Pleased, and warming to his reading*).—And also I have made this bit of poetry: (*reads*.)

Love and the gentle heart are one same thing,

* * * * *

Love is, whose palace where he sojourneth

Is called the Heart; there he draws the quiet breath

At first with brief, or longer slumbering.
 Then beauty seen in virtuous womankind
 Will make the eyes desire, and thru the heart
 Send the desiring of the eyes again;
 Where often it abides so long enshrined
 That love, at length out of his sleep will start.
 And women feel the same for worthy men.

Is this not true? Is not this the way in which you think of me?

Gemma (In a sort of daze).—Yes—Dante, you say you wrote a sonnet about me?

Dante.—Why, yes, I did. (*Generously*) You would like to hear it?

Gemma (Whispering in the tone of one resolved to hear the worst).—Yes!

Dante.—I have just written of the death of the blessed one, Beatrice, and how another lady came to me and looked on me with pity, and compassion, and comforted me. And I began to consider her thus, This lady is young, beautiful, gentle, and wise: perchance it was Love himself who set her in my path, that so my life might find peace. And I bethought me to write these things in rhyme, deeming it a lovely thing to be known; whereof I wrote this poem:

A very pitiful lady, very young,
 Exceeding rich in human sympathies.
 Stood by, what time I clamour'd upon Death
 And at the wild words wandering on my tongue
 And at the piteous look within mine eyes
 She was affrighted, that sobs choked her breath
 And my heart said, this is Love's messenger
 And speaketh but his words, from him received;
 And all the strength it owns and all the life
 It draweth from the gentle eyes of her
 Who, looking on our grief, hath often grieved.

Gemma (Rising and coming toward him, her eyes misty, her voice broken).—'Love's messenger,' 'the gentle heart,' Dante, have I seemed like this to you? Have I been a comfort?

Dante (Already back at his work).—Ay, and forsooth. But delay me not, for I am moved to write down further things touching my condition.

Gemma (Goes to the window, fighting to keep back the hurt feeling at first, then reasoning with herself).—'Ladies that have intel-

ligence in love.' He thinks me one of them. And I must be too, for she is wise as well as tender, who could understand thee, my Dante. 'Love and the gentle heart,' truly a gentle heart is needed here to bind a broken one. He said, 'Who, looking on our grief, hath often grieved.' Ay, how often—God grant me an understanding heart as well as a gentle one . . . This then is to be the pattern of my life, (*her voice is clear and firm as she turns from the window*) to be his lady of compassion . . . that his life may find peace. (*As she finishes speaking, the two children enter, carrying between them the baby. GEMMA sees them and hurries toward them in motherly concern.*)

Gemma.—Be careful!

Pietro (Much excited).—See, Father, see, Mother! How small she is.

Jacopo.—How funny she is! How ugly . . .

Pietro (Almost shouting in his vigor).—NO! She looks like Mother!

Gemma (Quickly).—Hush! (*She takes the child in her arms, and turns toward DANTE*) See! She is ready for the christening, your daughter, Beatrice!

Dante (Absentmindedly looking up).—Eh? Oh, of course. (*He rises in a half awake manner and comes toward her.*)

Curtain

THE EXILE

BY AMY JOSEPHINE KLAUBER

“But their fell curses cannot fix our doom,
Nor stay the Eternal Love from his intent,
While Hope remaining bears her verdant bloom.”

CHARACTERS

DANTE ALIGHIERI

CAN GRANDE DELLA SCALA, *in whose place the exiled DANTE has sought hospitality.*

CAN GRANDE'S JESTER

CORSO DONATI, *one of DANTE'S bitterest enemies.*

GUIDO CAVALCANTI, *one of DANTE'S most intimate friends.*

CONTE DE GABBRIELLE, *Podesta of Florence who banished DANTE in 1300.*

FRA BELTRANDO DEL POGETTO, *Legate of the Pope who burned DANTE'S De Monarchia in the public square.*

A SERVANT OF CAN GRANDE

SCENE: *A large room in the palace of CAN GRANDE DELLA SCALA in Verona. It is early Renaissance in style, with a high ceiling and arched doorways, one right and one left. A leaded glass window at the back looks out upon a formal garden. The furniture is dark and carved. CAN GRANDE and DANTE sit at a table, eating in silence. It is not hard to see that the atmosphere is strained. CAN GRANDE'S FOOL sits cross-legged on the floor beside his master, eating and making faces at DANTE. Finally, not having succeeded in arousing DANTE, he turns to his master, who has been watching him amusedly.*

Fool.—Sir, our guest grows glummer every day; neither my most entrancing smiles nor my most patent mouths can break in to the thoughts that he witholds from us.

Can Grande.—I wonder that a Fool can make himself agreeable while he who is reputed to be wise, cannot.

Dante (Looking up for the first time, speaking very deliberately).
—You would not wonder if you knew what friendship lies in similarity of tastes and of mind.

*Fool (Jumping up, laughing).—*Aha! The first agreeable word in weeks. Milord, I bow to you! That he should elevate the fool to the plane of the master, is indeed, a piece of flattery.

*Can Grande (Bitterly).—*Nay, 'tis too plain your master is a fool. 'Tis only fools expect gratitude from politicians or good fellowship from poets. *(Another silence falls. The FOOL goes to the window with his plate and commences to eat again.)*

*Fool.—*In truth, my master, I've employed all my devices, and I know not what to do to cheer your ungrateful guest.

*Can Grande.—*No use, Fool. Why be a courteous host to him who will not be a courteous guest?

*Dante.—*To be rude to him is courtesy.

(FOOL makes gesture of despair and slides under the table, taking his plate with him. He reappears on the floor with a pile of bones in his hands. He layst he bones at DANTE's feet, grimaces at him, and slides back to window watching DANTE mockingly until he arises and without looking in the FOOL's direction, starts to go. He kicks the pile of messy bones which scatter over the floor, while he slips on the grease, nearly falling. The FOOL dashes to catch him solicitously by the elbow, letting out a peal of high pitched laughter as he does so. DANTE throws him off; is about to speak, but checks himself, merely looking at the FOOL in utter disgust. DANTE stalks toward the door. The FOOL jumps about in front of him, laughing and making faces.)

*Can Grande (Much amused by the FOOL, says mockingly to DANTE)—*You are indeed, a great eater of meat, Dante.

*Dante (Provoked beyond endurance).—*You would not see so many bones even if I were a dog like Can Grande—*Canis Grande*—well named, ye yelping curs.

(FOOL laughs shrilly as DANTE goes out. CAN GRANDE, stung by DANTE's words, rises and paces angrily up and down.)

*Can Grande.—*Dog, did he call me? Ay, a faithful dog, proud Dante, else had he ceased his service long ago. Rebuked in my own house—it passes patience! Rather would I be an exile myself than have this wretched exile on my hands. If I were half as rude as he, I'd send him off.

(Enter servant.)

*Servant.—*Milord, there is an embassy without.

*Can Grande.—*An embassy? From whence? Who are they?

*Servant.—*They are from Florence, Milord.

*Can Grande.—*More guests from Florence! Have I not enough?

*Servant.—*They wait your pleasure, Milord.

Can Grande.—Show them here—though I am in no mood for guests. (*Exit servant. CAN GRANDE turning upon the jester.*) And you, sirrah, begone. Your nimble wit is not fine enough to please our dainty Florentines. (*Jester displays mock contrition and goes out.*)

Servant (Announcing embassy).—Count de Gabbrielle, Podesta of Florene, Fra Beltrando de Pogetto, Legate of His Holiness, the Pope, Signor Corso Donati, Signor Guido Cavalcanti.

Can Grande.—Sirs, I greet you with all due respect. To what happy occasion do I owe this honor that you have chosen me for your host?

Podesta.—We thank you for the welcome, good Can Grande. But we come not to tax your hospitality. Our mission lies not with you, but with your guest. In the name of the generous city of Florence, we come to offer terms of pardon to Dante Alighieri whom you have lodged these last months of his banishment.

Can Grande.—Oh, blessed news for him (*aside*) and me. But pardon? I thought he had been expressly excluded from the benefits of the general amnesty. Why comes this pardon so tardily and so suddenly?

Corso.—'Tis the will of Florence, the generous city of this traitor birth.

Guido.—Nay, he was no traitor. Said he not ever that treason was of all crimes the most abhorred?

Corso.—I see that Guido still sides with this troublemaker.

Guido.—And so I do. For never was a greater injustice done to any man than you have done to him. For her own sake, to escape shame in days to come, Florence must win back her greatest son. If she does not take him to her bosom now, she may some day with bitter tears entreat his return, plead her claim to him—when it is too late.

Corso.—A poet's dream! We are practical men and we know how to deal with this exile.

Podesta.—Silence, both of you. This is no time for wrangling. Our business is with that traitor, who by this time, must certainly have learned that civic offenses are not lightly dealt with.

Priest.—Nor church offenses either. But he shall atone for them, no fear of that. Full glad am I to see the contumelious Dante brought to Florence and forced to burn in the public square his blasphemous treatise *De Monarchia*.

Corso.—The people will enjoy the public spectacle when

Dante makes atonement to his enemies and walks in penitential raiment through the city streets.

Podesta.—Noble Can Grande, in the name of Florence, I bid you bring hither Dante Alighieri that we may proclaim to him the terms of his most generous pardon.

Can Grande (To servant).—Summon Dante Alighieri. (*Exit servant*) (*To PODESTA*) Honored sir, your pardon, but I fear that you will encounter difficulties. The man has been so arrogant of late that there is nothing I can do to crack the cloak of ice he wears. If a suggestion from myself would not be resented, I think it would be well that he should be spokento in friendly wise at first.

Corso.—And we are as friendly as possible—under the circumstances.

Can Grande.—I am assured of that. But—pardon the suggestion—if you were to allow his old friend, Guido Cavalcanti, to converse with him in confidence before your terms are offered, I think they will meet a better reception.

Guido (Eagerly).—Yes, friends. Let me talk to him first alone. Let me prepare him for the terms you offer. I know him well. I know his love for Florence. Let me be the one to bring him the joyful news of her forgiveness.

Podesta.—A foolish indulgence. Yet—perchance 'tis better so. Stay—but on your honor as a Florentine, not one word of the conditions—of his pardon.

Corso.—Can Grande, may we refresh ourselves in your delightful garden while the conference takes place? (*With a warning glance at GUIDO*) Your oath, sir, as a Florentine! Not a word of what are the terms of his return. (*GUIDO raises his right hand morosely. The others go out talking.*)

Can Grande (At the door).—May you have a pleasant conversation with your friend, Cavalcanti. I hope for your sake that his temper has improved since last I saw him. (*CAN GRANDE and the other members of the embassy pass into the garden.*)

Guido.—A churlish host! How salt the savor of another's bread! How hard the path to mount another's stair! Unhappy Dante, bereft of all he loves, languishing in exile, visiting his country only in his dreams. No matter what the terms, he must accept. Happier days await him in Florence. (*Enter DANTE. He starts with joy at the sight of GUIDO.*)

Dante.—Guido! My friend whom I had thought never to see again. O, the misery these long years of separation have held for us both.

Guido.—Now over for us both. Dante, I owe you a heavy debt of gratitude. I have come to pay that debt. Never have I forgotten that when you pardoned me, your unworthy friend, and called me back to Florence, the unjust suspicions of the citizens fell upon you, and you who had called me back from exile, became yourself an exile.

Dante.—Reproach not yourself, dear friend. All my troubles and hardships had their cause and rise in the disastrous meetings held during my priorate. Albeit in fidelity I was not unworthy of that office, I was unworthy of it in age and wisdom.

Guido.—You were worthy in every respect. It was Florence that was not worthy of you. False charges rang more true to the ears of the citizens than did our true words.

Dante.—Oh, why was not the Sovereign of the Universe pleased to remove this sting from me! For then none would have sinned against me. I should have suffered no undeserved pain, nor would I have been thus subjected to misery and to exile. It has been the pleasure of Florence, the beautiful city, the famous daughter of Rome, to reject me from her sweet bosom, where I was born, where I grew to middle life, and where, if it may please her, I wish from my heart to end the time which yet remains to me, and to rest my worn-out spirit. Through almost all parts where our language is spoken, a wanderer, well-nigh a beggar, I have gone, showing against my will the wounds of fortune. Truly I have been a vessel without sail or rudder, driven to diverse ports and shores by that hot blast, the breath of grievous poverty.

Guido.—Dante, think not of exile. Think of Florence, sweet Florence, our mother, who watched over us in boyhood.

Dante.—I dare not think of those glad days. There is no greater pain than to recall a happier time in wretchedness.

Guido.—True, Dante; but the wretchedness is over, and the happiest time is yet to be. Our beloved city calls to you and soon you may see her sweet face again.

Dante.—Guido! Can it be true? I fear it is a dream, for my fair mother has cast me forth, and she is stubborn of will. I do not think to see her face again. And yet—why should I not? I was indeed, guiltless, an exile without blame. But no—I know despite my love for her, that I shall never see my Florence more.

Guido.—You shall indeed, for the embassy which bids you return is here even now, and I am but a runner who comes before to gladden you with the joyful word.

Dante.—I cannot believe. Nay, let me hear again those words of joy. Guido, I cannot realize that the years of torture are at an end. For I have long abandoned everything beloved most dearly—Florence—home—glory!

(Re-enter the embassy.)

Dante (To the priest).—O Father, bless me in this happy hour, for never was more welcome word given to any man than this which you have brought to me. (*DANTE starts to kneel, but is stopped by the priest.*)

Priest (Sternly).—Nay, that blessing may not come till you have proved before the world that you deserve it.

Dante.—Deserve it? Have you not said that I deserve it by the pardon which you bring to me?

Podesta.—Dante, you speak too rapidly. There is much for which you must atone.

Dante.—Atone! Was not my exile atonement enough? My people—what have I done to you?

Corso.—Well do you know what you have done, Dante Alighieri.

Podesta.—Let your vain dreams of glory fade. (*Unrolls scroll.*)

Corso.—Dreams, Dante, are not for criminals.

Podesta (Reads).—The podestas of the glorious city of Florence, queen of the cities of Italy, to Dante Alighieri, an exile in disgrace, banished from Florence in the year 1300 for heinous offenses committed by him during his priorate, of which he acknowledges himself guilty—

Dante.—Never have I acknowledged guilt of any sort. What are these insults you offer me under the guise of pardon?

Guido.—Only be patient, Dante. They will explain.

Corso.—What explanation does he need? Dante Alighieri, well do you know your offenses, and that by your failure to appear for trial, you acknowledged your guilt.

Dante.—Guilt! Guilt of what?

Podesta (Reading from scroll).—Of attacks upon the persons of Corso Donati and others of his family, of revolts stirred up against the noble leaders of the Neri—

Dante.—Noble leaders of the Neri! Usurpers of authority! Wolves in sheep's clothing!

Podesta.—Of resistance to our noble ally, Charles of Valois, the Pacificator of Tuscany; of refusal to send troops to the aid of our Holy Father the Pope—

Priest.—Disloyal son of the Church, do you dare to ask her blessing till you have recanted your heresies and repented of your insubordination? Nothing can atone for your insolent embassy to Rome, your opposition to the savior of the Church, Charles of Valois, your scurrilous arguments against the temporal supremacy of the Pope, murder, fires, rapine, treachery, destruction—all were due to you.

Dante.—Liar! Fires and destruction you brought upon yourself.

Podesta.—Silence! (*Reads*) Because of dishonesty in seeking illicit gains while he was holding the office of prior, and in combining with others as evil as himself for the extortion of unjust profits from the innocent populace of Florence—

Dante.—O conspirators! Outcasts of Heaven, race despised, why dwells this insolence in you?

Guido (Pitifully).—Dante! My friend! These are but necessary premises. They must review the reasons for your exile—else how could they ask you to return. Only wait. Hear first the terms.

Dante (Fiercely).—Terms! Say you there are terms? Is it not enough that they have threatened me with death, with torture, banished me thrice while I was still in exile, placed vile accusations upon my head, driven me through hells innumerable, but that they should give me terms for my return to Florence?

Guido.—Nay, Dante. Only hear.

Podesta.—For all these sins, these irremediable offenses, Dante Alighieri is pardoned under the conditions laid down by the persons he has most grievously offended, which in order follow: First, that he pledge his enduring allegiance to the noble and generous party which so graciously permits him to return to his native city; secondly, that by public demonstration, he shall humble himself before the Podesta, walking in sackcloth through the streets of Florence and unto the cathedral, where by fitting ceremony—the carrying of the candle of humility and the rendering of obeisance to the Legate of the Pope, he shall beg the forgiveness of the Most High; and lastly, the people shall know by the payment he makes that—

Dante.—Enough! Is this then the glorious return of Dante Alighieri to his country after nearly three lustres of suffering and

exile? Did my innocence, patent to all, merit this? For this, the perpetual sweat and toil of study? Far from one, the house-mate of philosophy, be so rash and earthen-hearted a humility as to allow himself to be offered up bound like a schoolboy or a criminal. Far from one, the preacher of justice, to pay those who have done him wrong, as for a favor! This is not the way for me to return to my country.

Podesta.—Is this your final answer?

Dante.—If a way can be found that shall not derogate from the fame and honor of Dante, that I will enter on with no lagging steps; if by none such may Florence be reentered, by me then never!

Guido.—Never? Oh, Dante!

Corso.—And is this the way you answer your Mother City when she bids you return? No shame! Nay shame is not enough—may she curse you forth from her doorstep!

Dante.—She has cursed me forth. Florence has been to me a mother of little love. And you, the vilest of her false offspring, you who transgress all laws, human and divine, you who are dragged by insatiable cupidity into all crime—Begone, and take my answer to your well-guided city: Curses are the answer of Dante Alighieri, a Florentine by birth, but not by character, to the most wicked Florentines within the walls. Curses on both your parties Let it be my fame that I have been a party by myself!

(The members of the embassy shrink before him, and huddle in a horrified group. They slink out right in obedience to DANTE'S gesture. DANTE stands straight as an arrow, grim and commanding, till they have all gone. Not even in response to GUIDO'S gesture of entreaty does he move. When they have gone, he turns slowly from the door, drops into a chair by the table and buries his face in his hands.)

Dante.—Till now I still was cheered by hope. Now all hope must be abandoned. Never more—O thou faithless, thou beautiful, thou heartless mother—never more shall I behold thee.

(Hearing CAN GRANDE approach, DANTE rises with quiet dignity.)

Dante (To CAN GRANDE).—Honored host, too long have I trespassed on your hospitality. Permit me to depart with expressions of deepest gratitude for your bounty. Desiring to render some recompense for the benefits conferred upon me, time and time again I have carefully looked over the little things that I could give you. Nor did I find anything more suitable than the sublime

Canticle of the Comedy which is graced with the title of Paradise; and that I inscribe and offer to you. (*With a formal bow, he hands a scroll to CAN GRANDE. CAN GRANDE shows a trace of compunction.*)

Can Grande.—Accept in return, dear sir, my felicitations on your happy recall to Florence.

Dante.—I go not to Florence.

Can Grande (Amazed).—Not to Florence! Where then can you go? What can you do?

Dante (Sadly).—Can I not everywhere behold the mirror of the sun and stars? Speculate on sweetest truths under any sky without giving myself up ingloriously, nay ignominiously, to the populace and city of Florence?

Can Grande.—Are you then never to return to Florence?

Dante.—Never, unless that sacred poem of heaven and earth, which I have just dedicated to you, that poem which has made me lean these many years, subdue the cruelty that bars me from my city. Then it may be that I shall return as poet, and above the fount of my baptism receive the laurel crown.

Can Grande (Still bewildered).—And if not?

Dante (At door).—Then shall I pass from human to divine, from time unto eternity, from Florence to a people just and whole.

Curtain

MENDELE: THE FOREMOST OF GHETTO SATIRISTS

BY CHARLES A. MADISON

I

THE World war and the subsequent massacres throught the former Russian Pale, have practically destroyed the old Ghetto life of the Russian Jews. This life, an image of composite beauty and squalor in the minds of those acquainted with it, can never again return; modern conditions have forever relegated it to the historic past. Fortunately, this Jewish *milieu* has had an interpreter of the first rank in Sholom Jacob Abramowitch, better known as Mendele. His works have therefore assumed a special interest at the present time, apart from their intrinsic literary worth. In Mendele's stories this antiquated life of the orthodox Jews is accurately and artistically depicted. Readers are led into an atmosphere wherein the medieval spirit still prevails, wherein the Sabbath serenity and the holiday joviality illumine an otherwise workaday, drab existence.

This Ghetto atmosphere was most prevalent in the towns common to the plains of Lithuania. These communities, inhabited mostly by Jews were without the governmental authority to enforce civic duties, and appeared ugly and unsanitary. With the spring thaw, the streets acquired a coat of soft, deep mud: slush was everywhere. In the scorching summer days the same mud, dried to a fine powder, settled in the parched throats of the passersby. Verdant nature seemed to have wholly avoided these dilapidated settlements: not a tree, not a lawn: only a scant portion of wild grass and weeds. Not that nature was so parsimonious; it was merely uninvited.

The inhabitants of these towns were, with few exceptions, thoroughly versed in Talmudistic lore. In appearance they were ragged, untidy, rustic. Most of them were in grim want, eking out a bare existence, from one another and from the neighboring Gentiles, by continuous haggling and bargaining in petty commercial enterprises pertaining mostly to food. This was to them a mere ordeal, however: a necessary evil often alleviated by fre-

quent religious fasts; their true beings basked in the light of an unquestioned faith in the rectitude of Jehovah. Their knowledge of the world was circumscribed and naïve; their manner of living was still governed by the customs and habits of thought acquired from their medieval ancestors. Religion was to them the essence of life: its laws and rites were punctiliously observed; their God was of tangible form: he was visualised as something not unlike themselves, only all-powerful and sublime. Those who were financially secure, or whose wives were capable of attending to their material needs,—and of the latter there were a great number, sat all day and part of the night in continuous study and discussion. These men were dreamers with the imagination of children, with brains worthy of philosophers.

II

Mendele was a true representative of these Jews. He became their teacher and spokesman by virtue of being a descendant of the Prophets and a citizen of the Ghetto. Chastise his fellow Jews as he might, criticise them as he did, it was not so much in the attitude of a philanthropist as of a philosemite. His love for them was instinctive, as for blood relations. A sketch of his life will reveal this close intimacy.

Mendele was born in 1835 in the town of Kapule, in the government of Minsk. As a child he was precocious. Within one year he accomplished what it takes an average boy three to complete. He was quick-witted, an excellent mimic, and well-beloved by everyone. At the age of ten he began to study the higher branches of Gemmorah and Mishnaith. When about fourteen, his father died, leaving the family in want. This occasioned the youth to set out on a pilgrimage to the more prominent seats of learning, in which he sojourned for over two years.

When he heard that his mother had married again, and was living about ten miles from Kapule, he returned to live with her. In the serenity of the country, beautified by thick forests and a meandering stream, Mendele's love for nature first fully awakened. In giving expression to this joy he composed some Hebrew poems and a poetic drama. These were of a juvenile character.

A reaction soon set in. He was too intensely Jewish permanently to abide with nature; the isolation, the loneliness, was too much for him. He longed once more for the life of the synagogue, to be within reach of old and numerous books. At the age of seventeen he returned to Kapule. While there he was prevailed upon

by one Abraham the Maimed to accompany him to Wholinia, where he was also to take Mendele's aunt. Once out of town, this man revealed his mendicant purpose: he begged from town to town in the name of his passengers. Later he also attempted to earn some money as a marriage-broker, and would certainly have succeeded at the expense of Mendele, had not the latter refused to be intimidated. This incident severed their relationship, and Mendele found himself stranded in Kamenets. This trip so impressed itself upon his imagination that it later furnished him with much of the material for his *Fishke the Lame*.

In Kamenets his life took a sudden turn. He discovered the existence of science, and of literatures other than Hebrew. He realized that he had hitherto lived in delusion. Chance brought him in contact with the Hebrew poet A. B. Gottlober, who arranged with his daughter to teach Mendele the Russian and German languages and arithmetic. Mendele did not wholly forsake the synagogue, however. One of its wealthy members prevailed upon him to marry his daughter. This girl proved to be on the border of feeble-mindedness, and he divorced her after a three year ordeal. In the meanwhile, Mendele received enough tutoring to pass successfully the entrance examination as a teacher in one of the Hebrew schools of the city.

About this time he received a letter from his elder brother, describing the inconveniences and hardships he had to undergo as a village school-teacher. In reply, Mendele became so engrossed in the art of pedagogy that the result was a sort of essay. He posted the more personal part of it and left the remainder among his papers. One of his friends read it and sent it to Gottlober who was then teaching elsewhere. With the latter's recommendation it was printed in the *Hamagid*, a Hebrew periodical recently established. The article created a furore among its readers: it was not only written in a clear, intelligent Hebrew, but was also logical and constructive.

A year later Mendele came to Berditchev. Here he married for the second time, and it proved a very happy and lasting companionship. With his father-in-law taking all worry for a livelihood upon himself, Mendele's literary work began in earnest. His first book was called *Peaceful Justice*, a collection of essays and poems in Hebrew. In these pages he showed himself unlike most members of the *Haskoloh* movement. While in agreement with their reform-seeking, he did not agitate nor cry: "Rise, O my people, and educate thyself: Discard thy rusty shackles and

be free!" but laboriously and painstakingly helped to create the educational means for this purpose. His best work in this respect was to be the translation of Lenz's *Natural History* from the German into an easy Hebrew.

While occupied with his educational work, he made several attempts at writing fiction, but the biblical Hebrew of his time proved unfit for the task. Realizing also that in order to reach the masses he must write in the language most natural to them, he decided to forsake the flowery language of the Intelligencia. In 1864 he wrote his first Yiddish novel, *The Sycophant*. Notwithstanding the gloomy predictions of his friends, this story proved very popular and was issued in many editions. In this book he first employed the pseudonym, "Mendele the Bookseller."

A year later *The Magic Ring* came into print. *Fishke the Lame* and *The Meat Tax* followed in 1869. The latter aroused the ire of the Berditchev city fathers, and Mendele moved to Zhitomir to avoid their wrath. There he temporarily suspended his literary work in order to study at the Rabbinical School of that city. As soon as he received his diploma, he renewed his literary efforts, and *The Rackabone* and *The Travels of Benjamin III* came out in 1874 and 1875 respectively.

Here his literary activity appeared to have stopped short. In 1881 he moved to Odessa to take charge of the Jewish public schools, a position he held till his death. In honor of his twenty-fifth anniversary he wrote *The Draft*, a drama. In its introduction he explains the reason for his long silence: "The sorrows of the recent times (the massacres of 1881) have petrified my heart, so that my tongue could not speak nor my hand write a single word. It was a silence which, when it grips a person in anguish, costs more in life and health than the shedding of bloody tears. And if it persists for a time without relief, it endangers one's very existence."

He next began to rewrite some of his earlier works, and nothing but the title remained from *Fishke the Lame* and *The Magic Ring*. He also translated some of his novels into Hebrew. While thus employed he evolved a new and more pliable Hebrew, fit for modern fiction. Indeed, so improved was his style over the current form, that it became the model for the younger writers in that language. In 1900 a separate edition of his seven translated stories was published.

His last work was *Shlome reb Chaim's*. From this time until his death his pen was never abandoned, and, tho no longer writing

anything approaching his powerful novels, his articles and essays were to be found everywhere. Each occurrence of significance to the Jews, whether joyous or sorrowful found him ready to share or to solace. He died in December 15, 1917.

III

Mendele was a true satirist. He took life much in earnest: nothing left him unaffected. He accepted his *Weltanschauung* as the standard of all things, and was eager to beat into compliance whatever diverged from it. The longing of the satirist for reform and amelioration, was especially keen in Mendele because of his coming on the verge of the recent transitional process, when the clay feet of tradition needed exposure. For the satirist is most cogent when able to wield his doubled-edged sword of satire and irony in the destruction of what is needlessly held in awe and reverence.

Like most of the Jewish intellectuals of his time, he saw the deplorable conditions that have transformed the Jews into dreamy miserable, wretched beings; but his abundance of good sense warned him that "no dance comes before the feast." While others proposed education as the cure for all ills, he had one of his characters ask: "With what right would you deprive one from eating, breathing, until he has learned some trick? Each being at its birth is first of all a living thing, provided by nature with all the senses and with a complete body primarily to get for itself the necessities of life . . ."

Being a satirist, he cannot avoid moralizing. In his first novels the didactic intent protrudes itself most insistently, at times with the positiveness of a hump. Art for its own sake does not interest him. He has Weker, the intellectual in *The Meat Tax*, say: "At a time when our people, our poor people, suffer in Babylonia [The Diasporah,] break the strings of the Jewish violin. Jews were not born to sing, to play; more earnest things must occupy their minds. . . ." This didacticism diminishes, however, with the maturing of his art. Mendele the reformer continues to give way until he is wholly ousted in *Shlome reb Chaim's*. This artistic development is clearly seen upon a close analysis of each of his successive works. But the scope of this essay forbids such treatment. I must review only hastily all but the two stories which in my opinion express both his satire and droll humor, his moralizing and his art, namely, *Fishke the Lame* and *The Travels of Benjamin III*.

The first Yiddish story of Mendele deals with sycophants, who, tho insignificant in themselves worm their way into the hearts of the people and sap their blood. Tho its plot is of some interest. its primary importance lies in the strong exposition of the current evils among the small town Jews.

The Meat Tax may be called the sign of social awakening among the Russian Jews. In this drama Weker is the first social preacher in Yiddish literature; thru him Mendele landed blow after blow upon the so-called city fathers, who thrived upon the meat-tax collected from *kosher* meats. They were for the first time exposed in all their pettiness and hypocrisy. Yet Mendele is not satisfied in being the lone voice of protest. With Weker as his mouthpiece, he exclaims: "No! My patience is at an end, I can endure it no longer! Cursed be he who sees such evils and is silent; cursed be he who is a coward, who is afraid to speak the truth; cursed be he who stops his ears against the cries and sighs of the unhappy, of the insulted and the needy; cursed, execrated be all who sell their conscience, all who are able to help with a word, with the pen, and stand aloof for fear of a slight hurt . . . Why should I dissemble . . . I cannot keep silent; I must express the truth freely. Let the world know!"

Even as *The Meat Tax* is the beginning of the social consciousness of the Russian Jews, so is *The Rackabone* the symbol of their national awakening. In this allegory the Jews are placed as a whole, as a unit, face to face with the outside world. The scurvy horse was once a prince, but is now bewitched. He rouses one's pity from the first. When he speaks he may look the lean horse, but one does not think so; when he sighs it re-echoes like thunder in one's heart. He draws like a magnet. When half-crazed Isroel, who is his rider, calls out more than once: "Unhappy prince, poor horse!" one feels this to be the true state of the victim, the contrast between the princely soul and the animal body, between the beautiful *then* and the ugly, miserable *now*.

In *The Draft* Mendele first emerges as the mature artist. I say this despite the fact that the chief characters are weakened thru their reform-seeking; one forgets them in an appreciation of such of his minor creations as Feibush, the land broker and Mendel, the servant. In speaking of Mendele as an artist, I may as well state here that he was no adherent of modern art-tendencies. His idea of art is expressed in the following extract from a letter to Sholom Aleichem: "I demand that besides being beautiful a portrait should also have life, mind and spirit, as in a living person;

apart from fine rhetoric a description ought also to contain real thought." Thus it was not mere beauty Mendele was striving for, but beauty in action, charm.

The Magic Ring as rewritten gives a description of the daily life of the Jews of his period not yet equalled. Every type of Jew opens his heart and reveals his thoughts before the reader; the latter soon visualises these portraits in the lights and shades of Rembrandtian ruggedness and power.

Shlome reb Chaim's has no trace of didacticism. It portrays the truly beautiful phase of Ghetto life; it brings forth the expansive spiritual life of otherwise wretched beings. In the prologue is described Mendele's home in Odessa; in the book proper are depicted the first fourteen years of his life. In writing this story Mendele seemed to say to himself: "In my youth when it was necessary, I gave my all to my people, to my fellow Jews. Now, when I am old and without the vigor of youth, when I am no longer able to fight in the ranks of the reformers, I will allow myself the leisure of writing for my own pleasure."

IV

Fishke the Lame is not a novel in the modern sense of the word. Its plot is too heterogeneous and its interest too ill-balanced to fit into that form of fiction. It is rather what the author calls it in the subtitle: *A Story of the Jewish Poor*. One only sees in his mind's eye the Jewish vagabond-beggars of Russia in the fifties and sixties of the last century. It is their veritable epic. Mendele knew the Jews of his time as no man did. The Jewish soul was open to him, and its most complex emotion and nuance of feeling were subject to his study and portrayal. One of his characters philosophizes thus: "Want rouses me from my bed, want keeps me upon my feet, want compels me to ride my horse, and want beats me in the neck and moves me from place to place . . . Only the first move is difficult for a Jew. Once started, however, he glides like butter; he crawls even where it is not necessary, where he is not wanted; he even climbs the straight walls . . . A Jew lives on the go. Want compels him to run, to hover, to act, to work; let this want weaken in him the least particle, and he becomes passive and inert . . ." Can anyone deny the veracity of this utterance?

Mendele's great artistic achievement in this book is found in the love between the two cripples, Fishke and Anna. The grim realism of the story is made the somber horizon of their pure pas-

sion; the language which so vividly depicts the life of beggars and thieves is used to portray the most tender feeling of the soul. In no literature can there be found such ideal love among the most dejected of mankind. I have often questioned the possibility of an abject drudge, whose appearance is repulsive, whose aesthetic development is nil, whose thoughts are of the most mediocre and incoherent, who married a blind beggar-girl because she could provide for both, to be capable of falling in love with any one: the like doubt I had with the sloppy, ragged, homely, hunchbacked Anna. That their devotions should become mutual and reach the very ennobled heights found only in poetry, was the more to be questioned. Were it not for the masterful indirect depiction of their emotional experiences, their story would degenerate into an unsuccessful farce. Yet one is never inclined to doubt the genuineness of the love between Fishke and Anna. The reason for this may be gathered from the following passage. When his love for the girl is made mock of, Fishke says in a matter-of-fact way: "Why should I deny it? I first began to love her from great pity, later for herself. Something drew me to her: I gained life from sometimes sitting and chatting together with her . . . What? Nothing! just so! either chat or be silent and gaze at one another. A goodness lay over her face. Her looking at me was like that of a devoted sister upon an unfortunate brother at a time when he feels ill, very ill, and taking my sorrows to her, tears appeared in her eyes. Then I felt as if a warm balsam were flowing thru my body. I thought something—I thought—I don't know myself what. Something glowed within me, petted my soul: 'Fishke, you are no longer alone in this great world, no more as lonely as the cliff,' and hot scalding tears wetted my eyes" . . . What feeling, what noble devotion he expressed in these simple, incoherent words! And thus, whenever these two characters are met with thru the pages of this story, we find their hearts opening, and pure, undefiled love issuing forth.

Thus far he is the artist, the story teller. But he is no less the reformer. His mind becomes overwhelmed at the thought of the life of his fellow Jews. He desires to have them visualize their state of existence as he does, to feel their scabs and excrescences as he feels them, and he expresses himself in the only way he can: satirically, mockingly. The following description of one of their time-honored institutions, the poorhouse, is only a random example of his satire: "When I only think of it, my skin begins to itch and I must scratch myself. It looked like a very ancient inn; a

shanty with crooked uneven walls, with a roof like a battered felt hat, cocked in front and sunk almost to the ground in the rear. One could easily see that this poorhouse was about to tumble down, that it desired to crumble into a garbage hill; but the townspeople have driven this intent away, and have forcibly gained its consent to be propped up by branches and a post or two, and remain standing for years to come.

“Thru an imaginary gate one comes into a large anteroom. Its walls are full of crevices; the plaster does not cease to crumble away; this permits the light of day to enter. The earthy floor has many pits, some filled with garbage-slop and sending forth a deadly odor, others with rainwater which trickles in from the rotten straw roof as thru a sieve. Rotten, foot-trodden straw is scattered everywhere, mixed with all sorts of junk: torn beggar-sacks, rotten straw leggins, decayed shoe-tops, old soles and crooked heels with rusty nails, earthen scraps, broken wheel bands, wheel spokes, hair, bones, broom straws, etc. This junk combines to give a smell composed of crazy odors that stagger the newcomer. To the left side of the room, a greasy door opens unwelcomely on rasping hinges into a front room. The small, narrow windows are paned partly with glass and partly with rough paper, and some only with rags; some are very dirty, with mouldy corners, others are covered with aged yellow-green, crazily sparkling colors that stab the eye as a scratch on glass squeaks in one’s ear. About the plaster cracked walls, near a large, unwall’d store are long wooden benches. Over them about the walls are hooks of several sizes. From the black ceiling are hung lassoed ropes into which is inserted a long round pole. The hooks and poles are hung with coats, skirts, and various other garments, as well as beggar-bags belonging to those who come afoot or in wagon loads, and remain together in this room, young and old, husbands and wives.”

Need I describe the effect upon the readers of this description, many of them the supporters of such and similar institutions? They were inspired with an enthusiasm for change, for amelioration. To remove such scabs, to heal the sores from the body of the people became their ardent desire.

V

The intelligent reader of *The Travels of Benjamin III* finds something familiar about the book. As he reads about the journeys, the fortunes and misfortunes, and the mode of thought of the

two leading characters, Benjamin and Sanderel the Woman, he feels that they are no strangers to him: it seems to him that he had met them somewhere before, and is now only paying them another visit. Then he remembers. They are largely patterned after the two famous characters of Cervantes. This resemblance is partly due to the similarity of purpose of the two authors. Cervantes wrote his masterpiece to show in the hallucination of Don Quixote the chivalry of his age tending towards absurdity. In like manner Mendele produced his Benjamin in the hope of rousing the Jews of his day out of their vegetating passivity.

This book is not free from the didacticism of his earlier works, the satire is blended and mellowed by the healthy humor that abounds in it. Mendele has here reached the stage where he can accomplish his aim with laughter only. Instead of mercilessly chiding or urging with an anxious heart, he here makes his readers laugh with self-conscious shame, and brings about his desired end thru more artistic means.

The Travels of Benjamin III was written when Zionism was as yet but a nebulous, synagogue-formed longing. Its propounders still expected the advent of Messiah, sent by Jehovah to gather the Jews to Palestine, the Holy Land of Israel. It was psychologically inevitable for the underfed synagogue scholars to dream of the land where each man sits under his fig-tree, and where milk and honey flow in streams. The imagination is most active on a gnawing stomach. Innocent, idle dreamers that they were! They settled among themselves the exact location of the Ten Lost Tribes whom they believed existing. They even presumed them a rich and powerful nation, ignorant of the suffering of their Jehudaic brethren . . .

These reveries were often unconsciously resorted to in order to avoid stark despair. The life of these Jews was truly pitiable. The following artless reply from a Jew asked how he earned his living, well shows their general condition: "His name be praised, I have as you see a present from His beloved name, an instrument—a voice to sing; so I am frequently the cantor in the synagogue. I am one of the best *Mohails* and *matzoh*-makers in the world; I am also a marriage-broker, sometimes successfully; I have, between us and the lamppost, a blind still which brings me in a little; nor is a goat lacking to me, which, without an evil eye, gives me milk; and not far from here I have a well-to-do relative who helps me out when in need. But besides all these things, I tell you that the Lord is a Father and the Jews very compassionate, and there

is no need to complain. . . . People in such circumstances must have faith to persist! A Messiah becomes a veritable godsend.

Mendele wrote *The Travels of Benjamin III* to show the folly of such reveries, once they master the imagination. In Benjamin he brought forth the extreme representative of the synagogue scholar, the man who set out to find the Ten Tribes! With a mockery that grips the heart, Mendele shows, thru Benjamin's actions, the absurdity of such day-dreaming.

Benjamin is a young married man who takes his wretchedness philosophically. He has read many books. He knows the history of the Ten Tribes, the Red Little Jews, Palestine, the great Oceanus, Alexander the Great, and a number of other mythological and historical subjects. Like Don Quixote his mind becomes surcharged with the desire of doing great deeds. But it is no mere Dulcinea that moves him to action; it is the salvation of an entire people! He wants to seek out the Ten Tribes, become their leader, and in that capacity gather all the Jews to Palestine.

His plans gradually come to maturity. Being, instinctively, a great coward, he first makes several trips into the forest in order to lessen his fear of the unknown. For his companion he chooses Sanderel the Woman. This individual, like Sanzo Pancha, was without the imaginative faculty. He could be persuaded and cajoled by everyone; no matter what one said, he was sure of Sanderel's approval while in his presence.

As soon as they can escape their wives, they set out on their perilous journey. They only take with them their prayer-shawls, their phylacteries, and a mendicant bag. As this is their first journey away from their native town, everything appears wondrous and fearful, as foretold by the volumes Benjamin has read. They do not hesitate to disclose their purpose to the Jews they meet; some believe them inspired, others as mere fools. After a number of incidents, the last of which finds them in the Russian army, they return home.

Can anyone doubt the effect this story produced upon the Jewry as a Whole? As they read this self-portraying book, they thought and were ashamed, they thought and were resolved to change, they thought and became the wide awake revolutionary Jews of today. In saying this I do not mean that without such a book the transition would not have taken place; I know full well that the most a work of art can do is to stimulate, to hasten a process which circumstances have made imperative; what I wish to bring out is that this and the other works of Mendele have

served the Russian Jews as much as is in the power of literature to serve.

As a literary work *The Travels of Benjamin III* is very commendable. Charged with healthy humor, often even hilarious, written in a style that adequately expresses the content, it is no less artistically proportioned. The reader becomes primarily interested in the fate of the two heroes; the didactic element appears only indirectly and almost imperceptibly. The following quotation is a characteristic example, at once humorous and didactic, of this story: "Outside began the gray of the coming day; a quietness reigned everywhere. One could hear the snoring of the houseful of sleepers, each according to his habit: one with the sound of a banjo, another with that of a trumpet; one made it quiet and short, the other drew it higher, higher, on three notes, and afterwards emitted it with an angry turn as if speaking with puffed cheeks. Together they composed a snoring symphony, the noses playing on all instruments, performing in honor of the eminent Dneprowitz bedbugs that were feasting upon the flesh of the sleeping and drinking their blood—Jewish blood."

VI

My interpretation of the monument which Mendele has erected for himself is ended. It is necessarily sketchy and inadequate, as are even the best of short essays when grappling with a subject similar to mine. I wish once more to emphasize the following contributions of Mendele to Yiddish literature: he was the first to make Yiddish into a literary language, forming it out of the Germanic-Hebraic-Slavic dialect used by "the servant girl and tailor apprentice;" his work as a reformer is still bearing fruit among the orthodox Jews; he is unrivalled as a satirist and historian of the Ghetto Jew in Russia, especially that of his generation. These achievements would have been in vain, however, had he not inspired a number of disciples to continue and elaborate the work he had begun. In this respect he was most successful, Sholom Aleichem being his famous "grandchild."

Yet long before his death Mendele was already viewed as a tradition. This relegation is in a great measure due to the more modern literary schools that have arisen since his prime; the rapid development of the modern Yiddish authors, once influenced by the literature of the world, places his method and form far in the rear. His technique, flawed with the imperfections and crudities of the proper, seems almost juvenile to the reader of today. Nor

did the Jews of the city, the Jews estranged from the synagogue, find a place in his stories; these people, having passed the transitional period, did not interest him enough; they asserted themselves at a time when his literary powers were on the wane. But it is his didacticism that, to my mind, helps the dust most to accumulate over his books. Literature as literature can live only by virtue of its artistic qualities, and Mendele's novels were not written for purely artistic purposes. The modern Yiddish reading public appreciates and honors him, but seldom reads him.

DAY DREAMS

BY A. H. WARE

I wish that I could sink into this dawn!
 So might the clouds pass through me undisturbed
 As they twine now around those far-off pines.
 (How sweet the lilies grow upon this cliff . . .)
 Below, the earth has vanished—vague—unformed . . .
 It floats in thin, blue-shadowed cloud-wraiths, save
 Where here and there the foam-sea tides away.
 So was it when the Mightiest from His throne
 Looked down, and it was chaos. (White and meek
 These lily bells chime fragrance.) Heaven and Earth
 And God Himself, have loosened into space,
 And I forget the sense of time and life . . .
 All vast infinity and emptiness . . .
 And placid clouds. Emotion dies away.
 (But at my side the lilies will not fade.
 They drop insidious perfume from their cups
 And stifle dreams within me, nor may I
 Arise and crush them down against the rock.)

THE TRAGEDIAN IN SPITE OF HIMSELF

A FARCE OF SUBURBAN LIFE IN ONE ACT

BY ANTON CHEKOV

Translated from the Russian by Olive Frances Murphy

CAST

IVAN IVANOVICH TOLKACHOV, *the father of a family*
ALEKSYEY ALEKSYEEVICH MURASHKIN, *his friend*

The scene is laid in MURASHKIN'S apartment at St. Petersburg.

MURASHKIN'S study. *The furnishings are luxurious. MURASHKIN sits at a writing table. TOLKACHOV enters carrying in his arms a glass lamp chimney, a toy velocipede, three hat boxes, a large bundle of clothes, a carpetbag containing bottles of beer, and many small packages. He gazes about the room vacantly and then sinks exhausted on the couch.*

Murashkin.—How do you do, Ivan Ivanich! Well, but I am glad to see you. Where have you come from?

Tolkachov (Breathing heavily).—My dear—my dear friend, I have a favor to ask of you. I beg you—lend me your revolver till to-morrow. Be a friend to me!

Murashkin.—But what do you want with a revolver?

Tolkachov.—I must—ach, give me some water. Quick! Water! I must—at night I must go through a dark forest, and so—and so—ach, lend it to me! Have pity on me!

Murashkin.—What nonsense, Ivan Ivanich! What sort of devil do you think is in the dark forest? You are sure you have not planned something? But I see by your face that you have—that you have planned something that is not good. Tell me, what is the trouble? Are you ill?

Tolkachov.—Stop! Let me get my breath. Ach, my friend, I am tired as a dog. There is a feeling in my head and body as if I were being made into kibob! I can stand it no longer. Be a friend to me! Don't ask me any questions! Don't bother about the details. Just give me the revolver! I beseech you!

Murashkin.—Enough! Ivan Ivanich, what sort of cowardice is this? A father of a family! A state councilor! For shame!

Tolkachov.—What kind of father am I? I am a martyr! I am a beast of burden, a negro, a slave, a wretched creature who is continually expecting something to happen and, therefore, does not commit suicide! Why do I live? Ach, why? (*Jumps up violently.*) You tell me! Why do I live? Why this continuous round of mental and physical suffering? I can understand being a martyr for an idea, yes! But to be a martyr for the devil knows what—for women's petticoats, for lamp chimneys! No! No! No!

Murashkin.—Don't shriek so! The neighbors will hear you!

Tolkachov.—Let them! It's all one to me. If you don't give me the revolver, some one else will, and then I shall not be long in this world. That's settled!

Murashkin.—Stop! You have torn a button off my coat. Speak calmly. I can't understand what makes your life so miserable.

Tolkachov.—What? You ask me what? Just a minute, and I'll tell you. I shall give you my entire confidence, and perhaps my heart will be lighter. Let's sit down. Now listen! Ach, my friend, I am out of breath! Well, let us take for example this very day. As you know, from ten o'clock till four there is perfect bedlam in the chancellor's office. Heat, suffocating heat, flies, confusion! The Secretary has taken his vacation. Krapov has gone off to get married; the clerks in the chancellor's office have got a craze on house parties, love affairs, amateur theatricals. They are all asleep, half dead, tipsy, so that no sense can be got out of them at all! The creature who has taken over the secretary's work is deaf in the left ear and is in love! The solicitors have gone wild. They run and rush in every direction; they lose their tempers; they make threats. There is such a disturbance that one even has to call the guard. Everything is in confusion, and there is the very devil to pay! And the work is frightful—the same thing—always the same. Investigation and report, investigation and report—monotonous as the surge of the sea. Don't you see why my eyes literally bulge out under my brows? Give me some water, please! You come from the council room, broken-down, exhausted. Then it would be so nice to get something to eat, to lie down and have a little sleep. But no. Remember that you are a suburban, that is, a slave, mere trash, a bat-string, a sucket! And like a blithering idiot you immediately hasten to perform your

errands. In our suburb a fine custom has been established. If a suburban goes to the city, his wife and every woman in the community has the power and authority to impose errands on him. My wife insists that I go to the modiste's and give her a good rating for her dress being too big in the waist and too tight across the shoulders. I must also exchange Sonitchka's shoes and get a sample of some flame-colored silk at twenty kopeks and three yards of tape for my sister-in-law. But wait, I shall read them off to you. (*Takes a list from his pocket and reads.*) A lamp chimney, a pound of pork sausage, some cloves and rolls of cinnamon at five kopeks, castor oil for Mischa, ten pounds of brown sugar (take from home a copper basin and a small mortar for the sugar), carbolic acid, some bed bug powder—ach—hair-powders at ten kopeks, twenty bottles of beer, some essence of vinegar and a corset for Mlle. Shanso, No. 34. Ach, and I must take Mischa home a fall coat and some overshoes. This is the list for my wife and family.

Now for the commissions of my dear acquaintances and neighbors, the devil take them! At the Vlasimirs' to-morrow is Volodya's name-day, and it is, therefore, necessary to buy a velocipede for him. The Lieutenant-colonel's wife, Vikrina, is in a rather embarrassing situation, and in such a case I am obliged to drive to the midwife's every day and ask her to come. And so on, and so on. I have five lists in my pocket, and my handkerchief is all done up in little knots. Thus, brother, between the office and the trains you run about the city like a dog with his tongue hanging out. You run, you run, and you curse life! From the dry-goods store to the apothecary shop, from the apothecary shop to the modiste's, from the modiste's to the pork-butcher's shop, and then again to the apothecary. Here you lose your way; there you mislay your money; in the third place you step on a woman's dress—ach! From such excitement you are nearly crazed and your nerves are so shattered that your bones crack all night, and you dream of crocodiles. Well, your errands are finished, and everything is finally bought. Now how do you want all this music wrapped up? Will you have the heavy copper mortar and pestle with the lamp chimney, or the carbolic acid with the tea? And will you have the beer bottles with the velocipede? A great question, a problem for the mind, a veritable rebus! But do not ransack your brain, do not attempt to figure it out, for in the end you somehow manage to smash and scatter all these things on the way to the station. And in the train you

will have to stand with your arms spread out. You straighten yourself, supporting with your chin some box or other, everything in the carpetbags and in the cardboard boxes, and all the rest of the trash. But the train starts, and the people begin throwing your bundles in every direction. You have taken up some one else's place with your things. They scream; they call the conductor; they threaten to put me off; and what do I do? I just stand and gaze about stupidly like a beaten donkey. Now listen further. I arrive home in the suburb. . . . It would be so nice to have a little drink after my cursed labours, to get a bite to eat, to have a nap—now wouldn't it? But it is not possible. My wife has been waiting for me a long time. I have scarcely drunk a little soup when she grabs me and asks if I don't want to go somewhere to an amateur theatrical or a dancing party? You can't protest. You are a husband, and the husband translated into suburban-life tongue means a dumb animal whom one can drive and load with cargoes as much as one likes, without fear of interference from society or any protection by human beings.

You go and see the "Scandal in the Royal Family" or some play or other. You applaud at your wife's command and you pine away—you pine away—you pine away—and every moment you expect a stroke of apoplexy. You gaze about at a dance and watch for partners for your wife. And if you do not procure a partner for her, then you, yourself, must dance a quadrille. You return after midnight from the theatre or from a ball, and you are no longer a human being, but a dead thing, worth nothing. Finally you get home. You undress and get into bed. All is well. You shut your eyes tight. Everything is so nice, so poetic—. It is warm; the children do not cry; your wife is not there; and your conscience is clear. One could want nothing better. You fall asleep and suddenly—suddenly you hear—*dzzz*—mosquitoes! (*Jumps up.*) Mosquitoes, be they thrice cursed!! (*Clenches his fists.*) Mosquitoes!!! They are the plague of Egypt, the Inquisition! *Dzzz*—they buzz thus mournfully, sadly, almost asking forgiveness, but the wretches bite so that you scratch for an hour. You smoke, you strike at them, you cover your head—there is no salvation! In the end you spit out and give yourself up to laceration. Eat away, cursed things! You do not succeed in getting used to mosquitoes as you can to a new Egyptian plague. In the living room your wife begins to rehearse songs with her tenors. They sleep during the day, but at night they prepare themselves for amateur concerts. Ach, my God! Tenors—they are such a

torture that no kind of mosquitoes could compare with them! (*Sings.*) "Do not say that I squandered my youth—I again stand before you enchanted—" Ach! They have lashed my very soul! In order to drown them a little I resort to strategy. I press my fingers in my ears and count the hours till four, when they depart. Ach, brother, some more water! I cannot—Ach, that's good. Don't hurry me! You get up at six o'clock and walk to the station for the train. You hurry, for you're afraid of being late. Mud, mist, cold, brr—! And when you arrive in the city the first thing you meet is a street organ. I tell you it is so, my friend. I would not wish an enemy such a life. Do you understand? I have become ill—asthma, heart-burn, always I fear something. My stomach does not digest well. My eyes grow hazy. Will you believe I have become a psychopath? I want to go to Chechot or Merzhyyevsky. Some kind of madness comes over me.

Thus in a moment of vexation and rage, when the flies bite and the tenors sing—suddenly my eyes become hazy. I cry out. I rush through the entire house as if possessed and scream, "I thirst for blood! Blood!" And at those times I honestly want to strike some one with a knife or hit him over the head with a chair! Ach, that's what suburban life leads one to. And no one cares. No one sympathizes, any more than as if it were the most perfectly natural thing. They even laugh. But mark my words—I am a human being! I want to live! This is no vaudeville, but grim tragedy. Listen, if you will not give me the revolver, at least sympathize with me.

Murashkin.—I do sympathize with you.

Tolkachov.—I see that you do. Well, goodbye. I still have to get the herring, the sausages, some tooth powder—and then off to the station.

Murashkin.—Whereabouts in the country do you live?

Tolkachov.—At Death Creek.

Murashkin (Joyously).—Really? By any chance do you happen to know Olga Pavlovna Feinberg?

Tolkachov.—Yes, I'm quite well acquainted with her.

Murashkin.—Just think! What a coincidence! How nice it would be—how kind it would be if you—

Tolkachov (Hastily).—If I what?

Murashkin.—My dear friend, you would not refuse me one little favor? Give me your word you will not refuse!

Tolkachov (Weakly).—What is it?

Murashkin.—Just a little favor, my dear friend. In the first place, will you call on Olga Pavlovna and tell her that I am alive and well and send her my regards. And then, take her one little thing. She asked me once to buy her a small sewing machine, but I have had no way of getting it to her. Take it my dear, will you? And while you're at it this little canary and bird cage. Just be careful not to break the door. Ah, but why do you look at me like that?

Tolkachov.—A sewing machine—a canary and a cage—ach, ach—finches—chaffinches—

Murashkin.—Ivan Ivanich, what is the matter with you? Why do you turn purple?

Tolkachov (Stamping his feet).—Give me the machine! Where is the cage? Ach, ach! You are gnawing the soul of a human being—torturing me—killing me! (*Clenching his fists.*) I thirst for blood! Blood! Blood!

Murashkin.—You have lost your senses!

Tolkachov (Rushing at him).—I thirst for blood! Blood!

Murashkin (In terror).—He has lost his mind! (*Shrieks.*) Petrushka! Marya! Where are you? Help!

Tolkachov (Chasing him about the room).—I thirst for blood!! Blood!!!

Curtain

MORRIS'S "THE LADY OF THE LAND"

BY GENEVIEVE APGAR

THE *Lady of the Land* has seldom attracted the attention of critics, but, though one of the shortest and the simplest of the stories in *The Earthly Paradise*, it abounds in art elements well worth attentive study. These art elements become all the more pronounced when the "plain, unvarnished tale" from which Morris borrowed is considered. The story of *Ypocras Daughter* in *The Voiage and Travaile* of the pseudo-Mandeville was without doubt the source upon which Morris drew. In it he found only the bare facts of his story. The interpretation of those facts and the embellishment of the incident by imagery as clear and true as only a painter-poet can conceive—these are Morris's own. The result is a valuable part of the very memorable work of an unusually versatile and gifted man.

In the story, a youth leaves his companions when their ship touches a strange island, and goes for a walk. When he comes unexpectedly upon an ancient castle, he penetrates its ruined chambers until, in an inner room beneath the greatest hall, he to his amazement finds a wondrously beautiful maiden. In an impassioned conversation, he learns of the awful plight of the maiden. Having incurred the wrath of Diana, she is suffering under a spell which sends her in the form of a fork-tongued dragon to range through the island and sea by night; by day she sits alone in the gorgeous crypt. She urges self-control on the part of the youth, who has been caught in the snares of love at first sight, and directs him how to release her. Her disenchantment can be accomplished only by a kiss given by a man while she is in her dragon form. If released by the youth, she will marry him and put him in possession of great riches. Carrying with him a gem as a token of the verity of the incident, he returns to the ship eagerly anticipating the hour when he may accomplish the maiden's release. When that hour comes, however, he is terrified by the horrid appearance of the monster and flees from it. Not only does he fail to release the maiden, but after three days of suffering he himself dies.

One critic contemporary with the appearance of the poem says that it sets forth "the miseries that lurk in the enchantment of unhallowed passion."¹ This does not seem to be an adequate statement of the central idea of the story if there be one. It is doubtful whether Morris had any motive other than to give in pellucid verse an objective medieval tale with all the simple credulity of a seeing and trustful imagination. One idea, however, whether consciously or unconsciously introduced by the poet, is of sufficient recurrence to contribute to the atmosphere of the whole; it is that *fear* is destructive of all that may be best for man.²

The men went from their vessel
 lightly armed in twos or threes,
 For midst that folk *they feared no enemies*.

But the one who, wandering off by himself, found the ruined castle

. turned
 Trembling indeed at what might chance to wait
 The prey entrapped, yet
 hoping somewhat too, amid his fear.

To him later the enchanted woman said,

Unheard of wealth, unheard of love is near
 If thou hast heart a little dread to bear.

When the test of his courage came,

Through his heart there shot a pang of *fear*.

Fear was an element in that baseness against which the woman had warned him when she said,

Stout must thy heart be;
 No base man things like this may see,
 And live thereafter long and happily.

The postlude tells that the younger men listening to the story

. with little patience seemed to hear
 That story end with shame and grief and fear;
 A little thing the man had had to do,
 They said, if longing burned within him so.

¹Athenaeum, vol. I, p. 753.

²A recognition of Morris's devotion to all that is beautiful might support an interpretation that would give one the following ideas: (i) All should be risked for beauty. (ii) Man shrinks from the ugly, but beauty may be back of it.

This attitude was but the intolerance of youth; the older men recognized the danger that lay in fear,

Remembering well how fear in days gone by
Had dealt with them and poisoned wretchedly
Good days, good deeds, and longings for all good.

This idea is linked up with the frame-story of *The Earthly Paradise*. In the Prologue it is indicated that a god-like state is reached when fear is dead,—

And each to each a very god did seem,
For fear was dead,—

and fear is coupled with death:

. that fair escape from fear and death.

In the Epilogue we read,

The victory over fear,
(Ah, short-lived victory!)

In most of the other stories the same idea occurs; for instance, in *The Lovers of Gudrun*, Kiartan says,

The thing that all men fear,
Swift death and certain.

In the frame-story the shrinking from death and the hope of an earthly paradise where eternal youth prevails is ever present. The wanderers are oppressed by fate and the woeful wonder of death. This central note of the whole is sounded in *The Lady of the Land*:

Yet in his heart a longing for some bliss
Whereof the hard and changing world knows nought,
Arose and urged him on and dimmed the thought
That there perchance some devil lurked to slay
The heedless wanderer from the light of day.

Strange hopes began to flit
That in some wondrous land he might abide
Not dying.

The longing for death comes only with hopeless wretchedness. The woman, for four hundred years in the thrall of a horrible enchantment, laments,

Another year, and still I am not dead!

The medieval romance was true not so much to the facts of life as to the ideals and aspirations of an age. Character did not determine the course of the story; the hero merely reflected the common romantic ideals of manhood. This ideal was attained chiefly through physical prowess most often exerted to relieve distress,—to succor the weak. Thus we have the medieval conception of the woman as the inspiration and object of knightly endeavor. *Ypocras Daughter* of the pseudo-Mandeville and all other medieval romances of similar enchantment are of this character.

The nineteenth century story tends to relate action that is determined by character and by a central idea to which all the action contributes. The ideal of manhood is attained through control over man's baser passions. In Morris's *The Lady of the Land* we have not a man who is to perform the duty of a medieval knight—to carry out part of the science of his profession—and to be rewarded with a guerdon which he has a right to expect, but a modern man sensitive to beauty and drawn on by the hope of sensuous delight. Morris's *The Lady of the Land*, has, in these particulars, more of a nineteenth century than a medieval tone. The inadequacy of the man's courage—the dominance of his fear—makes impossible for him the noble things of life, and brings him death itself.

Aside from consideration of a possible underlying motive and a treatment of the hero consistent with this motive, the poem has a medieval, romantic tone. This is gained, first, by giving to the action an indefinite, far off time,—

It happened once;

and by the absence of localization in the "Land of Matters Un-
forgot,"—

And midst their voyage to an isle they came,
Whereof my story keepeth not the name.

The identification of the Lady of the Land, however, with the daughter of Hippocrates is made in

And such a leech he was that none could say
Without his word what soul should pass away.

Moreover, the telling of the story is at the close of the fourteenth century, when London was "small, and white, and clean," and Chaucer's pen was moving over bills of lading. The archaic words

fall readily upon our ears, fitting intimately into the tone of the whole: *gat, goodly, fain, nigh, a-low, clomb, perchance, aback, 'gan, a-flame, enow, twixt, wend, adown, abode (her still), afeared, durst.* Arbitrarily compounded words find a fit place here: *sea-roving, land-locked, hoped-for, marble-paved, unheard-of, God-destroyed, girt-up, new-kissed, rose-ringed, half-waking, nigh-gained.* Attracted to this compound form are adjectives with their associated adverbs, such as *well-hinged, well-nigh, well-trusted, long-deserted.*

The leisurely movement of the story is characteristically medieval.³ The poet never hurries to reach the end. In this Morris is more medieval than the pseudo-Mandeville. In the Isle of Lango we are in a land no less enchanted than is Morris's, but we do not linger in it; we roam through Morris's with senses alert to all there is to see and hear. The first land of enchantment is bare with no suggestion of beauty; the second is rich with a prodigality of loveliness. Our interest is built up and an element of suspense is secured by dwelling upon the exterior of the castle before we enter it, and by detailing seven parts of the castle or its environs before we come to the exquisite chamber in which the lovely lady sorrows.

The isolation of the ruined castle is made apparent; it stands in a "lonely valley . . . amidst an ancient cypress wood," and has been "long-deserted." Its former splendor is suggested by indications of terraced gardens; of luxurious marble-paved baths; of paths now overgrown, impeded with trunks of fallen trees, but

once made meet
For tender women's dainty wandering feet;

of a shrine once serving many people but now imageless.

The first climactic point is reached when the hero finds near the shrine a gateway. Curious, he is tempted to enter; fearful of some impending fate, he hesitates. The sympathetic reader feels a growing suspense as he, with the hero, enters the castle.

The interior of the castle suggests the life of peace and leisure that once had been the lot of its inhabitants. Its storied tapestry and ruined sculpture are vividly pictured, even to the

rusty nails through Helen's maddening lip.

³The whole (*The Earthly Paradise*) of which it forms a part is of more than medieval length—over 40,000 lines.

The hero finds indications of a noble family in what he takes to be a coat of arms above the door. Here the poet introduces two notes which serve to mark the unity of the whole. In the primitive narrative of his source, such marks found no place. These two marks are the

image with wide wings,
Whose unclad limbs a serpent seemed to seize,

and the fact that the country people had associated wizardry with the place:

the wondrous imagery
Outworn by more than many years gone by;
Because the country people, in their fear
Of wizardry, had wrought destruction here.

The utter absence of any sign of man in the chambers serves to heighten the surprise when human life is found in the room concealed within the crypt. We are held before the door of this room while the unifying note of magic is again sounded,

Perchance some marvel I shall see,

and, having entered the room, we are held while varied and vivid images are built up before us of the furnishings of a place

That seemed for some fair queen appalled,

and we hear again the note of magic,

The wanderer trembled when he saw all this,
Because he deemed by magic it was wrought.

In the adjoining room we are held in credulous wonder at the superb golden splendor of the place. Within nine lines are built up seven distinct images: golden medals, golden cauldrons, golden cups, golden tables, great gems, golden hangings, and precious raiment. For the second time the first mark of unity is noted: the indistinct image above the first entrance is repeated "well wrought" above a door in this room of golden glory—

a naked girl with wings
Enfolded in a serpent's scaly rings.

The moment of discovering this image is made a climactic moment by having coincide with it the sound of a woman's voice coming from the third room in this series "beneath the greatest hall." In this room rapturous beauties arrest the eye. The creamy tint of ivory is a background for the woman's tresses of gleaming gold. So clearly, yet concisely, is the woman herself drawn that I find myself, by following the details given, easily assuming the attitude described. Yet there is no harshness of outline, nothing mechanical. The atmosphere of relaxation of body and of spirit as she gives herself up to distressing memories mingled with which is "half-sweet shame" is exquisitely given, and the three stanzas make a picture as perfect in composition, line, and color as was ever put on canvas. Art to Morris was a single thing; expression of artistic images in any medium, whether color, form, design, or words, was the one thing—art. This picture so perfectly drawn in words is a tribute to Morris's fluent ease in literary art.

Effective juxtaposition of ideas is found when the woman sees the man just as she laments her lot; the possibility of his being her rescuer may awaken hope in her soul. But it is the man who takes the initiative and the woman who gently holds him off with look and voice while she warns him against too great temerity. Again the note of magic is sounded:

I have many a spell.

In the conversation between the two, the sincerity of passion in the man, the depths of pathos in the woman's story of her early life and later enchantment, and the longing of the woman for the simple human joys such as "the sunlight on the green grass and the trees," "the clatter of the summer rain," "to hold my child upon my knees"—are given with a direct and earnest simplicity that is most convincing. A dramatic effect is again achieved when, in the story of her life, the shadow of impending doom is made to fall at the moment of greatest passion:

. . . as he swept away my yellow hair
To make my shoulder and my bosom bare
I raised mine eyes, and shuddering could behold
A shadow cast upon the bed of gold.

The picture of the sensuous beauty of the woman as she gave to the man the gem as an earnest of the reality of the experience is exquisite in its delicacy.

Then comes a contrast, sharp, fearful. From the golden glory of the hidden rooms, we come into "the dreary crypt and bare." Instead of colorful images of gold and rose—"rosy fingers light;" "blushing like a new-kissed maid;" "those snowy, rose-tinged hillocks;" "her rosy heel"—the grayness of the "gray heaps of stone" settles over the scene. Instead of the utter silence of the ruined castle, on the next day we hear discordant, horrid sounds. Instead of the lovely lady, there is a revolting "fearful thing;" instead of a prudent, self-controlled human being, there is a raging, maddened animal. Instead of enthusiastic courage, there is a sinking of the heart that leads to wild, unthinking violence. Instead of a slowly stumbling backward from the place of delight, there is a headlong, heedless flight.

The unifying note of magic is again struck in.

"Some fiend she was," he said, "the bane of man."

The two parts of the story are further held together by an echoing of the word *thing*. The woman speaks of the shadow of Diana as "the thing;" the dragon is called a "thing:"

A fearful thing stood at the cloister's end.

: : : : : The thing dropped the goat.

Another connecting link is found in a line that seems to forecast the end:

God grant indeed thy words are not for nought!

Again in the line,

And this thing seemed a little thing to do,

we instinctively fear for the outcome; we feel that the man, thinking only of the ease to come, is not sufficiently fortified in spirit.

Besides images of purely visual appeal (in form and color,) Morris employs a wealth of images of varied appeal. Auditory images are frequent: the *croak* of the raven; the *choked* and *drear* sound of the *low* wind; the unmusical *gurgling* of the *baffled* stream; the *doleful* cry of the grey wolf; a *strange noise*; the *strident roars*, and the *whining moans* "like fiends in pain" of the dragon; her *grinding* jaws and *horrible*

Cries that folk could hear far out at sea.

Single words effectively suggest the man's state of mind; for instance, "gazed dizzily" gives the effect upon him of the piled up treasure, and "passed dizzily," the effect of the meeting with the woman. Sometimes the epithet is transferred from the man to that which is associated with him; as, "his doubtful feet."

Single lines are strong in their simplicity of utterance of fact important for the story or in their suggestiveness:

If one ever gave
His life to any, mine I give to thee.

I think the story of my great despair
A little while might merry folk make sad.

And well indeed I knew that he was dead.

(I) felt a horror change my human blood.

Wilt thou not save me?⁴

And all the wrongs of these four hundred years.

In this last line unhappy experience is multiplied, and the weight of it is borne in upon us.

There are, however, no lines that lend themselves to quotation because they express universal truth.

In Morris we have much of the same charm of simple, direct narrative that we have in his master Chaucer. Simple as his form is, Morris's artistic sense of structure and proportion led him to employ more than mere time sequence to hold the parts together; in *The Lady of the Land* he used, as he has been shown, the devices of the image above the door, the suggestion of magic, the word *thing* to name nameless horrors, and an ever-present idea of death. His musical storied verse is of the very essence of narrative poetry with its flowing, loose expansiveness. The leisurely quality in his art reminds us of what is said by one of the character in *News from Nowhere*:

It is the childlike part of us that produces
works of imagination. When we are children,
time passes so slow with us that we seem to have
time for everything.⁶

⁴Cf. King Robert's cry in Longfellow's *King Robert of Sicily*: "Do you not know me?"

⁵For this as a characteristic of all Morris's poetry, see Henry A. Beers: *A History of English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 320 and p. 333.

⁶Since writing the above, I find Alfred Noyes (in *William Morris*, p. 142) quoting this passage as an expression of Morris's "passion of the past."

Fortunately, Morris's environment and associations were always such as fostered his instinct for beauty. In his childhood, his free daily range of Epping Forest, near which was his home, gave opportunity for developing his natural keenness of eye and his romantic bent of temper. The "mingled beauty, history, and romance" of Rouen, and the "grey streets" and "loveliness" of his undergraduate Oxford he accounted not only pleasures but abiding influences in his life.⁷ From early youth he was stimulated by Rossetti and Ruskin, and his college friendship with Burne-Jones grew into a life-long intimacy. He married a woman of rare beauty. In his home in the manor at Kelmscott, he surrounded himself with beautiful romantic things; among them were storied tapestries. "The beauty of life," he contended, "is no mere accident to human life, which people can take or leave as they choose, but a positive necessity of life, if we are to live as nature meant us to; that is, unless we are content to be less than men."⁸

From his cultivated art sense arose his perfection of narrative and descriptive verse. To him, as has been said, all art was a single thing. He never thought of the cultivation of poetry as an isolated and specific artistic product. While he was writing poetry, he was studying architecture and painting, and was designing windows, wall paper, and page decorations; and his sense of form and color shaped his poetic work. His was a pure joy in creativeness,—in an aiming at perfection. No matter how dependent his work was upon the past, it has a freshness of conception that belongs to a new creation. "He saw everything he cared to write about through a veil of ideal beauty."⁹

Out of his art sense and controlled imagination grew such minuteness and delicacy of description as is found in *The Lady of the Land*. So truly does Morris see every detail with the eye of a craftsman and an artist that he marks "the silver latch" on the door leading into the room piled with gold. Of the man he says,

This (the image)
He noted well,

just as was Morris's own habit of noting every detail of that which he saw. This habit dates from his earliest years. It is said of him that when fifty-eight years of age he described in some detail

⁷William Morris: *Signs of Change*, p. 123.

⁸William Morris: *Hopes and Fears for Art*, p. 75.

⁹Stopford A. Brooke: *Four Victorian Poets*, p. 219.

the church of Minster in Thanet which he had not seen since he was eight years old.

Not only were his sense perceptions extremely acute, but his memory of them and all their associations was extraordinary. "to this day," he said in his later years, "when I smell a may-tree I think of going to bed by daylight."¹⁰

The multitude of distinctive images in his poetry grew from the rich soil of his imagination, and in his imagination he saw as clearly as with his physical eye. Such a trueness of touch had he in the art of word painting that perhaps no poet of his day surpassed him in enabling his reader to *sense* the ideas presented to him.

The appeal, then, in *The Lady of the Land*, as in all Morris's poetry, is chiefly sensuous. In the middle of the nineteenth century, when the literary world was overwearied with an excess of purely subjective verse, such objective verse as this was eagerly welcomed. "The idle singer of an empty day" aimed not to attach meanings to things, but to give their true appearance.

Mr. Morris's central quality is a vigorous and healthy objectivity; a vision and a fancy ever penetrated by the color and light and movement of external things, just as they stir and penetrate the painter.¹¹

The casual reader may not feel the presence of an underlying truth; the student may not even find one. The highest form of poetry preserves a balance between the general and the concrete. In failing to get this balance Morris falls short of the greatness that comes from complete achievement. Yet sincerity of feeling "a reality of self-expression," gives to the whole, in spite of the absence of great single thoughts, an atmosphere that lifts it to the level of high poetry.

¹⁰ Alfred Noyes: *William Morris*, p. 9.

¹¹ John Morley in the *Fortnightly*, vol. 3, N. S., p. 714. 1865.

PAPA AND MAMA*

BY EDUARDO BARRIOS, Chilean Novelist and Playwright

Translated by Willis Knapp Jones

SCENE: *Twilight in the peace of a street of humble homes. A street lamp from behind the sparse and dust-laden foliage of a tree illuminates a wall of plain bricks. Soon a window opens in a modest dwelling; inside a mirror shows in dull lustre, but a large seashell, singing its mute yet siren song of the sea, is visible on a wall bracket. And in the window frame is silhouetted the seated figure of the wife.*

She is young, this girl. Her face is pale in the light of the street. Her eyes seem fixed in thought.

What does the wife think about every night at this hour, when her husband, just finishing his dinner, goes out? Upon what does she muse every evening while the servant washes the dishes inside and the children play a while on the echoing tiled sidewalk? . . . Does she long for her husband? Or does she simply tire herself out listening to the pendulum that in the mysterious shadows marks the filing past of the silent army of the hours?

The night is quiet. The sky clear; soft clouds grow whiter in a sky of blue already paling. The Milky Way powders it with a band of peace. There is a sprinkling of stars, and very white and very round the moon recalls the scenes of romanticism and of love.

Two children are playing on the sidewalk: RAMON and JUANITA. A third, an infant who cannot yet walk, seated on the steps of the street door, listens uncomprehendingly and watches with marveling eyes. Little RAMON already has his permanent teeth. He is lively, talkative, with nervous legs always in motion.

JUANITA is younger. Seated, like the baby, on the stone of the threshold, she is arranging packages of dirt, of buttons, matchboxes, and little twigs.

They are playing at grown-up, because they, like all youngsters feel, especially at night a vague need of pretending, of preparing for the time when they become adults.

Ramon.—(Stopping before his sister with hands in his pockets and legs apart).—Well, what'll we play?

*Original published in his *Vivir* (1916) Reprinted in "Cuentos de Autores Chilenos Contemporaneos (1917.)"

Juanita.—Now the store is ready at last. (*She straightens the line of buttons and boxes.*)

Ramon.—But are we going to play that game of buying again?

Juanita.—Sure. Come on. I'm always the storekeeper and you must go on buying. Don't you see there are lots of people from these houses that haven't bought anything yet? The tailor's daughter and the crazy fellow from the tenement house—

Ramon.—All right then. Now I'm the stupid boy of the tenement. (*He goes back a few steps toward the corner. Then he turns whistling, with a loose-jointed, scuffling gait, scraping against the wall.*)

Ramon (With a twang).—Lady, lady, my mama wants me to get the time of day, and she says to take the change in dried peaches.

Juanita (Very serious in her role of indignant storekeeper).—Oh, you're so stupid! Tell your mother to pay me for the stain remover I trusted her for this morning. (*Then follows an awkward pause. The game does not amuse RAMON.*)

Ramon.—Look. Let's play something else. I get tired of playing store all the time.

Juanita (Clapping her hands).—Let's play grandpa, shall we, and tell stories?

Ramon.—Listen. What good are grandpa's glasses?

Juanita.—You stupid! To see with.

Ramon.—That's what I used to say. But haven't you noticed that he always looks over the top of them to speak with anyone, and to read he puts them on his forehead?

Juanita.—That's true. What good are they, then?

Ramon.—All right, enough of that. Let's play—play—

Juanita.—House!

Ramon.—Bah!

Juanita (With growing enthusiasm).—Yes, let's play papa and mama. I'll be mamma, or the cook; it's the same to me, whichever you want. Or both—I'll be both.

Ramon (Making a cane of a dry stick which he picks up).—I'll be papa. I come home from work to eat, telling you to hurry the dinner because I have to go to the theatre. What do you say?

Juanita.—Fine. (*The animation is renewed. The little girl arranges again the matchboxes, groups the buttons, unwraps the packages of dirt. Meanwhile RAMON, swinging his arms arrogantly and with long strides that echo on the walk, comes back again from the corner.*)

Ramon.—Is that dinner ready, Juana? Come on, hurry up, I've go to go out.

Juanita.—I'll see, Ramon, I'll see. That cook is so slow—
(*She turns toward the pretended kitchen and asks*) Will you soon be ready, Sabrina? Yes? Dear me!

(*The boy raises his hands in admiration of her acting. Then he frowns and suddenly becomes angry.*)

Ramon.—What? Isn't that dinner ready yet?

Juanita.—Be patient, please. Let's see, cook. Let me do it. Give me an egg—the flour. Put on some coal. Hurry, hurry.

Ramon (*Who has begun to stride furiously, swearing and shaking his cane.*)—Did you ever see anything like it! What a mess! A man kills himself working all day just to get home and find the meal isn't anywhere near ready! It's a shame, I call it.

Juanita (*Laughing*).—That's it. That's fine.

Ramon (*In a parenthesis*).—Don't talk about other things. Now you're mamma and no one else. (*Again in the tones of an irate husband.*) How do two women spend a whole day? That's what I'd like to know.

Juanita.—Sewing and washing and—

Ramon.—Nothing! All lies! Being lazy. Brrr!

Juanita.—I hope God gives me patience. Chss—(*bustling she pretends to fry, on a button, an egg—of straw.*)

Ramon.—Patience? You make me laugh. I'm hungry, and I'm in a hurry. A hurry, do you hear? I work like a brute and come home dead with hunger. Oh! It's more than a man can stand.

Juanita (*Who is frying enthusiastically*).—Chss! Get that grease. Dear me! I don't know what's the matter with him. Chsss!

Ramon.—A pretty mess. Yes, it's fine, fine. Marriage!—
(*He strides more vigorously.*)

Juanita.—Don't you go complaining like that. And the children, those rascals; who washes them, who dresses them, who sews for them, who—?

Ramon.—Enough. That's the old story. I don't have anything to do with looking after that.

Juanita.—But that is—Oh! the beans are burning on me! The trouble is, those children on one hand and this slow cook—

Ramon (*Angrily*).—If Sabrina is lazy, fire her.

Juanita.—Careful, Ramon. It's a hard job to find servants.

Ramon.—What do I know about it? You'll have to see to that. You could learn from my mother. I've told you that. She is a real housekeeper.

(*Since JUANITA keeps quiet without trying to reply, the boy helps her.*)

Ramon.—You get mad a little, too. Say to me like this, grumbling: You'll have me crazy with the way my mother-in-law does things. She must be a wonder. But I—Do you think I'm a useless—

Juanita (Chuckles).—That's right. I'd forgotten.

Ramon.—Say it then. You don't know how to play.

Juanita (Between her teeth).—You'll have me crazy about—

Ramon (Angrily, without letting her finish).—What? Are you muttering?

Juanita.—Pass me that spoon, Sabrina.

Ramon.—No, No! Now you ought to answer: Goodness me! What bad disposition! You must have dyspepsia again. It's time you took some medicine. You don't know how to play.

Juanita.—Wait a minute. Now, then, you'll see.

Ramon.—(*Taking this for a reply, his anger rising.*)—Dyspepsia. Always something to blame. Oh! Marriage, marriage! To spend money, that's why one marries. That's what I tell my friends: Get married and you'll see.

Juanita (Eagerly).—You've forgotten one part. Ah, if ever I'm happily unfortunate enough to become a widower. And then I answer: You won't ever have that pleasure.

(*But the little man's feelings have been hurt by the prompting and brandishing his stick menacingly, he roars:*)

Ramon.—Shut up!

Juanita.—Let's look at the roast now. Sabrina, open the oven for me—(*Making her own reply*) There it is, madame.

Ramona.—Oh! Oh! This is a lovely existence. In the Office I have to put up with the boss. In the streets it's the English; in the trolley cars, the sweaty women conductors, (*NOTE: In Chile ever since the war of the Pacific, the trolley car conductors have been women*) the people treading on your feet, the old women who must go to mass every day just to make us men who work walk to the office . . . or the youngsters who are free to squander in the stores what costs us fathers our hard sweat.

Juanita.—Oh, if you should be luckily unfortunate enough to lose me!

Ramon.—Imbecile. Jealous!

Juanita.—I, jealous? The devil himself couldn't do anything more. But not now, sir. I'm not the fool I used to be.

Ramon.—Shut up, I told you.— (*He raises his cane, menacing, terrible.*)

Juanita (In a new parenthesis).—Listen, don't really hit me, remember.

Ramon.—Silence—Silence!! I'm married and tired of it. Crazy. Crazy. Brrrr!— (*He strikes the street door. The girl shrinks.*)

Juanita (Really frightened).—Don't you go and hit me.

Ramon (Repeating the blow with greater fury).—Not a word. Shut up!

Juanita (Seriously).—Let's not play any more. Do you want to?

Ramon.—Don't talk back. Hurry up, the dinner, quick, unless you want—

The stick falls several times against the door. It hums about the head of the little girl who gets more and more frightened. The boy keeps on in his anger and clamor. Suddenly with raised stick he remains staring at his pretended wife. In his eyes burn a flame of bold mischief; that arm seems about to fall to begin a severe beating on the girl's head. Then JUANITA has first a questioning smile, then an appearance of fear. The baby, also frightened, begins to howl, and here, JUANITA, as if suddenly seized by a saving thought, drops buttons and straw, takes up the baby in her arms, raises herself haughtily to her full height and says:

Juanita.—Ramon, respect your child!

Curtain

GOSSIP AND GOSSIPERS

BY MAY HARRIS

THERE is charm in the idea that one may be as selective as one pleases in the matter of gossip—it is such a purely relevant thing! The dictionary, even, is gracefully elastic with its traditional ancestry, whether as a noun or verb, and Shakespeare swings the pendulum with a practiced hand through the arc of its usage. Chaucer's *Gossip*

. dwelling in our town
God save her soul! her name was Alisoun

has a perpetual namesake among our garden flowers, and though the meaning of gossip as a noun has changed somewhat since the days of the *Canterbury Tales*, its later activity as a verb, is still, more or less accurately described by lexicographers as "idle personal tales."

"Idle personal tales," is an intriguing phrase to haunt an easy-going mind, and immoral reflections on the delights of gossip are apt to occur to all who have exhausted such topics as casual courtesy and current events suggest. The unruly impulse is to let other people be virtuous in their dulness, and discover cakes and ale, with fellow-outlanders, for one's self! At such times, gossip—not rude, or inquisitive, or scandalous, (for there are degrees of gossip, as of taste!)—seems a special need to stimulate one's mental processes. The quest of personalities offers a zest that is beyond cocktails and caviare! One measures one's self in the adventure, but that is part of the game,—a game, which, for obvious reasons, is most frequently played from the safe indirection of one's library shelves.

Of course it goes without saying that first hand analysis of the people one knows—either through books, or in the flesh—is the most interesting pursuit—except politics!—known to the mind of man or woman, either! Henry James, in one of his most famous novels, showed how far such a plummet could sound suspected depths. The achievement of *The Golden Bowl*, is marvellous in the list of fiction; but it is perplexing—though, of course, interesting—to find the anatomists of human nature in real life; carry-

ing on their interchange of courtesies under flags of truce, as it were, always within range of each other's guns! It is safe to say that the occupation is dangerous for the less agile person! The honours, in the case of such a vivisectionist as Mrs. Asquith, for instance, are not easy; they flash a ruthless warning to contemporaries! Her spirited analysis "rubs sharp lines in shadowy delights," and any admiration of her skill with the savage weapon of publicity, is less to a sensitive person, than the hard vision of the victims scattered in her wake. Here is gossip that is brilliant and clever of the social, literary, and political life of modern England; here, also is a portrait of herself from many angles, that is beyond Marie Bashkirtseff in frankness. That, in spite of all its claims to our interest, the book does not fascinate, is due, curiously enough to its lack of reticence. One may be fearless with almost everything—if one possesses the touchstone of taste! Her wit is quick and keen, and there is as little malice as there is self-consciousness in the book. Also, she had a genius for friendship—which speaks well for her. For the tradition of friendship, in whatsoever nebulous state, is that it is a little more than loyalty—if less than honour—and that its most expressive word is sympathy. But she leaves nothing to the imagination, and the reader—oddly enough—is disappointed and a little weary when the book is finished.

If those who gossip are "tellers of idle tales," there are few of us who would not ask a moment's grace for the colour they infuse into dead seasons and remembered names. There are those, of course

blest with huge stores of wit,
Who want as much again to manage it.

but, as a rule, the ability goes with the quality. Of course, as has been said, the gossip that is safest, is that upon our shelves—the worn volumes whose pages lure us to add or subtract our own opinions. With whom may one gossip better than with Pepys, who puts himself so naïvely at our mercy?

"Upon the whole," he says reflectively, "I do find it a troublesome thing for a man of any condition at court, to carry himself even, and without contracting envy and enviers; and much discretion and dissimulation is necessary to do it." Is not the phrase "to carry himself even," as delicious as it is descriptive of Pepys!

By a great many people of fine intent, gossip is regarded as gossip—in its less gracious sense, and very much like Peter Bell's

primrose. It is needless to say that this paper has no concern with gossip of that sort, which in literature as in life, reacts upon itself, and is as stupid and uninteresting as prejudice and controversy. But the anecdotal gossip that illumines people and moments who have passed beyond us, is interpretative, and fixes in vivid fashion portraits we wish to recreate. Walpole, the persevering dilettante, in pursuit of himself, always, a little more than of others, has put all lovers of gossip in his debt. His records not only mirror an age—they form a storehouse where one can select such ornaments as please one's fancy. It is to be remembered in this connection, that Hayward's praise of Rogers in one of his essays, carried a sharp criticism of the unfastidious acquisitions of collectors in general, and of Walpole in particular. "There was nothing," Hayward says of the furniture in Rogers' house, "beyond their intrinsic excellence, to remind the visitor that almost every object his eye fell upon was a priceless gem, a coveted rarity, or an acknowledged masterpiece." Rogers with unerring taste, gathered only such articles as could be put to daily use—aware, of course, that he and his friends gave the touch of additional value for future generations to each historic piece. There is a "superior felicity" in this method, that should recommend it to the burdened millionaire—whose only refuge from his "collections," is to donate them to some museum.

No one, of course, was ever so painstaking a collector of every shade of personality—of gossip at its nth power—as Boswell. His masterpiece discourages effort in like direction, and his impetuous desire—rotund, red-faced, little laird of Auchinleck, to justify his aspiration for fame—"What can be done to deaden the ambition which has ever raged in my veins like a fever!" would surely be satisfied were it possible for him to know the great measure of his success. Interest clings, in the Johnson connection, to the sprightly Mrs. Thrale, whom a recent writer—himself a virtuoso of literary relics—has happily christened "a light blue stocking;"—possibly in contrast to the deeply, darkly blue that symbolized Madame de Stael. Gossip of the latter has ceased to interest us, though it added to the gayety of nations in her time, with a disconcerting similarity of opinion. Napoleon, Byron, and Tallyrand—not to speak of Sheridan!—expressed themselves in no uncertain terms on the subject of Corinne. Henry James said in one of his essays, that Balzac considered "exquisite and elaborate mendacity the great characteristic of the finished woman of the world." Perhaps Madame de Stael was revealing her share of

this quality during her stay in England when she expressed such devotion for all things English. Hookham Frere said she once told him she would like to have been married in English—"A language in which vows are so faithfully kept." One of Frere's listeners asked in what language was she married. "Broken English, I daresay!" he replied.

It is quite true that the humblest person can sing convincingly of himself—if he has the chance! But most of the people we gossip with in memoirs and letters are the reverse of humble! The small beer chronicles of the great always have a specific value—one collects one's almanac of anecdotes from Adam to Zarathustra! And there are times when a silhouette has a more profound and subtle value than the full face of authentic biography. It is a matter of personal choice whether one prefers Marie Claire, to Marie Bashkirtseff—the fact of the princess, or the fiction of the peasant. Mary Wortley Montague and Pope keep step in a cotillion whose favors were the flowers of gossip we gather from their pages. Hot house flowers mostly—some faded a little, some quite withered, but still, in their dubious sweetness, preserving the spirit of their age. We warm our fingers—if not our hearts—with the chatter and jealousy buzzing about Cowper's tea-table—the slightest incident taking on a solvent interest when encompassed by a cloud of witnesses!

All of us have favorite figures to pursue through the medium of memoirs and biography—for each of us is influenced by his own temperament in the acceptance of testimony. If we are interested, we create a personality from our choice of the evidence submitted. It is the Byron of the *Letters*—reckless, generous, melancholy, brilliant and impulsive—who holds the stage in one's imagination rather than the poet. The one, rarely forgets to be Narcissus; the other, is the man himself! On the other hand, the best trail for Shelley's "luminous angel," is followed in his poetry.

There are tragic interludes in the annals of literary gossip—Keats and Fanny Brawne; the shadow touched lives of the Brontës; the smiling pathos of Charles Lamb. These names are so near and so dear, that the grave accents are like griefs we have known ourselves. Close to our own day, Amiel, and Gissing, and Barbellion, saw life not quite steadily as they fought against tremendous odds. Two of them left meticulous analyses behind them. Their self-revelation, however, was that of profound egotism, and for all our sympathy, it leaves us cold. There is always

the question whether the indirect interpretation is not more truthful—since a journal is more the translation of a mood, than the reflex of a personality.

The "long gallery" of gossip is very adequately and charmingly supplied with women—women who illustrate Meredith's saying—"A witty woman is a treasure; a witty beauty is a power." Marlowe and Shakespeare touched two imperishable names with their living fire, and lesser men have made shrines for homage where many of us pause. The question of Mary Stuart, with all the facts of history and the gossip of contemporaries, is as baffling as the smile Da Vinci fixed on canvas—as the "Dark Lady" of the Sonnets. Personal opinion being the court of last resort, each atom of gossip has its relevant weight; one picks it out to add to one's store and arrange at pleasure; and whether it is "chatter about Harriet," or gracious chronicles of quiet lives, it enriches the holdings of each succeeding generation. The power of a masterly phrase has the thrill of music. When the Goncourt's say of Marie Antoinette—"She had the rhythmic step that heralds the approach of a goddess in ancient poems," one seems to see the figure of the Queen in her tragic march with fate; and in a different way, Madame Geoffrin's famous saying—"One must not let the grass grow on the path of friendship," translates the sweet-natured personality of a woman who brightened everyday circumstances with a gracious spirit.

There is a tradition that a woman's evidence on her own sex must be taken with a grain of salt. This is as it may be. Mary Shelley—whom as Mary Godwin, Hogg described as—"a young female, fair and fairhaired, with a piercing look," and a "thrilling voice"—had, in later years, a certain detached forbearance in her estimate of other women. In writing of Mrs. Inchbald, a contemporary actress, she says: "When she (Mrs Inchbald) came into the room and took a chair in the middle, as was her wont, every man gathered around it, and it was vain for any other woman to try to gain attention." Mrs. Inchbald lacked the possession of a "thrilling voice," but she had a rarer gift than Godwin's daughter—a humorous perception of life that never deserted her, and the gossip about her wherever we meet it, is imbued with its abiding charm. She was whimsical and witty, and her sprightly naturalness lent her society an unusual charm in a day when affectation was a feminine vice. Sheridan said she was the only pleasing authoress he knew, and we have Byron's word for it that Sheridan was hard to please, (The list of "authoresses" was long—even in those

unemancipated days and ranged from Madame De Stael, and Miss Edgeworth, to Lady Caroline Lamb!) It is a source of regret that Mrs. Inchbald's diary—like Byron's and Lady Mary Wortley Montague's—should have been destroyed. An enterprising publisher offered her a thousand pounds for the volumes where her piquant pen had made intimate record of Mrs. Siddons, Kemble, Rogers, Sheridan, Madame de Stael, Miss Edgeworth, and many more of the great and near-great of her time. Mrs. Inchbald hesitated—read over the pages, and said to herself; "What would I wish done at point of death? Do it now!" So the lively volumes were burned. As an actress, her fame was negligible; as an author—though her writing made her self-supporting—it was equally so; but her magnetic personality reflected in the gossip of her contemporaries—sparkling, wistful, intriguing—remains an eighteenth century portrait that charms us.

The temptation to quote favorite bits of gossip is as irresistible as making the choice of seven best loved novels, or explaining why one prefers Wagner to Verdi! Charming chatterboxes, graceful scamps, gracious hostesses, vivid intellects, alternate in interest. They are fixed and relevant—priceless items in Time's collection for our appraisal and pleasure. What a Bayeux tapestry the gossip of Holland House has given us! No other house in England—perhaps in the world—had such memories of the poets, wits, diplomats, and other famous men and women of its contemporary period! There Tallyrand—hideously ugly and infirm, but "poignantly witty" made good his name of the "best teller of a story in Europe." Sidney Smith was jester in ordinary to the crowd, and the long procession of guests included Scott, Byron, Moore, Rogers, Campbell, Kean, Madame de Stael, and Macaulay. Social leadership, and its attendant gossip, passed, in a somewhat lesser degree, after Lady Holland's death, to Lady Ashburton—the brilliant "Lady Harriet" whom Mrs. Carlyle celebrated in her letters. Her beautiful country home "The Grange," was a gathering place, during the early London years of the Carlyles, for notable people. Here, came Macaulay—veteran of the greater coterie of Holland House—and Tennyson, Thackeray, Bunsen, Milnes, the Brookfields, and the Carlyles, were gathered by the spirited hostess for her holidays.

"This Lady Harriet Baring," Mrs. Carlyle wrote in her letters, "whom we have just been visiting is the very cleverest woman out of sight that I ever saw in all my life. (And I have seen all our 'distinguished authoresses') Moreover, she is full of energy and

sincerity, and has, I think, an excellent heart. Yet so perverted has she been by the training incident to her social position, that I question if in her whole life she has ever done as much for her fellow creatures as my mother in one year, or whether she will ever break through the cobwebs she is entangled in, so as to be anything other than the most amusing and most graceful woman of her time." Later, she sounded a note of scornful protest in speaking of Lady Harriet: "The grand lady, who it seems somehow impossible, whatever her talents and good intentions, to be other than idle to death." Lady Harriet's restless brightness passed like a meteor across Mrs. Carlyle's discontent. Froude presented the abortive tragedy and the shadow of bitterness it left, with more conclusive evidence than most biographers are allowed to gather.

Wordsworth seems to have been hard hit by his contemporaries. Byron called him "the aquatic gentleman of Windermere," and Crabbe Robinson's memoirs—another storehouse of gossip!—gives us a taste of Wordsworth's sublime egotism in his statement: "When I resolved to be a poet, I feared competition only with Chaucer, Spencer, Shakespeare, and Milton." Crabbe Robinson does passing justice to Macaulay, who showed, he said, "a minute knowledge of subjects not introduced by himself."—naïve testimony to the "preparedness" of the usual professional talker. He also has a revealing word of Goethe, whom he visited in Germany—an incipient Boswell, drinking in Goethe's swift and flashing comments on life. "I am glad," said the great German, "that there are some things that I hate—otherwise, one is in danger of finding all things good in their place, and that is destructive of true feeling. It is interesting to recall in this connection, Matthew Arnold's characterization of Goethe as the "Physician of the iron age," who touched the disease of Europe with a sure finger.

Ten years ago, the Diary of Lady Frances Shelley was published by her grandson, Richard Edgcumbe. This Diary reproduced with piquant frankness the social life of England and the Continent in the early days of the nineteenth century. She lived in stirring times, and it is a remarkable coincidence that this book which chronicled the great Napoleonic war and the triumph of the English and German Allies, should have appeared almost exactly a hundred years after, in the period of the greatest war of the world. The spontaneity of the book makes it specially valuable, and we are brought with unaffected naturalness into relation with her intimate friends—the Duke of Wellington, Sir Walter Scott,

Brougham, Metternich, Canova. Marie Louise, etc. The brilliant people of George III, the manners and customs of a century ago, the great political events—all live in her enthusiastic pages in a memorable way. There are anecdotes of Napoleon, of Nelson, of Byron, of Blucher, that are of vivid interest in relation to their dramatic and dynamic lives.

The period of Lady Shelley's Diary, preceded that covered by Janet Ross's volume, *The Fourth Generation*, which gives us such delightful gossip of Victorian celebrities. Few books are so rich in lively anecdote, keen comment, and intimate portraits of interesting people, and fewer memoirs have been strung on such a brilliant personality. George Meredith, who knew her from childhood, and whom she always called "my Poet," put her into his *Evan Harrington* as Rose Jocelyn; Watts, also a devoted friend painted her portrait many times—as did Leighton, Phillips, Prinsep, and many others. Lord Landsdowne, Kinglake, Carlyle, Guizot, Victor Cousin, John Stuart Mill, Mrs. Norton, Tennyson, Thackeray, Thiers, Symonds, Mark Twain, Halim Pasha—the list is a roll call of the famous names of three-fourths of a century. To quote from her preface:

My life in England as a child; in Egypt as a young married woman, and in later years in Italy, has not been an eventful one, but I have known so many distinguished people who were fond of me for the sake of my parents and my grandparents, that my reminiscences of them may prove interesting. Only a short time ago, the Miss Berrys were mentioned, and Mr. Berenson, who was sitting next to me exclaimed: "How I should like to have met someone who had known those two dear old ladies." When I said: "Well, here is someone; I knew them and remember them well," he looked astonished and replied; "You, impossible!" The truth is I often feel as though I had a dual personality—at times quite old, at others many years younger than I really am.

Our avenues of gossip, so beautifully wide and full in many instances, are sadly incomplete in others. We know—or think we know—how Shakespeare's contemporaries struck him; it is written in his plays. How he struck them, is so little known that the puzzle of his baffling personality has created a literature of its own. Controversies can rage—the serenity of the poet behind the mask of the actor, keeps the secret of William Shakespeare. His guerdon of personality is surely enough—Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear, Bolingbroke, and the sonnets! We can make our own choice . . .

Open questions, after all, are avenues of adventure to which we can return again and again without weariness of spirit. Gossip of the men and women, who have gone their way, is a betraying social signal, electric with the essence of the past. Gossip! How it seasons dull days—pepper and salt for dry as dust monotony! Zantippe's tongue brings Socrates very close to our comprehension, and we appreciate the Socratic method of reasoning to the fullest, when we see him cowering on his house top!

Heine's saying that nobody has the right to ridicule mankind unless he loves them, was offered, possibly, to excuse the accusation. It has his ready wit! But Thackeray's chuckling undertone to his satirical gossip, has the human tone, where Heine's quality is elfin. It is very evident that the gossip about people that is worth most, can come neither from a devoted friend nor from a prejudiced enemy. The heroic gesture of the subject, we are also aware, is too formal to survive a wife's intimate criticism, or a valet's scrutiny. (Notwithstanding, however, wives occasionally offer their husbands as sacrifices!) As to any enemy, gossip is also barred—justice to an enemy being generally meted out in the fashion of Wamba's definition: "When one forgives as a Christian, it means that one does not forgive at all!" Job's longing to "have at" his enemy, was soulfully expressed when he said "O that my enemy would write a book!" Then, by the rules of the game which allow a perennially open season for the writers of books, Job would have been able to smite him hip and thigh! One recalls that Leigh Hunt when reflecting on the lovers of books who had themselves become books, wound up with the ambiguous words that he well knew—"What a treasure is the possession of a friend's mind when he is no more!"

Would we call gossip revelation? It is wisest, perhaps to think it, in the last analysis, circumstantial evidence that might help us build opinions, but should never allow us to hang a man!

THE BITTERLY REVILED

BY LUCY LOWE

CHARACTERS IN THE PLAY

HAUVIETTE, *a village girl who has been interned in Alsace during the war.*

PIERRE, *her sweetheart, who has been serving in the French Army*
THE BABY, *himself*

GERMAINE, *a radical village maid* }
SYLVIETTE, *a gentle village maid* } *friends of HAUVIETTE*

THE MADONNA, *herself*
Other villagers and onlookers.

TIME: *Early spring following the signing of the Armistice, the Feast of the Ascension.*

PLACE: *The play takes place in a remote district of France which has seen no actual fighting, altho all of its young men have served, and the people have suffered, not, however, as those whom the Germans actually invaded.*

ACT I

SCENE I

It is the feast day and the girls of the village are assembled in the square in front of the Cathedral. A straggling street leads into the distance, and from time to time, someone goes and looks in this direction as if expecting someone. GERMAINE and SYLVIETTE are a little to one side, talking together.

Germaine.—So Hauviette returns today—our little lame Hauviette. Poor baby, she's been kept in Alsace all too long. Pity she ever had to go there at all.

Sylviette.—Oh, but Germaine! You forget her poor sister and that her mother could not go alone.

Germaine.—I forget nothing—I'm sorry about it, but if her sister, Jean, had never married that wretched Von Kleimer, they wouldn't have had to go.

Sylviette.—Well, let's not quarrel about it—her sister did marry him, and they couldn't not go when she was sick, and—oh, Germaine, do you suppose Hauviette had to talk to them—

Germaine.—To whom?

Sylviette.—The Germans—do you?

Germaine.—I don't know—but I know this much, I wouldn't have!

Sylviette.—But, do you suppose she *did* have to? What could she do when she was visiting there—and she must have had to see them at Karl's house—

Germaine.—Well, I just wouldn't that's all. And I'll wager Hauviette didn't either—she has too much spirit for all she's lame, and she loved France too much—she couldn't help it that Jeannette married Von Kleimer—remember she cried at the wedding feast—and how we teased her—

Sylviette.—No wonder she cried—but we didn't know then—about the war and all—and Herr von Kleimer was nice then—

Germaine (Turning on her angrily).—Sylviette, for shame! To say a boche could ever be nice!

Sylviette (With the stubbornness of the habitually gentle).—Well, I said "was" not *is*.

(*One of the group at the back runs down the road and returns, calling,*)

Girl.—Look, look, Hauviette is coming—she is coming on foot! I thought—oh, I forget there is no post, any more. (*Looking again*) Why, she comes alone—no—not alone, she has two bundles (*excitedly*) and one of them moves—oh Germaine—it is, it is a baby!

Germaine (Running to look).—A baby!

Sylviette (Following her).—Not a baby!

Girl.—She must have married Pierre in Alsace—they say he went there!

Germaine.—Let's go and meet her. (*SYLVIETTE and GERMAINE go to meet her. They return in a second, GERMAINE carrying the baby and SYLVIETTE, the bag. HAUVIETTE looks dazedly about her and smiles wanly.*)

Voices.—Glad you are back, Hauviette! Welcome, again! etc.

Hauviette.—Oh, my friends!—it is so good to see you again!

Germaine (Excited and curious).—But this baby—Hauviette, is it indeed Pierre's?

Hauviette.—I can't talk yet—I'm so tired. But, tell me, how have things gone—are many—lost—Who has come back?

Sylviette (Sadly).—We lost many—there are but four of the young men come back, Colin, Rene, Jean—

Germaine.—And Jean is nearly no man, he is—Oh, Hauviette, did you see many such—he is just head and body—and he was so strong and brave (*GERMAINE turns away.*)

Hauviette.—Oh, many such!—but Sylviette, you said there were four (*trembling with eagerness*) tell me, who is the fourth?

Germaine.—Why, do you not know?

Hauviette.—How could I know, who has gone and who has come back—I, who have been so long away—torn from my home and my friends—held where I could see nothing—hear nothing, get no news from those I loved (*breaks into sobbing.*)

Sylviette.—Dear Hauviette—do not weep, you are safe with us at last, and we love you, and see you have the dear little one (*softly*) Hauviette, it is yours and Pierre's—how glad he will be when he comes back, to see you both! (*She does not notice the pain that crosses HAUVIETTE'S face at the mention of the name of PIERRE*) Did I guess right that he stopped on his way and found you again, as he swore to do—it is such a darling baby—

Germaine (Looking tenderly down at the baby).—It is sweet, (*Takes it from HAUVIETTE*)—but it has such light hair and such blue eyes—

Hauviette (Dully).—I—yes, I know—

Sylviette.—But you haven't told us, Hauviette. It is so romantic (*sighs*) There is something beautiful about it all—that Pierre should come to you—and that you should meet even in such terrible times—

Germaine.—Yes, Hauviette, tell us all about it. (*The others draw near to hear.*)

Hauviette (Glancing first at one and then the other nervously).—It is very hard to say to you—there is so much to tell—and it all comes back to me when I speak of it—and I would like to forget—so much suffering. (*Controlling herself, she continues*) I—you know how I came to go away—I should never have gone if Mother could have gone alone, but you know she was very old and poor Jean was so sick and needed us. When we got there Karl had just received his call to—to (*falters*) their army. (*Exclamations of anger and disgust at the mention of the other army are heard*) Of course we didn't know that at first, and Jean didn't either—and we had always thought he cared most for France, anyhow—but it seems

he didn't and we soon found it out, for he kept saying things that might have made us guess, if anyone had ever dreamed war could come. I hated him for that and I hated being there, but most of all I hated him when he bragged about how much better Germany was than France and how much better the whole country would be if they governed us—and how we would fare when they conquered the world and France—my own beautiful beloved France—

Germaine (Interrupting).—Didn't you tell him that France could take care of herself and that we didn't need them?

Hauviette.—Oh yes, I told him—at first I used to talk back to him, but one day Jean begged me not to, that it only made him unkind to her, and I promised her not to speak to him—and I kept that promise—I never spoke to him again. I hated him so much—Oh, how I hated him. But we were there only a month when the war broke out and Karl left—I thought we could get back and bring Jean and the little one but it was not to be. Karl was gone a week and then sent back to be intelligence officer and stationed there—and we were as good as prisoners. Many, many Germans came to the house—and I saw no French. Of course there were many French people who loved France and were working for her, but because he knew I hated Germany, he watched me and I could not get to them. But one night I did slip away and met them, and they gave me a mission—to watch Karl and give them any news I could get—and then my heart was almost happy, for I could work for France!

Sylviette.—But Pierre—

Germaine.—Hush, child, you let your romantic thoughts run away with you—let us hear what Hauviette did for France.

Hauviette.—It was not much, but one night a wounded soldier came to us—one who had been working for us in the German lines—he wore a German uniform and at first I was deceived too, but he made himself known and I helped him to escape. It was found out that I had done it and, oh, I cannot go on—

Sylviette (Soothing her).—Rest a little, Hauviette, perhaps it will not be hard then.

Germaine (Tensely).—Oh, I should love to have done that—go on, what next?

Hauviette.—I do not know very much of what happened. All the next day Karl was quiet and watched me—that night he brought home four officers and commanded me to serve them. They had been drinking, but I set the food before them, and while

I was turned to the table, Karl locked the door—and (*Sobs wildly*)—I was lame and could not run,—and I had no strength—and they were drunk—and oh, Sylviette—can't you guess what happened? Germaine, do not look away—Sylviette, what could I do? I struggled like mad—I caught a knife from the table and I stabbed one of them—I think I killed him—I know he bled terribly—and Karl was like a wild man—he struck me and I fell—and knew nothing till I awoke in the morning and saw Jean's white face bending over me, and Mother sobbing in the corner.

Germaine.—And you came back? Came back to us! Hauviette, I would have killed myself rather than live and let that child be born!

Sylviette.—And Pierre—he didn't come at all?

Hauviette (Bitterly).—No, he didn't come, but it wouldn't have mattered if he had. He couldn't have reached me—and it was too late—it was too late from the day we went there, for they were beasts and no girl was safe in that city, but Mother thought that Karl, being my sister's husband, at least we were safe in his house, when we had come to help her.

Germaine.—What did you do?

Sylviette.—Poor Hauviette, what *did* you do?

Hauviette.—There was nothing I could do—I wanted to kill myself, but I was watched—oh Germaine, it was not my wish to live—but every move was watched—I tried to strangle myself, but they caught me. Karl, you see was there all the time, and they said that it meant another soldier for the Emperor! Oh, I hated it—I loathed it—I said it should not be born—but Mother said, it couldn't help itself, and to be patient and God would help me some way. I didn't believe in God any more, but as long as I had Mother, it helped some, but just before it came, she died—the struggle of it all was too much for her—and I was left with Jean—and Karl. Poor Jean wanted to help me, but Karl was cruel to her and she was about to become a mother, too, and there were two of us to think of. Jean's baby was born two days after mine—and she lived just to hear the news that France had won—and that the conquerors were pushed back. When Jean was buried, Karl turned me out of the house—"take your brat and go" he said—I wanted to leave it there—but it looked so little and it was crying—so I bundled it up and started. I have walked all the way—and I have begged from door to door as I came thru for enough for both of us—and the way has been very long. (*The child cries,*

and GERMAINE, who has forgotten that she was holding it, thrusts it back to her.)

Germaine.—You should not have come—we want no German babies here—why didn't you stay there. It was not too late then to kill yourself and that "bochinette"—take your German brat!

Hauviette.—Germaine—you don't mean—you don't really mean you don't want me—

Sylviette.—Germaine, she is so tired—

Germaine.—I care not if she is tired—she need not have come! (*murmurs of approval from the crowd.*) Why didn't she go over to Germany where its father is—I'll warrant they'd be glad enough to have her there—with her little German soldier.

(GERMAINE and the others draw to one side, SYLVIETTE embracing HAUVIETTE.)

Sylviette (*Caressing the baby*).—Poor little thing, it couldn't help it. Hauviette, I love you and I'll help you—come with me. (*She pulls the baby from HAUVIETTE's arms, and picks up the bag, starting off stage.*)

Hauviette (*Turning to face the others and GERMAINE*) (*Impassionedly*).—Oh, there is no help—I hate myself and I hate it—but you don't understand, you did not have here the things we had to endure there—you did not see the sorrow we saw, and you do not know—May God forgive you for your hardness, Germaine—and thank Him on bended knees that you do not know what it means! You think you have suffered and you think you have lost, but you do not know what it means to give your soul. You think you have fought for France—but you haven't died for her—and that is what I've done—for the happy old Hauviette is gone—and only a ghost remains, doomed to wander from place to place—(*She drops her arms with a gesture of despair and follows SYLVIETTE.*)

SCENE II

The Cathedral, dimly lighted. In one corner is the statue of the Virgin Mary, in its niche. It is about twilight time. HAUVIETTE is seen kneeling before the statue of the Virgin.

Hauviette (*Speaking softly*).—Dear Mother of God—Mary, Blessed Virgin, they say you can do all things—I used to believe that—do you hear me (*her voice rising*)—do you hear me, you statue thing, standing there, I used to pray to you—to believe that you could help me—I started to just now, but I know now you don't help. I thought you had a mother heart and could under-

stand, could feel for us below. But now I know you have none—you are nothing (*great sobs break into her voice.*) You—you sit up in heaven and do not hear us—and I prayed so hard to you. Why didn't you help me—why didn't you strike him down—why did you let it be born—Mary, Mother of God, why didn't you save me? (*She sinks prostrate at the feet of the statue.*)

(*The room is filled slowly with a glowing light that seems to come from about the statue. The Madonna moves and bending over the prostrate heap speaks in a tone of utmost gentleness and sweetness.*)

Madonna.—Dear little lame one—dear child of God, I have heard you, and I come to comfort you. Little Hauviette, have you forgotten that they called me the Virgin Mother, have you forgotten that they spoke of me cruelly, too, before my son was born, and that for many years they taunted him, “Ho, little bastard son of Mary, where's your father?” and I, knowing only what had been revealed to me, could only say—“One is his father, who is on high.” And, little Hauviette, that One was his father—even God eternal! Weep not, little one, for even as I wept and bore the sting of the world, and have been glorified, so shalt thou be also Hauviette, (*the Madonna stands erect in a pose which expresses all the glory of womanhood*) you stand as the figure of all those heroic women who gave all for France, who were brave enough to sacrifice the greatest of all things for her—Hauviette, tho life may be hard, there will come a recompense—for the greatest of the earth shall pay you homage, and before life is over, you will be honored, even as you have been reviled.

(*The faint sound of music—an organ playing the Cavaliere Rusticana Intermezzo, comes from back in the cathedral.*)

Hauviette.—Mother of God, Dear Mother Mary, forgive me that I lost my faith and spoke—Dear Mother of God, forgive a sinful child!

(*The music is still heard, as the Madonna bends and touches the head of the penitent HAUVIETTE*)

Madonna.—Arise, my child, go forth cleansed, and blessed by thy little one, for he shall live to show forth the glory of thy land to those who designed that he should destroy it. (*And the light fades away, the Madonna steps back into her niche, HAUVIETTE remaining in prayer.*) (*A man enters, in soldier garb, glances about, sees HAUVIETTE and crosses to her, and touches her gently on the shoulder.*)

Hauviette (*Looking up, the glory of the coming of the Madonna still in her face, but remembering and shrinking back a little*)—Pierre!

Pierre (Tenderly).—Yes, little one, it is I. I come—and I have heard, and oh, my beloved (*stooping to raise her to him*), only a daughter of France could return again—and I am here for you. They did not understand, those out there, because they had not fought battles and seen Christ walk on bloody fields—but those of us who have, Hauviette, we know and understand!

Hauviette (Not quite daring to believe).—But, Pierre—did they tell you all—all—

Pierre.—All, my little Hauviette—and I have come for you. Let us go now. Too long we have been apart, but God has spared us both that we might finish life together—that we may teach others the lessons learned—where is the little one?

Hauviette.—Sylviette has him—but Pierre—I cannot understand—they were so bitter—and it has been so hard—and I loved you so and I did not even dare to hope for this, but I came back just to be near you, to see you sometimes and dream of what might have been—and now (*remembering what the Madonna said*) Oh, Pierre, it must have been what the Divine Mary meant when she said, “You will be honored where you have been reviled”—and Pierre, it is coming true—you *are* honoring where I have been reviled—

Pierre (Drawing her close).—I do not know what the Madonna said to you, but I am not honoring—(*humbly*) I am honored that one of the bravest of earth should be mine (*he takes her hand and they walk quietly out.*)

Curtain

A. + S.

Antonius Stradiuarius Cremonensis, Faciebat Anno MCVIIXII

BY HAROLD DAVIS

I

My own Cremona, shall I have the grace
To hold you to my breast before I die?
It has been long, and every hour has left
A bleeding welt upon me; or has stuck
Hot cauteries of minutes in my soul
The days you were not with me. Can you sing
With strangers? Oh, how can you,—while I sit
And play a blatant, shiny, saxophone?

My art is living prostitute; the shame
Is on my face,—but bitterness remains
To hide the scar and quench the molten tears.
I have kept silent . . .

Bring the very day
And morning when my father, beaming, said—
“Here, lad, is a new fiddle for you; see
You take good care and treasure it—there is
The music of three centuries within
Its hollow pine and maple. Yes, it’s yours,
My son,—be worthy of it, and of me!”

From that day on it was my flesh and blood,
We grew together in the tone it had
Incarnate, and the one I gave to it
Were both perfected; art and harmony
Were soaked all through its wood
As capons soaked in wine.
And it was mellowed by the score of bows
Of all my ancestors,—the noble wrist,
The supple, flying, fingers made it burst
With melody,—close to a leaping heart.

A few years longer; years of loving work
 In Warsaw with the Master. Then, one day
 I never shall forget, he held me so—
 His voice shook as he held me;—"Jan, my boy,
 That piece of wood you have, and you yourself
 Have entertained some angels unaware."

I blushed and hung my head,—
 It was incredible.

Ah, many times it rode the rushing crests
 Of raging symphony, and graced the arm
 Of concert-meister; then, sometimes alone
 He fondled it, and spoke his love in song
 That melted; or that wept articulate
 Upon its strings, or laughed and danced in joy.

Cremona was the best, but I could play
 Upon the borrowed fiddles of my friends:
 There was Amati of Herr Altgeldt,—with
 A round tone as of pearls
 Dropped rolling off the bow.

And too, there was that big Guarnerius
 Of Cacchi. I recall its curving form,
 Its aromatic varnish, rounding back;
 Its tone to shake you clear from head to toes.
 I played it at a concert once in Prague—
 Its swelling majesty of tone was like
 An organ; more I loved to play my Bach
 Upon it. Soon I coveted the Strad
 Of friend Luigi—yet I must not tell . . .
 It's all too sweet a secret for a friend.
 I could only borrow it a little;
 (When it was strung with tiny, dying bells)
 To play my best. Just once I struck a note
 A trifle false;—it wounded me so sore
 I never since have drawn my bow across it.

He had a little Tyrol violin
 So dim, so hollow, and so sweet,—so old
 It had no name; yet one could make it coo
 Like any dove; and whisper like the pines

That made it, of the fresh and gleaming Alps.
 This it told me—I confided in it . . .
 (It filled but one salon,
 I played it by myself)
 Now my Cremona: golden trembling, smooth—
 Do you remember when the Gewandhaus
 At Leipsig was a shimmering sea;—a mist
 Of faces? —when I played—not music,—no
 For it was practised to a part of me;
 I played myself. Ah, how the roses came . . .
 The bravos! The mad encores! Happy?—drunk
 With music, drunk with glory,—triumph!

My grandfather said to father: “Michel,
 You must watch that boy!”

. . . once when I had played
 Some Chopin rather well, he called me in
 And laid his hand upon my head; and told
 Of how he played in Paris when a lad—
 (Yes, on my darling—) while a dark-eyed man
 With sharpened features; thin and nervous,—he—
 They called him Chopin. When he touched the keys—
 (And here the old man’s eyes would shine like stars:)
 He said the music was “moon forests all
 A-tremble with a dew of liquid sound.”
 The more he grew enthused, the more he told
 Of how *his* father would relate the fire
 Of Paganini,—how he marvelled when
 He tried it;—how he opened his black eyes.

Those clear, cool nights on lake Geneva when
 Friends Schiller, Fleuri, Boni, and myself
 Played works of the old masters and quartets
 Of Brahms. One blessed night we played a hymn
 There in the moonlight,—chance, we struck one chord
 That pierced us through;—we looked at each wide-eyed
 In ecstasy; and bows dropped into laps
 And tears ran down our cheeks;—it was too much—
 The beauty was too deep for us to bear.

I should play in Paris—
 Then came the war . . .

II

It all is nightmare to me yet:
 I could not understand, and now
 I cannot,—why such things
 Can be among God-loving men.
 I went to help my Poland with the rest—
 Yes, those from every walk of life and state
 Who loved her.
 But there was blood—
 The squeals of dying men;
 The steel
 The noise
 The hunger:
 Rotting smells
 Profaned our air
 Once mild, and sweet, and pure.
 And there was cold and fever—
 Noise that hit my ear-drums
 Like sledge-hammers; all the things
 Of carnal torture.
 But I would forget
 And cannot.

‘Shell-shock,’ they said
 With tight, thin lips,—
 I was too nervous, fine
 And sensitive.
 Oh, it was common—
 So was death . . .
 Father, Mother, Sister—
 They were gone, like many others;
 And my Poland just one dung-hill
 Made of horrible putrescence
 And all the best were gone;—they left
 The animals; fresh, greening bones.
 The hospital was heartless, but worse yet
 There was my brother Leopold; his wife
 And children
 Five or six—
 I cannot tell,
 There may be more.

They must be fed,—
 Fed what? That was the question.
 Far off,—America;
 Where there was money; people
 Who would pay for music

So I went, and here I am
 Now I must tell you
 How your cruel city
 And its filth—
 It sickens me
 As your heedless, hard-faced people
 Pound upon me
 Like the trains
 Which rush and roar
 And clash and bang
 Here past my windows.
 I had no money, so I did not eat;
 I tried the symphonies; they could not take
 An artist whose right arm would shake at times—
 The managers just smirked and said, 'Good day.'
 They were not even sorry—
 I was proud . . .
 I would not play
 Their cafe swilling;
 So I went hungry.

I had a little room,
 There was my fiddle on the bed,
 And there a letter from my Leopold
 "In Jesus' sweet name, Jan
 Send us some bread;
 For we are dying.
 Myself, I do not care—
 But Jan;—the little ones—
 I cannot see them so . . ."
 It was terrible;
 And there was nothing
 But the fiddle.
 I had to do it quick—
 For every time that I broke bread
 Or saw someone who ate,

There came those five and she
 Who was his wife, and they
 Would look at me with hungry eyes—
 With blackened lips—a face
 Just like a weasel's jowl;
 While dirty rags slid off their ribs
 And wasted arms.
 I could not sleep—they haunted me.

Necessity!
 You monster of the war;
 You are as all-impelling
 As an iron-clad tank,
 And just as trampling!
 Money, money for my Leopold!
 Soon I must have it
 Though I kill myself
 To play a brassy horn.
 It is never on the key—
 It is always squalling, belching
 Floods of syncopated fury;
 All an imbecilic nightmare.
 And I,—why, I had been
 A violinist . . .
 And so I went, and I was scourged.
 Yes, he would buy it,
 Though I begged for
 Just one day in which to play it.
 There was one whole string had stayed
 Upon it,—just one 'G' and that was very old.
 I took it up
 To run my fingers on its soul
 As one will run hot fingers
 On the flutings of a shell.
 Its tone was not so nasal as some were—
 —So creamy-smooth, so resonant and big;
 As holy as the nuns of Sainte-Cecile
 Who blessed it, gave to it an heritage.
 Its manly voice,—
 I made it weep
 With me;
 I made it quiver, yearn—

I could not stop—
 It was outpouring me,—
 The last; the best,
 The truest.

Well, the neighbors sat for hours
 On the stairs to listen to me;
 I had not seen them as I came,—
 They told me of it afterwards.
 I took it to him then;
 How cruel he was,—
 And my own countryman!
 He was a connoisseur
 And said that it was valuable,
 A genuine
 Cremona, made by one
 Of the Antonii
 Called Stradivarius.

Five thousand dollars!
 No!—and not a kopeck more!
 Just robbery, I thought.
 I drew it to me once,
 And stroked the finger-board
 Where silken, dancing fingers left
 Their polish, and the flowing scroll
 Was twining. All was dark
 And fragrant varnish,—warm
 As my old Mother's cheek:
 The staunch and rolling back;—
 The belly; dusty, deep,—
 The moon my chin had worn
 Same as my Father's chin
 Had done—the rosin marks
 Were badge of long
 And faithful singing.
 One last look—
 And it was gone.

Irreverently he snatched it up—
 Cold-eyed and ravishing;
 Yes, it was rape

And sacrilege;
I thought of murdering.

O, the dull, the bitter pain—
I went home dumb and numb
Into my little room,
And lay upon the bed and burned
And choked and froze;—
As when my dear Elena died.
I could not eat,
All life was dust—
And when they found me there,—
(It was three days,)
A wagon came
And took me off;
I wrote to Leo, sent
The money, all of it—
And told him there was food
In plenty here
For those with means to buy.
I told him; “come,
And bring with you the little ones.”

I suffered when I thought about the day
My Father gave his violin to me,—
Of how he cautioned care:
Now here it was
With strangers!
He seemed to come; to point, to say—
“They will kill it; they will break it!
It is gone, you are unworthy . . . ?
Jesu, can my Father know it?
Can he know of all this bloodshed?
Yes, he must have,
He was living;—
But he never had done fighting,
He had never starved and frozen,
He had all that he desired—
Cristo! Let me bear these crosses;
Feel the thorns without a whimper!

My own Cremona, shall I have the grace
 To hold you to my breast before I die?
 I want to die;—the doctors say I have
 Three months to live, and that must all be spent
 Out in the open air or by the sea . . .
 I want to die,—to have my own Elene,
 Then my Cremona and my music,—all;
 And never play a saxophone again.

IN A DESERTED GARDEN

BY JOY KIME BENTON

Across the ancient garden's wrinkled face
 The lawless vines prowl boldly, unafraid
 And all the graying walls are overlaid
 With sweet wild-rose and fragrant hawthorn lace.
 Among the flag-stones, honeysuckles trace
 A pattern that no earthly gardener made;
 And once-prim flower beds have wanton strayed
 And flaunt their indiscretions through the place.

Sometimes I think I see white, slender hands
 Lift tenderly the tangled jasmine there—
 Or on the wind hear ghostly laughter blow,
 As over argent swinging gossamer bands
 Of spider-webs, hung net-wise in the air,
 The wistful sunbeams shuttle to and fro.

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De Gourmont and The Idea

By VIRGIL GEDDES

The Lord's Will, A Play in One Act

By PAUL GREENE

A Caprice, A Comedy in One Act

By ALFRED De MUSSET

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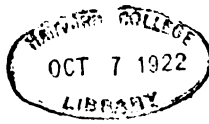
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UNCLE VANIA*

SCENES FROM COUNTRY LIFE IN FOUR ACTS

BY ANTON TCHEHOV

Translated from the Russian by Frances Arno Saphro

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

SEREBRIAKOV, ALEXANDER VLADIMIROVITCH, *a retired professor*
ELENA ANDREIEVNA, *his wife, 27 years old*
SOPHIA ALEXANDROVNA (SONIA), *his daughter by his first wife*
VOINITZKAIA, MARIA VASILIEVNA, *a widow, mother of the professor's first wife*
VOINITZKI, IVAN PETROVITCH, *her son*
ASTROV, MICHAEL LIVOVITCH, *physician*
TELEGIN, ELIA ELITCH, *an impoverished country squire*
MARENA, *an old nurse*
A WORKMAN

The action takes place on SEREBRIAKOV'S estate.

ACT I

A garden. Part of the house with terrace is seen. On the avenue, under an old poplar, a table with tea things. Chairs, benches, a guitar on one of the benches. Not far from the table a swing. Three o'clock in the afternoon. Cloudy.

Marena.—(A slow, corpulent little old woman sits at the tea-table, knitting a stocking) and

Astrov (Walks up and down.)

Marena (Pours a glass of tea from the samovar).—Eat, batiushka.

Astrov (Takes glass unwillingly).—I really don't care for it.

Marena.—Some vodochka perhaps?

Astrov.—No. I don't drink vodka every day. Besides it's so warm (pause.) Nurse, how long is it since we were acquainted

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Marena (*Thinking it over*).—How long? God help my? memory . . . You came to these parts . . . When? . . . Vera Petrovna, Sonia's mother was still alive. You visited us for two winters during her life time . . . That would make it about eleven years. (*Reconsidering*.) Perhaps more.

Astrov.—I have changed much since then?

Marena.—Oh, much! You were young and handsome then! You are older now and not so good looking. And besides,—you drink vodka.

Astrov.—Yes . . . In ten years I've become a different man. And why? Overwork, nurse. From morning till night constantly on your feet, you know no rest and all night long you lie shivering under your blanket for fear somebody'll come along and drag you off to a new patient. In all the time you and I have known each other, I haven't had a day off. How can one help aging? And such a life!—dull, stupid, dirty . . . It drags you down, this life! And on all sides of you are such queer and stupid people, blockheads, all of them. You live among them two or three years and little by little, without being aware of it, you turn into just such a simpleton as the rest of them. It's your fate, there's no escaping it (*Twisting his long mustache*.) Gee, what a huge mustache. . . . Fool of a mustache. I tell you, nurse, I've become silly . . . Not an imbecile quite as yet, God is merciful, my brain is still in its place, but I've grown callous somehow.—I want nothing, need nothing, care for no one, unless it be you, perhaps (*Kisses her on the head*.) When I was a little boy, I had just such a nurse.

Marena.—Perhaps you're hungry?

Astrov.—No. The third week in Lent, I went to Maletzki, where an epidemic of typhoid fever was raging. The huts were jammed with people . . . dirt, stench, smoke, calves on the floor together with the sick . . . the pigs there, too. I fussed all day, didn't sit down for a minute; without a crumb of bread in my mouth, I returned home and do you suppose they left me in peace then? No! They brought in a switchman from the railroad station. I put him on the table in order to operate on him and he ups and dies under the chloroform. And just then, when least desirable, all my former sensitiveness awakens and my conscience smarts as if I had killed the man on purpose. I sat down, covered my eyes with my hands like this and thinks I to myself: those people who will live one or two hundred years from

now and for whom we are now paving the way, will they remember us with a kind word? They won't, you know, nurse, they won't.

Marena.—The people won't remember, but God will remember!

Astrov.—There, thanks! That's good what you just said.

(*Enter VOINITZKI.*)

Voinitzki (*Comes out of the house. He has been sleeping after breakfast and looks ruffled. Sits on bench adjusting his sporty necktie.*)—Yes (*Pause.*) Yes

Astrov.—Slept enough?

Voinitzki.—Yes plenty (*Yawns.*) Since the arrival of the Professor and his wife, our life has swerved out of its beaten track. I sleep at irregular hours, at breakfast and dinner partake of sorts of "kabooli," drink wine . . . all of which is beastly unhealthy! Before, we hadn't a moment we could call our own, Sonia and I, we worked first-rate. Now Sonia works, while I sleep, eat, drink Rotten!

Marena.—And such orders! The Professor rises at noon and the samovar has been goin' since sunrise, awaiting his pleasure. Before they came we ate dinner at one o'clock, like all the other folks, but now at seven, if you please. All night the Professor reads and writes and all of a sudden around two o'clock in the morning, the bell What is batiushka? Tea! And rouse the people for him to start the samovar Such orders!

Astrov.—And do they intend staying long?

Voinitzki (*Whistles.*)—A hunded years. The Professor has decided to settle here.

Marena.—Take it now, the samovar has been on the table two mortal hours and they went walking.

Voinitzki.—Here they come, here they come Don't get excited. (*Voices are heard. From the depths of the garden, enter SEREBRIAKOV, ELENA ANDREIEVNA, SONIA and TELEGIN.*)

Serevriakov.—Beautiful! beautiful Magnificent views!

Telegin.—Remarkable, your excellency!

Sonai.—Tomorrow we go to the forestry, papa. Want to?

Voinitzki.—Ladies and gentlemen, tea!

Serebriakov.—My friends, please send my tea to the study. There's something I must attend to at once.

Sonia.—You'll enjoy it at the forestry, I am sure.

(ELENA ANDREIEVNA, SEREBRIAKOV and SONIA go into the house. TELEGIN goes to the table and sits near MARENA.)

Voinitzki.—You notice how warm it is—stifling! Yet our sage is in his overcoat and rubbers, carries an umbrella and has his gloves on.

Astrov.—In other words, takes care of himself.

Voinitzki.—But how beautiful she is! how beautiful! In all my life I have not seen a more beautiful woman!

Telegin.—Whether I am out riding in the fields, Marena Temofeievna, or walking in the thick of the garden, or gazing on this table, I experience the most inexpressible felicity. The weather is enchanting, the birds sing sweetly. We all abide in peace and harmony—what more could we desire? (*accepting glass of tea*) I am deeply obliged to you.

Voinitzki (Thoughtfully).—Those eyes . . . Glorious creature!

Astrov.—Tell us something, Ivan Petrovitch!

Voinitzki.—What is there to tell you?

Astrov.—Something new, if possible.

Voinitzki.—Not a thing. Everything is old. I am the same as I always was—a little worse perhaps, because I've grown lazy. Do nothing but growl all day, like a perfect crab. My old jackdaw of a Maman still babbles about female emancipation. With one eye on the grave, with the other she still searches in her learned tomes for the dawn of a new life.

Astrov.—And the Professor?

Voinitzki.—And the Professor, as before, from morning till late into the night sits in his study and writes, "With eye intent and brow afrown, our odes persistently we write and write; yet know we nothing of the renown, nor our readers much delight." Poor paper. He ought to set about his autobiography now. Such a brilliant subject!—A retired professor, you understand, a stale crust, a learned "vobla" . . . gout, rheumatism, megrim; from jealousy and envy swollen liver . . . And lives this "vobla" on the estate of his first wife, lives here against his inclination, because to live in the city is beyond his means. Always complains of his misfortunes, altho in reality he is extraordinarily fortunate (*nervously*) Just think what luck. The son of a common sexton, goes through college, attains a higher education, a chair, becomes his excellency, the son-in-law of a senator, etc., etc. All this may not be so important, however, but note this: for just exactly twenty-five years a man reads and writes on

art, understanding absolutely nothing about the subject. For twenty-five years he has been chewing over other people's ideas about realism, naturalism and all other bosh; for twenty-five years he reads and writes about things with which the intelligent are long ago familiar and in which the foolish are not at all interested; consequently for twenty-five years he has been—carrying water in sieve. And at the same time what confidence! what pretensions! He has retired and not a soul knows of his existence; he is utterly unknown. That means that for twenty-five years he has been occupying the rightful place of another! Yet behold him: strutting about like a demigod!

Astrov.—Come now, aren't you a bit jealous?

Voinitzki.—Yes, I am jealous! And what success with women! Not a single Don Juan could boast of such complete triumphs. His first wife, my sister, a beautiful, gentle being, pure as this blue sky, noble, generous, having more admirers than he students—loved him as only God's sweet angels can love just such innocent and lovely creatures as themselves! My mother, his mother-in-law, idolizes him to this day and to this day he inspires her with a feeling of sacred awe. His second wife, a beauty, intelligent—you saw her just now—married him when he was already old, bestowed upon him her youth, her beauty, her freedom, her splendor! For what? Why?

Astrov.—She is true to the Professor?

Voinitzki.—I am sorry to say, yes.

Astrov.—Why, "sorry to say"?

Voinitzki.—Because this very faithfulness is false from beginning to end. She's brilliantly eloquent but not at all logical. To be false to an old husband whom she cannot abide—that is immoral; but to be false to and do her best to stifle her own poor youth and lively feelings—that is not immoral.

Telegin (In a tearful voice).—Vania, I don't like to hear you say that. Well, really now . . . Whoever is false to a wife or a husband that means that that person is faithless and such a one is capable of betraying his country even!

Voinitzki (With annoyance).—Shut your mug, Waffles!

Telegin.—Allow me, Vania. My wife left me the day after our wedding, on account of my unattractive exterior, and ran away with the man she loved. That did not in the least swerve me from my duty afterwards. I love her to this day, am true to her and am helping her in every way I can; I gave up my estate to educate the little ones—the result of her association with the man

she loved, I lost my happiness but I have my pride still. While she? Her youth is gone already, her beauty, in the natural course of events has faded, the man she loved passed away . . . what is there left her?

(Enter SONIA and ELENA ANDREIEVNA, followed a little later by MARIA VASILIEVNA with book in hand. She sits and reads. She is given some tea which she sips without looking up.)

Sonia (Quickly to nurse).—Nursie, some peasants have just come. Go talk to them a while. I'll pour the tea myself . . . (pours tea.)

(The nurse leaves. ELENA ANDREIEVNA takes her cup and drinks, sitting on the swing.)

Astrov (To ELENA ANDREIEVNA).—I came to see your husband. You wrote that he is very sick, rheumatism, and something else and it seems he's perfectly well.

Elena Andreievna.—Last evening he was all out of sorts, complained of pain in his feet, but today he's all right again.

Astrov.—And I galloped thirty versts at break-neck speed to get here. Oh, well, it isn't the first time. Just for that, however, here I remain until tomorrow and at least sleep *Ruantum satis*.

Sonia.—Good! You hardly ever stay over night! Bet you haven't dined yet.

Astrov.—No, I haven't.

Sonia.—Then, apropos, you'll have dinner with us, too. We dine at seven now. (Tastes tea) Why this tea is cold!

Telegin.—Yes, the samovar's temperature has considerably diminished.

Elena Andreievna.—Oh, well, Ivan Ivanovitch, we don't mind if the tea is cold, do we?

Telegin.—Pardon me . . . Not Ivan Ivanovitch, but Elia Elitch . . . Elia Elitch Telegin, or, as some designate me on account of my pock-marked countenance, Waffles. Once upon a time I stood godfather to little Sonia, and his excellency, your spouse, knows me very well. I now live here with you on this estate. If you have deigned to notice, I dine with you every day.

Sonia.—Elia Elitch is our assistant, our right hand (tenderly) Godfather, dear, let me give you some more tea.

Maria Vasilievna.—Oh!

Sonia.—What's the matter, grandma?

Maria Vasilievna.—I forgot to tell Alexander—lost my memory!—today I received a letter from Harkov, from Paul

Alexeievitch . . . He sends me his new pamphlet.

Astrov.—Interesting?

Maria Vasilievna.—Interesting, but strange somehow. He now repudiates everything that seven years ago he himself propagated. It's terrible.

Voinitzki.—There is nothing terrible. Drink your tea, Maman.

Maria Vasilievna.—But I want to talk!

Voinitzki.—But we have been talking and talking and reading pamphlets for the last fifty years. Its about time we were through.

Maria Vasilievna.—You seem annoyed for some reason whenever I begin to talk. Pardon me. Zhon, but for the last year you have changed so that I hardly recognize you. You used to be a man of definite convictions, an enlightened personality.

Voinitzki.—Oh, yes! An enlightened personality from whom no one derived any light . . . (pause) I was an enlightened personality!—You couldn't have said anything more sarcastic. I am now forty-seven. Until last year, I, too, tried purposely to befog my vision with your scholasticism so as not to see life as it really is,—and I thought I was right. But now, if you only knew! I spend sleepless nights in bitterness and vexation, for having so stupidly frittered away my time when I might have had everything that now my old age denies me.

Sonia.—Uncle Vania, how tiresome!

Maria Vasilievna (To her son).—You talk as if your former convictions were to blame . . . But it isn't their fault, it's yours. You were forgetting that convictions in themselves are nothing, a dead letter. You should have worked!

Voinitzki.—Worked? Well, not every one is capable of being a scribbling *Perpetuum mobile* like your Herr Professor.

Maria Vasilievna.—Now just what do you mean by that?

Sonia (Pleadingly).—Grandma! Uncle Vania! I beg of you.

Voinitzki.—There, I say no more! And not only that, but I apologize.

(Pause.)

Elena Andreievna.—What delightful weather we're having . . . Not a bit warm.

(Pause.)

Voinitzki.—Just the right weather for committing suicide.

(TELEGIN tunes guitar, MARENA walks near the house calling chickens.)

Marena.—Chick, chick, chick . . .

Soncie.—Nursie, what did the peasants want?

Marena.—The same old thing! Still about that prairie land.

Chick, chick, chick . . .

Soncia.—Which one is it now?

Marena.—Spotty has disappeared with the little chicks

. . . I am afraid the crows will get after them . . .

chick, chick, chick, (*goes.*)

(*TELEGIN plays polka. All listen in silence; enter WORKMAN.*)

Workman.—Is the Mr. Doctor here? (*to ASTROV*) You are wanted sir, Michael Livovitch. They came for you.

Astrov.—Where from?

Workman.—The factory, sir.

Astrov (*Crossly*).—Much obliged. Well, I suppose I must go (*Searching with his eyes for cap*) How annoying, deuce take it all!

Sonia.—So disagreeable, really! Come back for dinner from the factory.

Astrov.—No, it will be too late. Oh, what's the use and where's the difference? (*To WORKMAN*) Here, my dear boy, fetch me a glass of vodka just for that (*The WORKMAN goes*) What's the use and where's the difference? (*Finds cap*) In one of Astrovski's plays there is a character with a huge mustache and no sense,—that's me. Well, ladies and gentlemen, I have the honor to bid you good-bye . . . (*To ELENA ANDREIEVNA*) If at some time or other you would look in on me, together with Sophia Alexandrovna, I should be very glad, indeed. Mine isn't much of an estate, so far as size is concerned, about thirty desiatins in all; but, if you are interested, I have a model garden and nursery, such as you would not come across in a thousand versts. Along side of me is the crown forestry. The forester is quite old and sick most of the time so that in reality the management of the whole business devolves on me.

Elena Andreievna.—They have been telling me that you are very fond of forests. Undoubtedly one can be of great use that way, but does it not interfere with your real calling? You are a physician.

Astrov.—Only God knows what are our real callings.

Elena Andreievna.—And you find it interesting?

Astrov.—Yes, the work is interesting.

Voinitzki (*Sarcastically*).—Very!

Elena Andreievna (*To ASTROV*).—But you are quite a young

man yet. You look . . . well about thirty-six, no more. And it can't all be as fascinating as you would have us think. Woods, woods and nothing but woods . . . I think it must be monotonous.

Sonia.—Why, no, it's tremendously interesting. Michael Livovitch plants new forests every year and they're already sent him a bronze medal and a diploma! He is laboring toward putting a stop to the ruthless extermination of the old forests. Wait till you have heard him talk about it; you can't help agreeing with him entirely. He says that forests adorn the earth, that they teach mankind to understand beauty and inspire them with a feeling of grandeur. Forests modify the severity of the climate and in countries of mild climate less energy is wasted in the struggle with nature and man is, therefore, of a more gentle and refined type. The people are beautiful and supple and easily stirred, their speech is elegant, their movements graceful. The arts and sciences flourish, their philosophy of life is not morbid. Their attitude toward woman is full of elegance and nobility . . .

Voinitzki (Laughing).—Bravo, bravo! . . . All that is very charming but hardly convincing, so that (*To ASTROV*) permit me, my friend, to continue the use of your wood to burn in my stove and your lumber to build my stables.

Astrov.—But you can burn turf in your stove and build your stables of stone. However, I can understand your being compelled to chop down some trees, but why exterminate them entirely? The Russian forests groan under the ax, milliards of trees perish, the abodes of beasts and birds are laid waste, rivers become shallow and run dry, beautiful landscapes are irretrievably lost and all because lazy man hasn't sense enough to stoop down and pick up his fuel from the ground (*To ELENA ANDREIEVNA*) Is it not so, Madam? One must be an unreasonable barbarian to burn all this glory in the stove; to destroy that which he is incapable of replacing. Man is gifted with reason and creative power in order to increase the things that are useful to him, but so far he has been only destroying. Forests grow fewer and fewer, rivers run dry, game is almost extinct, the climate is spoiled and the earth grows poorer and more hideous day by day (*To VOINITZKI*) There you are staring at me with ridicule as if all that I am talking about is so trivial! Well, perhaps it really is tomfoolery, but I tell you when I pass by the people's forests that I have saved from the ax, or listen to the hum of my virgin groves which I planted with my own hands, I cannot but feel that even the climate is

to some extent subject to my control and that if a thousand years from now the human race will be happier in an infinitesimal degree, I, too, will be responsible for that fact. Every time I plant a young birch and afterward see it green and waving in the wind, my heart is filled with pride and I . . . (*Seeing WORKMAN who has brought a glass of vodka on a tray*) However . . . (*Drinks*) I must go. It's all, doubtless, tomfoolery after all. I have the honor to bid you good-bye! (*Goes toward house.*)

Sonia (Takes his arm and accompanies him).—How soon are you coming to see us again?

Astrov.—I hardly know.

Sonia.—Not for another month, I suppose.

(*ASTROV and SONIA retire into the house; MARIA VASILIEVNA and TELEGIN remain near the table; ELENA ANDREIEVNA and VOINITZKI walk toward the terrace.*)

Elena Andreievna.—And you, Ivan Petrovitch, behaved abominably again. It was necessary for you to irritate Maria Vasilievna by bringing up *Perpetuum Mobile!* And this morning you argued with Alexander again. How petty that is!

Voinitzki.—But when I despise him!

Elena Andreievna.—There is no reason you should despise Alexander. He's much like other people. No worse than you.

Voinitzki.—If you could only see, your own face, your movements . . . How lazy you are. What an effort it is for you to merely exist! Oh, what an effort!

Elena Andreievna.—Oh, it is all so stupid and tiresome! You all scold my husband and pity me. Poor woman married to that old man! This interest in me—how well I understand it! It's exactly as Astov said just now; without rime or reason you destroy forests until soon there will be none left on earth and with just as little rime or reason you would destroy a human being, until, thanks to you, there will be left neither purity, nor devotion, nor self-sacrifice on earth! Why is it that you cannot look dispassionately upon a woman who does not belong to you? Because—this Doctor is right—in each of you is seated a demon of destruction. You are equally ruthless with forests, birds, women and each other . . .

Voinitzki.—I hate this moralizing.

Elena Andreievna.—This doctor has a tired, nervous face. An interesting face. Sonia evidently likes him. She's in love with him, I believe, and I can readily understand her. He has been here three times since I came, but I am so backward, I

haven't talked with him once as I ought, or been kind to him. He thought I was cross. Evidently Ivan Petrovitch, the reason you and I are such friends is because we are both such stupid, hum-drum people, disgustingly stupid and hum-drum, that's what! Don't look at me that way, I don't like it.

Voinitzki.—How can I look at you differently when I love you? You are my joy, my life, my youth! I know my chances for reciprocity are negligible, nil, most likely; but I ask for nothing; permit me only to look at you, to hear your voice . . .

Elena Andreievna.—Hush, someone will hear you! (*On her way to the house.*)

Voinitzki (Following her).—Allow me to talk to you about my love, don't drive me away and this alone will be to me the greatest happiness.

Elena Andreievna.—This is terrible . . . (*Both retire into the house.*)

(*TELEGIN strums polka. MARIA VASILIEVNA is making notes in the margin of the pamphlet.*)

ACT II

Dining room in SEREBRIAKOV'S house.—Night—The watchman is heard rapping in the garden.

SEREBRIAKOV (*Sits in arm chair before the open window, dozing*) and ELBNA ANDREIEVNA (*Sits near him and also dozes*).

Serebriakov (Starting).—Who's here? Sonia, you?

Elena Andreievna.—It's I.

Serebriakov.—You, Nellie . . . The pain is unbearable!

Elena Andreievna.—Your plaid rolled down on the floor. *Covers his feet*) I'll close the window, Alexander.

Serebriakov.—No, it's hot . . . I just dozed off and dreamed that my left leg was not my own. The agonizing pain woke me. No, this is not gout, sooner rheumatism. What time is it?

Elena Andreievna.—Twenty minutes past twelve. (*Pause.*)

Serebriakov.—In the morning, look for that volume of Batinshkov. I think we have it somewhere.

Elena Andreievna.—What?

Serebriakov.—Look for Batinshkov in the morning. I seem to remember our having it. But why is it so hard for me to breathe?

Elena Andreievna.—You are tired. This is the second night you haven't slept.

Serebriakov.—They say Turgenev had a frog in his chest as a result of gout. I'm afraid I might get one, too. Cursed, hideous old age, may the devil take it! When I got old I became disgusted with myself. And you, all of you, are doubtless sick of me, by now.

Elena Andreievna.—You talk about your old age as if we were all to blame for it.

Serebriakov.—You are the very first to be sick of me.

(*ELENA ANDREIEVNA walks away and sits at a distance.*)

Serebriakov.—Of course you are right. I am no fool and I understand. You are young, strong, beautiful, you want to live; while I am an old man, almost a corpse. Don't I know it? And it is doubtless very inconsiderate of me to go on living. But wait, soon I shall liberate you all. I cannot drag along much longer.

Elena Andreievna.—I feel faint . . . In heaven's name keep quiet.

Serebriakov.—There it is.—On account of me they they all faint, bored, waste their youth. I alone am in my glory. To be sure!

Elena Andreievna.—Keep still I tell you, you have worn me out!

Serebriakov.—I have worn everybody out, certainly.

Elena Andreievna (In tears).—This is unbearable. Tell me what you want of me?

Serebriakov.—Nothing.

Elena Andreievna.—Well then, keep quiet, I beg of you.

Serebriakov.—It's funny, let Ivan Petrovitch, or that old idiot, Maria Vasilievna begin to talk and everybody listens with attention, but let me say just one word and everybody begins to feel miserable. Even my voice is unpleasant. Well, let us admit I am disagreeable, I am an egotist, I am a despot,—but haven't I a right to some selfishness? Haven't I earned it, I should like to know? Haven't I a right to a peaceful old age? to some attention from people?

Elena Andreievna.—No one disputes your rights (*the window flaps in the wind*) The wind is rising, I'll close the window (*closes*) It's going to rain. No one disputes with you about your rights.

(*Pause; the watchman is heard rapping and singing in the garden.*)

Serebriakov.—To devote one's whole life to learning, to become accustomed to one's study, one's auditorium, to honorable companions and all of a sudden to find oneself, without warning, in this tomb, to have to associate daily with these stupid people, to listen to their absurd discussions . . . I want to live, I love success, fame, hubbub, excitement and here.—Like a prison! Never for a minute to cease pining for the past; to be compelled to watch the success of others, to fear death . . . I cannot endure it. I haven't the strength! And to top it all, people will not pardon me my old age . . .

Elena Andrievna.—Wait, have patience; in five or six years, I, too, shall be old.

(SONIA enters.)

Sonia.—Papa, you yourself ordered Dr. Astrov sent for and now that he has arrived you refuse to see him. That isn't very nice, to put a man to all this trouble for nothing . . .

Serebriakov.—What good is your Dr. Astrov to me? He understands as much about medicine as I do about astronomy.

Sonia.—Well, you don't propose summoning the entire medical faculty just on account of your gout, do you?

Serebriakov.—With this idiot I don't care to converse, even!

Sonia.—Do just as you please about that (*sits*) It's immaterial to me.

Serebriakov.—What time is it now?

Elena Andrievna.—One o'clock.

Serebriakov.—It's hot . . . Sonia hand me the drops from the table.

Sonia.—Here! (*Gives drops.*)

Serebriakov (Impatiently).—Oh, not those! Can't get them to do a thing properly!

Sonia.—Cut out your caprices! It may make a hit with some people, but not with me, thank you. I don't like it. And besides, I haven't time. I must be up early to-morrow morning in time for the hay making.

(Enter VOINITZKI in dressing gown, with candle.)

Voinitzki.—It's beginning to storm. (*Lightning.*) See that? Helen and Sonia, go to bed, I came to relieve you.

Serebriakov (With embarrassment).—No, no! Don't leave me with him, he will talk me deaf, dumb and blind.

Voinitzki.—But we must give them a chance to rest! This is the second night they have been up with you.

Serebriakov.—Let them go to bed, but you go too. Please go, I implore you, in the name of our former friendship! We'll talk another time.

Voinitzki (With ridicule).—Our former friendship . . .
Our former . . .

Sonia.—Uncle Vania, keep quiet!

Serebriakov (To his wife).—My dear, don't leave me here with him! He will talk me to death, I tell you!

Voinitzki.—This grows ridiculous.

(*Enter MARENA with candle.*)

Sonia.—Why don't you go to bed, nursie? It's late.

Marena.—The tea things aren't cleared away yet. Small chance for me to go to bed.

Serebriakov.—Everyone is kept awake, everyone is faint, I alone am happy!

Marena (Approaches SEREBRIAKOV, tenderly).—How batiushka, does it hurt? My own feet hum, just hum with pain (*adjusts plaid.*) You've had this trouble a long time. Vera Petrovna—God rest her soul!—Sonichka's mother, couldn't sleep nights, worrying . . . How she did love you, that woman! (*pause*) old people are like children—they want sympathy! But who sympathizes with the old? (*Kisses SEREBRIAKOV on the shoulder*) Come, batiushka to bed . . . Come sunshine . . . old nursie will brew you some elderberry tea, warm your feeties, offer up a prayer for you . . .

Serebriakov (Touched).—Yes, let us go, Marena.

Marena.—My own feet hum, just hum with pain! (*Leads him, Sonia assisting.*) Vera Petrovna used to kill herself worrying and weeping . . . You, Soniushka were quite a little girl then, and foolish . . . Come along, batiushka . . .
(SEREBRIAKOV, SONIA and MARENA go out.)

Elena Andreievna.—I am worn out with him. I can hardly stand on my feet.

Voinitzki.—You with him and I with myself. This is the third night I don't sleep.

Elena Andreievna.—It really isn't safe in this house. Your mother hates everything except her pamphlets and the Professor; the Professor is irritated, mistrusts me, is afraid of you; Sonia is angry with her father, cross with me and hasn't spoken to me for two weeks now; you detest my husband and openly show your scorn for your own mother; I am exasperated and at least twenty

times today betook myself to crying . . . I tell you it isn't safe in this house.

Voinitzki.—O, leave off this philosophizing!

Elena Andreievna.—And you, Ivan Petrovitch, who are educated and sensible, ought to understand, it seems to me, that the world is brought to rack and ruin not so much through murder, rapine, nor fire, as through envy, malice, hatred, through all these petty quarrelings and scandal-mongering. Instead of growling, it ought to be your business to reconcile people with one another.

Voinitzki.—First reconcile me with myself. My darling . . . (*Seizes her hand.*)

Elena Andreievna.—Stop that! (*Snatches away her hand*) Go away!

Voinitzki.—It is going to rain soon and everything in nature will become refreshed and heave a sigh of content. To me alone the storm will bring no relief. Day and night the thought of my wasted life pursues me like a demon! Past I have none; it was irretrievably frittered away in trifles and the present is horrible in its utter stupidity. Here you have my life and my love. What is to become of them? What am I to do with them? My love is quenched uselessly like a ray of sunlight that falls into a pit and my life is quenched with it.

Elena Andreievna.—When you talk to me about your love, I grow numb, somehow, and don't know what to say. Forgive me, there's nothing I can say to you (*Starts to go.*) Good night.

Voinitzki (Obstructing her way).—And if you knew how I suffer from the thought that along side of me, in this very house, another life is being wasted—yours! What are you waiting for? What cursed philosophy stands in your way? Understand, can't you, understand . . .

Elena Andreievna (Scrutinizes him attentively).—Ivan Petrovitch, you're drunk!

Voinitzki.—Maybe . . . maybe . . .

Elena Andreievna.—Where is the Doctor?

Voinitzki.—He's there . . . spending the night in my room. Maybe, maybe . . . Everything maybe . . .

Elena Andreievna.—So to-day, too, you've been drinking! Why do you do that?

Voinitzki.—To induce a state that bears at least some resemblance to life, so don't try to stop me, Hélén!

Elena Andreievna.—You never used to drink and you never talked so much . . . Go to bed, you bore me!

Voinitzki (Seizing her hand).—My darling . . . You wonderful!

Elena Andreievna (Angrily).—Let me alone. This is at last disgusting! (*Goes.*)

Voinitzki (Alone).—Gone . . . (*pause*). . . Ten years ago I used to meet her at my late sister's. She was then seventeen years old and I thirty-seven. Why did I not fall in love with her and propose to her then? It was all so possible. . . And she would now have been my wife. . . Yes . . . At this moment we both would have been aroused by the storm; she would be terrified by the thunder and I would be holding her in my arms and murmuring, "Don't be frightened, dearest, I am here." Oh, wonderful thoughts! How delightful! I am actually laughing . . . But, Lord, how mixed up everything is in my head . . . Why am I old? Why doesn't she understand me? Her eloquence, her passive morality, her idle, absurd ideas about the destruction of the world. All this is deeply abhorrent to me (*Pause*) Oh, how I've been cheated, I worshipped this professor, this pitiful rheumatic, I worked like an ox for him! Sonia and I squeezed from this estate its last sap for him; like common hucksters we trafficked in vegetable oil, peas, curds, went without bread ourselves to accumulate thousands in kopeks and two-kopek pieces and send them to him . . . How proud I was of him and his learning. I lived, I breathed only through him—Everything that he pronounced and wrote seemed so ingenious . . . My God, and now! Here he is, retired and what is the sum-total of his existence? Not a single solitary page of all his labors will remain after him. He's nothing, a soap-bubble! And I have been duped . . . I see it all now, hopelessly duped! (*Enter ASTROV with his coat on, but no vest, nor tie. He is followed by TELEGIN with guitar.*)

Astrov.—Play!

Telegin.—But how can I? They're all asleep!

Astrov.—Play!

(*TELEGIN strums softly.*)

Astrov (To VOINITZKI).—You are all alone here? No ladies? (*With arms akimbo softly sings*) "Swaying cabin, swaying bed; nary place to lay your head!" And you know it was the storm that woke me. Fine rain! What time is it?

Voinitzki.—The Devil knows.

Astrov.—I thought I heard Elena Andreievna's voice.

Voinitzki.—She was here just now.

Astrov.—Stunning woman! (*Examines bottles on the table*)
 Drugs, drugs, drugs . . . What haven't they here in the way
 of prescriptions? From Harkov, Moscow, the Toula . . .
 Not a city but was made acquainted with his gout. Is he really
 sick or only shamming?

Voinitzki.—He's sick all right (*Pause.*)

Astrov.—What makes you so sad today? Sorry for the Pro-
 fessor?

Voinitzki.—Let me be.

Astrov.—Or in love with the Professress?

Voinitzki.—She is my friend.

Astrov.—Already?

Voinitzki.—What do you mean by "Already"?

Astrov.—A woman passes through three stages before she
 becomes a man's friend. First she's his pal, then his mistress,
 and then only his friend.

Voinitzki.—Pretty vulgar philosophy, that.

Astrov.—How? Yes, I guess I am vulgar. See, I am drunk,
 too! I get that way about once a month, and then I am insolence
 and vulgarity personified! But nothing is beyond me at those
 times, I tackle the most serious operations and perform them
 magnificently! The future seems big to me then and I am no
 longer a pigmy in the scheme of things but one capable of being of
 tremendous benefit to humanity . . . simply tremendous!
 And you fellows seem to me mere insects . . . microbes
 . . . (*To TELEGIN*) Play, Waffles!

Telegin.—My dear friend, I should be delighted to for your
 sake, but understand me—they're all asleep in this house!

Astrov.—Play!

(*TELEGIN strums softly.*)

Astrov.—Let's have a drink. Come on, there's still some
 cognac left, I think. And at daybreak we'll start for my place.
 Is it a go? I have an assistant who never says "go" but "goo."
 He's a dreadful swindler! And so, is it a "goo"? (*Catching sight*
of SONIA just entering) I beg pardon, I am minus a necktie (*Goes*
out quickly; TELEGIN follows.)

Sonia.—Uncle Vania, you and the Doctor have been drinking
 again. With the Doctor it's an old story, but what's come over
 you? It's hardly becoming at your age.

Voinitzki.—What's age got to do with it? When there's
 nothing worth while in actual life, you try to create illusions.
 It's after all better than nothing.

Sonia.—Our hay is all mowed, it's raining constantly, everything's rotting to pieces and you are busy with illusions. You've dropped your share of the management entirely and have piled it all on me and I am just about exhausted . . . (*Startled*) Why Uncle, there are tears in your eyes!

Voinitzki.—What tears? There's nothing of the sort . . . nonsense . . . Just then you looked up at me exactly like your mother. My dear . . . (*Eagerly kisses her hands and face*) My sister . . . My darling sister . . . Where is she now? If she knew! Oh, if she knew!

Sonia.—What? knew what, uncle?

Voinitzki.—I feel terribly! It's rotten! Never mind . . . Some other time . . . Never mind . . . I'll go away now . . . (*Goes.*)

Sonia (Knocks on the door).—Michael Livovitch, are you asleep? Just a moment!

Astrov (On the other side of the door).—All right. (*Enters after a moment; he has put on his vest and necktie*) What are your orders?

Sonia.—Drink all you want yourself, if you can bring yourself to do it; but, I implore you, don't let uncle do it. It's bad for him.

Astrov.—Very well. We'll not drink any more (*Pause.*) I go home at once. That settles it. By the time the horses are harnessed, it will be daylight.

Sonia.—It's raining, wait till morning.

Astrov.—The storm is going by, we'll probably get the tail end of it only, I'll go. But please don't ask me to call on your father again. I tell him gout and he—rheumatism! I ask him to lie down, he sits up. And today he stopped talking to me altogether.

Sonia.—He's spoiled (*Searches in buffet*). Will you have a bite to eat?

Astrov.—That's not a bad idea.

Sonia.—I'm a great one for eating at night. There ought to be something here in the buffet. They say he was always a great favorite with the ladies and they spoiled him. Here we are, have some cheese. (*Both stand near buffet eating.*)

Astrov.—I didn't eat a thing today, only drank. Your father has an awful disposition (*Reaches for bottle in buffet*) May I? (*Drinks a glassful*) There is no one here and I can speak frankly. Do you know, it seems to me I couldn't live one

month in this house of yours. I should suffocate in this atmosphere . . . Your father, wholly taken up with his gout and his books, your uncle Vania with his grouch, your grandmother and finally your stepmother . . .

Sonia.—What about my stepmother?

Astrov.—Well, a beautiful person should be perfect in every respect: face, clothing, soul, thoughts—everything! She is lovely without a doubt, but then, she only eats, sleeps, goes out walking. charms us all with her beauty and there an end. She has no responsibilities, she lets others work for her . . . that's so, is it not? And an idle life can hardly be a wholesome one (*Pause.*) And yet, perhaps I'm too hard on her. I am like your Uncle Vania, disgruntled with life, and we're both getting to be regular crabs.

Sonia.—You are dissatisfied with life?

Astrov.—Life in general I love, but our life, our Russian residential country existence, I cannot abide and detest it all with the whole strength of my soul. And, as for my personal life, by heaven, there's nothing to it! You know, it's like this: some dark night you walk through a thick forest and suddenly discover that you have lost your way; and then far off in the distance you behold a tiny spark of light glimmering, you forget your fatigue, the darkness, the brambly bushes that lash your face mercilessly, and push forward courageously. Now I work—you know it—harder than any one in this district; my destiny buffets me about unceasingly; at times I suffer beyond endurance, but there is no light for me in the distance. I expect nothing more for myself, I can't bear people . . . I've long ago stopped caring for any one.

Sonia.—Not any one?

Astrov.—Not one. Oh, a certain amount of tenderness I experience only for your nurse, for old remembrance sake. The peasants are monotonous, ignorant, dirty and with the intelligent class it's hard to get along. They're tiresome! They are all, our good acquaintances, shallow of thought, shallow of feeling, see nothing beyond their noses, in short—fools! While those who are bigger and more intellectual are hysterical, fault-finding, morbid; these mope and hate and slander; they are always one-sided in their judgment; they look at a man cross-eyed and immediately conclude: "He's crazy!" or "A phrase-monger." And when they are at a loss what label to stick upon my forehead, it is simply: "He's queer! queer, that's all!" I love forests—that's

queer; I'm a vegetarian—that's queer, too. There's no longer anything spontaneous or pure, no freedom of intercourse with nature or with man . . . nothing like it! (*Is about to drink again.*)

Sonia (Interferes).—Please don't, I beg of you, I implore you, don't drink any more.

Astrov.—Why not?

Sonia.—It is so unlike you! You are so elegant, you have such a wonderful voice . . . You are different from everyone I know—so splendid in every way! Then why should you behave like ordinary people, who drink and play cards? Oh, don't do it, I implore you! You yourself always complain because people don't create but only destroy everything that is bestowed upon them from above. Then why will you destroy your own self? Oh, you mustn't, you mustn't, I beseech, I adjure you!

Astrov (Extends his hand to her).—All right, I shan't drink any more.

Sonia.—Promise me.

Astrov.—I promise.

Sonia (Seizes his hand eagerly).—Thank you.

Astrov.—That settles it, from now on I am sober. You notice I've sobered up considerably already and so I shall remain to the end of my days (*Looks at his watch.*) But to go back: so far as caring for any one is concerned, I say these things are not for me any more, it is too late. I am old, preoccupied, vulgar, blasé. I am not in love with anyone and it seems to me, I could never fall in love with any one again. There's just one thing that still has power over me and that's—beauty! I cannot remain wholly indifferent to that. It seems to me that if, for instance, Andreievna wished, she could make me lose my head in one day . . . But that would not be love, affection . . . (*Covers his eyes with his hands and shudders.*)

Sonia.—What is it?

Astrov.—Nothing . . . In Lent a patient of mine died, under chloroform.

Sonia.—It's time to forget about that. (*Pause*) Tell me, Michael Livovitch . . . If I had a friend or a younger sister, say, and if you discovered that she . . . well, suppose she's in love with you . . . what would be your attitude toward it?

Astrov (Shrugging his shoulders).—I hardly know. It would probably not affect me one way or another. I should most likely make her understand that I don't care for her. Besides, I have

other things to think about. Now, if I am to go at all, I had better start immediately, or at this rate we'll not get through till morning. Good-by, dear girl (*Shakes hands with her.*) I'll go through the drawing-room, if you don't mind, as your Uncle Vania might detain me again (*Goes.*)

Sonia (Alone).—And he told me nothing after all . . . His heart, his soul are still a mystery to me, but why do I feel so happy? (*Laughs delightedly*) I said to him: you are elegant, noble, you have such a wonderful voice . . . Was that out of place I wonder? His voice vibrates, caresses . . . I feel his presence in this air. But when I spoke about a younger sister he didn't understand . . . (*Wrings her hands*) Oh, how terrible it is that I am not beautiful, how terrible! And I know that I am not. I know it, I know it . . . Last Sunday coming out of church, I overheard them talking about me and a woman said: "She is sweet and generous, but what a pity she's so homely . . ." Homely . . .

(*Enter ELENA ANDREIEVNA.*)

Elena Andreievna (Opens window).—The storm is over. How sweet the air is! (*Pause*) Where's the Doctor?

Sonia.—He left (*Pause.*)

Elena Andreievna.—Sophie!

Sonia.—What is it?

Elena Andreievna.—How much longer are you going to pout with me? We never did each other any harm, why should we be enemies? Give it up . . .

Sonia.—I myself wanted to . . . (*Embraces her*) Let's stop it. Let's not be cross any more.

Elena Andreievna.—Good (*Both are agitated.*)

Sonia.—Has papa retired?

Elena Andreievna.—No, he's sitting up in the drawing-room. We're not on speaking terms with one another for weeks at a time and God knows what it's all about . . . (*Noticing that the buffet is open.*) What's this?

Sonia.—I was giving Michael Livovitch some supper.

Elena Andreievna.—Here is wine too . . . Let's drink brudershaft.

Sonia.—Yes, let's.

Elena Andreievna.—Out of the same glass . . . (*Pours wine.*) So. That's much nicer. Well, then it's—pals?

Sonia.—Pals (*Both drink and kiss.*) I've been wanting to make it up with you a long time but I was ashamed, somehow

(Weeps.)

Elena Andreievna.—Why are you crying!

Sonia.—This is just . . .

Elena Andreievna.—There, there, that's enough now, enough . . . (Weeps) Silly, here am I crying too . . . (Pause). I know, you are angry with me because you think my marriage to your father was one of convenience; but, if you believe my oath, I swear to you I married him because I loved him. I fell in love with his learning, his greatness. My love was unnatural, of course, it was artificial but it seemed genuine enough to me at the time. It wasn't my fault, I assure you, yet from the day of our marriage you did not stop persecuting me with those clever, suspicious eyes of yours.

Sonia.—Well, peace, peace! Let's forget it.

Elena Andreievna.—You mustn't look so—it isn't becoming. You must trust everybody; there's no living otherwise (Pause.)

Sonia.—Tell me honestly, as to a friend . . . Are you happy?

Elena Andreievna.—No.

Sonia.—I knew it. One more question, frankly, now—you would be happier if your husband were a young man, wouldn't you?

Elena Andreievna.—What a baby you still are! Why of course! (Laughs) Well, you may as well go on asking some more. Go on, ask . . .

Sonia.—You like the Doctor?

Elena Andreievna.—Yes, very much.

Sonia (Laughs).—I have such a stupid face, haven't I? He's gone and I still hear his voice, his footstep and when I glance up at that dark window there, I can see his face in it. Please let me tell you . . . But I mustn't talk so loud, I'm ashamed. Come to my room, we'll talk there. I seem silly to you? Tell the truth . . . Tell me something about him . . .

Elena Andreievna.—What do you want me to tell you?

Sonia.—He's so wonderful. . . He knows everything, can do anything . . . He cures the sick, grows forests . . .

Elena Andreievna.—Oh, it isn't only a question of forestry or medicine, it's it's—it's genius? And you know, my dear, the meaning of genius? Genius means fearlessness, freedom, breadth of beam . . . He plants a tree and already tries to foresee what will come of it a thousand years hence, dreams of the happiness of future ages! Such people are rare, we should love

them . . . He drinks, at times, is a bit coarse but what of that? No gifted man can long remain spotless in Russia. Think of the life this Doctor is compelled to lead! Travelling over impenetrable roads thru rain and frost and blizzards, tremendous distances, surrounded by people who are coarse, savage, who live in want, disease! So, for one who works and struggles under such conditions it is hard to reach the age of forty and remain pure and sober . . . (*Kisses her*) From my heart I wish you joy and happiness . . . You deserve it, too . . . (*Rises*) As for myself, I'm an incidental, episodic sort of character . . . In the musical world, in my husband's home, in all the romances with which I have come in contact, in short everywhere and at all times I have always been a mere episode. Really, when you come to think of it, Sonia dear, I am very, very unfortunate! (*Walks about the stage in agitation.*) There is no happiness for me in this world, none! Why are you laughing?

Sonia (*Laughs, covering her face*).—I am so happy . . . so happy . . .

Elena Andreievna.—I want to play . . . Now I really could play, I think.

Sonia.—Yes, do play something (*Embraces her*.) I can't sleep anyway . . . Play something.

Elena Andreievna.—All right. But your father is not asleep. When he is sick, music disturbs him. Better go ask him. If he doesn't mind, I'll be glad to play. Go.

Sonia.—All right (*Goes*.)

(*In the garden the watchman is heard rapping.*)

Elena Andreievna.—I haven't touched the piano in ages. Now I am going to play and weep; weep my fill for once (*Speaks out of the window.*) Is that you rapping, Ephraim?

Voice of Watchman.—Yes.

Elena Andreievna.—Please stop, the master's ill.

Voice of the Watchman.—All right, I'll go away. (*Goes off whistling.*) "Oh you, dog, you black boy, dog" (*Pause.*)

Sonia (*Returning*).—He says you better not play.

ACT III

The drawing room in SEREBRIAKOV'S house. Three doors; right, left and center—day

Voinitski, Sonia (*Sits*) *and Elena Andreievna* (*Walks up and down stage, lost in thought.*)

Voinitzki.—The Herr Professor has deigned to express a desire that we this day all assemble in the drawing-room at one

o'clock (*Look at watch.*) Quarter to one. Evidently desires to make an announcement to the world at large.

Elena Andreievna.—Business, doubtless, of some sort.

Voinitzki.—He has no business of any sort. He simply writes nonsense, is disgruntled and jealous and nothing more.

Sonia (Reproachfully).—Uncle!

Voinitzki.—There, I beg your pardon (*Points to ELENA ANDREIEVNA.*) There's a picture for you—please admire! Walks up and down, reeling with laziness! Charming—very!

Elena Andreievna.—You buzz—buzz all day long—it's a wonder you don't get tired of it (*Sorrowfully.*) I am dying of ennui, what do you want me to do?

Sonia (Shrugging her shoulders).—There is enough to do, goodness knows, if you only wanted to work.

Elena Andreievna.—What, for instance?

Sonia.—There's housekeeping, teaching, nursing and what not? Before you and papa came, Uncle Vania and I used to go to market ourselves to sell the flour.

Elena Andreievna.—But I wouldn't know how to do that. Besides it isn't interesting. It's only in novels with ideas that they go about teaching and nursing the peasants. Imagine me, all of a sudden, descending upon the poor unsuspecting creatures and falling to teaching or nursing them.

Sonia.—And I can't understand how you refrain from doing it. Just wait, you'll get used to it (*Embraces her.*) You see, dear, (*Laughing*) you mope and can't find a place for yourself all day, and moping and idleness are catching. Behold! Uncle Vania does nothing but follow you about like a shadow. I left my occupations and came hurrying here for a chat with you—I'm lazy and I can't help it! Dr. Michael Livovitch used to come very rarely, once a month at most, couldn't be persuaded to come oftener and now he's here every day; dropped his forests and his practice and comes. You're a witch, I know!

Voinitzki.—Why go on torturing yourself? (*Gayly.*) You are such a darling, such a glorious creature, there really must be the blood of some naiad in your veins, be a naiad then! Be sensible, let go for once in your life, fall up to your ears in love with some water sprite and go ker-plunk head first into the pool, leaving the Herr Professor and the rest of us speechless with astonishment!

Elena (Angrily).—Let me alone! How cruel it all is! (*About to leave.*)

Voinitzki (Stopping her).—There, there, my darling, forgive

me . . . I apologize (*Kisses her hand*) Peace.

Elena Andreievna.—You're enough to try the patience of a saint and you know it!

Voinitzki.—As a token of restored peace and harmony between us I am going to bring you a bouquet of roses immediately. I had them all ready for you this morning. Autumn roses—exquisite, mournful roses . . . (*Goes.*)

Sonia.—Autumn roses—exquisite, mournful roses . . . (*Both gaze out of window.*)

Elena Andreievna.—It's actually September already. How will we ever live through the winter here? (*Pause.*) Where is the Doctor?

Sonia.—In Uncle Vania's room. He's in there writing. I am glad Uncle Vania has gone, I must have a talk with you.

Elena Andreievna.—What about?

Sonia.—What about? (*Lays her head on ELENA ANDREIEVNA's shoulder in deep distress.*)

Elena Andreievna.—There, there . . . (*Strokes her hair.*) Enough, now, enough . . .

Sonia.—I am homely.

Elena Andreievna.—You have beautiful hair.

Sonia.—There it is! (*Looking round to catch a glimpse of herself in the mirror.*) It's always the way when a woman is ugly, they tell her: "You have beautiful eyes," or "Your hair is lovely" . . . I've been in love with him for the last six years. I love him more than my own mother. I hear him every moment, feel the clasp of his hand. I watch the door, waiting, and every minute it seems to me—here he comes. And here you see, I keep coming to you in order to talk about him. He is here every day now, but he never looks at me, never sees me . . . It is such torture. I have no hope whatever, none, none! (*In despair.*) Oh, God, give me strength . . . I prayed all night . . . I often approach him, try to make him tell me, gaze into his eyes . . . I have no more pride left, no power to control myself . . . I could not remain silent any longer and yesterday confessed to Uncle Vania. And all the servants know that I'm in love with him. Everybody knows . . .

Elena Andreievna.—And he?

Sonia.—He doesn't notice me.

Elena Andreievna (Thoughtfully).—He's a singular man . . . Do you know what? Let me talk to him . . . I'll be careful, just suggest . . . (*Pause.*) Really, how much longer can

you endure this uncertainty? Please, let me!

(SONIA *nods her head affirmatively.*)

Elena Andreievna.—Good, either he cares or doesn't care—that ought not to be hard to ascertain. Now don't you be confused, or troubled, my dear. I'll question him so tactfully that he won't even suspect. All that we want is yes or no (*Pause.*) If it is no, he had better stop coming. So?

(SONIA *nods her head affirmatively.*)

Elena Andreievna.—It is easier when you don't meet. We'll not put it off too long either, but examine him immediately. He offered to show me some drawings . . . Go tell him I wish to see him.

Sonia (In great agitation).—You'll tell me the whole truth?

Elena Andreievna.—Yes, certainly. I think the truth, whatever it may be, it is not so terrible as uncertainty. You may depend on me, dear.

Sonia.—Yes, yes . . . I'll tell him you'd like to see his charts (*Goes and stops near the door.*) No, uncertainty is easier . . . There's at least hope . . .

Elena Andreievna.—What did you say?

Sonia.—Nothing (*Goes.*)

Elena Andreievna (Alone).—There is nothing worse than to know another's secret and be unable to help (*Thoughtfully.*) He's not in love with her—that's certain, but why should he not marry her? She isn't beautiful, but for a country doctor of his age she would make an excellent wife. She's intelligent and so good and sweet! But that's not the main thing, what am I thinking about . . . (*Pause.*) How well I understand this poor child! In the midst of this desperate stupidity where, instead of people there roam about you some sort of gray shadows who carry on the most insipid conversations and all that concerns them is to eat, drink, sleep, once in a while there arrives this man unlike all the others, interesting, handsome, alluring!—Why, it's as if amid the utter darkness the bright sun suddenly arose . . . Oh, to yield oneself to the charm of such a man, to forget oneself . . . I am afraid I'm a bit gone on him myself. I miss him when he's away and here I am smiling at the very thought of him. This Uncle Vania insists that I have the blood of a naiad in my veins. "Let yourself go for once in your life!" Who knows? Perhaps I am meant to . . . Oh, to fly, free as a bird, away from you all, from your sleepy faces, your tittle-tattle, to forget your very existence even . . . But I am cowardly, shy . . . My

conscience would torture me to death. He comes here every day now and I can only guess why he comes and already I feel guilty, ready to throw myself on my knees before Sonia, implore her forgiveness, weep . . .

Astrov (Enters with chart).—Good day! (*They shake hands*) You wished to see my picture?

Elena Andreievna.—Yesterday you promised to show me your work . . . You are at liberty?

Astrov.—Yes, certainly (*Spreads out map on card-table, fastening the corners with thumb tacks.*) Where were you born?

Elena Andreievna (Assisting him).—In Petrograd.

Astrov.—And received your education?

Elena Andreievna.—At the conservatory there.

Astrov.—On second thought, this will not interest you.

Elena Andreievna.—Why not? I am not personally familiar with the country, but I've read a great deal about it.

Astrov.—I have here, in Ivan Petrovitch's room, my own table . . . When I am utterly tired out, to the point of stupor, that is, I drop everything and run here to amuse myself at this thing for an hour or two . . . Ivan Petrovitch and Sophia Alexandrovna rattle away on the counting-board while I sit at my table near them and daub—it is warm and peaceful, the cricket chirps. But I don't often indulge in this pastime, only once a month at most . . . (*Pointing on map.*) Now look here. It's a picture of our district, such as it was fifty years ago. The dark—and light-green colors represent the forests; one half of the entire area is covered by forests. Where the green is overlaid by this network of red, there goats and elk abounded . . . I indicate here both flora and fauna. Upon this lake floated innumerable swans, geese, ducks, and hosts of different species of birds filled the air—clouds of them! Outside of the regular villages and hamlets, you find scattered here and there all sorts of smaller settlements, farms, heritages, water-mills . . . Of horned cattle and horses there was a great abundance; the blue paint indicates that; for instance in this section the blue paint is quite thick: here were whole droves of cattle and at least three horses to every yard (*Pause*) Now look lower. This is how it looked 25 years ago. Here we have under forest only one-third of the entire area. There are no more goats, only elk. The green and blue colors are growing paler . . . etc. etc. . . . We pass over to the third part—a picture of the district at the present time. The green is still visible here and there but no

longer in solid stretches, but only in spots. Vanished entirely have the elk, swans and woodcocks. Of all the little settlements, farms, hermitages and mills that existed formerly, not a vestige remains. In short a picture of gradual but certain degeneration, which, apparently lacks but ten years to become complete. You may conclude this to be the influence of civilization. That of necessity the old life had to give place to the new. Yes, I would understand it if in place of these exterminated forests there stretched macadamized roads, railways, if there were mills, factories, schools—if the people had grown healthier, wealthier, wiser, but no such thing! There is in the district the same mud, mosquitoes, the same impenetrable roads, the same wretchedness, typhoid, diphtheria, fires . . . This degeneration is the result of an unequal struggle for existence. It is the result of ignorance, inertia, lack of understanding. It's simply a case where a sick, starving, freezing man, in order to preserve the remnants of life, in order to save his children, instinctively, unconsciously, almost, seizes upon anything that will warm his body, stay his hunger; destroys everything that comes his way, with no thought for the morrow . . . Almost everything is already destroyed, but there has been nothing as yet built up to take its place. (*Coldly*) I see by your face that you are not interested.

Elena Andreievna.—But I understand it all so little.

Astrov.—There is nothing here that requires particular powers of understanding. It simply does not interest you.

Elena Andreievna.—To speak frankly, my thoughts were elsewhere. Forgive me. I am obliged to put you through a sort of cross-examination and I am embarrassed. I don't know how to begin.

Astrov.—Cross-examination?

Elena Andreievna.—Yes, cross-examination, but . . . an entirely harmless one, I assure you. Let's sit. (*They sit*) The matter concerns a young woman. I propose that we talk this over in a perfectly honest, straight forward manner, like two pals, and then forget all about it. Yes?

Astrov.—Yes.

Elena Andreievna.—It's about my stepdaughter, Sonia, that I wish to talk to you. You like her?

Astrov.—Yes, I have a deep regard for her.

Elena Andreievna.—Do you admire her, as a woman?

Astrov (After a moment),—No.

Elena Andreievna.—Just a word or two more and we'll have it

over with. You have noticed nothing?

Astrov.—Nothing.

Elena Andreievna (Takes his hand).—You do not love her, I see that plainly enough . . . She suffers . . . Surely you understand and will stop coming . . .

Astrov (Rises).—I'm too old for that sort of thing now and besides, I'm so busy . . . (*Shrugging his shoulders*) When is there time? (*He's embarrassed.*)

Elena Andreievna.—Oh, what an unpleasant conversation! I feel as put out as if I had been lugging a thousand pounds. Thank goodness it's over! And now we'll forget it as completely as if we had never mentioned the subject and . . . and please go. You are wise, you understand, I am sure . . . (*Pause*) Why, I can actually feel my face burning.

Astrov.—If you had told me this a month or two ago, I might perhaps have considered it, but now . . . (*With another shrug*) Of course if she suffers, I shall certainly . . . There is just one thing I don't understand about this, though. Of what use can be to you this "cross-examination," as you call it? (*Looks into her eyes and threatens her with his finger*) By Jove, you're—clever!

Elena Andreievna.—What do you mean?

Astrov (Laughing).—Oh, so clever! Suppose Sonia does suffer, I am ready to admit that such may be the case, but what's that got to do with this cross-examination of yours? (*Without giving her a chance to answer, gayly.*) Please, please! Oh, don't look so innocent, you know very well why I am here every day . . . why and on whose account I come; you know it only too well, you sweet ravisher! You needn't look so shocked, I'm an old bird, you know . . .

Elena Andreievna (Entirely at a loss).—Ravisher! I don't understand in the least.

Astrov.—Beauteous, fluffy little polecat, you! You must have victims, eh? A whole month I've let everything go to the dogs and done nothing but run after you and that pleases you tremendously, tre-mendously! Well, what of it? I am vanquished, you knew that without any cross-examinations (*With folded arms and head bowed.*) I am at your mercy. Proceed to devour me!

Elena Andreievna.—You're out of your senses!

Astrov (Laughing through his teeth).—You're coy . . .

Elena Andreievna.—Oh, I am much finer and better than you

think me! I swear to you (*Starts to go.*)

Astrov (Intercepting her).—I leave here today and shan't come again, but . . . (*Takes her hand, looks all around.*) Where will we see each other? Speak quickly, where? Some one may come in, hurry, speak . . . (*With passion.*) What a beauty you are! You marvelous . . . One kiss . . . Let me kiss just your fragrant hair . . .

Elena Andreievna.—I swear to you . . .

Astrov (Preventing her from speaking).—Why should you swear to me. There's no need for useless protestations or words . . . Oh, how beautiful! What hands! (*Kisses her hands.*)

Elena Andreievna.—Stop it, I tell you! Go away . . . (*Takes away her hands*) You forget yourself.

Astrov.—Speak, then, speak, where will we see each other tomorrow? (*Puts his arms around her.*) You see it is inevitable, we must see each other (*Kisses her; at this moment VOINITZKI enters with bouquet of roses and stops at the door.*)

Elena Andreievna (Without seeing VOINITZKI).—Have pity . . . leave me . . . (*Puts her head on ASTROV'S breast for a moment.*) No! (*Starts to go.*)

Astrov (Detaining her, still with his arms around her waist).—Come tomorrow to the forestry . . . two o'clock . . . Yes? Yes? You'll come?

Elena Andreievna (Seeing VOINITZKI).—Let me go! (*In great confusion retires to window*) This is terrible . . .

Voinitzki (Puts bouquet on a chair; in his agitation, mops his face and behind the collar with handkerchief).—That's nothing . . . that's nothing . . . no matter . . . it's nothing . . .

Astrov.—The weather today, my dear Ivan Petrovitch, is what you might call not at all bad. It was rather cloudy this morning, looked like rain, and now—bright sunshine! Conscientiously speaking, the fall has burned out splendidly! And the winter crops, too, are rather good (*Rolls the plan into a tube*) There's just one thing, the days have grown shorter. (*Goes.*)

Elena Andreievna (Hurriedly approaches VOINITZKI).—You will see to it, you will use your utmost influence that my husband and I go away from here this very day! Do you hear? This very day!

Voinitzki (Wiping his face).—What? Yes, yes, of course . . . very well . . . I saw it all, Hélén, everything . . .

Elena Andreievna (Nervously).—You hear? I must go away from here this very day!

(Enter SEREBRIAKOV, SONIA, TELEGIN and MARENA.)

Telegin.—I, too, your excellency am somewhat out of sorts, today. I've been ailing for two days now. There's something the matter with my head . . . A bit . . .

Serebriakov.—But where are the others? I don't like this house—a perfect labyrinth. Twenty-six enormous rooms, everybody straggles off somewhere and you can never find anybody (*Rings.*) Ask Maria Vasilievna and Elena Andreievna to come here!

Elena Andreievna.—I am here.

Serebriakov.—Please be seated, ladies and gentlemen.

Sonia (Approaching ELENA ANDREIEVNA with impatience).—What did he say?

Elena Andreievna.—Later . . .

Sonia.—You're trembling? You're excited? (*Gazing searchingly into her face*) I understand . . . He said that he will stop coming here . . . Yes? (*Pause.*) Tell me! Yes?

(ELENA ANDREIEVNA nods her head affirmatively.)

Serebriakov (To TELEGIN).—When it comes to sickness, I can still reconcile myself to it after a fashion, but what I cannot stomach is the order of life in the country! I feel as if I had rolled off the earth upon some strange planet. Be seated ladies and gentlemen, I beg of you. Sonia! (*SONIA does not hear him. She remains standing with her head bowed in grief*) Sonia! (*Pause*) She doesn't hear me (*To MARENA*) And you too, nurse, sit down, please. (*The nurse sits and knits stocking*) I beg of you, ladies and gentlemen, to hang your ears, as it were upon the peg of attention (*Laughs.*)

Voinitzki.—Perhaps you can get along without me here? I may go?

Serebriakov.—No, indeed! This matter concerns you more than any one.

Voinitzki.—What is it you want of me?

Serebriakov.—You . . . But why are you angry (*Pause.*) If I have offended you in any way, I ask your pardon.

Voinitzki.—Leave off that tone. Let's get down to business. . . . What do you want?

(Enter MARIA VASILIEVNA.)

Serebriakov.—Here is *Maman*, too. I begin, ladies and gentlemen (*Pause.*) I have invited you, ladies and gentlemen in

order "to announce to you that the inspector is coming!" But all jokes aside. The matter is serious. I have assembled you, ladies and gentlemen, to ask your advice and assistance and, remembering your kindness to me at all times heretofore, I am in hopes of obtaining both. I am a man of learning, of books and have always felt foreign in matters pertaining to practical life. To get along without the guidance of people with business ability, I simply cannot and so I ask you, Ivan Petrovitch, as well as your Elia Elitch, also you *Maman* . . . The idea is this: *Manet omnes una nox*, in other words, we are all in God's hands. I am old, sick and therefore consider it expedient to arrange my business affairs in so far as they concern my family. My life is already ended, I am not thinking about myself, but I have a young wife, a young girl daughter (*Pause*.) For me to go on living in the country, is out of the question. We're not cut out for this life. To live in the city on the income derived from this estate is impossible. To sell the forest, for instance, that would be to resort to extraordinary measures and besides it could not be repeated every year. We must, therefore, find a way that would insure us a steady, more or less, definite income. I bethought me of one such plan and have now the honor of presenting it for your consideration. Waiving all details, I shall state its general features only. Our estate yields us on an average of no more than two per cent on the investment. I propose that we sell it. If we convert the money so realized into bonds, we will receive from four to five per cent with enough left over, I think, to purchase a small villa in Finland.

Voinitzki.—Wait . . . There must be something wrong with my hearing. Repeat what you just said, will you?

Serebriakov.—We convert the money into bonds and with the remainder purchase a villa in Finland.

Voinitzki.—Hang your Finland . . . You said something else.

Serebriakov.—I propose that we sell the estate.

Voinitzki.—Oh, that's it! You sell the estate, excellent, great idea . . . And what do you propose shall become of me and my aged mother and Sonia?

Serebriakov.—All that can be decided on in time. Can't do it all at once, you know.

Voinitzki.—Wait. Evidently till now I hadn't a grain of common sense; for till now I had the folly to suppose that this estate belongs to Sonia. My late father bought it as a dowry for

my sister. Till now I was naive enough to suppose that according to law—which is, by the way, not altogether Greek to me—my sister's estate passes on to Sonia.

Serebriakov.—Yes, the estate belongs to Sonia. Who questions it? Without the consent of Sonia, I have no intention of selling it. Besides, I propose doing it for Sonia's sake.

Voinitzki.—This is preposterous, preposterous. Either I am out of my senses, or . . . or . . .

Maria Vasilievna.—Zhon, don't contradict Alexander. I assure you he knows best what's right and what isn't.

Voinitzki.—Please give me some water somebody (*Drinks water.*) Say on, what you will, what you will.

Serebriakov.—I don't understand what you are so wrought up about. I don't say that my project is ideal. If the rest of you find it unsuitable, I shall not insist (*Pause.*)

Telegin (In confusion).—I experience toward learning, your excellency, not only a feeling of reverence, but one of kinship as well. My brother Gregori Elitch's wife's brother, you know him perhaps, Konstantin Trofimovitch Lakedemonov was a magistrate . . .

Voinitzki.—Wait, Waffles, this is business . . . Wait, later . . . (*To SEREBRIAKOV*) There, ask him. The estate was bought of his uncle.

Serebriakov.—But there's no need to ask. What's it all about anyway?

Voinitzki.—This estate was bought according to the values of those times for ninety-five thousand. Father paid only seventy and there remained a debt of twenty-five thousand. Now listen . . . This estate would never have been purchased if I had not refused my share of the inheritance in favor of my sister whom I loved devotedly. And that's not all. For ten long years I worked like an ox until I paid off the entire debt.

Serebriakov.—I am sorry I began this conversation.

Voinitzki.—The estate is now free from debt; and that it is entirely unembarrassed is due solely to my individual efforts. And now that I am old, I am to be kicked off the place by scruff of the neck.

Serebriakov.—What are you after, I don't understand!

Voinitzki.—Twenty-five years I managed this estate, worked and sent you the money like any—the most conscientious—clerk and during the whole time you never once thanked me. In all that time, throughout my youth and now, I received of you five

hundred roubles a year—a pauper's pittance! And not once did it occur to you to offer me a raise in wages of a single rouble!

Serebriakov.—How was I to know, Ivan Petrovitch? I am not a business man and don't understand these things. You could have raised yourself as much as you liked without my knowing anything about it.

Voinitzki.—In other words, I might have stolen. Why don't you all despise me, ladies and gentlemen, because I didn't steal? I would have been perfectly justified in doing it and now I would not be a begger.

Maria Vasilievna (Sternly).—Zhon!

Telegin (In agitation).—Vania, my dear friend, don't, don't . . . I tremble . . . why spoil cordial relations? (*Kisses him.*) Don't.

Voinitzki.—Twenty-five years this mother of mine and I sat here like moles immured in these walls. All our thoughts and emotions belonged only to you. During the day we talked about you and your works—you were our pride, we pronounced your name with awe—the nights we spent in reading books and journals which I now profoundly despise!

Telegin.—Don't, Vania, Don't . . . I cannot bear it . . .

Serebriakov (Wrathfully).—I can't understand what it is you want?

Voinitzki.—You were to us a being of a superior order and for your articles we knew every one of them by heart . . . But my eyes are opened at last. I see it all now. You write about art and you understand nothing at all about it! All of your works that I so admired are absolutely worthless and you're a humbug!

Serebriakov.—Ladies and gentlemen, will you make him keep quiet at last or shall I go?

Elena Andreievna.—Ivan Petrovitch, I demand that you keep still! Do you hear me?

Voinitzki.—I won't keep still! (*Getting in SEREBRIAKOV'S way*) Wait I haven't finished with you! You ruined my life! I never lived, never lived at all! For your sake, I destroyed, I ruined the best years of my life! You are my bitterest enemy!

Telegin.—I can't . . . I can't . . . I am going away . . .

(*Exit in great agitation.*)

Serebriakov.—What do you want of me? And what right

have you to talk to me in that tone? You insignificant creature! If the estate is yours, keep it! I don't want it.

Elena Andreievna.—This very instant I must get out of this hell! (*Screams*) I cannot endure it . . . I cannot endure it . . .

Voinitzki.—My life is wasted I tell you! I have talent, intelligence, initiative. Had I lived normally, I, too, might have developed into a Schopenhaur, a Dostoevski . . . But what am I talking about . . . I am losing my mind . . . Mother! What shall I do! Mother!

Maria Vasilievna (Sternly) Do as Alexander tells you.

Sonia (Crouching on her knees near nurse).—Nursie! Nursie!

Voinitzki.—Mother, dear, I am desperate! Tell me what to do? No, don't, don't speak! I know what to do (*To SEREBRIAKOV.*) You'll understand me! (*Goes through door center.*)

(*MARIA VASILIEVNA follows him.*)

Serebriakov.—Ladies and Gentlemen, what is all this, anyhow? Why don't you take this maniac away from me? I cannot continue to live with him under the same roof. He lives here (*Points to center door*) almost along side of me . . . Let him move to the village, into the wing, anywhere; but here he cannot stay, or I shall leave this house tomorrow; for to remain with him under the same roof, I cannot.

Elena Andreievna (To her husband) We go away from here today! You must give the order at once.

Serebriakov.—The insignificant runt!

Sonia (On her knees turns to father; nervously and with tears).—You ought to have some pity, papa! Uncle Vania and I are so unhappy! (*Struggles to overcome her sobs*) You must have some pity! Remember when you were younger, Uncle Vania and grandma spent nights in translating books for you, copying your papers . . . whole nights, whole nights! Uncle Vania and I worked without rest, were afraid to spend a kopek for ourselves and sent it all to you . . . We earned our bread! But what am I talking about, that isn't what I want to say, that isn't it at all . . . but you ought to try to understand our side of it, papa. You should be a little more kind.

Elena Andreievna (In great excitement to her husband).—Alexander, in God's name go find him and try to come to an understanding with him. Go, I implore you . . .

Serebriakov.—Very well, I shall have an explanation with him . . . I don't blame him in any way, I am not even

angry, but you must admit that his behavior is strange, to say the least. All right, I shall go to him (*Goes through center door.*)

Elena Andreievna.—Be gentle with him, try to soothe him . . . (*Follows him off.*)

Sonia (Clinging to nurse).—Oh, nursie, nursie!

Marena.—There, child, don't worry, They'll soon get over it. They'll hiss a while, the ganders, and stop . . . Hiss—and stop . . .

Sonia.—Nursie! Nursie!

Marena (Pats her head).—You shiver as with cold! There, there, little orphan child. God is merciful. A wee bit of linderberry or raspberry tea and it'll all pass away . . . Don't grieve, little orphan child . . . (*Looking at center door, fiercely.*) Just listen to them, the ganders, drat them!

(*Behind the scenes a shot is heard followed by a cry from ELENA ANDREIEVNA; SONIA shudders.*)

Marena.—Oh! Drat you!

Serebriakov (Rushes in, staggering with horror).—Hold him! Hold him! He's out of his mind, he's out of his mind!

(*ELENA ANDREIEVNA and VOINITZKI struggle in the doorway.*)

Elena Andreievna (Trying to get the revolver away from him).—Give it up! You're told to give it up!

Voinitzki.—Let go Hélén, let me go! (*Having wrenched himself loose, he rushes forward and searches for SEREBRIAKOV with his eyes*) Where is he? Ah, there you are! (*Shoots at him.*) Bang! (*Pause.*) Missed? Again a failure! (*Fiercely*) Oh, the devil, the devil . . . the devil take it all! (*Slams the revolver on the floor and sinks exhausted into chair. SEREBRIAKOV is stunned; ELENA ANDREIEVNA leans against the wall, she is hysterical.*)

Elena Andreievna.—Take me away from here! Take me away, kill me, do with me what you will . . . but remain here I cannot . . . I cannot . . . I cannot . . .

Voinitzki (Beside himself).—Oh, what am I doing? What am I doing?

Sonia (Faintly).—Nursie! Nursie!

ACT IV

IVAN PETROVITCH'S Room; it is his bedroom but serves too as an office in which is transacted the business connected with the estate. Near the window is a large table with receipt and expense books and papers of every description. A desk, clothes-press, cupboard, scales.

A smaller table for ASTROV; on this table are drawing materials, paints, a portfolio. A bird-cage containing a starling. On the wall is a map of Africa, evidently of no use to anyone here. A huge daveno, covered with oil-cloth. At left a door, leading to sleeping apartments; at the right—a door to hall; near the right door is a mat, for the peasants to wipe their feet on. An Autumn evening. Quiet.

TELEGIN and MARENA sit opposite one another, winding yarn.

Telegin.—You better hurry, Marena Teniofeievna, they'll soon be calling us to say good-bye. They've ordered the carriage already.

Marena (*Tries to wind more quickly*).—There's very little left.

Telegin.—They're going to live in Harkov.

Marena.—So much the better.

Telegin.—Scared stiff . . . Elena Andreievna, "Not another hour, says she, do I care to live here . . . let's go and let's go . . . we'll live, says she, a little while in Harkov, look around and then send for our things . . ." They mean to travel light. It seems, Marena Temofeievna, it wasn't destined for them to live here . . .

Marena.—So much the better. Raising such a rumpus, shooting and what not!—it's a disgrace.

Telegin.—Yes, the subject is worthy the brush of Aivazovskii.

Marena.—May my eyes never see the like! (*Pause*) We'll start life again like it used to be. In the morning at eight o'clock, tea; at one o'clock dinner, in the evening sit down to supper, everything in its proper order same as the rest of the folks, like Christians (*With a sigh*.) Oh, the sins of one, it's been a long time since I've eaten some vermicelli.

Telegin.—Yes, it's been quite a time since they've prepared vermicelli, for us (*Pause*.) Quite a time . . . This morning, you know, Marena Temofeievna, I was walking through the village and a storekeeper after me: "Ei, you hanger-on!" It made me feel so badly!

Marena.—Now, don't you pay attention, batiushka. We're all of us hangers-on under God: You and Sonia and Ivan Petrovitch—no one sits idle, we all work! All of us . . . Where's Sonia?

Telegin.—In the garden. Walking about with the Doctor, looking for Ivan Petrovitch. They're afraid he shouldn't lay violent hands on himself.

Marena.—And where is his pistol?

Telegin (*In a whisper*).—I hid it in the cellar!

Marena (With a chuckle) The sins of us!

(Enter from out-doors VOINITZKI and ASTROV.)

Voinitzki.—Let up on me! *(To MARENA and TELEGIN)*

Go away from here, give me a chance to be alone for one hour at least. I can't stand this guardianship.

Telegin. .—I go at once, Vania *(Goes on tiptoe.)*

Marena.—Goosie, goosie-gander: "Go—go—go!" *(Gathers up yarn and leaves.)*

Voinitzki.—Leave me.

Astrov.—With the greatest pleasure in life. I should have gone long ago, but I repeat, I shan't leave until you return what you took from me.

Voinitzki.—I took nothing from you.

Astrov.—I am speaking seriously—don't detain me. I should have left long ago, I tell you.

Voinitzki.—There isn't a thing I took from you. *(Both sit.)*

Astrov.—So? Well, I'll wait a little longer and then if necessary we'll use force. We'll simply bind you and search you. I am saying this in all seriousness, mind you.

Voinitzki.—As you please *(Pause.)* Oh, to make such a fool of myself! Twice to fire and to miss both times! That I shall never forgive myself.

Astrov.—If you were seized by such an irresistible desire to shoot, why didn't you put the muzzle to your own precious brow and fire?

Voinitzki (Shrugging his shoulders).—Funny.—I made an attempt to kill and I am not arrested, not prosecuted? That means they consider me insane *(Bitter laughter.)* I—am insane! But people who under the guise of professors, wizards of learning conceal their incapacity, stupidity, their howling heartlessness, they are not insane! People who marry fossils and then in broad daylight openly deceive them, they are not insane! I saw, I saw you with your arms around her.

Astrov.—Yes, I had my arms around her and you take that! *(Thumbs his nose.)*

Voinitzki (Glancing at door).—Oh, no, insane is the earth that still holds you!

Astrov.—You know that's nonsense!

Voinitzki.—What of it? I am a lunatic, hopeless and irresponsible, I have a right to talk nonsense!

Astrov.—Oh, that's an old trick. You're not insane, you're just an idiot and a buffoon, that's all! Once upon a time I, too,

considered every crank as diseased, abnormal; but now I'm of the opinion that the normal state of mankind is being cranky. You are perfectly normal.

Voinitzki (Covers his face with his hands).—Oh, the shame of it! If you only knew how humiliated I feel! This keen agony of humiliation can be compared with no other pain (*In despair.*) It is unbearable! (*Leans on table.*) What shall I do? What shall I do?

Astrov.—Do nothing.

Voinitzki.—Give me poison! Oh, my God . . . I am forty-seven years old; if I should live to be sixty, there remain to me still thirteen years. How am I to endure these years? What will I do, what fill them with? Oh, you know (*Convulsively clutches ASTROV'S arm*) you know, if one could live out one's remaining years after some new pattern, somehow . . . To wake up some bright, still morning and feel that you've begun life over again, that the entire past is forgotten, scattered like smoke (*Weeps*) To begin life anew . . . Prompt me how to begin . . . where to begin . . .

Astrov (With irritation).—What kind of a new life is there for me and you, pray? Our position, yours and mine, is hopeless I tell you.

Voinitzki.—You think so?

Astrov.—I know it.

Voinitzki.—Give me poison then . . . (*Pointing to his heart.*) There's a consuming fire here . . .

Astrov (Yells angrily).—Shut up! (*More gently*) Those who will live a hundred or two hundred years after us and who will despise us for having led such stupid, colorless lives—they perhaps will find a way to be happy. But as for us . . . for us, you and me, there is just one hope. The hope that when we are peacefully reposing in our graves, we will be visited by visions, beautiful, ideal dreams (*With a sigh.*) Yes, brother, in the entire neighborhood, there were only two decent, intelligent men: You and I. And yet within a matter of something like ten years this hateful country life has overwhelmed us both. With her rotten exudations she has poisoned our blood and we have turned into just such vulgarians as the rest of them (*Quickly.*) But don't try to get me off the track. You return to me what you have stolen.

Voinitzki.—I never took anything from you.

Astrov.—You took a bottle of morphine out of my traveling

medicine chest (*Pause*) Listen to me, if you are determined to put an end to your existence, go to the woods and blow out your brains there. The morphine you return to me, or there'll be no end of talk and surmises. They'll think I gave it to you . . . And I'll have enough on my hands with cutting you open. You think it's so interesting? (*Enter SONIA.*)

Voinitzki.—Let up on me, I say!

Astrov (To SONIA).—Sophia Alexandrovna, your uncle has swiped a bottle of morphine out of my medicine chest and won't give it back. Tell him . . . it isn't wise, to say the least. Besides I haven't time. I must be going.

Sonia.—Uncle Vania, did you take the morphine? (*Pause.*)

Astrov.—He did take it, I am sure of it.

Sonia.—Give it back. Why do you frighten us? (*Tenderly.*) Give it back, Uncle Vania! I am perhaps no less unfortunate than you, but I don't give way to despair. I bear it all patiently and will continue to bear it patiently until my life reaches its normal close. You, too, must be patient. (*Pause.*) Give it back! (*Kisses his hands*) Dear, darling uncle, sweetest, give it back! (*Weeps*) You are good, you will take pity on us and give it back. Patience, uncle, patience . . .

Voinitzki (Reaches vial from the table and gives to it ASTROV).—There, take it (*To SONIA*) But we must set to work immediately, at once . . . Let's do something, or I . . . I . . .

Sonia.—Yes, yes, work. Just as soon as they are gone we set to work . . . (*Nervously sorting papers on the table*) Everything has been so neglected.

Astrov (Puts vial into medicine-chest and fastens the straps).—Now, I can start.

Elena Andreievna (Enters).—Ivan Petrovitch, you are here? We go immediately. Go to Alexander, there's something he wants to say to you.

Sonia.—Yes, go Uncle Vania (*Takes VOINITZKI'S arm*) Come, let's go together. Papa and you must make it up, that's very important. (*SONIA and VOINITZKI go out.*)

Elena Andrieivna.—I am going away (*Offers ASTROV her hand.*) Good-by.

Astrov.—Already?

Elena Andreievna.—The carriage is at the door.

Astrov.—Good-by.

Elena Andrieivna.—You promised me today that you would leave here.

Astrov.—I remember. I am leaving now. (*Pause*) Scared? (*Takes her hand*) Is it so dreadful?

Elena Andreievna.—Yes.

Astrov.—I think you might stay! Hm? Tomorrow at the forestry . . .

Elena Andreievna.—No. That's final. . . That is why I am able to look at you so bravely; it's because we are really going. I ask but one thing of you; think better of me. I want you to respect me.

Astrov.—Bah! (*Gesture of impatience*) Remain, I beg of you. Confess, you have nothing at all to do in this world, no aim in life, nothing to occupy your attention, and sooner or later, you're bound to give way to your feelings—it is inevitable. Then why not here, instead of Harkov or Koursk somewhere? Here, in the heart of nature, where it is all at least poetic and beautiful. There's a forestry here and old farmhouses in semi-ruin, altogether in the style of Tourgenev.

Elena Andreievna.—You're so funny! I am really angry with you and yet I shall think of you always with joy. You're so original and interesting. You and I will never see each other again and so—why conceal it? I even fell in love with you a little bit. There, let's shake hands and part friends. Remember me kindly.

Astrov (After shaking hands).—Yes, go! Seemingly you are a perfectly splendid, straight-forward sort of creature and yet there is something uncanny about your entire personality. You came here with your husband and immediately all of us who were working here so busily, hustling—bustling, building something, were obliged, one by one, to give up our various occupations and be wholly taken up with your husband's gout and you—You two have infected us all with your idleness. I allowed myself to become completely carried away, a whole month did absolutely nothing and all the while people were sick, my groves and forests were converted by the peasants into pasture-grounds for their cattle, etc., etc., etc. . . . And so wherever you go, you and your husband, you're sure to carry ruin and destruction with you . . . I am joking, of course, and yet—it's weird. And I am convinced that if you remained the havoc would soon be complete. I should certainly become annihilated and you too . . . would scarcely come to good. So go your ways. *Finita La Comedia!*

*Elena Andreievna (Takes pencil from his table and hides it quickly).—*That's for a remembrance.

*Astrov.—*It seems so strange . . . We were acquainted and all of a sudden for some reason or other—never to see each other again! So is it in this world. Do you know what? While there is no one here, before Uncle Vania has appeared with his bouquet, let me . . . kiss you—for good-by . . . Yes? (*Kisses her on the cheek*) There . . . that's splendid.

*Elena Andreievna.—*Good luck! (*Glancing round*) Come what may, for once in my life! (*Impulsively throws her arms around his neck and instantly both walk hurriedly away from each other.*) I must go.

*Astrov.—*Yes, hurry, go. If, as you say, the carriage is ready, go at once.

*Elena Andreievna.—*They are coming, I think (*Both listen.*)

*Astrov.—*Finita!

(*Enter ZEREBRIAKOV, VOINITZKI, MARIA VASILIEVNA with book, TELEGIN and SONIA.*)

*Serebriakov (To VOINITZKI).—*May he lose an eye who means to recall the past! After what has happened, I have lived through so much in these few hours that I am sure I could write a thorough treatise on the proper conduct of life for the edification of posterity. I gladly accept your apologies and herewith offer you mine in return. Farewell! (*Kisses VOINITZKI three times.*)

*Voinitzki.—*You will continue to receive regularly the same amount as formerly. Everything remains as it was between us.

(*ELENA ANDREIEVNA embraces SONIA.*)

*Serebriakov (Kisses MARIA VASILIEVNA's hand).—*Maman.

*Maria Vasilievna (Kissing him).—*Alexander, be sure to have your pictures taken again and send me a photograph. You know how dear you are to me always.

*Telegin.—*Farewell, your excellency! Do not forget us!

*Serebriakov (Having kissed his daughter).—*Farewell . . . Farewell everybody! (*Offering his hand to ASTROV*) Thanks for your agreeable society . . . I respect your trend of thought, your ideals, your enthusiasms, but pardon an old man for introducing into my farewell greeting a bit of friendly advice—work, ladies and gentlemen, we must work! (*General bow.*) Good luck! (*Goes; MARIA VASILIEVNA and SONIA follow him.*)

*Voinitzki (Ardently kissing ELENA ANDREIEVNA's hand).—*Good-by . . . Forgive . . . We will never see each other again.

Elena Andreievna (Deeply affected).—Good-by, dear boy! (Kisses him on the forehead and goes out.)

Astrov (To TELEGIN).—Waffles, be good enough to tell them to incidentally bring round my rig, too.

Telegin.—Most assuredly, my friend (Goes.) (There remain only ASTROV and VOINITZKI.)

Astrov (Gathers up paints from the table and puts them into his traveling bag).—How is it you don't go to see them off?

Voinitzki.—Let them go, I . . . I can't. It is too painful. I must occupy myself with something without delay . . . Work, work! (Rummaging among the papers on the table.)

(Pause; the jingling of bells is heard.)

Astrov.—They're off. The Professor is delighted, no doubt; nothing could tempt him back again.

Marena (Enters).—They're gone! (Sits in armchair and knits stocking.)

Sonia (Enters).—Gone! (Dries her eyes) I hope they have a safe journey (To her uncle) Well, Uncle Vania, now let's do something.

Voinitzki.—Work, work . . .

Sonia.—How long, how long we haven't sat at this table together (Lights lamp on the table.) I don't think there's any ink . . . (Takes inkwell, goes to cupboard and fills it) I am sorry they're gone.

Maria Vasilievna (Comes in slowly).—Gone! (Sits and becomes absorbed in reading.)

Sonia (Sits at the table and turns over the pages of an account book).—Let's first of all, Uncle Vania, straighten out our accounts. They are terribly neglected. Today some one sent after a bill again. You make out one bill, I—another . . .

Voinitzki (Writes).—Account . . . Mr . . . (Both write in silence.)

Marena (Yawns).—Feel like going s'eeepy-by already.

Astrov.—How peaceful! The pens squeak rhythmically, the crickets chirp. It is warm, cosy . . . I really hate to leave (The jingling of bells is heard) There is my rig. It remains, therefore, only to say good-by to you my friends, to my table and—off! (Puts chart into portfolio.)

Marena.—What's your hurry? Sit down.

Astrov.—I mustn't.

Voinitzki (Writes).—“Balance from old account, two seventy-five . . . ”

(Enter WORKMAN.)

Workman.—Michael Livovitch, the horses are at the door.

Astrov.—Yes, I heard them (*Hands him the medicine-chest, traveling bag and portfolio*) There, take it and be careful not to bend the portfolio.

Workman.—Just so (*Goes.*)

Astrov.—Now then . . . (*Goes to take leave.*)

Sonia.—When do we see you again?

Astrov.—Not before next summer probably. Hardly this winter . . . Of course, if anything should happen, let me know—I'll come (*Shakes hands*) Thank you for bread, for salt, for all your kindness . . . for everything (*Goes to nurse and kisses her on the head*) Good-by old-un!

Marena.—Going like that, without tea?

Astrov.—Don't seem to care for any, nurse.

Marena.—A little vodochka, perhaps?

Astrov (Hesitatingly).—Well, just as you say . . .

(MARENA goes out.)

Astrov (After a pause).—My off horse seems a bit lame. I noticed it yesterday when Petrushka was taking them to water.

Voinitzki.—Probably needs re-shoeing.

Astrov.—I see where I'll have to turn in at the blacksmith's when we get to Rozhdestveno. Can't be helped (*Approaches the map of Africa and examines it*) I'll bet down in that same Africa, it must be hot as blazes—fierce, eh?

Voinitzki.—Doubtless, yes.

Marena (Returns with tray on which is a glass of vodka and a small piece of bread).—Eat.

(ASTROV drinks the vodka.)

Marena.—For your good health, batiushka (*bows low*) Finish with the bread.

Astrov.—No, this will do . . . And so, good luck! (*To MARENA*) Don't come along to see me off, nurse. It isn't necessary. (*He goes; SONIA follows him with candle; MARENA sits in her armchair.*)

Voinitzki (Writes).—February 2nd, vegetable oil 20 lbs.
February 16th, vegetable oil again 20 lbs. Buckwheat groats

. . . (*Pause.*)

(*The jingling of bells is heard.*)

Marena.—He's gone.

(*Pause.*)

Sonia (Returns, puts candle on the table).—Gone . . .

Voinitzki (Makes the computation on the counting board and writes).—Total . . . fifteen . . . twenty-five . . .

(SONIA sits and writes.)

Marena (Yawns).—Oh, the sins of us, the sins of us . . .

(TELEGIN enters on tip-toe, sits near the dor and softly strums guitar.)

Voinitzki (To SONIA, stroking her hair).—It's all so painful, my child! If you only knew the anguish . . .

Sonia.—But what can we do? We must go on living! (Pause) And we will live, Uncle Vania. We will pull through a long, long stretch of days and interminably long evenings; we will patiently bear whatever trials fate will put us; we will continue to labor for others, both now and in old age, knowing no rest. And when the hour has struck for us, we will obediently lay down our lives there, beyond the grave we will tell how we suffered, how we wept, that it was bitter for us and God will take compassion on us and you and I, uncle, dear uncle, will behold a life of light, beauty and refinement; we will be so happy that we will look back upon these present woes of ours with gladness, with a smile—and we will find rest! I believe it, uncle, I believe it with all my soul . . . (Kneels down beside him and lays her head on his hands; in a tired voice) We will find rest!

(TELEGIN plays guitar softly.)

Sonia.—We will find rest! We will hear the angels, we will behold the entire firmament burning with jewels, we will be hold all the evils of the earth, all our sufferings swallowed up in one great wave of love and compassion that will flood the universe and our life will be sweet and peaceful, joyous, and tender as a caress, I do believe it, Uncle, I do, I do, I do . . . (Dries his tears with her handkerchief) My poor, poor Uncle Vania, you weep (Through tears) You have known nothing of joy in your life, but wait, Uncle Vania, just you wait . . . We will find rest . . . (Embraces him) We will find rest!

(The WATCHMAN is heard rapping in the garden.)

(TELEGIN plays softly; MARIA Vasilievna writes in margin of pamphlet; MARENA knits her stocking.)

Sonia.—We will find rest!

The curtain slowly descends.

DE GOURMONT AND THE IDEA

BY VIRGIL GEDDES

THE art of literature reaches its phase of spiritual, or actual, existence in man not by words but through implication. The detection of insincerity occurs when the actuality of response, in connection with some truth of human experience, refuses to remain. Provoked by this sort of disappointment, the mind is apt to revert to less important but equally sincere conclusions; and at this point the manipulation of the form of expression immediately impresses itself as an accentuation of the nonessential. The surface illusion of language in our modern poetry might be regarded as a humorous proof of this statement, in that, when stripped of the artificiality of metrics, and the proper division of lines according to metrics, stripped even of much of the garb of superfluous punctuation and capitals, it becomes extremely annoying to those not accustomed to looking upon the nudity of things.

De Gourmont attained his phase of spiritual existence by implication; by implication behind the idea, expressed through the idea. His ideas are clearly discerned and worked out, and the forces implied and presented are direct, distinguished by absence of indolent effort and free from the ineffective gesture of doubt and supposition. But his method was the presentation of the unashamed nudity of facts and the duplicity of truth, and not the exposing of a feigned "nudity" by discarding the mannerisms of language and letters. The plausible initiative to adumbrate at present is, I believe, to strike a contrast, as near as possible, in the paradoxical opposite; to hurl one's self with overwhelming velocity from the polaris of anything that revolves in a worn past. If one should, by good fortune, after he has made his blustering departure, set his feet on something that promises solid ground, the thing to do is to begin at once storming about with the maxim that one's self is the only tradition existent. It is not difficult to show that there is plenty of excuse for such augmented fury in American letters. And one wonders why at this late date de Gourmont should just be merging into something like appreciation

in this country; wonders, in fact, how he can come into appreciation at all. He has little direct bearing or association, in so far as I can see, with the more conspicuous tendencies of our prose and criticism, either modernistic or otherwise. He has almost nothing to do with transient observation; he had always a preconceived motive and denouement, and he had form and that keenly developed. It is true he was concerned with some of the obscurities which troubled Mallarme and his group, but this was again the pursuit of the illusive idea rather than the more recent obscurities we are now witnessing where implication is *all* implication and nothing else.

For de Gourmont the idea was the thing. It was not only the thing; it was also the single consistent excuse for the focus of one's mental activities, and owing to his occupation being that of literature and in consideration of his critical attitude as predominating that choice of labor, it was more or less the inevitable. And his predilectioned and insatiable passion for erudition led him further into the realm where the formulating of decided opinions and comment, such as he continually let drop from his mind, could hardly be discouraged; was, instead, given a deeper nourishment, and for a mind of de Gourmont's cultured curiosity, an eager satisfaction. The scope and inclusion of his knowledge, which began at the first notable beginnings in literature and ended only with the latest innovations, and as one feels at times projected even into the future beyond that, was in itself nothing less than remarkable; but when, after an examination of much of his writing, it is discovered that when the range of his interests meant also a synthesis of underlying elements responsible for those periods and then, by the method of thinking he confessed he preferred and employed, a dissociation of ideas from the cumulated compound, the feat becomes absolutely astounding. And he seems never to have become wearied or overburdened by the mass of his undertaking; his keenness of intellect and disillusionment of vision never seemed to flounder. And with all he retained the conviction and the virtue of art; the sureness of existing beauty.

Thus de Gourmont should be first taken as a critic. His works available in this country easily lead one to that assumption, they being, with one or two exceptions, of his critical writings; but in his own country where the amount of his poetry and fiction equilibrate in bulk the amount of his other production it would not be hard, without analysis, to believe that the creator has

exceeded the critic. De Gourmont, however, never succeeded in withdrawing himself from the cloisters of that period and influence of French letters known as the decadent enough to shake himself free of the disease of the pondering and sifting over of old ideas in his mind, and thus permit himself to become the actual creator. On the other hand we doubt if he ever tried or so desired. Certainly the all-absorption in the interests to which he was addicted showed little intention to revolt. The French mind in literature has proved itself, time and again, supple and refreshingly active in reflecting itself against the background of its native environment, and even though it has an old, a Latin, tradition, it has never grown tired of criticizing the facts or proving the possibilities of that plastic tradition. De Gourmont is no exception to the spirit of his countrymen; but in de Gourmont the spirit is turned in and confused with that of the cold meditation of the critic, and what came about from this infusion was a sort of spirited criticism; a criticism which for the reason of its alert and active thinking achieves a living attraction equal to the inspiration aroused by the other arts. And in de Gourmont's work outside of supposed criticism the complication is still confused and infused, and the critic has simply preferred the disguise of the writer of fiction for the possible advantage it may give him. And the other artist in de Gourmont is disparaged thereby, almost submerged by de Gourmont the critic.

Even such sharp things as *Couleurs* seem to exist primarily as an expression of his succinct and unhesitant conclusions drawn from momentary predicaments of life, predicaments that reflect in a single situation the result of all preceding events, but which events are of course eliminated in view of the importance of the one crucial incident which embodies the main idea. The resort is made to fiction in that it is a living proof of an idea with which he has long been concerned and preoccupied. And in many of these tales the thinking involved projects enough beyond the surface to nearly obliterate the personages as people of fiction or of life. As *truths* of life, however, they satisfactorily serve and mirror up the purpose for which they seem to be created, due, I suppose, to the recognized sanity and identified soundness of practically all de Gourmont's thinking.

In *The Book of Masks* he has preserved for us in the silhouette of brief, unassuming sketches quick but illuminating summaries of the poets near and contemporary with his time. Here again it is interesting to note that whereas these were surely de-

tined to furnish at least part of the information of biography they illuminate rather than give data or describe.

In *Decadence, and Other Essays on the Culture of Ideas* we get the clue to the operation of de Gourmont's mind. There is a great patience displayed here, wherein he arrests himself upon the importance of an idea and wrestles to extract and convey the secret of its living force. He succeeds in so far as the delineation of his adventure is modeled to a precise clarity; but we do not get a summary, as it were, of his ideas. He never halted long enough in the course of his limitless inquiries to permit of such a thing as a final estimate: the suggestive material encountered in any one line of thinking was usually sufficient to set him off on another tantrum of intellectual speculation.

But with all de Gourmont's comprehension; the generous delight with which he entreated and combated ideas; the vivacious tenacity with which he pursued an explanation to the furthest possibility; his enlightening and fruitful results; his relation to the decadent epoch that saw his birth; even the consideration of his writings as unquestionable pieces of art; it is highly possible that he labored under a not uncommon condition of mind, that form of pursuance which hopes to unite two ends that never meet.

MONOTONY

By JUSTINE L. WHITFIELD

I know that people long for quiet hills and
 peaceful sunsets—
 They have written volumes to express their
 longing for these things.
 I only wish *they* could have stood the quiet
 I have known through all these years.
 Then perhaps they'd know how tired one can be
 of quiet hills,
 And peaceful streams, and endless picket fences
 Roaming on and on—
 I feel sometimes that I would give my soul
 For just one day of *noise*.

THE LORD'S WILL*

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

BY PAUL GREENE

PERSONS OF THE PLAY

MARY ADAMS

MRS. JONES

LEM ADAMS, *Mary's husband*

Time, An autumn evening, 1921.

Place, Eastern North Carolina.

SCENE

The scene is laid in the kitchen-dining room of the Adams home, a home typical of the tenant farmer class. It is weather-boarded on the outside, with rough joists and rafters showing inside. In the center is a table covered with striped oil-cloth. Two or three splint-bottomed chairs are set around it. Directly behind the table is a child's high chair. At the right front is a stove with a fire going, and beside it a wood-box. Through the rear center wall a door leads to the outside, and to the right of it is a window. To the left rear are a cupboard and flour barrel. Near the center of the left wall a door opens into a shed room. On a string behind the stove, dish-cloths hang drying. At the right a door leads into a bedroom. Between this door and the window hang several old coats, a shawl, and two or three ragged hats. An old organ is beside the door†. Near the right front is a large homemade chest.

When the curtain rises, MARY ADAMS is at the table ironing on a spread out quilt. Through the window at the rear the sun can be seen setting behind a wide cotton field fringed in by trees glowing with autumn color. Beyond the rim of the woods a country church with its surrounding tombstones stands white on the hill. Somewhere far off a dog barks. Then there is the rattle of a wagon and a man's voice calling "Whoa! Whoa!" to his team. A great gap of silence hushes these sounds, and nothing is heard except the slipping of the

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†. The organ is not necessary for staging this play. Lem can sing from his hymn book alone or use his accordion.

iron on the clothes and the sudden "blump" as MARY sets it on the holder to turn the garment.

MARY is a thin-chested woman about twenty-five years old, tall and pale of face, yet retaining a sort of wistful beauty. Her dress is poor but clean. Her eyes, red with weeping and sleeplessness, are pools of shadow.

Lazily and clear from the cotton fields on the creek rises a song:

"They'll be no stranger there,
They'll be no stranger there.
I'll take my golden rocking-chair
To the River and set down.

Look up, look up that lonesome road,
Where me and my pardner's got to go"—

The day's work is done, and the negroes with their cotton weighed up are going home.

MARY stops ironing and holding the iron in her hand listens with something of a rapt expression on her face. She goes to the window and stands looking out at the cold streaks of the sunset. Fainter and farther away comes a single negro's voice yodeling high in the gathering dusk! "O—ee! O—ee! hi—yo—o—o—ee! It, too, passes out of hearing. She turns from the window with a sigh. In a childish sort of helplessness she brushes her hand across her forehead and into the hair loosely balled at the back of her head. She returns to the table, sets the iron down, and takes up the garment which she has been ironing. It is a child's dress, suitable for a girl of four or five. Placing a chair near the stove, she hangs the dress on it and begins ironing another.

The sound of a childish rattling cough comes from the room at the left. MARY drops her iron and hurries quietly through the door, leaving it ajar. The indistinct outlines of a low wooden bed are seen. The spell of coughing passes, the words "My precious!" are heard, and MARY comes back into the room. Closing the door softly behind her, she stands wiping the tears from her eyes. Then she clasps her hands and lifts her head as if to pray. But a look of rebellion comes over her face. Vehemently she throws her hands apart.

Footsteps are heard coming up the porch. She starts impetuously toward the door, but stops and goes slowly back to her work.

MRS. JONES comes in at the left. She is a stout woman about forty, dressed in a cheap dark, dress bareheaded, and puffing with the exertion of walking. She is carrying food on a tray with a napkin

spread over it. For a moment she stands just inside the door as if undecided as to what to do.

*Mary (In surprise).—*Why, Mis' Jones, I thought it was . . .

*Mrs. Jones.—*Never mind, Mary, I just stepped over for a minute. (*She comes towards the table*) Was you expecting somebody else?

*Mary.—*It's about time for Lem to be coming. I thought it was him.

*Mrs. Jones (Somewhat laconically).—*Yes; Lem.

*Mary.—*But come in and take a seat. (*She places a chair for her. MRS. JONES puts the tray on the table*) I shore am surprised to see you.

*Mrs. Jones.—*Well, it's a sort of surprise to me. But I'd cooked up some different things for supper; and a setting there waiting for John to come from the gin, I thought I'd run down here and bring something. Perhaps Ruth could drink a little of the chicken soup, and maybe you'd like a piece of fruit cake yourself. (*She turns towards MARY and looks around the room*) Where is she? She ain't bad off enough to be in bed, is she?

*Mary.—*I don't know—She's in there asleep. (*With a motion of her head towards the room at the left*) Yistiddy she said she wanted to lay down. (*After a moment*) Maybe she's better there in bed.

*Mrs. Jones (Looking rather directly at MARY and then away).—*I reckon so. Guess you know best. (*She uncovers the food*) This is shore 'nough cake, Mary, if I did make it myself—It's got some of John's scupperlong wine in it, I snitched from the bottom of his trunk.

*Mary (Gazingly hungrily at the food and then turning off).—*You're mighty good, Mis' Jones. Set down and rest.

*Mrs. Jones (Blowing her nose in her apron).—*No, no. Lord help my life. I got to be hitting the grit in a minute. John'll be home after while and want his supper. And Dick's there waiting for his. You know how men folks is. And John's on the puny list too. (*MARY replenishes the fire from the wood-box.*)

*Mary.—*Oh, set down, Mis' Jones—if you can spare the time.

*Mrs. Jones.—*Wisht I could, but there's my greens I left cooking. The thrasher's coming tomorrow, and they'll be a passel of hands to feed.—But—there I go about my fixings. How's the child tonight?

*Mary (With a troubled look).—*I—I don't know. This morn-
ing she seemed to be better, but about five o'clock she tuck to

coughing worse'n usual. Onct or twice she had a spell of choking with the phlegm. I— I—Oh, I don't know how she is. (*She goes to the window*) Take a seat.

MRS. JONES *stands watching her*. MARY *turns from the window, puts the iron back on the stove, folds the quilt up and places it in the chest along with the dress. Then she lights the lamp and sets it on the table.*

Mrs. Jones.—The soup'll soon be cold. You reckon you'd better see if she'll drink some now? (*Accusingly*) Is that her coughing so? (*As the child coughs.*)

Mary (*In alarm*).—Yes, but I—I think she'll be all right soon. Shore 'nough she ain't bad off. (MRS. JONES *starts towards the door*) Better not go in. She's sleeping now. And the soup can warm on the stove. We appreciate it. If you hadn't brought the soup and cake I hardly know what we'd a done—for supper. (*She sighs.*)

Mrs. Jones (*Trying to appear unmoved*).—There, there. Don't go takin' on so. I ain't done nothing for you but what I ought. It ain't more'n human for folks to help out each other in spells of trouble.

Mary.—Yes, but—I didn't think—And the way things has turned out!

Mrs. Jones.—Now, now, that's all right. I have been hopping mad about the way Lem's done, but—Well, just because you live on our land ain't no reason we shouldn't be neighbors. You know, Mary, we'd ought to sorter pull together.

Mary.—Yes, oh, yes, we had ought.

Mrs. Jones.—And if John does stay mad about the way Lem's done him, it don't mean that I can't be kind to his wife and baby, does it?

Mary.—But Mr. Jones he don't feel for—oh I reckon women folks hadn't ought to fall out when they men can't gee horse—and I'm thankful for—

Mrs. Jones.—Yes, yes, and soon as Sue told me this evening about Ruth being sick, I thought I'd better fix some soup and bring her. (*Impulsively*) 'Tain't as if I had a houseful of little uns of my own, Mary. And you know Ruth sorter tuck to me the time you was at your daddy's nussing the fever. ■■■■

Mary.—That's so. She loves you about as much as she does me. She takes natural to most everybody. ■■■■

Mrs. Jones.—Now you see I wanted to. And besides it's my duty.

Mary.—Yes, but they's plenty of folks in this world don't do they duty.

Mrs. Jones (A little snappishly.)—That they is. And one of 'em don't live far from here neither.

Mary (Turning quickly toward her.)—Don't, Mis' Jones. Don't start on that. He ain't—It can't be that he's to blame. Why, he ain't never said a harm word agin Mr. Jones.

Mrs. Jones.—I reckon not. (*She shivers*) Well—I feel a draught from som'ers. I got hot digging across the plowed ground, and now I'm about to have the shivers. (*She looks around at the unceiled room*) Mary, tell me, you reckon she caught that cold on account of this house being so airish?

Mary.—I think not. 'Tis terribly cold, but she got the starting of it last week. That cold day, the Saturday Mr. Matthews killed hogs, I washed up Lem's clothes for the meeting at Parker's Grove; and she kept playing around the pot in the cold. I tried to git Lem to keep her in the house with him, but he was reading the Bible and working at his sermons. He didn't have no time to fool with her he said. That night she was all stopped up. And she's been gitting worse ever since.

Mrs. Jones (Explosively.)—Well, I never in all my born days! There—again, always—But—(*Seeing MARY's accusing face*) I was sorter afraid she'd caught it all from the openness here. I been after John to ceil the house before the roaring gusts sets in, but—(*Stopping*) somehow he won't take much stock in doing it. (*MARY sits down at the table resting her chin in her hand.*)

Mary.—I know, I know—Set down.

Mrs. Jones.—Well, I will a minute (*She sits*) Don't notice what I said. They's more ways than one to git a house ceiled, and I reckon I'll see to it or break a trace.—(*Sympathetically*) Must be powerful lonesome here at times, ain't it?

Mary (Persistently.)—I know the reason he won't ceil the house. It's account of Lem ain't it?

Mrs. Jones (Trying to appear unmoved.)—Well, I do say. How come you to think of such a thing. I never said a word about it.

Mary.—But that's just the reason, ain't it? He don't want us another year.

Mrs. Jones.—Aw, Mary, don't go digging up trouble before your joy's spread.

Mary (Bitterly.)—I know, though. He's goin to git niggers to move in next year and plant a lot of cotton. Sue come from

cotton patch this evening to git a drink of water, she said, but it was just to tell me that Mr. Jones had rented to them another year.

Mrs. Jones (Wrathfully).—The black hussy! What's she talking to you like that for! You just let her come back to pick cotton tomorrow and I'll make her cut a dido for that very thing.

Mary.—Oh, I don't blame him for wanting to git rid of us, with nobody to work. There's our cotton standing in the field, not touched, except for the little dab I picked. And I ain't picked none since Ruth was tuck.

Mrs. Jones (Taking out her snuff-box).—Mary, it ain't that I blame you. You've done your level best. But—*(Blurting out)* Lem's jest no 'count for farm work.

Mary (Wearily, without seeming surprised).—Maybe not. He's plumb carried away with his preaching—says that's what he's made for. And—you know the way he feels about it.

Mrs. Jones.—It may be what he's made for. But he told John, when he come to rent from him, that he'd let preaching go and count his crop first. And look what he's done. A quair thing when preacher's can't tell the truth. *(Scornfully)* Been off to tent meetings, and holding revivals and brush meetings every since last July. And here it is the first of November with just a day now and then at home. Never got all his fodder pulled even. Left it all for you to do.

Mary.—Don't blame him, Mis' Jones. You can't understand how much his preaching means to him. He's just filled up with it. You know he's good to me in his way. I understand him. But his religion's everything to him.

Mrs. Jones (Resolutely calming down and taking snuff).—Well—but anyhow people has different ideas on that. Have some snuff?

Mary (Looking at her hungrily as she lifts a huge brushful to her mouth).—I'd be plumb glad to, but I quit it long ago. Lem said 'twon't right to dip, and so I ain't teched it since we was married. *(Leaning forward)* That smells like Sweet Scotch, is it?

Mrs. Jones (Holding the box toward her).—Yes, that's the kind 'tis—good too.

Mary.—It's what I used to dip.

Mrs. Jones.—Then try a dust of it. Lem won't know. *(With a sudden thought)* Now if John Jones'd try to stop me from my snuff I'd—

Mary (Pushing the box from her).—But he ain't like Lem. You

can reason with Mr. Jones. And he kinder lets you have your way at times. But—they's something slow and awful in the way Lem does things. You couldn't go agin him. He used to chew tobacco, but on the road one day God tol him to quit it. And he ain't never had none in his mouth since.

Mrs. Jones (Bursting out).—There you go Mary. You're a plumb fool to be belly-banged around the way Lem Adams does you. Set here and eat your heart out from pure lonesomeness, not a ray of pleasure in the world. And he off preaching trying to save souls. He'd better sight be here saving his crop. (*With gathering wrath*) He ain't even been here since Ruth got sick, I bet you on it.

Mary (Interrupting).—She ain't been sick long. I sent word by Mr. Matthews this morning that she had a cold. The Meeting breaks today, and he'll be shore to come home tonight. I been expecting him all the evening. I thought at first that you was him.

Mrs. Jones.—It's his own good time he'll take leaving that meeting. Oh, Lord, child, I'm sorry for you. My man's hard enough to endure, but if I was tied—Don't look at me that way, for I'm going to say it—Yes siree, if I'd married a spindle-shanked fool like that always dribbling gospel from his jaws—Oh, I'd been in the asylum long ago. Cussing and fighting is better'n too much praying for me. (*Her snuff-brush works up and down with excitement. MARY rises from her seat*) And what's any of it worth? Far as I can see—and God'll forgive me for saying it—far as I can see, his preaching ain't worth a cent. He might as well spend his time catching doodles. Yes, I do mean it! (*She also rises from her seat. MARY turns from her in pain*) He ain't fit for nothing but to stake out cows. Here he goes up and down the country roaring out the word of God, and he might as well be on a hill in a dark night calling *cooshy, cooshy* to a dead sheep. Suit him better—and he a treating you like pizen.

Mary (Half in tears).—You hadn't ought to—

Mrs. Jones (Continuing).—I ain't never heard him preach but once, thank God! And I didn't understand a word he said, and I don't believe he did. The way he threwed his hands around in the air made me think of my old cat the day he got caught in a whirlwind of sand. (*She stops for lack of breath*) But, Oh, Lord, what's the use of my preaching too. And you, a-standing there, pale and plumb wore out.

Mary (Turning on her in sudden rage).—Stop that! You ain't got no right to run him down behind his back (*Half-sobbing*)

You're trying to tear up my belief in him. But he'll show you all some day what a man he is. He's got a great work to do. I married him believing in him, and I'll keep on till everybody puts confidence in what he's trying to do.

Mrs. Jones (Sadly sympathetic but firm).—What he's trying do! He ought to be here trying to take care of his family.

Mary.—Oh; it's been hard, lonesome—doing without enough to eat even, working my fingers to the bone, believing in him, trusting in him, knowing that some these days it'd all come right and folks'd see in Lem what I see in him. But—now— (*She looks at the floor to hide her tears.*)

Mrs. Jones.—There, there, Mary. Don't. (*Blowing her nose*) I—I shore sympathize with you.

Mary (Wildly).—Don't keep on telling me how sorry you are for me and what a hard time I have in this world. Don't I git to the place sometimes I can't hardly stand it. If I hadn't had Ruth I'd done been raving distracted. (*She goes to the window and looks out. Several negroes are passing the road singing . . . a medley of high-keyed women's and low husky men's voices—mingled into a far away velvety harmony—*

“We are climbing Jacob's Ladder
We are climbing Jacob's Ladder
We are climbing Jacob's Ladder
Soldier of the Cross.

We will wear them golden sandals
We will wear them golden sandals
We will wear them golden sandals
Soldiers of the Cross!”

An expression of almost delight comes over her eager face.

The singing passes down the road dying into a faint yearning wisp of song. . . .

“Soldiers of the Cross”

Mrs. Jones (Casually).—That's purty, ain't it?

Mary (Almost in awe and forgetful for a moment.—Ain't it! And don't it make you think of sorter way off things—with the sky so glowzy and cold and everything so still-like. (*She glances shyly at MRS. JONES.*)

Mrs. Jones (A little gruffly).—Them lazy niggers! They'll chouce you out of a piece of meat and a peck of meal slickern nothing, talking of how po'ly they's getting along, and go home at night singing all the way like you hear 'em there. They don't feel trouble no more'n goats.

Mary.—Yes, but they ain't not telling what they's remembering back of all they's singing. (*A tear slides down her cheek. She looks as if she is about to cry.*)

Mrs. Jones (*Embarrassed.*)—Don't—don't let a little music make you babyish—

Mary (*Half excitedly.*)—That there music sorter makes me think of all I've wanted and ain't never had . . . and . . .

Mrs. Jones.—Oh, Mary, don't carry on so—and be foolish now (*She stops, at a loss as to what to do.*)

Mary (*Growing calm again and speaking dully.*)—Oh well, they ain't a bit of use of complaining. (*In a queer, abstracted fashion she begins picking at her finger nails, now and then wringing her hands together.*) But Lem keeps saying put all your troubles on the Lord and if you want anything to ask for it. He seems to understand it all. But everything is numb and cold when I pray. I ain't never had no prayer answered. Lem says I ain't never been changed from nature to grace.

Mrs. Jones.—Changed! The idea!

Mary.—It's all a mystery to me. I can't understand it. (*Helplessly*) But he seems so certain about it all. He don't even never git worried no more—says the Lord's tuck away his troubles. (*The child has another coughing spell.*)

Mrs. Jones (*Thankful for the interruption.*)—Let me go to her. She's coughing.

Mary (*With her hand on the door-latch.*)—I'll 'tend to her. She may just be restless in her sleep. And one she ain't used to might wake her. (*She passes through the door. The rattling breathing of the child is heard. MRS. JONES raises her head quickly with a sharp movement of uneasiness. MARY comes back into the room, her face even more haggard than before. She closes the door softly.*)

Mrs. Jones (*Catching MARY by the shoulders.*)—Look here. Why didn't you let me know how sick that child was? From the way she's breathing she's . . .

Mary (*Frantically catching her hands.*)—Tell me, tell me! she ain't real sick, is she? No, no! What do you mean! They can't be no danger, can they!

Mrs. Jones (*Pushing her firmly down in a chair.*)—Set still, Mary, and I'll go in and see her. No, I won't wake her. (*As MARY starts to interpose*) They mayn't be nothing much to matter. (*Her face belies her words. She goes into the room. MARY rises and follows her with her eyes, clasping and unclasping*

her hands, and looking around the room as if pursued by a nameless fear. MRS. JONES reappears in the door. MARY runs to her, frightened by what she sees in her face.)

Mary.—Oh, Mis' Jones!

Mrs. Jones.—Child, child, why didn't you let me know? She's burning up with a fever.

Mary.—I knowed she's awful warm, but I didn't think it was wors'n croup.

Mrs. Jones.—Croup! She's got pneumonia in both sides, bless God, if I'm any judge.

Mary (*With a fear blanching her face*).—Pneumonia! But they ain't no danger, is they? Oh, they ain't! (*Looking at her beseechingly*.)

Mrs. Jones.—They may be. We got to git a doctor quicker'n that. I'll run home and hurry Dick to Dr. McDonald's. And he'll be here in no time. Oh, why didn't you let me know? (*MARY stands at the stove with a lost look on her face*) What sort of medicine you been giving her?

Mary (*Coming to with a start*).—You, you know Lem don't believe in medicine. (*Wildly*) I prayed and prayed for her all last night and all day yistiddy. But it don't do no good—Lem says you must have faith.

Mrs. Jones (*Exasperated to the limit*).—Faith! Lord 'a mercy! Here, I'll kite across the fields and send for the doctor. Then I'll come right back. Don't be uneasy now.

Mary.—No, no. Lem won't have no doctor. It's agin his religion. You know that.

Mrs. Jones.—It may be agin his religion, but it ain't agin common sense. (*Taking a salve box out of her pocket*) I brought some pneumony cure with me. Git a piece of flannel and we'll fix a poultice quick.

(*MARY goes hesitatingly towards the chest. The sound of a buggy is heard outside.*)

Mary.—I can't do it. There's Lem now, I believe. Somebody must a brought him from the meeting.

Mrs. Jones.—Go at the door and see if it is. (*She rummages in the chest.*)

Mary (*At the door*).—Lem!

A Voice (*Replying from the outside*).—All right, Mary. I'll be there in a minute.

Mrs. Jones.—It's him, ain't it? (*She lets the lid fall with a bang. MARY closes the door*) Well, it won't do to have no trouble

with him now, Mary.

Mary (Somewhat hopefully).—Maybe Lem can—Oh, maybe he can—

Mrs. Jones.—Maybe nothing. You can believe in prayer if you want to. But you just do what I tell you. Don't say nothing about how sick Ruth is to Lem till I git back. We'll have the doctor then, and let him do his do when he comes. If you'd let him git in there to her now, he'll like as not pray over her so loud he'd bring the death sweat on her from pure fear. Now keep him out of there.

(She hurries through the door at the left and is heard speaking to LEM as he comes up the walk. MARY straightens up, wipes her eyes, hurriedly, tidies the room, goes to the stove and replenishes the fire, through every motion acting like one numbed with the horror of the news she has just heard.)

The last faint streak of day has died out. Now and then a stray nigger going home from the cotton-fields can be heard far away giving his holler. MARY goes to the cupboard and brings out some cold food. She breaks off a piece of the cake and nibbles at it hungrily. The remainder she puts back in the cupboard.

LEM ADAMS, tall and stoop-shouldered, enters, carrying a small ill-looking handbag, made of imitation leather and split at the sides. He wears cheap clothes, rough shoes, a derby hat, home-laundered collar without a tie.)

Lem (In a voice, hoarse from the week's preaching).—Well, how you been, Mary? *(He looks at her kindly.)*

Mary.—All right, I reckon. Supper's about ready. *(He hangs his hat up and starts through the door at the left. MARY calls out sharply, but half-afraid)* Don't go in there. Ruth's asleep. You mustn't wake her. Please don't. *(LEM slowly sets his bag down and turns towards MARY. His face is ignorant and kind. There is a deadly sort of seriousness, a powerful will shown in his every action and word. He has the way of a man absorbed, in the power of a belief or idea.)*

Lem.—Yes, I'd forgot about Ruth. Brother Matthews told me she had a bad cold. How's she tonight? *(Without waiting for her reply, he opens his satchel and takes out a well-worn Bible.)*

Mary (Bringing out knives and forks).—She's better now, I think. Anyhow she's asleep. *(He lays the Bible on the table, buttons up his coat, the sleeves of which are far too short for his arms, and goes over to the stove.)*

Lem (Rubbing his hands together).—It's going to be cold to-

night, and think of the poor suffering homeless ones with no place to lay their head. We sure ought to be thankful that we're living in peace here, keeping our health and strength. (*Stands musing*) I's sorter surprised to see Mis' Jones. What'd she want?

Mary (Wiping a plate with a dishcloth).—Nothing, she just come down to see how we're making out.

Lem.—I thought she'd been maybe a giving you a piece of her mind about me. She's a right good woman if she won't so wild in her talk. But, Mary, it's set forth plain as light concerning them as talks about they neighbors the way she does—sometimes. (*Hurriedly*) I don't mean no harm by saying that either. (*MARY stands near the door to the sick-room, as if listening for the child's breathing*) You say the baby's gitting' long better?

Mary (Coming towards the stove).—I think she's better.

Lem.—When'd she begin to mend?

Mary (Calculating).—She must have had a change this evening about five o'clock.

Lem (His voice thrilling).—It was just about that time, Mary, as I was coming along the road I felt a strong desire to pray for her. And right there on my knees I asked the Lord to do as he saw best. And he's seeing fit to restore her to health. Few know the power of prayer. (*MARY impulsively starts to reply but controls herself.*)

Mary.—Yes, Oh, yes, I hope so.

Lem (Earnestly, with a worried note in his voice).—Hope! It ain't hope that saves, Mary, it's faith—faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you could have seen what faith did in our meeting! Old Miss Campbell who's been crippled for five long years is walking about to-night because she had faith—faith in our prayers for her. Walking, Mary, walking! Praise His name!

Mary.—Yes—faith, (*Bursting forth*) But I ain't got no faith.

Lem.—What?

Mary (Frightened).—No, no. I mean it's so awful hard to— to have faith.

Lem (Relieved).—Yes, that's so. You sorter scared me at first with that wild talk. It made me think of your pa, and he such a cussing man, and how you's raised in the times back there before I married you. (*More kindly*) But you know what it says about it. Except you believe.—I've told you that a thousand times. (*He throws his long right arm out in a gesture*) Repentance, saith the Lord.

Mary.—Better eat your supper, Lem.

Lem (Quieting down).—Mary, you're a good woman, but you ain't reached to the state of the holy life. When you do and are redeemed, you won't have no doubts. It'll be like a stone rolled from your heart. Oh, blessed Jesus.

Mary (Glancing at the door).—Le's eat. The towel's by the stove. (*LEM runs his fingers through his thin hair. He goes to a towel hanging behind the stove and gives his hands a dry wash. Then they sit down at the table.*)

Lem (Hesitating).—Ain't you going to put Ruth in her high chair?

Mary.—Let her sleep. It's better.

Lem.—I'd sorter like—Never mind. Le's give thanks.

We thank thee, our Father, for what we receive. Make us truly thankful for all blessings, all things that come from thee. Do with us as thou seest fit. We ask thy kind mercy on the deeds done in the body. All is in thy hands. Thou givest and thou takest away. Save us—(*Here the child begins coughing, and MARY, in her nervousness, knocks over a cup. LEM concludes*) Save us in Heaven, and thy will be done. For Jesus' sake, amen.

Mary (Breaking out),—I just can't stand to hear her cough so much.

Lem (Speaking kindly but rebukingly).—You hadn't ought to break right in on the blessing like that. (*He looks at her and then at the meal before him*) Why, where is all your supper, Mary?

Mary.—I ain't got nothing but this. The flour give out two or three days ago. And—and—Yes, I was about to forget a special I had for you. (*She rises and goes to the cupboard and gets the cake*) Here's some fruit cake. It's a sort of surprise.

Lem (Looking at her with a manner of affection and smiling, somewhat boyishly).—It shore was good of you to save it for me (*He buries his teeth in it*) It's fine, all right. Ain't you going to eat?

Mary.—No, I don't want nothing. I et just before you come in. (*She goes to the stove and replenishes the fire.*)

Lem (Roused by the noise of the stove door and the crackle of the flames).—Ironing agin, air you?

Mary.—I'm trying to. They ain't been a thing ironed since you left. But the irons won't heat with nothing to burn but chips and pine bark.

Lem (Rising from the table).—I'll cut you some wood a Monday. You ironed that streaked shirt and low collar yet?

Mary.—I was just fixing to. They're out on the line now.

I better git 'em. (*She goes through the door at the right. LEM finishes eating, crosses the room to the organ and sits down. Pedaling with one foot, he begins to play chords to "The Ninety and Nine." He sings.*

There were ninety and nine that safely lay
 In the shelter of the fold.
 But one was out on the hills away,
 Far off from the gates of gold.
 Away on the mountains wild and bare,
 Away from the tender Shepherd's care.
 Lord, whence are those blood-drops all the way
 That mark out the mountain track?
 They were shed for one that had gone astray
 Ere the Shepherd could——

(*With a rush MARY comes back into the room, carrying the shirt and collar. She runs to LEM and pulls at his arm.*)

Mary.—Lem, Lem, don't do that. Ruth can't sleep. Please quit. (*After a minute he stops playing.*)

Lem (*Turning slowly around as he closes the organ.*)—Oh, I forgot, Mary. But that won't wake her, will it? And what you want her to go to sleep for right here at dark?

Mary.—It might wake her. And I just got her to sleep a while ago.

Lem (*Coming towards the table.*)—It seems so natural to play a piece after supper that I—Well, go ahead and iron them things. I'll need 'em tomorrow, if the Lord's willing.

Mary.—You ain't going off to preach agin, are you Lem?

Lem (*Quietly.*)—Don't ask me not to, Mary.

Mary.—I—I kinder thought you'd—

Lem (*Turning away his face.*)—Don't start that old tale agin. (*He stands in silence a moment and then flames out*) Can't you see? It's my work (*Fiercely*) I got to. I ain't one of them high-faluting preachers, serving God for the money. I'm called to do it. They ain't no rest for me 'less I'm preaching. (*His eyes flash and he nervously clutches the Bible as it lies on the table.*)

Mary (*Somewhat timidly.*)—I know. But you—

Lem (*Hurrying on.*)—People don't understand me. They abuse me, talk about me, and accuse me. But let 'em talk. Didn't they persecute the Master? And He said in His Holy Writ,

Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you,
 and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake.

Didn't he say for us to be glad of it? For so they persecuted the prophets. And great shall be my reward in Heaven. Praise his name.

(His voice is earnest, glowing with the power of his feeling. MARY, no longer able to contend against him, sits down, holding the ironing cloth idly in her hand. The strained and hunted look in her face grows more accentuated.)

For a moment Lem stands, silently looking at the Bible. RUTH coughs and struggles for breath. MARY springs to her feet and runs to the door. LEM, on whose face has come a look of pain at hearing the child cough, also starts towards the rear room)

Mary.—Don't bother to come in, Lem. I'll just smooth out her pillow so she can sleep better. 'Tain't nothing much. *(LEM seems to mistrust her and makes a move as if to go into the room. In fright MARY clutches his arm)* Let me 'tend to her. A touch of croup ain't nothing. *(She pushes him from the door, and closes it behind her. LEM clearly shows that he realizes something is wrong. He falls on his knees and prays in a barely audible voice, clasping and unclasping his hands. Now and then the words, "Heal her, Lord! Heal her, Lord! if it is thy will!" are heard. As MARY comes back into the room, he rises and taking a dirty blue and white-striped handkerchief from his pocket, wipes his moist face with trembling hands.)*

Mary *(Feelingly)*.—She's resting all right. *(Loudly, as if trying to calm herself as well as LEM)* 'Tain't nothing but a bad cold. She'll be plumb well in the morning.

Lem *(Visibly relieved)*.—I'm shore glad tain't nothing worser'n that. I wanted to come home soon's I heard about it this morning, but I couldn't leave the meeting—*(Piously)* What a privilege it is to have a Friend who will take our sorrows upon Him—and we can know that all things work for the good of those that love the Lord—And He alone knows how I love Him.

Mary *(Briskly)*.—It's all right. I been ironing a dress so me and her could go down to pa's tomorrow. Anyhow I was ironing it—and—*(She suddenly sobs.)*

Lem *(Half amazed)*.—Why what's there to be crying about? *(With a sudden light dawning on him)* Now if it's Ruth you're worrying about, don't you know you needn't to do it. The Lord'll take care of her. He knows what is best. Put your trust in Him. *(He speaks kindly but firmly, like one reasoning with a child. With an effort MARY holds back her tears and begins clearing away the dishes. LEM picks up his Bible and sits down near the*

lamp. From his jacket pocket he pulls out a pair of steel-rimmed spectacles and puts them on. He begins thumbing the leaves of the book. MARY sits a moment as if lost in thought and then springs up suddenly, spreads the quilt back on the table, goes to the stove for the iron, and begins ironing.)

Lem.—We hadn't ought to worry about what we ain't got no control over. The Lord of Hosts has got this world in his keeping. Listen here. (*Reading.*)

See now that I, even I am He, and there is none good besides Me. I kill and I make alive. I wound and I heal. Ain't that plain. (*He turn the leaves*) Listen. (*Reading*) Come and let us return unto the Lord, for He hath torn and He will heal us. He hath smitten and He will bind us up.

Mary.—It might be so, yet I can't, I can't understand it—But, Lem, if Ruth—if Ruth's sick tomorrow, you won't go off, will you?

Lem.—I'd love to stay with her, but—(*Closing the Bible firmly*) You know I ain't going to let nothing stand in the way of service, Mary. I can't neglect my duty. I'll leave her in the hands of God.

Mary (Coming around the table towards him).—Lem, I—I wish you wouldn't go. It's so lonesome here. Why can't you stay at home and let the preaching be for *one* time? (*Somewhat defiantly*) What's it all for anyhow?

Lem (More amazed).—What you mean by saying that? Can't you understand? Mary, it's writ out as plain as it can be, and a fool tho a wayfaring man can understand. Why, why do you act like you do? Here's the Book sent as a lamp to your feet and you won't heed it. Don't you remember he said, Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel—and whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not *all* that he hath, he cannot be my disciple? (*He stands up and speaks humbly*) I felt his power this morning in the meeting. I know he speaks through me—to help save this poor sinful world. Oh, don't tempt me from my duty!

Mary (With a sob in her voice.)—And what sort of people is it you preach to! All the common trash in the neighborhood. The best folks, them that has work to do, don't waste their time at meetin's when they're housing their crops.

Lem.—Mary, you ought to be thankful that people is people in His sight.

Mary (Doggedly).—Lem, I always let you convince me, because I wanted to believe in you. But somehow, it's changed

now, and something's got to be done. For one thing, we can't live on your preaching. It takes money.

Lem.—Money don't count, Mary. Wan't He a poor man? (*Sympathetically*) I know we have got to have some money. I'll try to fix it somehow. They took up a collection for me down at the meeting. But Brother Jenkins' family is all down with the flus, and I turned it over to them, remembering it is more blessed to give—

Mary (Now angry).—And here your own child sick and we with hardly a bite.

Lem (Trying to be patient).—But, Mary, can't I convince you. Listen here— (*Turning through the Bible.*)

Mary (Half-turning upon him).—Ain't—Oh, who could answer your scriptures!

Lem.—It ain't never seemed right to think of money when serving God. Didn't He tell His disciples to take no thought of money or clothes. (*Firmly*) Now let's have no more words about it.

Mary (Her voice rising high and nervous).—I'm going to have it out about this preaching. (*Half sneering*) Preaching! I heard them niggers yistiddy laughing about you being off preaching. (*Vehemently*) They even make fun of you and your education.

Lem (Hurt and angered, looking at her).—What ails you tonight? You ain't never talked to me this way—(*Letting his arms fall with a despairing gesture.—In a proud hurt voice*) Them niggers laughed at me! Well, it's not them I heed. An what's education got to do with it! If God wants you to preach, He'll put words in your mouth. I ain't never lacked for nothing to say.

Mary (Hysterically).—Why?—why?—But, Lem, look what you promised Mr. Jones about the crop—and—

Lem.—Hush, Mary. I told you it was wrong in me to promise when I didn't know what work the Lord would call on me to do. I got forgiveness for that promise (*Raising his hand*) and I'll never make another'n like it agin. (*Forgetting himself*) It was all on account of you that I promised. No—no, I didn't mean that, Mary.

Mary (With growing wrath).—Yes, account of me!

Lem.—After tomorrow I am going to work on the crop, shore enough I will, and that's a fact. They won't be much more preaching till next summer. But you ought to help me, Mary,

encourage me and not do all you can to pull me down. Why can't it be like it was when we started out together—It's hard, I know. But I will get beyond this—and bring the people to the fold—and you shan't want, then and on and on to bigger things for His name's honor and glory. But I need your help, Mary, you must help me.

Mary (Fighting to understand, and yet helplessly angry at him).—I've helped you all I can and nothing don't come of it. I reckon you wisht I was out of the way. I've always been a drawback to you.

Lem (Contritely).—Don't say that, Mary. Let's not quarrel. We must help each other. You know we'd ought to sorter pull together.

Mary.—Yes, I have been a hindrance to you and you know it. We wan't made for each other. We wan't. I love to work on the farm, and live respectable and have things a woman likes. (*Recklessly*) And you're fit for nothing but preaching and praying and reading that old Bible.

Lem (Horried).—Mary, what you saying!

Mary (Her face twitching).—I mean it! I—I hate it. Why don't you leave me, you and your scripture! I don't understand it, I—(*Helplessly*) Oh, everything is—in a mess!—You, you, aint got no feelings for nothing but your Jesus and God and—

Lem (Sternly).—Hush that talk!

Mary (Crying out).—I won't, I won't!—What's He ever done for me but hurt me!

Lem (Thundering).—Stop saying that!

Mary (Sobbing).—I hate it, I hate God—all of it! (*Wildly*) Oh, I ain't afraid of your hell fire—and brimstone and burning pit—

Lem (In awe).—That's blasphemy. It's a wonder He don't strike you dead.

Mary (Coming towards LEM and giggling hysterically).—I tell you they ain't no God. It's all lies and talk. He wouldn't allow things to be like this if—if— (*Her voice is lost in a senseless stammer. The terrified expression deepens on LEM's face. He moves away from her. MRS. JONES is heard coming up the steps. She hurries in out of breath. Her eyes show that she has been weeping.*)

Mrs. Jones.—Mary, I sent for him, and he'll be right along. (*With a defiant look at LEM*) And I brought some medicine back, too.

Lem (Staring around him as in a dream).—What's all this mean? Is there—(Turning quickly towards MARY) Mary—Oh Mary!— (Suddenly from the sick-room comes a scream and the sound of the child struggling for breath, then a cry: "Mamma! Mamma!" (With a bound MARY is in the room and at the bed. MRS. JONES hurries after her. LEM left alone, stands a moment as if dumbfounded, and then runs to the bedside of the child. After a moment MRS. JONES kindly leads LEM back to the kitchen. She wipes the tears from her eyes and goes back into the room. LEM mechanically twists his hands together, crying out.)

Lem.—Oh, Lord! it can't be so! It can't be so! Spare me! Spare me! ((With a hysterical cry MARY comes through the door. Her eyes are almost wild now. As she sees LEM, a look of hatred comes over her face. With a scream she throws herself at him, clutching wildly at his throat. Dazed and uncomprehending, he holds her from him.)

Mary.—It is so! It is so! She's gone—gone!

(LEM catches sight of the Bible. Eagerly he picks it up. Outside the singing of the home-going negroes can be heard.)

See them children come dressed in red,
Don't you see?

See them children come dressed in red—
Must be the children what Pharaoh led.

I got a home in the rock,
Don't you see?

Lem (Half-sobbing).—Mary, we still got His blessed Word with its promise. (He looks indefinitely around the room as if seeking aid from the bare walls. Dropping the Bible, he starts toward MARY, a sob in his throat) We have each other, Mary and—

Mary (With a great cry, her voice rising high in a crescendo of final hopeless yielding.—She's dead—dead! You hear! Ruth's dead—dead! and—Oh—(Her voice goes out of her with a gasp. Sinking into a chair, she begins to laugh, low at first, then loud and koulder. LEM, as if in a maze, brushes his hand across his forehead again and again. The singing of the negroes passes out of hearing. Suddenly she springs up and throwing back her head, cries out to the empty air— It's you! you!—

(She begins laughing again. LEM covers his face with his arm to escape from her wrath and goes into the room at the left. Far away a single negro's voice comes back cold and high—

O—ee—O—ee—O—ee!—O!

CURTAIN

SOME TENDENCIES OF THE ENGLISH SPEAKING DRAMA

BY JENNIE M. CONSTANCE

Everybody loves a play. Shakespeare accounted for the Universal interest in the drama in his characteristic lines:

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players.

Upon a broad and ever-shifting stage we are now playing—we the actors in this great contemporary drama of confusion and revolt.

The drama has always been the mirror of its age. Contemporary drama, more than other art form, is the mouthpiece and embodiment of the spirit of modernism. The drama of to-day reveals a three-fold revolt against the traditions of the past: a revolt in subject-matter, technique, and stagecraft.

The change in the choice of subject-matter is of primary importance. For the most part, the high and royal personages have stepped off the stage of the theatre—as well as of actual life—rather precipitately, we must admit—and with poor grace. In their stead have crowded in representatives of the vast middle and lower classes.

On the American stage, this middle class consists notably of pioneers and villagers. For instance, Susan Glaspell in her *Inheritors* extols the simple, far-sighted Silas Morton who toiled a life-time to found a college; Eugene G. O'Neill in *Beyond the Horizon* lays bare the heart of dreamy, misfit Robert Mayo; Zona Gale in *Miss Lulu Bett* portrays all misunderstood; professionless spinsters.

The sub-strata of society is now presented upon the stage as not since the days of Greene and Udall. In the early Elizabethan period, the lower class were considered fit subjects for comedy merely.

Today for the first time in the history of the drama, the lower class are made the chief characters in many of our best serious plays. A motley group arrests our attention, a group just beyond

our usual respectable pale. They consist of such characters as a "tough," barker Liliom; a prostitute, Anna Christie, and even a rascally ex-Pullman porter, Emperor Jones. The new birth of the drama is not unlike the origin of the novel. When Richardson chose a waiting-maid for Pamela, as the heroine of his first novel, he struck the first effective blow for the democracy of fiction.

The drama, too, is at last recognizing its democratic function. The drama is at last becoming a faithful observation of ourselves. We see people at too near range; we analyze their motives too closely to idealize any—especially those whom we meet in daily life, such as we ourselves are—or our neighbors. As a consequence, there has come about the degeneration of the hero. Not only is he no longer noble, romantic, and tragic, but he has sunk so far beneath the respectable commonplace as to be often a villain policeman or a thief turned detective as in the thrilling but futile *Bat*.

Correspondingly, there has come about an elevation in woman's position not only in politics and the professions but in the drama as well. Barrie and Shaw have always made their most careful analyses of women; few recent dramas have slighted woman; and a goodly number of the so-called best plays of the last seasons have feminine names as titles and women as chief actors.

The themes these new dramatis personae supply must be woven of the woof of their own daily lives. Lowell pertinently says in his essay, *Our Literature*; "The literature of a people should be the record of its joys and sorrows, its aspirations and shortcomings, its wisdom and its folly, the confidant of its soul." Here, we may add, there is little place for sentimentality, mere intrigue, or vulgar passion. Life is chiefly a serious business, full of engrossing problems—social, political, and economic.

One of the most striking characteristics of the drama of our century has been the enunciation of strong national peculiarities. Paradoxical as it may seem, it is nevertheless true, that the more thoroughly national subjects are, the greater is their appeal—international and cosmopolitan. The peculiarly national drama of Great Britain is still very largely Celtic, for Yeats, Lady Gregory, and Ervine are doubtless producing to-day the most distinctive national drama in the British Isles. Their subjects are largely "fabled and historical Irish heroes and humble Irish peasants." For instance, Yeats's tragedy, *Deirdre* and Robinson's comedy, *The White-headed Boy*, could have been reproduced by playwrights of no other people.

America is declaring her dramatic independence. Craven's *First Year* and Miss Gale's *Miss Lulu Bett* are only a few of the faithful, painstaking studies of American life—not of a certain section only, though the scenes may happen to be laid in Reading, Illinois, Joplin, Missouri, or some other small town of the Middle West. In the gradual loss of American provincialism, we are rejoicing in the gain of nation-wide Americanism. With pride we realize that we are at last beginning to produce literature indigenous of the soil; we are at last acquiring national solidarity—national consciousness.

The development of the critical faculties in an individual or in a nation has always been considered a sign of maturity. Our literature, then, is slowly maturing. In no way is this tendency more clearly shown than in our striking introspection and discriminating criticism of our manner of living. In *Nice People*, Rachel Crothers criticises the dress, language, love-making, smoking, and drinking of the younger set of rich New York. In *Main Street*, Sinclair Lewis criticises the sordidness, ugliness, and lack of ideality of Gopher Prairie, Minnesota.

Closely allied with the critical faculty always comes satire. Great Britain has produced clever satirical plays or comedies of manners from the days of Sheridan to Shaw. Great Britain, however, has had for centuries a definitely stratified society; whereas we have always been a little boastful of the fact that we were a heterogeneous people with no upper class. We are beginning to prick the bubble of our national pride and are now getting brave enough to see ourselves as others have long seen us. Porter Emerson Browne's *Bad Man* may not take rank as a great play, but is significant as expressive of our lately acquired ability to satirize ourselves. When that power becomes fully developed, we shall produce and lend encouragement to fewer plays of trivial, transitory theme, shallow characterization, and superficial style. Frank Bacon's *Lightnin'* is a notable example, the play having the second longest run in the annals of the theatre. Yet *Lightnin'* is merely clever, depending largely for its power upon the time-honored tricks of the stage.

Another encouraging sign of our maturity is evidenced in our historical interest, in our keen appreciation of our past. Young's *Little Old New York* is one of the most popular plays, revealing with pride and sympathy a bygone period. Drinkwater's *Abraham Lincoln* is probably the finest epic drama of an American—curiously enough written by an Englishman and produced in

America only after flattering success abroad. *Abraham Lincoln* reveals another noteworthy trend in our whole literature as well as in our drama,—our half-conscious striving for tradition, the recognition of our national legends.

Cities and even small communities are evincing an unusual interest in and desire to perpetuate local traditions. As a consequence, before we are scarcely aware, we are being ushered into the age of the masque and the pageant. The sign is most encouraging. Thomas H. Dickinson says, "Historically the pageant has always appeared early in the development of the national drama." As a means of unifying the diverse elements of a community and of creating and making permanent its legends, no literary form can be more valuable.

Whatever our themes and they are varied—for they present a life of manifold interests—they all show reaction to the old, grim realism, the product and distinguishing trait of the last century. Realism, as Kenneth Macgowan has pointed out, properly belongs to an age of science, machinery, and industrial capitalism. Such qualities can never make for drama of the highest type, as the greatest periods of Greek, English, Spanish, and French drama prove. It is doubtless true as Galsworthy predicts that the English speaking drama will develop along two distinct phases—one realistic, and the other, romantic. Our best drama has been, for over half a century almost entirely realistic. With the second decade of the present century, we rebelled against this emphasis upon the exterior. We refused to see only squalor and misery and crime. We refused to listen to the trivial details which had long since ceased to interest us. Even Eugene G. O'Neill, considered our most thorough-going realist, has interpenetrated his realism with subtle illumination and emotional intensity.

In our ardent desire to escape from the here and the now, we have sought what Macgowan calls "an intense vision of spiritual reality." In this pursuit he has truthfully pointed out that we have gone to the extreme and rushed as far away from home and our contemporaries as possible. Lured by the past and the remote, we have sought our themes in other lands and in other times. A glance at the list of the best plays of the two previous seasons will convince even the most sceptical of our interest in historic or semi-historic plays.

From the monotony and oppression of the realistic, we have likewise sought variety and relief in the symbolic. The war—as all wars do—hastened this impetus. The wide-spread revival of

the morality play, *Everyman*, is only one evidence of this tendency as well as of the spiritual power of the drama.

The drama, indeed, originated in the services of the Christian church. After centuries of scorn, abuse, and neglect, the church is inviting its wandering child home. The surprisingly large number of good religious plays and pageants written and produced during the last five years is a most wholesome sign, not only of the tardy alertness of the church but also of the spiritual possibilities of the drama.

We have delighted in whimsical dream plays like Barrie's, *Mary Rose*. We have revived fairy lore in the drama. We have turned to the writing and producing of plays for children. We have experimented in the management of even exclusively children's theatres.

We have followed the trend of our age in carrying psychological inquiry even into the domain of the drama. *Overtones* and *Suppressed Desires* are two of the best known and most clever plays of psychoanalysis. *Smilin' Through*, *A Well-Remembered Voice*, *The Return of the Peter Grimm*, which Warfield is now happily reviving, artistically at least establish the theory of the survival of personality after death.

In our less exalted moods we have sought relief from the burden of the actual in thrilling detective plays. Again does the drama reveal the signs of the times. When the stories of crimes cease to fill our newspapers, perhaps then the most popular play ever on the boards of American theatres will be a drama of nobler form and higher appeal than the transitory *Bat*.

In technique also the new drama has revolted notably from the past. The history of the drama, because it is a living, vital form is the story of change—and let us hope, of progress.

For centuries the predominant dramatic form has been prose. Since we still live in an age of materialism, in which our everyday language is wholly prose, in which our thoughts only rarely rise to emotional intensity, we may expect that prose will continue to be for some time the dominant form of dramatic expression.

Every great poet of the last century had tried and failed to produce the true poetic drama. Most critics thought that the ghost of poetic drama was effectually laid for some time at least, when suddenly out of its shallow grave, the form again arose. Stephen Phillips's *Paola and Francesca* was ushered in as *the* poetic drama of the English-speaking world. And a beautiful drama it is with many passages of great loveliness, rich pictorial quality,

and romantic passion. Never again, however, did Stephen Phillips reach these heights. John Masefield, likewise, attempted the poetic drama, but even his best play, *The Tragedy of Nan*, lacks the reality and vitality of the greatest drama. Although the poetic drama now slumbers, it has had during recent years occasional resurrections. We can only guess what will be the form of the drama of the future. Possibly, as one authoritative critic predicts, it will be beautiful, rhythmic prose.

The ancient Greek dramatists observed the three unities of time, place and action. Shakespeare, following Marlowe's precedent, was great enough to break with tradition and create a new and more vital form. He believed that people had sufficient imagination to traverse any realm and to bridge the gap of years. Therefore he discarded the classical unities.

At the same time, Shakespeare perfected the five act form. His technique was designed for, adapted to, and was, for that reason, successful on the Elizabethan stage. His technique unfortunately, however, became the model of all subsequent dramatists to the time of Ibsen. Because their stages differed from the Elizabethan stage, the five-act form became, in their hands, artificial and studied.

In the middle of the last century came Ibsen, inaugurating the dramatic technique which sometimes included five acts, sometimes four, and sometimes three but always a return to the classical unities of time and place and usually no scene division. He reduced technique to the lowest terms. He narrowed his stage; he began the play close to the catastrophe; he refused to make use of rhetoric—the glory of the Elizabethan stage; he stressed the life of the spirit rather than the life of action. In a word, Ibsen inaugurated the "drama of ideas," of which Bernard Shaw is to-day the chief exponent.

Ibsen's ideas meant emancipation. He invented a new kind of plot development consisting of opposition, clash, equivocate, and solution. This dramatic technique was suitable to the stage of Ibsen's day—the picture-frame stage. The difficulty of providing rapidly changing scenes and the use of the conventional back curtain and "box-set" were partly responsible for the continuance of the unity of time and place tradition. Now, however, we are breaking away from this tradition, as evidenced by the plays of Galsworthy, O'Neill, and many other of the best dramatists.

Old things are indeed passing away. We are evolving a new type of stage—the symbolical, synthetical form. The realism of

Ibsen is no longer feasible, if possible. The perfection of stage devices, the use of a few suggestive properties are making possible again the division of plays into many scenes. The old act division is felt to be stupid, confining, and artificial. Our lives do not fall naturally into separate, air-tight, hermetically-sealed compartments. Nor are the whole contours of our lives arranged in pyramidal or pent-house form. On the other hand, the curves of our lives are most often irregular, and, by no stretch of the imagination, conformable to definite patterns. Plays are pictures of life, dealing with the same stuff of which life is made. Our own lives are a series of scenes, episodes, pictures kaleidoscopic, blending one into another.

The modern dramatic form is true to life. Illustrations of the current use of the scene rather than the act divisions could be multiplied easily, but perhaps the following will suffice to show a marked new tendency in our drama; Molnar's *Liliom*, though of Hungarian origin, one of the most popular plays on the English-speaking stage, is written in seven scenes with settings in both earth and heaven; Drinkwater's *Oliver Cromwell* is written in seven scenes; Shaw's *Getting Married* and Drinkwater's *Mary Stuart* represent a more daring tendency still, for each play is written in one scene only.

Therein they represent the present tendency toward the one-act play, which until lately has not been considered a reputable art form. The one-act play is characteristically a modern form and a legitimate descendant of the short story. Both fulfill a need: in a crowded life people dislike to bear in mind long plots, to remember many characters; in a busy world people are impatient of long suspense; they demand frequent change, rapid climaxes, and hurried conclusions. Both the short story and the one-act play have conformed to the demands for unity, brevity, and vitality.

The one-act play has developed into a distinct art form. It is neither the abbreviated long play nor the single act of a three, a four, or a five act drama. It aims only to give a single episode, to show the development of a single character, or to create a single mood.

In England, the one act play has not yet received powerful endorsement. To be sure, in the Gaiety Theatre in Manchester, the one act play is an honored dramatic form, and in London one act curtain-raisers are merely by-products designed to entertain the plebeian audience till the arrival of the patricians after their eight o'clock dinners.

Because Ireland possessed a National Theatre and lacked a national playwright, that country has given for years signal encouragement to the writing and production of one-act plays. Consequently, several Irish playwrights:—Synge, Lady Gregory, Ervine, and Yeats, are veritable masters of the one act form.

Appropriately America, the country which perfected if it did not invent the short story, is fast becoming the home of the one act play. To the rapid spread of the most artistic and highly educational work of the Little Theatres is due in large measure the present vogue of the one act play.

Another tendency in modern dramatic technique is evinced in the simplification and condensation of dialogue. This new dialogue is the earlier Maeterlinck naturalized. O'Neill occasionally uses long speeches still, but even these are so interpenetrated with emotion as not to seem forced or studied.

Ibsen eliminated the soliloquy and the asides, and rightly so, for the picture-frame stage of his day made such speeches unnatural, if not ridiculous. Now, however, when we are tending again toward an intimate theatre—a theatre in which both audience and players will act—the soliloquy and asides will return and indeed are already returning. Eugene O'Neill's recent popular success, *Emperor Jones*, is perhaps the most interesting case of literary monologue in the annals of the stage. In the eight scenes of which the play is composed, six scenes, all except the first and the last, are monologues.

Von Gottschall has written an excellent defense of the soliloquy. He says: "Our inner life moves in monologues from morning to night, and even our dreams are still monologues of the soul. They are not spoken aloud, that is all; that is the outward difference over which our petty little modern code of aesthetics makes so much ado."

C. Calderon's defense of the monologue is less poetic but scarcely less conclusive: "It is true that a man does not talk aloud when he is left alone in a room; but then, to be consistent, we should also drop the curtain, for when man is alone, no one sees him."

The moving pictures have proved the superiority of visual to aural sensations. Although we had disregarded Maeterlinck's theory of silence, the screen has at last compelled us to recognize the value of silence and the concentrated power of the short speech or caption.

The third and most important revolt in the drama has doubtless come in the realm of stagecraft. The subject is so broad that it can be treated here only in outline.

The purpose of the new stagecraft is the visualization of the atmosphere of the play, for we live in a visual age—an age when moving pictures daily furnish the chief recreation of millions of our people.

The methods of the new stagecraft are “simplication, suggestion, synthesis”—a combination of all the arts. For the attainment of these ends, there has come into use an entirely new stage mechanics, including notably new types of stages,—the sliding stage, the revolving stage, and the wagon stage. Lighting, from being subsidiary, has come to be the dominant power in modern dramatic productions. Color, as never before, is emphasized—color of background, properties, costume, till all have become a wonderful symphony and beautiful symbolization. The new stagecraft is destined to go to greater length still. Eventually it will evolve a new kind of playhouse architecturally and a new kind of stage, making possible a new and intimate relationship between actors and audience.

The result of this revolutionary stagecraft is not far to seek. No longer is the actor the only living force, for he is now well-nigh subordinated to the scenery and the atmosphere. His naturalistic reading of the lines militates, for the moment at least, against the poetic drama. Eventually, however, it is to be hoped, that the actor will rise to the same artistic heights as his costume and the stage-setting.

Despite all this progress in the drama, represented by notable revolts in its subject-matter, technique, and stagecraft, all authoritative critics agree that the English-speaking drama has not as yet evolved an ideal form or even come to its fruition. The English-speaking drama—as indeed all European and American drama—is still in a plastic, experimental stage, but this very plasticity, experimentation is an evidence of life—and promise of greater things.

London and New York are the dramatic centers of England and America. Each supports at least forty theatres of legitimate drama. James W. Dean on November 5th, stated that twenty-six of the sixty-two plays produced in New York this season had failed. It is safe to guess that the London failures were on a corresponding scale. In all experimentation, some failures are inevitable. For some of these failures, the playhouses are doubtless

to be congratulated, for many of even the popular successes are futile—plays of trivial incident and slight character portrayal.

The age of England, her old and honored dramatic history, her crystallized traditions, and her stratified society have all conduced to give to even her modern drama a form and substance for which American drama is still groping.

The rapid and successful development of college and community playhouses is one of the most significant movements in American drama. Here as never before are offered opportunities for the composition and presentation of highly original and artistic plays.

Even so, America is not living up to her possibilities. Gregory Zilberg says: "America is potentially, perhaps the most dramatic, the most acting, and the most theatrical nation and at the same time, she possesses so far, perhaps the least national, the least appealing, and the least constructive drama."

Professor Ludwig Lewisohn perhaps diagnosed our case when he says that our great American drama will not come till we realize "that no noble play is ever 'built' or 'made' but grows in the still chambers of the watchful soul."

Toward the making of that great American drama, we each—though not writers of a single play—have a definite part. It is an old saying, worthy of acceptance, "The drama's laws the drama's patrons give."

When we decide that commercialism in the theatre must go, that democracy, not autocracy shall dominate our stage, that all earnest, gifted playwrights shall have a hearing, that our own life is worth portraying and elevating and honoring—then shall have dawned the day of the great American drama.

A CAPRICE

A COMEDY IN ONE ACT

BY ALFRED DE MUSSET

Translated from the French by Anne Grace Wirt

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

M. DE CHAVIGNY
MATHILDE, *his wife*
MADAME DE LERY

The scene takes place in MATHILDE's room, Paris.

Time, early in the nineteenth century.

SCENE I

Mathilde, (Alone, making fillet).—One stitch more and I've finished. (*She rings, enter a man servant*) Has anyone come from Janisset's?

Servant.—No madame, not yet.

Mathilde.—It's intolerable! Send some one back there! Make haste! (*Exit servant*) I ought to have taken the first tassels they sent, it's eight o'clock! he is dressing. I am sure he is going to come before everything is ready. That will still be one day late. (*She rises*) To make a purse in secret for one's husband, that would pass for a little more than romantic in the eyes of many people. After one year of marriage! (What would Madame de Lery say, for example, if she knew it? And he, himself, what would he think of it? Oh, well! He'll laugh, perhaps, at the secret, but he won't laugh at the present. Why this mystery, in fact? I don't know, but it seems to me as if I wouldn't have worked with such good courage before him! that would have had the air of saying to him, "See, how I'm thinking of you!" That would seem like a reproach! while in showing him my little piece of work finished, he'll be the one to say that I've been thinking of him.

Servant (Reentering).—Some one brought this for Madame from the jeweler's. (*Giving a small parcel to MATHILDE.*)

Mathilde.—At last! (*She sits down*) When M. Chavigny comes, give me warning. (*Exit servant.*)

My dear little purse, we're going to put on your finishing touches. Let's see if you're going to be smart with those tassels? Not half bad! Now how will you be received? Will you tell all the pleasure I've had in making you? All the care I have taken of your little person? He doesn't expect you, Mademoiselle. I didn't want to show you except in all your finery. Will you have a kiss for your trouble? (*She kisses her purse and arrests herself*) Poor little thing! You aren't worth much; one couldn't sell you for two gold *Louis*. How does it happen that I feel sad at parting with you? Weren't you commenced to be finished as soon as possible? Ah! you were commenced more gaily than I finish you. It was only two weeks ago; only two weeks! Is it possible? No, no more than that, and how many things happen in a fortnight. Are we going to arrive too late, little one? . . . Why such thoughts? Some one is coming, I think, it's he; he loves me still!

Servant (Entering).—Here is the count, Madame.

Mathilde.—Oh, good heavens! I have only put on one tassel; I have forgotten the other one. Fool that I am! I can't give it to him to-day! Let him wait an instant, one minute in the parlor! quick, before he comes in . . .

Servant.—Here he is, Madame. (*Exit servant*) (*MATHILDE hides her purse.*)

SCENE II

MATHILDE, CHAVIGNY

Chavigny.—Good evening, my dear, am I disturbing you? (*He sits down.*)

Mathilde.—Me, Henri? What a question!

Chavigny.—You have a troubled, preoccupied air. I always forget, when I enter your room, that I am your husband, and I push the door too suddenly.

Mathilde.—There's a little mischievousness in that; but as there is also a little love, I will none the less, kiss you for it. (*She kisses him*) What do you think then to be, sir, when you forget that you are my husband?

Chavigny.—Your lover, my sweet; am I mistaken?

Mathilde.—Lover and friend, you are not mistaken. (*Aside*) I feel like giving him the purse as it is.

Chavigny.—What dress is this you have on? You aren't going out?

Mathilde.—No, I wanted . . . I hoped perhaps . . .

Chavigny.—You hoped? . . . What, then?

Mathilde.—You are going to the ball? You are superb!

Chavigny.—None too much; I don't know whether it is my fault, or the tailor's, but I have no longer my figure of the regiment.

Mathilde.—Fickle man! You aren't thinking of me, reflecting yourself in that glass.

Chavigny.—Bah! Well, of what am I thinking? Am I going to the ball to dance? I swear that it's a bore, and that I'm dragging myself there without knowing why.

Mathilde.—Very well, stay at home, I beg of you! We shall be alone and I will tell you . . .

Chavigny.—It seems to me your clock is fast; it can't be so late.

Mathilde.—One doesn't go to a ball at this hour, no matter what the clock says. We just got up from the table a moment ago.

Chavigny.—I gave orders to have the carriage ready; I have to make a visit.

Mathilde.—Ah! that's different. I . . . I didn't know . . . I thought . . .

Chavigny.—Well?

Mathilde.—I suppose . . . After what you said . . . But the clock is right; it is only eight o'clock. Spare me a moment. I have a little surprise for you.

Chavigny (Rising).—You know, my dear, that I leave you free, and you go out when you please. You will find it no more than just, if I do the same. What surprise have you for me?

Mathilde.—Nothing! I didn't say that word, I think.

Chavigny.—I am mistaken then, I thought I heard it. Have you the Strauss waltzes there? Lend them to me if you are not using them.

Mathilde.—They are there; do you want them now?

Chavigny.—Why, yes, if that doesn't trouble you. I was asked for them for day or two. I won't deprive you of them long.

Mathilde.—Is it for Madame de Blainville?

Chavigny (Taking the waltzes).—Beg pardon? Aren't you talking of Madame de Blainville?

Mathilde.—I! No, I haven't spoken of her.

Chavigny.—This time I understood very well. (*He seats himself again*) What were you saying about Madame de Blainville?

Mathilde.—I thought that my waltzes were for her.

Chavigny.—And why did you think that?

Mathilde.—Why, because . . . because she likes them.

Chavigny.—Yes, and I too; and you too, I believe? There is one in particular; but how does it go? I have forgotten it . . . How is it, anyway?

Mathilde.—I don't know whether I remember it. (*She seats herself at the piano and plays.*)

Chavigny.—That's the very one! It's charming, divine, and you play it like an angel; or, better, like a genuine waltzer.

Mathilde.—As well as she, Henri?

Chavigny.—Who, she? Madame de Blainville? You are very keen on that, it seems to me.

Mathilde.—Oh, not very. If I were a man, she's not the one who would turn my head.

Chavigny.—And you would be right, Madame. A man should never allow his head to be turned, either by a woman or by a waltz.

Mathilde.—Are you counting on playing this evening, my dear?

Chavigny.—Eh! my dear, what a queer idea! One plays, but one doesn't count on playing.

Mathilde.—Have you any gold in your pockets?

Chavigny.—Probably. Do you want some?

Mathilde.—I, goodness! What do you want me to do with it?

Chavigny.—Why not? If I open your door too hastily, at least I don't open your bureau drawers, and that's perhaps a double wrong that I commit.

Mathilde.—You are fibbing, sir! Not long ago I noticed that you had opened them, and you leave me much too rich.

Chavigny.—No, my dear, not while there are poor people. I know what use you make of your fortune, and I ask you to let me give to charity through your hands.

Mathilde.—Dear Henri! How noble and good you are! Tell me; do you remember one day, when you had a little debt to pay, and you complained to me that you hadn't any purse?

Chavigny.—When was that? Ah, that's right! The fact is when one goes out, it's intolerable to trust to one's pockets, that, hold nothing.

Mathilde.—Would you like a red purse with a black cord?

Chavigny.—No, I don't like red. Gracious! you make me think! I have a purse right here, quite new, from yesterday; it's a present. (*He draws a purse from his pocket*) What do you think of it? Is it in good taste?

Mathilde.—Let's see, will you show it to me?

Chavigny.—Take it. (*He gives it to her, she looks at it and gives it back.*)

Mathilde.—It's very pretty. What color is it?

Chavigny (Laughing).—What color? That question is great!

Mathilde.—I misspoke myself . . . I mean . . . Who gave it to you?

Chavigny.—Oh, that's too funny! On my word, your distraction is adorable!

Servant (Announcing).—Madame de Lery.

Mathilde.—I've given orders not to admit anyone.

Chavigny.—No, no, let her come up! why not receive her?

Mathilde.—Very well! Finally, sir this purse; may one know the name of the maker of it?

SCENE III

MATHILDE, CHAVIGNY, MADAME DE LERY *in ball dress.*

Chavigny.—Come, Madame, come, I beg you! you couldn't arrive more appropriately. Mathilde has just been showing an abstraction which is worth its weight in gold. Fancy! I was showing her this purse . . .

Madame de L.—Here! that's quite pretty. Let's see.

Chavigny.—I was showing her this purse; she looked at it, felt of it, returned it, and in giving it back, do you know what she said? She asked me what color it is!

Madame de L.—Well, it's blue.

Chavigny.—Yes, it's blue . . . That's certain . . . and that's precisely the amusing thing about it . . . Can you imagine one asking that?

Madame de L.—It's perfect. Good evening, my dear Mathilde; are you going to the embassy this evening?

Mathilde.—No, I intend to stay at home.

Chavigny.—But you don't laugh at my story?

Madame de L.—Why, yes, and who made this purse? Ah! I recognize her, it's Madame de Blainville. What? Really, you don't move?

Chavigny (Brusquely).—By what do you recognize her, if you please?

Madame de L.—Just because it is blue. I've seen it dragging along for centuries; she commenced it seven years ago, and you can judge whether during this time, it has changed destination. It has belonged in thought, to three different persons of my acquaintance. It's a treasure that you have there, Mr. de Chavigny. It's a real inheritance that you've received.

Chavigny.—One would say that there's only one purse in the world.

Madame de L.—No, but there's only one blue purse. First of all, to me blue is odious; it doesn't mean anything, it's a stupid color. I can't be mistaken in a thing like that. It's enough for me to have seen it once. As much as I adore lilac, just so much I detest blue.

Mathilde.—It's the color of constancy.

Madame de L.—Bah! it's the color of the hairdressers. I've only dropped in, as I was passing, you see. I'm in evening dress; one must arrive early at that affair; there's a jam enough to crush you. Why don't you come? I wouldn't miss it for the world.

Mathilde.—I haven't thought of it, and it's too late now.

Madame de L.—Nonsense, you have all the time there is. Wait, my dear, I'm going to ring. Ask for a gown. We'll put Mr. de Chavigny outside with his little chattel. I'll do your hair, I'll put in two sprigs of flowers, and I'll take you in my carriage. Come, there's an affair patched up!

Mathilde.—Not for this evening. I've decided to stay home.

Madame de L.—Decided? Is it a resolution? Mr. de Chavigny, come now, bring Mathilde along.

Chavigny, (Dryly).—I don't meddle with other people's affairs.

Madame de L.—Oh! oh! you like blue, it appears. Oh well, listen! Do you know what I'm going to do? Give me some tea, I'm going to stay here.

Mathilde.—How sweet you are, my dear Ernestine! No, I don't want to deprive this ball of its queen. Go and dance one waltz for me, and come back at eleven o'clock, if you think of it; We'll chat alone in the corner by the fire, since Mr. de Chavigny is forsaking us.

Chavigny.—I? Not at all; I don't know as I shall go out.

Madame de L.—Very well! it's agreed, I'll leave you. Apropos, you know my bad luck? I have been robbed, as if I were in a forest.

Mathilde.—Robbed? What do you mean?

Madame de L.—Four gowns, my dear, four loves of gowns, on the way from London, lost in the customs. If you had only seen them! One was Persian, and one was puce color; it's enough to make one weep! They'll never make anything like them again.

Matilde.—I'm sincerely sorry for you. Did they confiscate them?

Madame de L.—Not at all. If it were only that, I would cry out so loud, that they'd give 'em back, for it's a crime! Here I am destitute for this summer. Just imagine! They made holes in my gowns; they ran their poker, I don't know where, into my box! They tore holes big enough to put in your finger. That's what they brought me yesterday at luncheon!

Chavigny.—There wasn't a blue one, perchance?

Madame de L.—No, sir, by no means. Good-by, my beauty. I'll only be an apparition. I've had my twelfth influenza this winter, I believe; I'm going to catch my thirteenth.

As soon as it's done, I'll hurry to plunge into your arm-chair. We'll talk customs, trinkets, won't we? No, I'm quite sad; we'll do some sentiment, in short, no matter!

Good evening, sir of the azure . . . If you will take me back, I won't return. (*She goes.*)

SCENE IV

CHAVIGNY
MATHILDE

Chavigny.—What a crazy woman! You make good choice of friends.

Mathilde.—You are the one who wanted her to come up.

Chavigny.—I'll wager that you think it's Madame de Blainville who made my purse.

Mathilde.—No, since you tell me the contrary.

Chavigny.—I'm sure you believe it.

Mathilde.—And why are you sure of it?

Chavigny.—Because I know your character; Madame de Lery is your oracle; it's a notion without common sense.

Mathilde.—That's a fine compliment which I don't merit.

Chavigny.—Oh, my heavens! yes; and I should like just as well to see you frank on that matter, as dissembling.

Mathilde.—But if I don't believe it, I can't pretend to believe it, in order to seem sincere.

Chavigny.—I tell you that you believe it; it's written on your face.

Mathilde.—If I must say so, to satisfy you, very well! I consent to do so; I believe it.

Chavigny.—You believe it? And if it were true, what harm would there be in it?

Mathilde.—None, and for that reason, I don't see why you should deny it.

Chavigny.—I don't deny it; she made it. (*He rises*) Good evening! I shall return, perhaps right away, to take tea with your friend.

Mathilde.—Henri, don't leave me that way!

Chavigny.—What do you call *that way*? Are we angry? I see nothing in it except a very simple matter; someone makes me a purse and I carry it; you ask who and I tell you. Nothing is less like a quarrel.

Mathilde.—And if I should ask you for this purse, would you make me the sacrifice?

Chavigny.—Perhaps; of what use would it be to you?

Mathilde.—No matter; I ask you for it.

Chavigny.—Not to carry it, I suppose? I want to know what you're going to do with it.

Mathilde.—I'm going to carry it.

Chavigny.—What a joke! You would carry a purse made by Madame de Blainville?

Mathilde.—Why not? You're carrying it!

Chavigny.—A fine reason! I'm not a woman.

Mathilde.—Very well! if I don't make use of it, I'll throw it into the fire!

Chavigny.—Ah, ha! now you are finally sincere. Very well! insincerity also, I shall keep it, if you'll allow me.

Mathilde.—You are free to do so, certainly; but I confess, it is cruel to think that everybody knows who made it for you and that you are going to display it everywhere.

Chavigny.—Display it! Wouldn't people say that it's a trophy?

Mathilde.—Listen to me, I beg of you, and let me have your hand in both mine (*She kisses him.*) Do you love me, Henri? Answer!

Chavigny.—I love you, and I'm listening to you.

Mathilde.—I give you my word that I'm not jealous, but if you'll give me this purse of good friendship, I'll thank you with all

my heart. It's a little exchange that I'm proposing to you, and I think, at least I hope, that you'll find you're not losing by it.

Chavigny.—Let's see your exchange! What is it?

Mathilde.—I'm going to tell you if you insist on it; but if you'd give me the purse first, on my word, you'd make me very happy.

Chavigny.—I don't give anything on my word.

Mathilde.—Come, Henri, I beg you.

Chavigny.—No!

Mathilde.—Very well! I beg you on my knees.

Chavigny.—Get up, Mathilde, I beg of you in my turn; you know I don't like that manner. I can't bear to see anyone humble himself, and I understand it less now than ever. It's insisting too much on a childishness; if you demanded it seriously, I would throw the purse into the fire myself, and I could make the exchange for that. Come, get up, and let's not talk about it any more. Good-by till later! I'll return. (*He goes out.*)

SCENE V

MATHILDE, *alone*

Mathilde.—Since it isn't this one, it'll be the other one that I shall burn. (*She goes to her desk and takes out the one she made.*)

Poor little thing! I kissed you just now; and do you remember what I was saying to you? We arrive too late, you see. He doesn't wish anything of you, and he wishes nothing more of me. (*She approaches the fire-place.*)

How foolish one is to dream dreams! they never come true. Why this attraction, this invincible charm, that makes us cherish a fancy? Why so much pleasure in pursuing it, in working it out in secret? What good is all that? For tears in the end. What then does pitiless chance demand? What precautions, what prayers are necessary to bring to fulfillment the simplest wish, the paltriest hope!

You were quite correct, Mr. Count, I am insisting on a childishness, but it was sweet to insist upon it; and you, so proud or so unfaithful, it wouldn't have cost you much to lend yourself to this childishness. Ah! he doesn't love me any more, he doesn't love me any more! He loves you, Madame de Blainville! (*She weeps.*)

Come! I mustn't think of it any longer. Let's throw into the fire this child's toy, that didn't know how to arrive soon enough; if I had given it to him this evening, he would have lost it

perhaps, tomorrow. Ah! without any doubt, he would have done so; he would leave my purse lying on his table, I don't know where, among his rubbish, while the other one will follow him everywhere, and playing at this hour, he will draw it out with pride; I see him spread it out on the cover, making the gold in it jingle. Unhappy me! I am jealous! that was lacking to make myself hated! (*She goes to throw her purse into the fire and arrests herself.*)

But what have you done? Why destroy you, sad work of my hands? it isn't your fault; you were waiting, you were hoping too! Your fresh colors haven't grown pale during this cruel conversation; you please me, I feel that I love you; in this fragile little net, there are two weeks of my life; ah, no, no! the hand that made you, shall not kill you; I want to preserve you, I want to finish you; you will be a relic for me, and I will wear you on my heart; there, you will comfort me and hurt me at the same time, you will recall my love for him, his forgetfulness, his caprices; and who knows? Hidden in this place, he will come back, perhaps, to hunt for you. (*She seats herself and attaches the tassel that was lacking.*)

SCENE VI

MATHILDE, MADAME DE LERY

Madame de L. (*Behind the scene.*)—No one here! What does that mean? One enters here as if it were a barn. (*She opens the door and calls laughing*) Madame de Lery! (*She enters, MATHILDE rises*) Good evening again, dearie! no servant here; I ran everywhere to find some one. Oh, I'm tired! (*She sits*)

Mathilde.—Relieve yourself of your furs.

Madame de L.—In a minute; I'm frozen. Do you like this fox? They say it's Ethiopian marten. I don't know; M. de Lery brought it to me from Holland. I, for my part, think it's ugly, speaking frankly. I shall wear it three times out of politeness, and then I shall give it to Ursule.

Mathilde.—A house maid can't wear that!

Madame de L.—That's true; I'll make a little rug of it.

Mathilde.—Well, was the ball lovely?

Madame de L.—Ah, my goodness, the ball! Why, I'm not going to it. You would never believe what happened to me.

Mathilde.—Then you didn't go?

Madame de L.—Oh, yes, I went, but I didn't go in. It's enough to die laughing! Fancy, a line . . . a line . . . (*She bursts out laughing*) Do those things scare you?

Mathilde.—Why yes; I don't like the annoyance of carriages.

Madame de L.—It's tiresome when one is alone. I called in vain to the coachman to go on, he didn't budge; I was so angry! I felt like getting up on the box; I assure you I would have broken their line. But it's so stupid to be there, in evening dress, face to face with a wet pavement; for with all the rest, it's pouring rain. I amused myself half an hour, watching the passers splash along, and then I gave orders to drive back. That's my ball! This fire gives me a real pleasure. I feel like a new creature!

(*She takes off her furs. MATHILDE rings, a servant enters.*)

Mathilde.—The tea! (*Exit servant.*)

Madame de L.—So Mr. de Chavigny has left?

Mathilde.—Yes, I think he's going to this ball, and he'll be more persistent than you.

Madame de L.—I don't believe he likes me at all, between you and me!

Mathilde.—You are mistaken, I assure you, he has told me a hundred times, that in his eyes you are one of the prettiest women in Paris.

Madame de L.—Really? That's very courteous of him; but I deserve it, for I think he is very good looking. Will you lend me a pin?

Mathilde.—There are some beside you.

Madame de L.—This Palmire makes such gowns! You don't feel any shoulders; you keep thinking that everything is going to fall. Did she make those sleeves for you?

Mathilde.—Yes.

Madame de L.—Very pretty, very nice, very pretty! There's absolutely nothing but tight sleeves; but I was a long time in coming to them; and then I think one ought not to be too stout to wear them, because in that case one looks like a grass hopper, with a big body and little claws.

Mathilde.—I like your comparison. (*Tea is brought in.*)

Madame de L.—Good, isn't it? Look at Mademoiselle St. Ange! One mustn't be too thin either, because then there's nothing left. They exclaim over Marchioness d'Ermont; for my part, I think she looks like a gallows, Hers is a beautiful head, if you will, but it's a madonna on the end of a stick.

Mathilde (Laughing).—Shall I serve you my dear?

Madame de L.—Nothing but some hot water; with a suspicion of tea and a shade of milk.

Mathilde (*Pouring the tea*).—Are you going to Madame d'Egly's to-morrow? I will take you, if you wish.

Madame de L.—Ah, Madame d'Egly! There's another one! With her curls and her legs, she makes the impression of those great brooms for brushing down the spiders. (*She drinks*) Why certainly, I shall go to-morrow. No, I can't; I'm going to the concert.

Mathilde.—It's true, she is a little droll.

Madame de L.—Just look at me, please.

Mathilde.—Why?

Madame de L.—Look me frankly in the face.

Mathilde.—What do you find so extraordinary about me?

Madame de L.—Eh! certainly, you have red eyes; you have been crying that's clear as day. What has happened, my dear Mathilde?

Mathilde.—Nothing, I swear! What do you think has happened?

Madame de L.—I don't know at all, but you have just been crying; I am disturbing you; I'll go away.

Mathilde.—On the contrary, my dear; I beg you to stay.

Madame de L.—Is that sincere? I will stay if you wish; but you'll tell me your troubles. (*MATHILDE shakes her head*) No? Then I'll go, for you know that from the moment I'm good for nothing, I can only do harm, involuntarily.

Mathilde.—Stay, your presence is precious to me, your wit amuses me, and if it were true that I had any trouble, your gaiety would chase it away.

Madame de L.—Listen, I love you. You think me frivolous perhaps; no one is so serious as I for serious things. I don't understand how one plays with the heart, and it's for that reason that I seem to lack one. I know what it is to suffer, I was taught that very young. I know what it is too, to tell one's grief. If what is troubling you can be confided, speak without embarrassment; it isn't curiosity that urges me.

Mathilde.—I believe you are good and especially very sincere but excuse me from obeying you.

Madame de L.—Ah, my goodness! I see! It is the blue purse. I made a frightful blunder in naming Madame de Blainville. I thought of it on leaving you; is Mr. de Chavigny paying her court? (*MATHILDE rises, not being able to respond, turns around and puts her handkerchief to her eyes.*)

Madame de L.—Is it possible? (*A long silence; MATHILDE*

walks for some time, then goes to sit down at the other end of the room. MADAME DE LERY seems to reflect, she rises and approaches MATHILDE; the latter offers her her hand.)

Madame de L.—You know, my dear, the dentists tell you to cry out when they hurt you. I tell you to weep, weep! Sweet or or bitter, tears always relieve one.

Mathilde.—Oh, my heavens!

Madame de L.—Why, it's incredible, such a thing! One can't love Madame de Blainville; she's a coquette, half done for, who has neither wit nor beauty. she isn't worth your little finger; one doesn't leave an angel for a devil.

Mathilde (Sobbing).—~~I am sure he loves her, I'm sure of it.~~

Madame de L.—No, my child, that can't be; it's a caprice, a fancy. I know Mr. de Chavigny better than he thinks; he is mischievous, but he isn't bad. He has probably acted out of caprice; have you cried before him?

Mathilde.—Oh, no! never!

Madame de L.—You have done well; it wouldn't surprise me, if it would please him.

Mathilde.—Please him? please him to see me cry?

Madame de L.—Eh! good heavens, yes. I was twenty-five years old yesterday, but I know many things, that's certain. How did all that come about?

Mathilde.—Why . . . I don't know . . .

Madame de L.—Speak. Are you afraid of me? I am going to reassure you immediately; if, in order to put you at your ease, it is necessary to pledge myself for my part, I am going to prove to you that I have confidence in you, and force you to have confidence in me; is it necessary? I will do it. What do you wish to know on my score?

Mathilde.—You are my best friend; I'll tell you everything; I have confidence in you. It isn't a question of anything very grave, but I have a foolish head that carries me away. I made a little purse for Mr. de Chavigny, in secret, and was planning to offer it to him to-day; for two weeks, I have scarcely seen him; he spends his days at Madame de Blainville's. To offer him this little gift, was to give him a gentle reproach for his absence, and to show him that he was leaving me alone. At the moment when I was going to give him my purse, he pulled out the other one.

Madame de L.—There's nothing in that to cry about.

Matilde.—Oh, yes! there's something to cry about, because I committed a great folly; I asked him for the other purse.

Madame de L.—Oh, ho! That isn't diplomatic.

Matilde.—No, Ernestine, and he refused me . . . and then . . . Ah! I'm ashamed . . .

Madame de L.—Well?

Mathilde.—Well, I asked it on my knees. I wanted him to make me this little sacrifice, and I would have given him my purse in exchange for his. I begged him . . . I implored him . . .

Madame de L.—And he did nothing; that goes without saying. Poor innocent child! He isn't worthy of you.

Mathilde.—Ah! In spite of it all, I shall never believe it!

Madame de L.—You are right, I express myself badly. He is worthy of you and you love him; but he is a man and proud. What a pity! And where is your purse?

Mathilde.—Here it is on the table.

Madame de L. (Taking the purse).—This purse? Well, my dear, it is four times as pretty as his. First, it isn't blue, and last, it's charming. Lend it to me. I will charge myself to make him find it to his taste.

Mathilde.—Try it. You will give me back my joy in life.

Madame de L.—To be at this point after one year of marriage it's unheard of! There must be some sorcery in it. This Blainville with her indigo, I detest her from head to foot.

She has those languishing eyes!

Mathilde will you do one thing? It won't cost us anything to try. Will your husband be coming this evening?

Mathilde.—I don't know at all, but he said he would.

Madame de L.—How were you when he went away?

Mathilde.—Ah! I was very sad, and he was very severe.

Madame de L.—He will come. Have you courage? When I have an idea, I warn you, I have to seize it on the wing; I know myself, I shall succeed.

Mathilde.—Give your orders then, I submit.

Madame de L.—Pass into this boudoir, dress yourself in haste and jump into my carriage. I don't wish to send you to the ball, but on coming back, you must have the air of having been there. Have the coachman take you wherever you wish, to the *Invalides*, or to the Bastille; it won't be very entertaining, perhaps, but you will be just as well off there as here, to keep yourself awake. Do you agree to it? Now take your purse and wrap

it up in this paper; I'll put on the address. Good, that's done! At the corner of the street, have the carriage stop; tell my footman to bring this little package here, to give it to the first servant he meets, and to go away without any explanation.

Mathilde.—Tell me, at least, what you want to do.

Madame de L.—What I want to do, child, is impossible to tell, and I'm going to see if it's possible to do it. Once for all, do you trust me?

Mathilde.—Yes, everything in the world for the love of him.

Madame de L.—Come quick! there's a carriage.

Mathilde.—It's he; I hear his voice in the court.

Madame de L.—Hide! Is there a secret stairway this way?

Mathilde.—Yes, fortunately. But my hair isn't done; how will he believe in this ball?

Madame de L. (*Taking off the garland she has on her head and giving it to MATHILDE.*)—Here, you can arrange that *en route*. (*Exit MATHILDE.*)

SCENE VII

MADAME DE LERY, *alone*

Madame de Lery.—On her knees! such a woman on her knees! and that man who refuses her! A woman of twenty years, beautiful as a picture and faithful as a greyhound! Poor child, who asks him as a favor, to accept a purse made by her, in exchange for a gift of Madame de Blainville! But what an abyss the heart of a man is! Ah! on my word, we have more merit than they. (*She seats herself and takes a magazine on the table. An instant afterward, someone knocks on the door.*) Come in!

SCENE VIII

MADAME DE LERY, CHAVIGNY

Madame de L. (*Reading with a distracted air.*)—Good evening, Count, will you have some tea?

Chavigny.—Many thanks. I never take it. (*He seats himself and looks around.*)

Madame de L.—Was the ball interesting?

Chavigny.—So so! Weren't you there?

Madame de L.—That isn't a polite question. No, I wasn't there; but I sent Mathilde whom your glances seem to be seeking.

Chavigny.—You are joking, I see? (*A silence. Uneasy, he rises and walks.*)

Madame de L.—What did you say? I beg your pardon, I am reading an article that interests me very much.

Chavigny.—Is it really true that Mathilde is at the ball?

Madame de L.—Why, yes; you see I'm waiting for her.

Chavigny.—That's strange! She didn't want to go out when you proposed it to her.

Madame de L.—Apparently she changed her mind.

Chavigny.—Why didn't she go with you?

Madame de L.—Because I became indifferent.

Chavigny.—So she dispensed with a carriage?

Madame de L.—No, I loaned her mine. Have you read this, Mr. Chavigny?

Chavigny.—What?

Madame de L.—It's the "Review of Two Worlds," a very nice article by Madame Sand on orang-outangs.

Chavigny.—On . . . ?

Madame de L.—On orang-outangs. Ah! I've made a mistake; it's not by her, it's the next one; it's very entertaining.

Chavigny.—I don't understand at all, this notion of going to the ball, without telling me beforehand. I should have been able at least to take her.

Madame de L.—Do you like the novels of Madame Sand?

Chavigny.—No, not at all. But if she is there, how does it happen that I didn't see her?

Madame de L.—What? The "Review"? It was on top.

Chavigny.—You are making fun of me, Madame.

Madame de L.—Perhaps; apropos of what?

Chavigny.—It's of my wife that I'm speaking.

Madame de L.—Have you given her into my keeping?

Chavigny.—You are right; I am very ridiculous; I'm going to look for her immediately.

Madame de L.—Bah! You'll have to wait in line.

Chavigny.—That's true; I shall do just as well to stay here, and I shall do so. (*He approaches the fire and seats himself.*)

Madame de L. (*Dropping her reading.*)—Do you know, Mr. de Chavigny, that you astonish me very much? I thought I heard you say that you left Mathilde perfectly free, and that she went wherever she pleased.

Chavigny.—Certainly; you see the proof of it.

Madame de L.—Not too much; you are acting furious.

Chavigny.—I? What an idea! not the least in the world.

Madame de L.—You don't stay in your chair. I thought you

a wholly different man, I confess; and to speak seriously, I would not have loaned my carriage to Mathilde, if I had known how things are.

Chavigny.—But I assure you, I find it very natural, and I thank you for having done so.

Madame de L.—No, no, you don't thank me; I assure you, you are angry. To tell you the truth, I believe, if she went out, it was a little for the purpose of joining you.

Chavigny.—I like that! Why didn't she accompany me?

Madame de L.—Ah, yes! that's what I said to her. But that's how we are, we women; we don't want to, and then we do want to. Absolutely, you don't take tea?

Chavigny.—No, it doesn't agree with me.

Madame de L.—Very well, give me some.

Chavigny.—Beg pardon, Madame?

Madame de L.—Give me some. (*CHAVIGNY rises, fills a cup and offers it to MADAME DE LERY*) That's good, put that there. Have we a ministry this evening?

Chavigny.—I don't know at all.

Madame de L.—They are queer offices, these ministries. One goes in and comes out without knowing why; it's a procession of marionettes.

Chavigny.—Well, take this tea; it's already half cold.

Madame de L.—You haven't put in enough sugar. Give me one or two lumps.

Chavigny.—As you like; it won't be good for anything.

Madame de L.—That's right; now, a little more milk.

Chavigny.—Is that enough?

Madame de L.—One drop of hot water! Have you done it? Give me the cup.

Chavigny (Presenting her the cup).—There it is, but it won't be good for anything.

Madame de L.—You think so? Are you sure?

Chavigny.—There isn't the least doubt.

Madame de L.—And why won't it be good for anything?

Chavigny.—Because it's cold and too sweet.

Madame de L.—Very well! if this tea isn't good, throw it out. (*CHAVIGNY is standing, holding the cup; MADAME looks at him laughing*) Oh, my goodness! How you amuse me! I have never seen anyone so cross.

Chavigny (Impatient, empties the cup into the fire, then he

strides about and says with temper).—Oh my word, it's true! I'm nothing but a fool.

Madame de L.—I had never seen you jealous, but you are jealous as an Othello.

Chavigny.—Not the least in the world; I can't bear to see anyone disturbed, or to have anyone disturbing others. How do you mean that I am jealous?

Madame de L.—Through self-esteem, like all husbands.

Chavigny.—Bah! Woman's talk! People say, "Jealous through self-esteem," because it's a phrase ready-made, just as one says, "Your very humble servant." The world is very severe on these poor husbands.

Madame de L.—Not as much so as on the poor wives.

Chavigny.—Oh, my heavens, yes! Everything is relative. Can women be permitted to live on the same basis as we? That's an absurdity, apparent at once. There are a thousand things very grave for them, which have no importance for a man.

Madame de L.—Yes, caprices, for example.

Chavigny.—Why not? Well, yes; caprices. It is certain that a man can have some, and that a woman . . .

Madame de L.—Has them sometimes. Do you believe that a dress is a talisman, that wards them off?

Chavigny.—It is a barrier which ought to arrest them.

Madame de L.—Unless it is a veil which covers them. I hear someone walking. It's Mathilde coming in.

Chavigny.—Oh, no! It's not midnight. (*A servant enters and gives a small parcel to MR. DE CHAVIGNY.*)

Chavigny.—What's this? What do you want?

Servant.—Someone just brought this for the Count. (*He goes out, CHAVIGNY opens the parcel, which contains MATHILDE'S purse.*)

Madame de L.—Is it another present arrived for you? At this hour, that's going too far!

Chavigny.—What in the devil does that mean? Hey! Francois, hey! Who brought this package?

Servant (Reentering).—Sir?

Chavigny.—Who brought this package?

Servant.—It's the porter, sir, who just came up.

Chavigny.—Was there nothing with it, no letter?

Servant.—No, sir.

Chavigny.—Did this porter have it a long time?

Servant.—No sir; it was just delivered to him.

Chavigny.—Who gave it to him?

Servant.—He doesn't know, sir.

Chavigny.—He doesn't know! Are you losing your head?
Was it a man or a woman?

Servant.—It was a man in livery, but he doesn't know him.

Chavigny.—Is he down stairs, this man?

Servant.—No, sir; he left immediately.

Chavigny.—He said nothing?

Servant.—No, sir.

Chavigny.—That's all. (*Exit servant.*)

Madame de L.—I think you are being spoiled, Mr. Chavigny.
If you drop your money, it won't be the fault of these ladies.

Chavigny.—I'll be hanged, if I understand anything!

Madame de L.—Oh, don't! You are acting like a child.

Chavigny.—No; I give you my word of honor, I can't guess!
It must be a mistake.

Madame de L.—Isn't the address on it?

Chavigny.—On my word! Yes, you are right. That's
singular; I know the writing.

Madame de L.—May I see?

Chavigny.—It's perhaps, indiscreet of me to show it to you;
but so much the worse for whoever is exposing herself. Wait,
I've certainly seen this writing somewhere.

Madame de L.—And I too, most certainly.

Chavigny.—Wait . . . No, I'm mistaken! Is it in
round, or in running hand?

Madame de L.—Fie on you! It's pure English hand. Look
how fine those letters are. Oh, the lady is well bred.

Chavigny.—You seem to know her.

Madame de L. (*With pretended confusion.*)—I! Not at all!
(*Chavigny astonished, looks at her, then continues to walk.*)—
Where were we then in our conversation? Ah, it seems to me, we
were talking caprices. This little red souvenir arrives very
apropos.

Chavigny.—You are in the secret. Admit it.

Madame de L.—There are people who don't know how to do
anything; if I were you, I would have already guessed.

Chavigny.—Come, be frank! tell me who it is.

Madame de L.—I could easily believe it's Madame de
Blainville.

Chavigny.—You are pitiless, Madame; do you know that we
are going to have a falling out?

Madame de L.—I expect so, but not this time.

Chavigny.—You won't help me solve the enigma.

Madame de L.—Pleasant occupation! Drop it; one might say that you're not fitted for it. You will reflect when you go to bed, were it only out of courtesy.

Chavigny.—Is there no more tea? I feel like taking some.

Madame de L.—I'm going to make you some; say that I'm not amiable! (*A silence.*)

Chavigny (Still walking).—The more I search, the less I find.

Madame de L.—Oh, say! Are you determined to think of nothing but this purse? I'm going to leave you to your reverie.

Chavigny.—The fact is, I'm falling from the clouds.

Madame de L.—I tell you, it is Madame de Blainville. She has reflected on the color of her purse, and she's sending you another as repentance. Or better still, she wishes to test you; to see whether you will carry this one or hers.

Chavigny.—I shall carry this one without any doubt. It is the only means of knowing who made it.

Madame de L.—I don't understand, it's too deep for me.

Chavigny.—I suppose the person who sent it to me, will see it tomorrow in my hands; do you believe that I could be mistaken?

Madame de L. (Bursting out laughing).—Ah, that's too much; I don't insist on it.

Chavigny.—Might it be you, perchance? (*Silence.*)

Madame de L.—There's your tea, made by my fair hand, and it'll be better than that you concocted for me just now. But get through looking at me. Do you take me for an anonymous letter?

Chavigny.—It's you, it's some joke. There's a plot behind it.

Madame de L.—It's a little plot, pretty well knitted.

Chavigny.—Confess then, that you're part of it.

Madame de L.—No.

Chavigny.—I beg you.

Madame de L.—Enough.

Chavigny.—I implore you.

Madame de L.—Ask on your knees, and I'll tell you.

Chavigny.—On my knees? whatever you wish.

Madame de L.—Come! let's see!

Chavigny.—Seriously? (*He falls on his knees, laughing, in front of MADAME DE LERY.*)

Madame de L. (Dryly).—I like that posture, it's marvellously

becoming to you; but I advise you to get up, before moving me to too much tenderness.

Chavigny (Rising).—So you won't tell anything, eh?

Madame de L.—Have you your blue purse there?

Chavigny.—I don't know, I think so.

Madame de L.—I think so too. Give it to me, and I'll tell you who made the other one.

Chavigny.—So you know?

Madame de L.—Yes, I know.

Chavigny.—Is it a woman?

Madame de L.—Unless it's a man, I don't see . . .

Chavigny.—I meant to say, is it a pretty woman?

Madame de L.—It's a woman who, in your eyes, passes for one of the prettiest women in Paris.

Chavigny.—Brunette or blonde?

Madame de L.—Blue.

Chavigny.—With what letter does her name begin?

Madame de L.—You don't want my bargain? Give me Madame de Blainville's purse.

Chavigny.—Is she short or tall?

Madame de L.—Give me the purse.

Chavigny.—Just tell me if she has a little foot.

Madame de L.—Your purse or your life!

Chavigny.—Will you tell me her name, if I give you the purse?

Madame de L.—Yes.

Chavigny, (Pulling out the blue purse).—On your word of honor?

Madame de L.—On my word of honor.

Chavigny, (Seems to hesitate; Madame de Lery holds out her hand; he looks at her attentively. Suddenly he seats himself beside her and says gayly).—Let's talk caprice. ~~So you agree that a woman may have some.~~

Madame de L.—Are you certain of it in asking?

Chavigny.—Not exactly but it can happen that a married man may have two manners of speaking, and up to a certain point, two manners of acting.

Madame de L.—Oh, well! and this bargain; is it all off? I thought it was concluded.

Chavigny.—A man married isn't any the less a man; the ceremony doesn't metamorphose him, but it obliges him, sometimes, to assume a role, and to make responses accordingly. It

isn't a question of knowing, in this world, to whom people address themselves, when they talk to you; whether it is to the real man, or to the one playing a part; to the person, or to the actor.

Madame de L.—I understand, it's a choice one may make; but how does the public know where it stands?

Chavigny.—I do not think that for a public of intelligence, it is either long or difficult to find out.

Madame de L.—You are giving up this famous name then? Come, come! Give me that purse.

Chavigny.—A woman of intelligence, for example,—a woman of intelligence knows so many things!—ought not to be mistaken, I believe, in the true character of people; she ought to see at the first glance . . .

Madame de L.—Actually, you are going to keep the purse?

Chavigny.—It seems to me you are very keen about that. A woman of intelligence— isn't it true Madame?—ought to know how to distinguish the role of the husband, and consequently, of the man. How is your hair dressed? You were all in flowers this morning.

Madame de L.—Yes, that disturbed me, so I made myself comfortable. Oh, my goodness! my hair is undone on one side. (*She rises and adjusts it before the glass.*)

Chavigny.—You have the most beautiful figure I ever saw. A woman of intelligence like you . . .

Madame de L.—A woman of intelligence like me, gives herself to the devil, when she has an affair with a man of intelligence like you!

Chavigny.—Don't let that be an objection! I am a pretty good devil.

Madame de L.—Not for me, at least, so I think.

Chavigny.—That's because some one is doing me a wrong.

Madame de L.—What do you mean by that?

Chavigny.—I mean that if I do not please you, it's because someone is hindering me from pleasing you.

Madame de L.—That's modest and courteous! But you are mistaken; no one pleases me and I wish to please no one.

Chavigny.—With your age and those eyes, I am suspicious of you.

Madame de L.—Nevertheless, it's the simple truth.

Chavigny.—If I believed it, you would give me a poor opinion of men.

Madame de L.—It will be very easy to make you believe it. I have a vanity which doesn't wish a master.

Chavigny.—Can't it suffer a servant?

Madame de L.—Bah! Servants or masters, you are only tyrants.

Chavigny (Rising).—That's true enough, and I confess to you, that on that point, I have always detested the conduct of men. I don't know where they get this mania for dominating; it only serves to make them hated.

Madame de L.—Is that your sincere opinion?

Chavigny.—Absolutely sincere; I cannot conceive how one can imagine, that because he has pleased this evening, he has the right to take advantage of it to-morrow.

Madame de L.—Meanwhile, that is the first chapter of universal history.

Chavigny.—If men had common sense on that point, women would not be so prudent.

Madame de L.—That is possible; the bonds of to-day are marriages, and when it is a question of a wedding-day, it's worth the trouble to think about that.

Chavigny.—You're right a thousand times; and tell me, why is it that way? Why so much comedy and so little frankness? Wouldn't a pretty woman who trusts an honest man, know how to distinguish him? There's nobody on earth but fools.

Madame de L.—That's a question.

Chavigny.—But I am supposing that there is a man, by chance, who on this point, is not of the opinion of the fools; and I am supposing that an occasion presents itself, where one could be frank without danger, without mental reservation, without fear of indiscretion. (*He takes her hand*) I am supposing that one says to a woman:—"We are alone, you are young and beautiful, and I place all the value on your mind and heart that one ought to place on them. A thousand obstacles separate us; a thousand griefs await us if we try to see each other to-morrow. Your pride does not wish a yoke, and your prudence does not wish a tie; you have to fear neither the one nor the other. Neither declaration, nor promise, nor sacrifice is demanded of you; nothing but a smile from those ruby lips and a glance from those beautiful eyes. Smile while this door is closed; your liberty is on the threshold; you will find it again on leaving this room; what is offered you is not pleasure without love; it is love without anguish and without bitterness; it is caprice, since we are talking of that; not the blind

caprice of the senses, but that of the heart, which is born of a moment and of which the memory is eternal."

Madame de L.—You were speaking to me of comedy; but it seems to me that on occasion you would act one dangerous enough. I have some desire to nurse a caprice before responding to your discourse. It seems to me this is the moment for it, since you are pleading for the discussion of it. Have you a pack of cards there?

Chavigny.—Yes, in this table; what do you want to do with them?

Madame de L.—Give them to me. I have my whim, and you are obliged to obey, if you do not want to contradict yourself. (*She takes one card from the pack*) Come, Count, say *red* or *black*.

Chavigny.—Will you tell me what is the stake?

Madame de L.—The stake is a forfeit.

Chavigny.—So be it. I call *red*.

Madame de L.—It is the knave of spades; you have lost. Give me that blue purse.

Chavigny.—With all my heart, but I shall keep the red one, and although its color has made me lose, I shall never reproach it for that; for I know as well as you do, what hand made it for me.

Madame de L.—Is it small or large, this hand?

Chavigny.—It is charming, and as smooth as satin.

Madame de L.—Will you permit it to satisfy a little stirring of jealousy? (*She throws the blue purse into the fire.*)

Chavigny.—~~Ernestine~~, I adore you!

Madame de L. (*Watches the purse burn, she approaches DE CHAVIGNY, and says to him tenderly.*)—So you don't love Madame de Blainville any more?

Chavigny.—Oh, great heavens! I never loved her.

Madame de L.—~~Nor me either, Mr. de Chavigny.~~

Chavigny.—But who can have told you that I was thinking of that woman? Ah! it's not she of whom I shall ever demand a moment of happiness; it's not she who will give it to me!

Madame de L.—Nor I either, Mr. de Chavigny. You have just made a little sacrifice for me, that's very gallant on your part; but I don't wish to deceive you; the red purse is not my work.

Chavigny.—Is it possible? Who did make it then?

Madame de L.—It is a hand more beautiful than mine. Do me the favor to reflect a moment, and explain to me in my turn, this enigma. You have made me in good English, a very nice

declaration: you have fallen on your knees, and take notice that there isn't any rug on the floor; I asked you for your blue purse, and you let me burn it. Who am I then, tell me, to merit all this? How is it you find me so remarkable? I'm not plain, that's true; I am young; it is certain that I have a small foot; but after all, that isn't so rare. When we shall have proved to each other that I am a coquette and you, a libertine, solely because it is midnight and we are *tete-a-tete*, what will be a fine feat of arms which we shall have to write in our memoirs! Meanwhile, that's all, isn't it? And what you grant me laughing, what doesn't cost you even a regret, this insignificant sacrifice which you make to a caprice still more insignificant, you refuse to the only woman who loves you, to the only woman whom you love! (*The noise of a carriage is heard.*)

Chavigny.—But Madame, who can have informed you?

Madame de L.—Speak lower, Mr. de Chavigny, some one is coming in, and this carriage is coming after me. I haven't the time to point my moral for you; you are a man of heart, and your heart will do it for you. If you find that Mathilde has red eyes dry them with this little purse, which her tears will recognize; for it is your good, brave and faithful wife who has spent two weeks in making it. Good-by; you will have a grudge against me to-day, but to-morrow you will have some friendship for me, and believe me, that is worth more than a caprice. But if it is absolutely necessary for you to indulge one, here is Mathilde; you can nurse a fine one to make the evening pass. It will make you forget, I hope, another one, which no one in the world, not even she, will ever know. (*MATHILDE enters, MADAME DE LERY goes to meet her and kisses her.*)

Chavigny (*Looks at them; he approaches them, takes from the head of his wife MADAME DE L's garland, and says to the latter, giving it back to her.*)—I beg your pardon, Madame, she will know it; and I shall never forget that a young curate preaches the best sermons.

CURTAIN

UNDESIRABLES

BY JANE RUTHERFORD

"No stories about professors, the clergy, or school teachers are desired." Why that one sentence from a whole page of print should fairly have flung itself at me, I do not know. Idly turning the pages of a magazine, I had reached the book notes and advertisements in the back. I looked to see who it was that desired no such stories; the article was a statement of the editorial policy of a new magazine.

As I say, I don't know why that one sentence should have caught my eye. I can guess, however, why it has stayed in my mind. In the first place, I have been two of those three undesired things,— a school teacher and a professor. I have always taken a simple pride in my profession, and it had not occurred to me that I was outside the pale of ordinary human interest.

Secondly, when I had turned from my typewriter to look over the mail that had brought that magazine, I had just begun the third page of a sketch of a professor friend of mine—which I had hoped that some editor might find interesting. But there it was in black and white,—“No stories of professors, the clergy, or school teachers are desired.”

Laying aside the magazine, I tried to go back to my writing, but in vain. That sentence kept repeating itself in my mind. It wasn't that I had expected to send my story to that particular periodical; as a matter of fact, I had never heard of it before. But it raised a question which I could not answer satisfactorily. Why should an editor feel that men of those professions are not suitable subjects for stories? More disturbing still was the idea which his attitude suggested—that possibly the general public did not care to read of them. Are those three classes of men not “red-blooded” enough to serve as heroes? I took the sheet out of the typewriter and went for a walk.

My attempt at communion with nature brought me little comfort. I was back after years of absence, for a visit in the college town where I had spent my childhood. My steps led me to the campus. As I walked across it, I thought of the men who

had been professors there thirty years ago. They had been the leaders of the town, intellectually and socially. They were not politicians, but when any question of public interest was discussed, their opinion was sought,—and followed. Now the affairs of the city are managed by “wide-awake young business men,” who would laugh at the idea of consulting those whom they consider visionary theorists. The professors and their wives no longer have any well defined social position; bridge clubs and public dances don’t need intellectual leadership. I knew all this before, but today it struck me particularly. Is it possible that in life as in literature “professors, clergymen and teachers are not desired?”

Tired of my own thoughts, I decided to go into the public library in search of diversion. In the reading-room, a rack full of gaudily colored popular magazines met my eye; that wasn’t what I wanted. With a nod to the librarian, who allowed me liberties because she knew I respected her charges, I passed back of the desk and went in among the stacks. There I came by chance upon an old friend. “The Professor at the Breakfast Table” greeted my eyes, and I put out my hand as I would extend it to one of my colleagues. I sat down by the window, and my private grouch was soon forgotten, under the genial influence of the Professor.

Suddenly it occurred to me that he was only one of a rather considerable company of my friends of the “Not Desired” classes. I looked around for some of the rest of them. There was the Vicar of Wakefield, perhaps my earliest acquaintance among the literary undesirables. I admit that he would hardly do for the hero of a modern story of successful business,—but I find him good company. With him came the picture of the minister in the “Deserted Village,”—“passing rich at forty pounds a year.” He’d never pass the scrutiny of that editor, would he, with that meager salary? But in my mind many a modern millionaire is poor in comparison with him.

Close behind them came Parson Adams and then Dominic Sampson. I realized that they wouldn’t do for modern fiction either, but the matter wasn’t worrying me so much. In the company of these old friends, the views of that editor were beginning to lose weight.

Not all of these acquaintances of mine have been painted in wholly flattering colors. Truth compels me to state that some of my own profession have been used rather as objects of ridicule,—

witness Holofernes the Pedant, and the immortal Ichabod Crane. But they *are* immortal, aren't they? I wonder if that editor can guarantee similar length of life for any of the typical heroes of today?

For that matter, if bone and brawn and daring are the main requisites, there are some even among the clergy who might serve. I don't know any modern hero who surpasses the "Mad Friar" of Robin Hood's band in those particulars. Arthur Dimmesdale, while not by any stretch of the imagination to be called "red-blooded" or "virile," could at least claim admission because he formed one side of the—no, not eternal, but everlasting—triangle.

A few modern writers have ventured to choose characters from the undesirable classes aforesaid, albeit not many. Some of us knew the "Little Minister" before he became popular on the stage; and there are few characters more loved in the magazine literature of today than Dr. Lavendar. It seems almost a pity that they must go into the discard, doesn't it?

At this point in my musings, the librarian came in to switch on the light. I realized that I must go. As I walked out through the reading room, the gaudy magazines didn't disturb me as they had before. I looked almost with pity on the people who were finding their literary acquaintances there,—for some of my old friends are so much more worth while.

I haven't decided yet to put that sheet back in the typewriter. But if I don't, it will be because I know that *I* can't hope to do my professor justice,—to make him a fit companion for the Vicar, for instance. It will not be because I am convinced that there can be no "human interest" in the life of these literary undesirables.

ASHES

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

BY ELEANOR CUSTIS WHITING

Dedicated To My Friend J. L. B.

CHARACTERS

CHRISTOPHE, *the leader of an orchestra in a cheap vaudeville theatre in Paris*

MARTA, *his wife—a peasant woman from the Provinces*

LARSAC, *a prosperous baker, who is also from the Provinces*

SCENE

A dingy apartment in the basement of a cheap rooming house in Paris. The center room, which serves as a kitchen and dining room, opens on a narrow dark hall on the right and a tiny bedroom on the left. Several unpainted chairs, a ragged leather sofa, and a long table comprise the only furnishings. Through the half opened doors of a closet at the back, some heavy blue china, tin boxes, and pans are visible. There is a small fire-place on the left with a cuckoo clock above the mantle. A tarnished gas jet is suspended from the right wall. An obvious attempt is made to give the room an air of gaiety by a red cloth covered with faded roses, which is thrown over the table, and several vulgar French prints.

It is barely seven o'clock on Christmas eve.

MARTA, *a stout peasant woman of about thirty-eight is arranging the sticks for a fire in the rusty grate. She is poorly dressed in a flannel blouse and a thick cotton skirt. Her face is beginning to lose its contour and become flabby—the uninspired face of a lower middle class woman who had once been pretty in a rather cheap way.*

LARSAC, *a prosperous baker, re-established comfortably on the sofa with a large plate of dough cakes at his side. Thick set, with a heavy coarse face, he is dressed in the greasy, loosely fitting black suit of the petty tradesman. In each hand he holds a cake which he half stuffs into his mouth as he watches MARTA with evident satisfaction.*

Marta (*Lighting the paper under the wood*).—There now, praise God, it will burn out some of this dampness.

Larsac (*Talking with his mouth full*).—You shouldn't burn up so much all at once like that. Look now, you've put on the last stick.

Marta (*Sullenly*).—Yes, and when that's gone, then we can freeze. Do you hear?

Larsac.—Well, and that's not my fault certainly. Come and sit down here with me. Closer like this. You know I'll look out for you, don't you? Perhaps I brought some wood up with me from the store. What would you say to that? It would make a nice Christmas present, eh?

Marta.—Quick, where is it? (*She rises hurriedly*) You didn't leave it outside? Those dirty thieves on the floor below will run and hide it like rats.

Larsac.—Oh, it's safe enough. I threw an old piece of sacking across the pile. No one would so much as look at it now. (*Confidentially*) So, I'm not so stupid, am I?

Marta.—You're a sharp one all right.

Larsac.—Yes, we understand each other, don't we? I can't pretend to be a great man like your fine husband. (*He laughs*) But I can keep the roof over my head, and then I've got a neat little store—and something to fill my pockets with. (*He rattles some coins noisily in his pocket.*)

Marta.—Oh, it's easy enough for you to talk, but with me—well, that's another matter. There's no use saying anything though; talking don't help matters, and then Christophe—(*She pauses, fingering her coarse woolen skirt distastefully*) Only this morning I told him I hadn't hardly a rag to cover me, that I couldn't go about this way forever.

Larsac (*Leans forward expectantly*).—Then, he gave you something, eh?

Marta.—No, only turned out his pockets and threw me a few francs. He said it was all he had—not even enough to buy a fit dinner for tomorrow.

Larsac (*Patronizingly*).—But I didn't forget you now. Carried the wood here myself through the ice and snow. You'd had to pay high enough for it at the store I can tell you, but I'm not asking for nothing from you. Why I almost froze my hands off getting it here tonight.

Marta.—What makes your hands so bit and red? (*She*

laughs, taking one in hers) And all covered with crumbs too. How greedy you are!

Larsac.—I know a good thing when I see it, eh? (*He takes her other hand.*)

Marta.—There now, none of that. (*She pretends to struggle with him.*)

Larsac.—You're a shy little bird. As if there was any harm in it!

Marta.—Well, I don't suppose there's any real wrong in it. But then I've always been faithful to Christophe. Why, I've had to go round with hardly clothes for my back. Not that it wouldn't be easy enough if I wasn't a good woman. He never sees anything.

Larsac.—Well, and I'm not so bad, am I? I don't want to see you come to no harm. Where would you be now if I didn't look after you. But I'm just your friend, that's all; I've never asked for nothing else, have I?

Marta.—He don't care that I've been faithful.

Larsac (Lowers his voice cautiously).—Can't you make him listen to reason. I'd think by now, instead of acting like a madman, he'd gotten better sense, eh? (*He hesitates*) Well, I can't say what I think. It wouldn't be the right thing, but you know, I'm well, I'm not so blind I can't see how things are going.

Marta.—Oh, it's the same every night. He's like a child, always playing with the half cracked violin until I can't sleep for the noise. And then for whole days at a time he won't eat nothing at all, and just writes as though it was for his soul's salvation. He buys paper when we haven't got enough bread in the house.

Larsac (Indignantly).—And you'll stand for anything. It's shameful.

Marta.—I wouldn't care so much myself. It keeps him quiet you know, but it makes them mad around at the theatre. They don't like all his queer notions.

Larsac.—Why don't you speak to him? Make him listen to you. You've got your rights, haven't you?

Marta (Looks anxiously toward the door).—Hush, he might hear you coming up the stairs. You know, it's just what I tell you; Christophe's only a child after all. If he ever found out the truth, that he is like the others he despises so, why, he couldn't stand it, that's all. He'd go mad, and we could all starve. And what's the use of it. It keeps him quiet to think he's a great man. Why not? If it wasn't that, it would be something else. He

never gets crazy drunk like the great Jew upstairs, wasting all his money to fill his belly. I wish sometimes he would act—well, sort of like the others, then it wouldn't be so lonely.

Larsac (Laughs).—He still thinks he'll be a great man, eh? That he can write music? Where'd he ever get such notions from?—*(He shakes his head uncomprehendingly.)*

Marta.—What's the difference to me? It keeps him quiet, I tell you. But then they won't stand for it at the vaudeville—all his grand talk, pretending all the time he's too good for them. How they laugh at him, and he's so stupid,—you wouldn't believe it, he doesn't even see them.

Larsac.—It's ruining him, all this foolishness. Why, to meet him now in the passage after dark! Ugh!—*(He shivers)* He looks as bent and thin as an old man.

Marta.—Oh, it's always been like that, since we left the country. It's such a long time now. I wish I was back there, God knows. I don't like it here, with all the noise and the grand people in their carriages, when I haven't so much as a silk dress like a respectable woman.

Larsac.—Why don't you tell him the truth? How the people laugh in the street! Why, even the children throw refuse at him and then run away to hide.

Marta.—What's the use of all that? It won't do any good. Oh, I can laugh too, when I don't feel like crying for the cold. But never when he's home. Then I look like this,—*(She makes a long serious face, assuming a dramatic air)* It's just like saying a lesson to a child over and over again. The people are so stupid in the theatre I tell him, but some day there will be a great man. He will come to the vaudeville and call you the Master. *(She joins in the laugh with LARSAC)* It's the same thing every night, but it keeps him quiet.

Larsac.—Does he listen to you?

Marta.—I don't know, but I think it helps *(She smiles)* that I believe he is a great man, you know. Then many times in the evening he just talks to himself and forgets that I am here at all.

Larsac (Exasperated).—What makes you go on this way? It isn't as if you couldn't do better if you only wanted too and then—

Marta (Slowly).—I've done it twenty years now, and that's a long time. I wouldn't know how to make a change after all these years. *(She continues methodically arranging the table)* But then sometimes when he comes back from the theatre, tired and angry, muttering to himself like a sleepy child, *(She pauses)* it makes me

think of the children I might have had to quiet with silly tales and work for just like him. It wouldn't have been so lonely then. (*She shrugs her shoulders and laughs*) But what's the use of talking, when we haven't got enough for ourselves?

Larsac.—You know I'm sorry for you. But I can't do nothing. I think you're half afraid of him.

Marta.—Afraid? (*She laughs uneasily*) Only sometimes afraid that he might go mad. He's always making plans and struggling with his music, all for nothing, you know, like a young girl who is dreaming of her lover. What does he care if I'm hungry or all the rest of it? Tomorrow, he's always telling himself, and then it's morning again and there's no bread in the house.

Larsac (*Comes forward and takes her hand*).—How soft your hand is. You shouldn't work this way for a madman.

Marta (*Starts to remonstrate, then changes her mind. She becomes sentimental*).—And if I didn't work, what then? It's easy enough to use a lot of fine words, but what good does it do? Look at me now—(*She speaks in a harsh complaining voice*) I'm ashamed to go to Mass on Sunday. Oh! if I wanted to, it wouldn't be so hard to find them that would think I was still good for something, eh?

Larsac (*Excitedly*).—There now, be careful what you say. I don't want to see you come to no harm, you know. It's very easy once you get started, and then before you know it, it's all over and you can't show your face in the street again like a respectable woman.

Marta (*Laughs obviously pleased by having aroused him*).—Mother Mary! how excited you are; I can hear your thick breathing over here and your face is so red—(*She laughs*)

Larsac.—Oh, it's only because I'm thinking for your good. You'll be lonely enough when I'm gone. Just wait; then you'll see. No one to comfort you or bring you presents. It won't be so easy to find some one like me, who'll go straight with you.

Marta (*As though unable to understand*).—You're going away?

Larsac.—Yes, that'll give you something to think about, eh?

Marta.—You're not going far? You can't leave the store for long. (*Impulsively*) Perhaps you're only lying though, because you're tired of doing everything for me when I can't—

Larsac.—I thought I'd get you frightened. (*He laughs*)—I'm right cunning when I want to be?

Marta (*Relieved*).—Then you're only trying to fool me, eh?

Larsac.—No, I'm going out in the country to see my old

mother once more before she dies. God knows she may be dead now, and then I won't need to spend the money after all. I've been a good son to her though, sent her money regular all these years. And is she grateful for it? No, she's always wanting more, never satisfied.

Marta.—It's time that Christophe was coming back. He's always home by now on regular evenings. (*She starts to rise.*)

Larsac.—Wait now, just a few minutes more. (*He holds her back*) We was so comfortable together like this. (*He draws her closer*) Now the fire's died down again, I can feel the dampness climbing up into my beard.

Marta.—I hope it don't start him to coughing again. I can't hardly get to sleep at nights. I'm used to that now, but upstairs they beat on the wall when he gets worse.

Larsac.—There now, not a single cake left on the plate for me. Where do you think they're all gone to, eh? (*He laughs stupidly*) If you look over there in the great blue jug, you can find me some more perhaps. How about that? I've got my eyes open, you know.

MARTA goes over to the oak cupboard and refills the plate with cakes, shaking her head and laughing. She resumes her former position on the sofa.

Larsac.—Be still, can't you? It will be a long time now before I'll see you again. And when I'm gone, there won't be anyone else, eh?

Marta.—You'll come back, though. (*Pleadingly*) I couldn't stand it here all alone with no one to speak to. You've been good to me and I won't forget it. There are few enough, God knows, who care if I—

Larsac (Interrupting her excitedly).—Listen to me, Marta; it's a great shame that a pretty girl like you has to go on this way. It's not as if you was too old for it. You've still got a nice figure and—

Marta (Obviously pleased).—Yes, I guess you're right enough. (*She smooths back her loose untidy hair.*) I'm not so ugly that a man should never look at me from one day to another.

The outer door opens slowly and CHRISTOPHE enters. He is a thin, emaciated man with great stooping shoulders. His long coat and ragged boots are clotted with mud. CHRISTOPHE drops his roll of music on the table and then, without taking off his coat or without a word of greeting, he sinks down on a chair before the fire.

Larsac (Embarrassed).—It must be snowing again. (*To CHRISTOPHE*) Why, look at him wet through to the skin. Fine Christmas weather, I call it. Enough to drown a poor man. Well, you've got a home to come to; then it's not so bad; but look at me. Can only creep back to an empty attic on top of the store house, where the dust is so thick—(*MARTA makes signs to LARSAC to go. She beckons to him with a gesture toward CHRISTOPHE.*)

Larsac.—Well! I guess I'll have to be going out in all the storm myself. But then, as it's a holiday tomorrow, perhaps I will ride home. Not such a bad idea, eh? I've got a few francs in my pockets still, thank God, not like some who have to go out and ask for charity. (*MARTA becomes impatient through his slow rambling talk. She points angrily to the door.*)

Larsac (Starts toward the door; then he turns back, takes up the half filled plate of cakes and stuffs them in his pockets).—Well! I'll not find much supper when I get home tonight. (*MARTA follows him to the door and pushes him out into the corridor. She returns a moment later, her hair dishevelled and her face very red, with a large bundle of wood. CHRISTOPHE seems to shrink more and more into his chair. His face is white and drawn and he coughs several times as though in pain.*)

Marta.—Come now, let me take your coat. Look how you're spoiling the carpet with streams of dirty water. (*She re-makes the fire, selecting the smaller pieces of wood, and stores the rest away carefully in one corner of the great oak chest.*) Don't moon there like a child while your supper is getting cold. You'll not have time to eat before you'll have to climb back through the snow to the theatre again. (*He ignores her. With a shrug, she returns to the cupboard for a loaf of bread and begins to eat her supper. She picks up the gravy bowl and shakes it irritably*) Look now, I've waited so long for you the gravy has hardened. There's nothing left but a sheet of grease. (*CHRISTOPHE makes an impatient movement and coughs. Through the following conversation MARTA is eating.*)

Marta.—What's the matter with you tonight? I know, it's always the same thing. You've quarrelled with them at the theatre that's it? Why won't you be careful? (*She repeats the following like a lesson.*) Well! they're all stupid fools, but you can't tell them that, can you? But some day it will change. You'll see then. Just a little patience. They won't dare to laugh, when they send for you from the Opera house. Think of it and you can ride like a Prince to the theatre, instead of crawling

through the alleys to a stable, to play all night for drunken sailors.

Christophe.—For God's sake, stop your stupid talk. (*He turns suddenly in his chair and faces her*) I can't bear it, always the same, and I'm so tired tonight. My head's on fire.

Marta (Sullenly).—What about me? Don't you think I ever get tired of hiding in the house all day because I haven't got a decent dress to my back? I'm ashamed to put my head out of the door even; they all laugh at me in the street. Oh yes, I know you've never thought of that.

Christophe.—What do you mean?

Marta.—Nothing. What should I mean? You don't know. (*She laughs*) Well! come and get your supper. You'll be late again at the theatre and then—

Christophe.—I'm not going back to the theatre.

Marta.—So we don't need to eat, eh, with all your grand airs. And when the wood burns out, what then?—(*She is thoroughly frightened*) Don't talk like a fool.

Christophe.—Oh, yes, you're just like the others. You thought I'd never get away. I'll show you, though. I'm not going back. (*Imploringly*) Oh, I couldn't stand it any longer.

Marta.—What are you talking about, for God's sake?

Christophe.—It couldn't go on, I tell you, the way things were. I'd known it was coming, the men were so frightened. They must have thought I was mad. I heard them whispering together and laughing. (*He turns to MARTA, who is eating noisily*) Why don't you listen to me? You'll understand tomorrow when we haven't any bread.

Marta.—Hush, you'll wake them all.

Christophe.—While we were practising there tonight the manager came back where we were playing. You remember he stopped here one night when I was ill. Tall and always half drunk. He was drunk again tonight and insolent, but I was used to that.

Marta.—You didn't say anything to make him angry? You couldn't have been so stupid?

Christophe.—He thought he was so cunning with all his tricks. Well! I saw he was only trying to frighten me—what he said, you know, about the music. Made them play it over in the orchestra. Then when they'd hardly started, he bellowed out in his thick drunken voice, "Do you want to drive out the honest people who work hard in the week to spend their money here at night? They want to laugh, not to have to puzzle what it's all

about, you fool. You're trying to ruin me, that's what it is," he screamed, working himself up into a frenzy all on purpose.

Marta.—Well, he can say what he wants. He pays you, don't he? What difference does the rest make, I'd like to know.

Christophe.—It was so dark in the theatre—the dampness almost choked me. I can't remember everything now, but—

Marta.—Don't speak so loud. It frightens them up stairs. They'll turn us out tonight and you know we've no money to pay them with.

Christophe.—I was so terribly tired and then the dampness made me cough until the tears ran down my face. I can hear their stupid laughter now. It made me doubt myself. But that didn't last for long, I knew, (*Reassuringly*) it was just because they were all stupid fools.

Marta.—But you didn't say anything did you? You know there's nothing else now but the theatre, and we've got to live.

Christophe (Dully).—Nothing else? Oh yes, of course you're only frightened too. You don't really mean it, though, do you, after what you said tonight? If I thought—

Marta.—Oh, it's all right for you to talk to me, but to him; why, you've got no right to say anything while he's paying you. And what's the use of so much talk? What good does it do?

Christophe.—I don't know what I said. My head was burning like it was on fire. I struck at him; his coarse vulgar face maddened me. Then, Oh God, I can't remember.

Marta.—You want to ruin us?

Christophe.—And Franz,—you remember the half starved boy I found outside in the alley one night,—he is in my place now. He is better than I am, and then he knows what they want in the vaudeville; he understands,—(*He laughs.*)

Marta.—Be quiet, you must be mad to have struck at him—the Master. This is the end of all your stupid pride.

Christophe.—When I stumbled out of the theatre half blind with the fever, the little Jew in the orchestra tried to push some greasy francs into my hand, snivelling as though I were a pauper already.

Marta.—It would have bought some bread tomorrow, when we're hungry. What will become of us now? I can't even go to Mass to pray to the Virgin to help us, without a new dress or even a warm shawl.

Christophe.—I tell you I had to leave the theatre. I had no time there for my great work. It's better so. (*He takes a thick*

brown manuscript from his pocket and forces a laugh) I won't have to listen to their stupid corrections and vulgar talk now; I'll be free. Who could have done great things there in the vaudeville? It stifled me, can't you understand? I couldn't breathe in the thick air reeking with garlic.

Marta.—All your fine talk won't keep us from starving.

Christophe.—They didn't know what they were saying about my music. (*Making a supreme attempt to reassure himself*) I don't want to please the vulgar stupid people at the vaudeville. But now, when I've got time to work, you'll see; I'm only just beginning.

Marta.—What's all your grand talk worth? You'll ruin us if you go on this way. (*She shrugs her shoulders.*)

Christophe.—You're lying again. You don't want me to be a great man, because then you'd be afraid of me. Oh, I know how cunning you are, but you can't frighten me, do you hear? That's what they all want, because they're jealous—afraid. Yes, that's what it is. (*CHRISTOPHE rises and takes an old violin from a chair where he had laid it when he entered. His expression changes miraculously. For an instant he seems almost another being. Then after the first few bars, a string snaps and there is a harsh rasping discord. MARTA seems cowed and draws back in her chair as though waiting an outburst. CHRISTOPHE stands still in the center of the room with the violin still in his hand. He is trembling from excitement. There is a complete silence in the room for several seconds.*)

Christophe (In a low voice).—God, it was like a symbol of everything.

Marta (Reassured by his quietness).—What nonsense you're talking! That's not the first time the string has broke, is it? Quick now, don't stand there all night like a simpleton. Perhaps he didn't mean after all, that, you weren't never to come back. He'll take pity after all these years you've worked there for almost nothing.

Christophe.—I can't go back, I tell you.

Marta.—But there's nothing else. It doesn't pay to be so proud when you're hungry. You can't earn bread that way, can you? Go back and ask him civilly. He's not such a hard man. Perhaps he'll let you take Old Jule's place. The beggar is half blind now, and not worth his hire.

Christophe.—I don't know what it was, but when that string snapped something seemed to break in me. Tonight it was different. Couldn't you feel it too? (*Imploringly*) It can't be

true that after all these years I've never done anything great. No, it's just a lie like all the rest. You can see, can't you, they're all trying to frighten me. I know what they're after. And now I've got more time; that's it, I've never had time before—*(He pauses)* But then I'm so tired tonight, and the pain in my head.

Marta (Startled by his manner tries to quiet him).—There, it's only because you're worn out with the fever. Some day of course you'll be the great master, but tomorrow we must eat and you will go back to the theatre. They'll soon forget there—what happened tonight, and it will all be just the same as before. *(CHRISTOPHE comes toward her and grasps her by the shoulders, so that she is forced to look at him.)*

Christophe.—Have you laughed at me too all these years? Why do you go on repeating lies like you were afraid of being caught? You know there's nothing more for me. And yet you go on pretending.

Marta.—Let me go. *(She twists in embarrassment to free herself)* You know I've always been faithful and believed in you. While you had time to dream, I've cooked your food and tried to keep the roof over our heads. Any other woman would have gone out into the street for company. And then I'm not so ugly. It isn't as if I couldn't—

Christophe.—You are afraid of me. That's what it is. That's why you are lying now. You thought I was mad because I didn't come home drunk every night to beat you. Can't you understand what's it meant for me to go on alone this way all these years?

Marta.—What are you talking about? You've not been alone. Out in the country—well that was different, but here—

Christophe.—These last years at the theatre were somehow the hardest to bear; when I knew I was getting to be an old man. Oh, it was terrible to feel that I didn't make any difference to the people that brushed by on the street, cursing me for being in the way. And then I couldn't understand their talk at the vaudeville. Oh, sometimes I've wished I were like them. I've wanted the men to come and talk to me, about their homes and all the little things that don't matter. Not that I cared, but just to feel I was living like them, that was something. But they were all afraid of me somehow. At first they tried to be friendly enough, I suppose, but they felt uncomfortable and stiff, as if they couldn't speak right out before me. They thought I was a fool with all my dreams. They were pleased enough where they were. What did

they want with anything better than the vaudeville. I didn't let them guess what it meant to be left quite alone. I couldn't creep after them whining; so I learned to despise them. That was easier, and then I felt so sure that after while, some day, you understand when I had time, I'd do something great and then all the rest wouldn't matter.

Marta (Cried out angrily).—Oh, you're hurting me.

Christophe.—And you've not even respected me. "The blind fool," you said to your friends of the street. "He is quite mad, but I must go on lying for fear he will kill me."

Marta.—It was no harm certainly if I did speak of you to Larsac. I had to talk to someone, didn't I? And he was so kind, bringing me wood and great strings of sausages. He was glad enough to listen to me and then he wasn't so proud like—

Christophe.—Why should he bring you presents? He was nothing to you, or perhaps—

Marta.—You know I've always been faithful, but then he was kind because he pitied me and I've been so lonely. (*She wrenches away*) It's true I haven't the simpering beauty of a raw girl of sixteen, but there are some who don't only look for that.

Christophe.—Why have we lived together all these years? Haven't you ever guessed that I—

Marta.—While you've been dreaming, I've wanted new dresses for Sunday. Sometimes I've prayed to have children. I've wished so hard to be like the other women I've seen in the street, with little hands clutching at their skirts and great giants of husbands who came home in the evening half drunk and gay.

Christophe.—But you've never said anything to me. Why was it? Were you afraid?

Marta.—What good would it have done to try to talk to you? No, I've borne everything with a word. At first I used to cry my heart out when I sat here alone, but then you were my husband, I'd sworn at the altar to be faithful, and what was the use of so many tears? (*She laughs bitterly*) It didn't do any good, did it?

Christophe.—What made you faithful to me? Perhaps once when you were fresh and young—then your body was strong and light and your hair was bright as gold in the sunlight—I loved you then because you were beautiful.

Marta.—And now, I've grown old and worn and all through working for you?

Christophe.—I have wronged you. I can see it now, but what could I do? Perhaps it's still not too late. If I'd only realized

the truth before, that I was like Larsac the baker, and Jules, and Old Mere Louin, then I could have made you happy, eh? Instead of writing bad music I could have stood on the street and sold half rotting vegetables to the country people, all wrapped up in great baskets, so that they couldn't find out the truth until they got home and then it would be too late. (*He begins to cough.*)

Marta.—If only I had a new silk dress, then I could go to Mass. After all, it isn't so much to ask for, is it? I'm getting too fat always sitting about the house because I'm ashamed to put my head outside the door. Larsac said tonight that I still had a fine figure, but——

Christophe.—He said that to you?

Marta.—Yes, you can laugh at Larsac. You don't know all he has done for us. Where do you think it was I got so much wood and meal? I suppose you've never thought of it at all, or else believed the Virgin had taken pity to keep us from starving.

Christophe (Interrupting her angrily).—It's all so hideous, your great morality! I'm beginning to understand.

Marta (Quickly).—You understand nothing. It's only the fever.

Christophe.—Yes, now I remember, it was almost every evening I found you sitting on the sofa, your bodies close together.

Marta.—Mother Mary! You don't suspect?

Christophe (Laughs).—Suspect you? No, you've always been afraid of the truth. But when you sat there in silence, telling yourself there was no harm in it, working yourself into a state of hysteria like a coarse peasant woman who has not the courage to take what she wants, for fear that her husband will stop her stupid lies and kill her,—(*he laughs and then begins to cough painfully*)—did you think I cared that much for you?

Marta.—You don't know what you're saying.

Christophe.—Did he teach you that too? What was it he said when I came in tonight? Yes, that's it—asking for charity—Now I remember—I can see it all now. You sit together on the sofa, closely like this. It is cold outside. He puts his arm around you and pities you. Then you cry a little. It is all very delightful when you feel his arm creeping up on your neck and his sour breath on your face. Oh, it is all innocent, of course! There's no harm done. (*There is a long silence with only the sound of the clock and CHRISTOPHE'S heavy breathing*) I am beginning to understand at last. It's so terribly clear to me now. I can see all the ugliness I've tried to hide from like a fool. But then I

wanted to pretend like you and all the others. I didn't want to know the truth. I was afraid—but now——

(MARTA *sobs*) Oh anything but that, I could have stood anything else. It was so much easier then when I didn't know. If you had even had the courage——

Marta (*In a thick voice*).—But there was nothing wrong I tell you.

Christophe.—I couldn't go on forever pretending. I've known it now, a long time, but I was afraid—a coward, can't you hear me? Afraid I'd go mad if I lost faith. (*He takes up his violin and starts toward the door. His face is changed and he seems to have found a great peace*) But I can go now, thank God, get away before it's too late, before I have to climb down into the street with you and the others. It's a lie; I'm not like the rest of you. (*He makes a gesture of pain and puts his hand to his head.*)

Marta (*Impatiently*).—It's madness. You can't go out in all the snow. Look outside and see for yourself, if you won't believe me.

Christophe.—What difference does it make to you? When I'm gone, you can go back to Larsac the baker. He will comfort you again and even put his arm round your waist. And you can laugh and not be afraid any more, do you hear? (*He coughs*) But then I won't hear you. I'll be far away—in the country perhaps, where the sun shines and it's warm and everything's beautiful. There they can't laugh because they won't know me you see. And all the ugliness—these damp walls reeking with your vulgar intrigue—will be only a dead memory.

Marta (*Shrugs her shoulders*).—Where could you go tonight? You've no money.

Christophe.—I'm strong again now. The rest doesn't matter. And I won't stay here. Then you'd drive me back to the theatre like a beggar to listen to their jeers. And while I was away he could come here again, and you—I tell you I'm going away now, before it's too late—before they all try to stop me— (*He staggers toward the door, then suddenly sways and falls heavily to the ground. MARTA gives a low cry and goes over to him as though stupefied. She realizes that he has fainted and mechanically brings some water to bathe his forehead. He is a little revived and she half carries him to to a chair before the fire.*)

Marta.—Here drink this. (*She offers him some water.*)

Christophe (*Submits dully, then pushes the bowl away as he begins to remember*).—I tell you I won't stay here. It stifles me.

Marta.—Yes, later you can go, but now—

Christophe.—You see I couldn't even do this properly. The pain in my head. It's like a burning flame, I can't see anything but these damp walls closing in on me and then your face, (*He hesitates as though groping for something*) and all the rest, I tell you it's gone forever.

Marta.—It's only the fever. Be quiet now and rest.

Christophe (Looks at her wildly).—You think now I'll never be able to go away. That I'll stay here to rot and die. You think you're too cunning for me with all your tricks, eh?

Marta (Wearily).—Why do you struggle so? It only makes things worse, and what's the use of it all? You're faint with weakness.

Christophe (Speaking very slowly in a low tense voice).—I don't know. I think it must have been in my blood like a curse when I was born. Oh, I could see it all so plainly then. When I crept into the great Cathedral on Sunday, and hid trembling behind the dusty curtains, the music went to my head. And the old Cure when he found me, instead of being angry, laughed and said, "Some day you'll be a great man, my child." Oh, I've never forgotten, it was all so plain to me then, but now—(*In a tone of agony*) I can't see anything. (*The church bells chime far away the notes for service on Christmas eve.*)

Marta (Crosses herself).—It will soon be Christmas day and I've no new dress to wear to Mass. And tomorrow everyone will have presents and the great ladies will ride on the boulevard wrapped in furs and I—

Christophe (Interrupting her impatiently).—Why do you stay here with me? What are you waiting for?

Marta (Goes to the window and holding back the thick curtain looks into the street).—It's stopped snowing now. How terribly quiet everything is.

Christophe.—You knew I couldn't get away from here, but you lied about that too. You think it won't make any difference, that I'll go on just the same with all the years stretching ahead. (*His voice rises hysterically*) Why did you make me understand then tonight, if I had to go on pretending. And the others, they'll never even guess that I can see them now when they laugh and whisper.

Marta.—I'm so tired. (*She yawns sleepily*) I suppose I'll have nothing better than my old red shawl to wear tomorrow to keep me warm. Well, they'll still pay you something if you go

back early in the morning. On Christmas day they'll need extra help in the vaudeville.

Christophe.—What are you waiting for? What will it bring you to stay with me? You're too cunning not to understand that you're only wasting your time here. And Larsac, he could buy you a new dress. Then the people in the street wouldn't pass by so quickly, eh?—*(He laughs.)*

Marta.—It's sinful to talk so, but you don't know what you're saying. *(She goes to the oak cupboard and brings out a bundle of sticks for the fire)* Don't excite yourself so for nothing. Wait until tomorrow. What do you want? To change all these years in a few seconds with your fine talk? *(She yawns again.)*

Christophe (Grasps her skirt as she passes and drags her toward him. She is forced to let the wood that she has brought to replenish the fire fall on the floor).—Tell me, what it? You knew I couldn't bear to feel you touch me—Why didn't you go then while I lay there on the floor half asleep. What made you try to help me?

Marta (As though humoring a child).—God knows Christophe, I saw you lying there, and all the rest—I didn't think of that. I've lived and worked for you twenty years and that's a long time. *(She shivers drawing her red woollen shawl closer about her shoulders)* Ugh! how cold it is. Look, the fire's burned out now; there's only ashes in the grate. I tell you all your fine talk won't keep us from freezing.

CURTAIN

UNKNOWN HERO

BY ANDRÉ LAMANDÉ

Translated from the French by Cammie H. Lamy

In changeless gesture of heroic pose
 He slumbers, and not one of those who climb
 The gentle slope where his ashes repose
 Has seen his pallid lip, his brow sublime.
 None will know him. But faithful to his tomb
 A tree for joy laughs in the dawn of May,
 And sings. And when the perfumed breezes sway
 Her branches, falls a sheaf of snowy bloom.

THE CHINA PIG*

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

BY EVELYN EMIG

CAST

ELIZABETH MAYNARD, *the mother*
ELSA, *her daughter*
ROYAL, *her son*

The scene is the living-room of a \$60.00 per month apartment. It is filled with rather a heterogeneous collection of articles, some of which were purchased during a more prosperous period of the owner's career. The table in the center of the room is of beautiful mahogany, two of the chairs are of the same wood; a third is a comfortable leather morris, and the remaining one is of reed. A bookcase on the right is also of mahogany. The mantle on the left matches the oak doors of which there are three: one, the entrance, in the back, right of a large window, and the other two beyond the bookcase on the right. The first of these last two leads into the hall; the second is a closet door. The surroundings blend somewhat—it is a room much used—so that there is no clashing element to offend a cultivated nature, but neither is there any artistic effect. The whole atmosphere seems somewhat subdued and depressed; but it is an energetic depression; there is nothing lethargic about it. Perhaps it is the woman who conveys the impression. She seems somehow to dominate the room. One rather wonders why. She is no longer young; about forty, one should judge, and whatever charm she may have possessed—it probably lay in her quick black eyes and her young determination—has long lain dormant. She is badly dressed in an old brown skirt and a shabby waist. Her brown hair is lifeless and her mouth is faded, wistful at times, above all, submissive; but her eyes are deep with a stubborn determination that no quantity of rebuffs can entirely subdue.

The doorbell has rung with the rising of the curtain and she is crossing from the hall to answer it. The caller is a messenger with a hat-box.

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The Boy.—Mis' Elizabeth Maynard?

The Mother (Eagerly).—Yes. (*Taking the box*) Thank you.

(*She closes the door and carries it quickly to the table where she opens it and takes out the hat. She takes it to the mantle and tries it on diffidently before the mirror. The result is eminently satisfactory. Reluctantly she removes it and takes it back to the box. In it she sees the sales-slip. She opens it. The price she realizes is too high; but she does want the hat. Regretfully at last she decides that she cannot afford it. Then she returns to the mirror to try it on again. While she is standing there ROYAL enters.*)

Royal (He is eighteen, a slender young chap in ill-fitting clothes; stumbling, awkward, with all a boy's dreams and ambitions, and all a boy's needs. One can tell that from the word with which he enters. It is always the same).—Mother?—Gee. Some hat!

Mother.—Do you like it?

Royal (Enthusiastically).—It's classy.

Mother.—I'm afraid I can't keep it.

Royal.—Why not?

Mother.—Oh I can't afford it. I saw it down town and I thought so much about it that I telephoned them to send it up on approval.

Royal.—Well, (*With a lordly air*) Keep it! It's a peach.—How much is it?

Mother.—Eight dollars.

Royal.—Pshaw. We can spare *that*. You need a new hat anyway. That old one's shabby.—Gee mother, you look swell in that. With a new coat now, and a set of furs—

Mother.—Oh Royal!

Royal (Bragging).—You just wait till *I* start making money! Oh say! What do you think I did. I went up to see Ralph Gorman. The explorer, you know?

Mother.—What for?

Royal.—I asked if I could go down to Peru with him next year. *You* remember; I read you the article the other day, about the trip they're going to make?

Mother.—They wouldn't take you, Royal.

Royal.—Why not? *Sure* he would. He *said* he would. (*Qualifying*) Said he *might*.—Gee, he was great to me, though.

Mother.—What did he say?

Royal.—Oh, he told me all about Peru. First thing I asked him if he'd take me with him next year. He said I'd need some scientific training. I asked if a year would do; an' he looked at

me kind of hard, an' said it would help. Then I said "If I study for a year will you *take me?*" And he said perhaps he could. Gosh, I was rattled.—He told me what subjects to take, and what to read up on.

Mother (The hat in the box, has seated herself in the morris chair and taken up her darning).—But Royal. Father expects you to study law.

Royal.—Oh he won't care.

Mother.—Yes, he will care.

Royal (Stubbornly).—Well, I can't help it. I'm not going to do it. I guess I have the right to choose my own profession.

Mother.—He's paying for it.

Royal (Annoyedly).—Oh Lord. He won't kick, will he?

Mother.—You mustn't talk like that Royal.

Royal.—Will you talk to him?

Mother.—I'll try.

Royal.—Do you think he'll be really sore?

Mother.—I hope not. But he's been planning all your life to have you practice with him. Ever since you were born.

Royal.—I can't help it. (*Realizing it*) I'd like to do it,—but I couldn't stand working in an office. I want to get out and see things.

Mother (Looks up at him, the light of understanding in her eyes, but all she says is).—Exploring is a dangerous business at best. It means hardships and bad climates; poor food, a life away from civilization, a life facing any sort of possibilities. It isn't so wonderful as it sounds.

Royal.—I know. I know what it is. But think of the glory. Think of finding things that have lain hidden for ages; cities, fossils, ornaments!—Oh you can't understand. You're a woman. But it's wonderful.

Mother (Half to herself).—Yes I can—

Royal.—Say—(*Diving down into his pocket*) Look what he gave me. (*He fishes out a little black iron urn*) He got that down in Machu Picchu.

Mother (Takes it in her hands in great interest).—Machu Picchu!

Royal.—That was the capital, you know.

Mother (Absorbed).—I know.

Royal (Turns away. He is worried over his father's possible interference.)

Mother (Suggests timidly).—Just think, Royal. Maybe a little Indian princess played with this.

Royal.—Uh huh.

Mother (Fingers it awkwardly).—What was he like, Royal?

Royal (Not interested).—Oh I don't know.

Mother.—Nice looking?

Royal.—No. Little dried-up, red-headed man. (*Pacing up and down*) Gee, I've got to go with him. Father's got to let me.—I wish he'd come home. I can't stand waiting.

Mother (Is fingering the urn wistfully.)

Royal (Turning decisively).—I think I'll go down to the office and talk to him there.

Mother (Putting urn on the table).—He may be busy.

Royal.—I know, but—he—he'll be more polite down there, with his clerks around. Besides, I can't wait. (*He takes up his cap.*) Goodbye.

Mother.—Goodbye.

Royal (Comes back to kiss her.)

Mother.—Be good, now.

Royal (Off again).—I will. (*He pauses at the door to remind her*) And mother, you're to keep the hat.

Mother.—We'll see. (*He is gone. She darns slowly. The sock finished, she rolls the pair of them up in a little ball and starts on a long silk stocking. Once she stops to pick up the little urn and gaze at it dreamily, but she lays it down again. After a moment* ELSA *enters.*

Elsa (She is twenty-two; tall, slender, self-reliant, with a quick decisive charm. She is an independent and fearless person, a girl who has weighed life in the balance and discovered thereby her own scale of philosophy with which she is satisfied to judge. She has not much sense of humor; she thinks of herself as "serious" and worthwhile. Today she is in a very elated mood that she does not try to repress, though she is usually rather reserved. She speaks eagerly as she enters the door).—Mother—I'm going to New York. Tonight. I've got an engagement with a theatrical company there. I've been accepted! I met the manager down at the office. He came in, mind you. Mr. McDonald had told him about me; about my acting for the Drama League. And after a little he offered me a position. Thirty dollars a week. Just imagine! And it's rather an important part. (*She has removed her hat and taken a suitcase from the closet while she finished.*)

Mother.—But Elsa—you can't go away like this.

*Elsa (Withdraws into herself at this, and composedly opens the suitcase).—*Why not?

*Mother.—*Why you don't know the man.

*Elsa (Decidedly).—*Nonsense. I'm not going away with him. *(She takes a coat from the closet and lays it on the table by the bag.)*

*Mother.—*But you can't go away to a strange city. Why, New York is an enormous place. You'd be lost. You have no place to go.

*Elsa.—*I'll get a room from the Y. W.

*Mother.—*You aren't a member.

*Elsa (Impatiently).—*Well, what of it? I guess they'll take me in.

*Mother.—*But Elsa, you *can't* go. You can't go away like this.

*Elsa (Packing; politely, with forced patience).—*Why, not mother?

*Mother.—*You're too young and inexperienced. You've made no preparations.

*Elsa (Calmly).—*I'm going, mother.

*Mother.—*Your father won't consent. He won't allow you to go.

*Elsa.—*That's all the good it will do him.

*Mother.—*You wouldn't go against his will?

*Elsa (Politely).—*Wouldn't I?

Mother (Sighs injuredly and stands gazing at her beseechingly.)

*Elsa (Looks up at this. Stops packing and breaks out impatiently).—*Mother. Here's the biggest thing that's ever come into my life. The chance I've been working toward for years; and when it comes to me you ask me to give it up. I suppose you want me to be a stenographer all my life.

*Mother (Breaking in).—*No, I don't.

*Elsa (Near tears of annoyance).—*Yes you do. You stand there and talk about father, well I suppose father *will* object. I expect him to. He'll storm around here as he always does, and then sulk for a month. Well, I don't care. Let him. I don't care what he does. I don't care if I never *see* him again.

*Mother (Shocked).—*Elsa! How can you talk like that?

*Elsa.—*Why not, it's the truth. Why *shouldn't* we be truthful once in a while! What's the good of all this lying and pretending all the time? You know I don't care about him. *(After a breath, calmly)* Neither do you.

*Mother (Pained).—*Elsa, how can you *talk* like that?

Elsa (Melting).—I'm sorry mother. (*Firing again*) But I just can't help it. It makes me wild when I think of how he tyrannizes over everybody.

Mother (Dutifully).—He's your father, Elsa.

Elsa.—That's no reason why he should be disagreeable to me.

Mother.—You don't understand him.

Elsa.—Oh, yes I do. That's why I despise him.

Mother (Righteously).—Elsa you must not talk like that.

Elsa.—Why not admit if it's true? You don't care for him any more than I do. Do you think I don't know you? If you had money of your own you'd leave him tomorrow.

Mother (Dismissing her).—You don't know what you are talking about.

Elsa.—Don't I? (*Persisting*) Mother, tell me the truth. Do you love father?

Mother.—Why of course I do.

Elsa (Searchingly).—Honest and true? Do you love him?

Mother (Coldly).—I don't care to discuss the subject.

Elsa (Looks at her wordlessly—what is the use of speaking? Then she does it).—Why do you stay with him?—Why don't you go away some place by yourself?

Mother (Arguing).—Where could I go?

Elsa.—Why don't you come to New York with me?

Mother.—Oh Elsa, don't talk like that. You know it is impossible.

Elsa (Turning away, gives it up, a little contemptuously).—Yes, I suppose it is.

Mother (Upset by it all, and hurt to the quick by her contempt, breaks suddenly through the restraint of their relationship).—Oh, it's not what you think. I'm not dead. You think I am, but I'm not. I'm as much alive as your are. I'm more alive. Much more. I—I want to go to New York as you never can want it. Until you've been put off for years and years as I have.

Elsa (Is staring at her.)

Mother (Gathering force).—Oh, I know what you think. You think I'm spiritless. You think I'm going to stick here till I die. But I'm not. I'm going to New York too. It won't be very long now either.—You think it's just money. But I *have* the money! I have almost a thousand dollars! Why do you think I've been wearing old shabby clothes? For fun? Why, I began saving before you were born.

Elsa.—Mother—

Mother (At the note of sympathy in her voice the mother halts and stares at her, remembering herself. Then, almost whispering).—It's true.

Elsa.—I never knew—

Mother (Carried away by the emotion of it all, she says poignantly, something that means almost nothing— unless perhaps it means a great deal).—Sometimes I hardly knew myself.

Elsa.—And all these years—?

Mother.—Ever since I was a girl. Look—(She goes down into the bottom drawer of the desk and brings up her bank, a little green china bank in the shape of a pig.) My grandfather gave me that china pig when I was sixteen, and the first thing I began to save for was a bicycle. My grandparents were old-fashioned; they didn't consider a bicycle was lady-like. But Oh, how I did want it. I've wanted so many things I couldn't have. I was just supposed to stay at home, and I wanted to get out and study. I wanted to write. I've always wanted to write. Then I began to dream about college. I only spoke of it once at home. My grandfather was very angry. He said it wasn't womanly. I couldn't talk of a career to him. But I made up mind I would have it. I began to save; for the time when I could go away and study. I saved up two hundred dollars. And then grandfather died and everything was just swallowed up. My money went to help pay the funeral expenses. The rest of it took grandmother and me to Pittsburgh where I got a place in a factory. Oh Elsa—how I hated that factory. How I hated all the sordidness, the petty jealousies—I couldn't stand it. My dreams were dying. I was too tired to dream. (She looks down at the little green bank. She is speaking in a monotone now, jerkily) So I began saving again. It meant more than just studying now. It meant freedom. Living.—And then grandmother died, and the money went again. But I started in again. My expenses were less now. I saved one hundred and six dollars in ten months. It wasn't very much. But I meant, when I had five hundred, to go to New York. To Columbia University. All I was working for was one year of college. I don't know what I thought I'd do after I got it. I suppose I believed I could write at once and support myself that way. Then I met your father. He was just a young lawyer. He was different then, more gentle and thoughtful. The first thing I knew, I told him what I was saving for. Well—he, he encouraged me. He got me night work to do—and I—we—well, one day he proposed to me. And he promised, if I'd marry him, that I should have my year of

college anyway. As soon as we could save the money I was to go. But when the time came you were here, and most of the money went for you. (*More intensely*) You say I don't understand your wanting to go? Why, I gave you that longing. I lived it into your little body before you were born. And you think it's odd that Royal wants to be an explorer? How can he help it? I've wanted to explore all my life. I've dreamed of strange places, new environments—I—I—if a strange man had come to me—and offered to take me all those places, I'd have gone. Not loving him. I'd have left my home and gone.—But no one ever came. I've just been chained here all these years.

Elsa.—But mother—why didn't you go?

Mother.—How could I?

Elsa.—Did you give it up then?

Mother.—No. I meant to go when you were older. Your aunt could have been with you. Your—your father knew it. He never said much then, but he thought I ought to give it up. One time—you were about six; he had a chance to get in on a good business deal, and he asked me to lend him the money. I had meant to go that summer—and he knew it; but he said I might get it back in time. I didn't. I never got it back. He couldn't spare it at first, and afterwards—it made him angry if I spoke of it,—and the next money I saved—do you remember that year when you had so much trouble in school? I wanted to send you away for a while. You needed a change. But he couldn't afford it. He said you needed a strong hand.

Elsa.—But I did go away.

Mother.—Yes. I sent you. I had forty dollars then. But I think I hated him then. I think I've hated him ever since.—When you were sixteen he made a lot of money—(*her voice becomes lower now, hard and even*) And I stole six hundred dollars. He never knew. He never even missed it. I changed the accounts. And then when he failed I never said a word. I sat there as hard as steel, and watched him worry over those bills. I sat there and thought about college—I have over a thousand dollars now.

Elsa.—Mother you're splendid—

Mother.—No I'm not. Sometimes I forget all about it. Sometimes I think it's no use. I've had to give it up all my life. Perhaps just in giving the desire to you and Royal I've fulfilled my mission.

Elsa.—What nonsense.

Mother (Unhappily).—It's only occasionally that I think of it now. Perhaps when the time comes I won't have the courage to break away. I'm too old. (*Despairingly; sinking into chair at table*) Oh I *am* too old. I simply can't bear to admit it.

Elsa (Suddenly).—Mother—come to New York with *me*—you're *not* too old yet. Break away today.—You have the money. What are you waiting for? There's nothing to keep you now.

Mother.—Royal—

Elsa.—Royal doesn't need you. He's a man himself.

Mother (Stares at her)

Elsa.—You said you didn't want me to go alone. Come along and take care of me.

Mother.—You don't need me either.

Elsa.—I want you. Can't you see! Isn't it splendid? We've neither of us lived yet. We've both been waiting and hoping. Now our chance has come. Let's take it together. What wonderful chums we could be now. Can't you see it? Oh, *think* of New York! The lights, and the big streets. It means Fifth Avenue, and the Metropolitan Museum, and Broadway and the opera, and the shops and the theatres. All the theatres.

Mother.—And the statue of Liberty. I've always wanted to see that.

Elsa.—Mother—won't you come? (*They stare at each other. There are tears in the MOTHER's eyes. ELSA takes her in her arms. Then, releasing her*)—You will come, won't you! And you have the money. Can't you get it today? It isn't three yet. Go down to the bank and draw it all out. Let's take it with us.

(*They are tense with excitement.*)

Mother (Goes to the closet for her old hat and coat.)

Elsa.—No, wear your new hat. (*She puts it on her*) I'll pack your things for you. Now, hurry—

Mother (Turning at the door and coming back).—Oh, my check-book— (*She is getting it from her desk when Royal enters.*)

Royal (He is just recovering from a tempestuous scene in which he has been very angry. His face is still set in fierce, determined lines. He sees his mother and the boy in him calls out).—Mother— (*Then the man in him comes to the fore. He speaks gruffly and briefly*) I'm going away. Father won't let me study. He won't give me the money. So I'm going away somewhere, and make it for myself.

Mother.—But where will you go Royal?

Royal.—Oh, I don't know.—Out west somewhere. Perhaps

California. I just know I'm going. He wants me to stay in a musty little office all my life and practice law. But I won't do it. If he won't help me, I'll do it myself. I'm going to be an explorer if it costs me my life. I—

Mother (Staring at him piteously).—But Royal—

Royal.—It's all right mother. Don't you worry. I'll get through all right. (*Breaking*) But it would have been such a wonderful chance. To go with them next year—(*He stares stiffly.*)

Mother (Unwillingly).—How—How much would it cost?

Royal.—Only about two thousand.

Mother.—Would a thousand do?

Royal.—I don't know. Why?

Mother (Quietly).—I can give you a thousand.

Royal.—YOU?

Mother.—I've been saving it for quite a while.

Royal.—Oh, do you *mean* it? I'd pay it back. Oh mother, could you?

Mother.—Here. I have my check-book. I'll write you out a check. You can cash it right away.

Royal (While she is writing it).—Oh mother! I can't believe it. It means so much to me. You can never understand how much it means.

Mother (Not answering that).—There. You can cash it today if you hurry.

Royal.—(*Puts his young arms about her and kisses her quickly, on the cheek.*)—Oh mother, I do thank you—you wait—I'll do something for you some day.

Mother (Hurrying him, unobtrusively).—It's all right, Royal. Just be good; that's all I ask.

Royal (Kisses her again and starts out eagerly.)

Mother (As he crosses the sill).—Hurry—(*He is gone, slamming the door behind him. She stands silent for a moment. Then, slowly, she begins to take off her hat.*)

Elsa (Who has not moved, stands watching her. ELSA believes in not interfering.)

Mother (Puts the hat back in the box. Then slowly she sinks into the chair right of the table. ELSA is back, left of the Morris. She twists her hands nervously. Then she looks at ELSA; and looks away again).—What could I do? I hadn't any choice.—It was his life or mine. I couldn't have gone, when it kept him back. I couldn't.—It's been the same thing all my life. Every time I've had to give it up.

Elsa.—Come anyway, mother.

Mother.—I can't.

Elsa.—Yes you can!

Mother.—No—(*Resigned*) No; I've made my choice.—Oh, it wasn't any choice, I've never had any. Every time it's been the same, every time. It can't be right. It can't be—and yet it wouldn't have been right to go. I had to do it. It must have been right, wasn't it right, Elsa? Why do you look so hard?

Elsa (Slowly).—I don't know—

Mother.—The Bible says so.

Elsa (Sure of this).—I can't quote Bible verses to you. But I know this—that a man's first duty is self-development.

Mother.—Self-development. No it can't be, Elsa. There are other things.

Elsa (Passionately).—It is. It is.

Mother.—Then you think I should have gone? At the expense of Royal's development?

Elsa.—I can't decide for you.

Mother.—What would you have done?

Elsa.—I don't know—

Mother.—You'd have done the same thing. Every time you'd have done it. And every time I've had to. All my life. (*Tears in her voice*) I've dreamed and dreamed. I've saved and saved until my heart was sick. And still I've kept on; saving and planning. And every time when it was within my reach, I've had to give it up. I don't believe I was ever meant to go. I might just as well believe it. It's just been a game I've been deluding myself with all these years. This little china pig—(*she snatches it from the table, and lifts it high above her head to dash it to the floor*) I'm going to break it—(*Then, quickly she stops*) No! I won't! I won't give in! I'm going on. I'm going to start all over again! I won't give in! I won't!

Elsa (Gladly).—You'll come?

Mother.—No. I'm going to stay right here. I'm going to save again. And this time I'm going to go!

Elsa (Turns away wordlessly. Then she faces her again, and as she speaks, the truth of what she is saying dawns on her).—I wish you had broken it. I wish you had smashed it to bits. Why do you wait for that? Why do you?—That's been the trouble all along. All your life you've been wanting to grow. All your life. And every time you started, some other thing came and held you back. I don't say you were right in giving up the money. I don't say

you were wrong. But why did you let it stop you? You have no right to do that. It's as if, each time you found yourself a stepping stone, some one else needed it, and you gave it up—but why did you wait to get another? Why didn't you wade across?

Mother.—What do you mean?

Elsa (More confidently now).—You asked me if you were right in giving up the money. And I say—it didn't matter. Whether you used it and went, or whether you gave it and stayed here. What does matter is that you've waited to save again. Don't you see? All your life you've been waiting and saving for an opportunity—when you should have been going on without it.

Mother.—But I couldn't—

Elsa.—Yes, you could. You can now. What have you done with your life? Saved. Saved money. When you should have been thinking, reading, studying at home. When you should have been writing. Have you ever written anything? No. You've been waiting to learn. Well, why didn't you teach yourself? Don't you see? These years have been wasted; wasted in dreams. It didn't matter where you were. It didn't matter how busy. You could have grown somehow if you'd tried.—But you've just saved.

Mother (Realizing it).—I've just saved. (*Slowly*) Saved and dreamed, instead of going ahead.—You didn't do that. You've been working for years; getting ready.—Now I've let my years slip by—and it's too late.

Elsa.—No, it's not, mother.

Mother.—Oh yes, it is.—No one else has been to blame. It hasn't even been circumstance. It's just been me. (*After a time*) A new environment would have helped—

Elsa.—Yes.

Mother.—But it wasn't necessary. I see it now. I see it all now that it doesn't matter. Now that I'm too old.

Elsa.—You're not too old, mother. It's never too late if you see it.

Mother.—Do you believe that?

Elsa.—I do. I do. Nothing matters. If you can see.

Mother (Deciding).—Then I'm going to begin.

Elsa.—You'll come with me?

Mother.—No. I'm going to do it here.

Elsa.—Are you afraid to go?

Mother.—No. But I have no money. I'd hamper you. And besides—I don't need it now.

FACING REALITY

A FARCE IN ONE ACT

BY FLOY PASCAL

The living room of the LAWRENCES, simply but tastefully furnished, giving evidence of literary occupation. A few good pictures, books, an open fireplace in which a wood fire burns cheerily, a potted flower on the center table. MRS. POMEROY, a thin nervous woman in the late fifties sits on the edge of a chair twisting her hands. MR. MYERS, a thin nervous man some years older, walks restlessly about.

Mrs. Pomeroy.—I don't see how things could be worse.

Mr. Myers.—They couldn't! (*After a second, with deepening gloom*) But they will be!

Mrs. Pomeroy.—Will be?

Mr. Myers.—Don't forget that tomorrow is coming. Tomorrow is always worse than today!

Mrs. Pomeroy.—Oh, yes, of course. I've done nothing all day but agonize over what tomorrow will bring forth—conjuring up one terrible picture after another.

Mr. Myers.—And I! I've worried myself almost sick. And it's a good thing you and I are here to worry. David and Diantha simply will not do it for themselves!

Mrs. Pomeroy.—Another letter came from the agent today. I saw it. He said they would either have to pay the rent tomorrow or get out! All day I've been thinking of that—seeing all of us put out upon the sidewalk. No place to lay our heads. And what did Diantha say to me when I went weeping to condole with her? Asked me if I didn't think pink was a lovely color?

Mr. Myers.—Irresponsible! Both of them! Perfectly irresponsible! There's hardly enough coal in the cellar to make the morning fire in the furnace, yet David builds a wood fire in here! (*He throws up his hands in despair*) If I only had some money to lend them now! But you know I have to manage very carefully

with my small income. Every dollar has its appointed place. I've always been a careful manager.

Mrs. Pomeroy.—It's the same with me, as you know. And we both had to allow for the railroad fare here and back. I hope our visit has helped them. I've tried so hard in the month we've been here to keep them from walking light-heartedly over their perils.

Mr. Myers.—Here they come! Oh, if we could only arouse them to a sense of their danger. Make them realize they are on the brink of ruin (*Enter DAVID and DIANTHA gaily.*)

David.—Well, good people! Having a happy time?

Mr. Myers.—I should hope not! When my nephew is in financial difficulties, I couldn't allow myself to have a happy moment.

Mrs. Pomeroy.—We've been utterly wretched, dear David, wondering how you're going to meet the responsibilities of tomorrow.

David.—Oh, Aunt Laura, tomorrow is twelve hours off!

Mrs. Pomeroy.—But my dear boy—it is rolling to meet you ominously like an awful stormy sea! (*She lifts her handkerchief to her eyes.*)

Mr. Myers.—I don't like to interfere, David, but I've had years of hard experience. Now take this matter of fires, my dear boy. There is only a handful of coal in the cellar. No money to buy more. And you indulge in the extravagance of a wood fire! You may need every stick of that wood to keep you from freezing, in a day or so.

Mrs. Pomeroy (*Openly weeping*).—If you only have a fireplace left to build a fire in.

Diantha.—Why, uncle, that is the time to indulge in the cheer of a wood fire—when there is very little coal in the cellar. (*She goes to victrola and puts on a gay little waltz record, and begins to dance with DAVID.*)

Mr. Myers.—I don't see how you have the heart to dance.

Mrs. Pomeroy.—It doesn't seem right, under the circumstances to do anything but just sit and be anxious. How can you dance, dear children? Such untimely gaiety might tempt Providence to destroy you utterly.

David (*Still dancing*).—It's worrying that tempts Providence to destroy people utterly, Auntie.

Mr. Myers.—David, if you and Diantha would only learn to face reality!

David (Stopping and speaking vehemently).—Face reality! Good God! If Di and I used up all of our energy facing reality, we wouldn't have any left to do our work with. Face reality! That's the last thing one wants to do. Uncle! You want to forget the damned thing!

Diantha.—For don't you see, uncle?—and, aunt?—that if you sit and look at it it gets bigger and more awful and obsesses you? And I—well, really it's of no consequence at all. Reality!

Mrs. Pomeroy.—No consequence? Reality of no consequence? Not having any money to pay your bills—threatened with being turned out—no coal—Oh! Oh!

David.—No, those things are of no consequence. They are merely the shadows that frighten people. It's what's in one that counts!

Mrs. Pomeroy.—Well, there's nothing but fear in me! (*Weeping.*)

David.—But there isn't any fear in us, Aunt Laura. There's imagination and—and—some talent I hope—powers—to think—to create—to enjoy—to feel—

Mr. Myers.—But you'll be put out of the house tomorrow, and it won't be very comfortable creating and feeling and enjoying—on the sidewalk!

David.—But, my dear uncle, can't you see that there is absolutely no thought in me anywhere of being turned out on the sidewalk. I don't entertain such a foolish notion that has no substance in it.

Mrs. Pomeroy.—But the agent entertains such a foolish notion.

Mr. Myers (As if he gives up the job as hopeless).—Ten o'clock now. In a few brief hours the agent will be here with ejection papers—

David.—But in those brief hours I will write an installment of a serial. I will arise gaily with the sun, be at the editor's office upon his arrival, get my check, return—voila!

Mrs. Pomeroy.—But you don't know that you can write it, David. All you've got to get it out of is your poor dear head.

David.—Yes. That seems like a forlorn hope to you, aunty, I know. But all the same if I don't fill my poor dear head with silly fears and worry my very good imagination will work, and by sun up, I'll have a good yarn ready!

Diantha.—And I, too, will proceed up to my studio, make some drawings, arise with the sun, and—

Mr. Myers.—But the editor may not buy your serial and your drawings—

Mrs. Pomeroy.—He most likely will not—just because you need the money so. Things happen contrary, that way. Then, where, oh, where, will you be?

David (Beginning to crumple with vexation sits down running his hands through hair).—In a hellavafix! My God! If the sun, moon and stars felt that way about the future, they'd topple out of their orbits and go smashing through space. Maybe that's what will happen in the morning, auntie! How do you know you will get up and find the universe in place?

Mrs. Pomeroy (Piously).—Oh, my boy, God is tending to the universe! That's his handiwork.

David (Explosively).—Well, God's tending to me, too. I'm his handiwork! And I'm not going to fall out of my orbit! Damn!

Mrs. Pomeroy.—My dear boy, I didn't teach you to be profane.

David.—One doesn't have to be taught to say damn, auntie. It's a natural and universal expression of woe. As for profanity, the only profanity is to reduce oneself from the limitless possibilities of the mind and soul to the circumscribed area of what is called reality.

Mrs. Pomeroy.—It sounds like Greek to me, David.

Mr. Myers (Dryly).—Or Dutch.

David (Toploftily).—It's neither. It's a new language born of man's better knowledge of himself.

Mrs. Pomeroy (Getting up, sighing).—It's my bedtime. I will go up and try to sleep. But, I fear—

Mr. Myers.—I also will endeavor to snatch a little unconsciousness after the anxieties of the day. But, I'm afraid—
(*The uncle goes up the steps nodding goodnight. But the aunt kisses each of the young people with a sad and commiserating look that says plainly; "You poor young things that tomorrow will crush."* Then she, too, ascends.)

(*DAVID and DIANTHA sit down and look at each other.*)

David.—Di, we must get rid of the poor old dears. They will make ants of us! Ants that crawl upon the ground and lay up their witer's supply of food while the summer's sun doth shine. I don't want to be an ant, Di!

Diantha.—Nor I, David! I don't want to be an ant—seeing a mountain in a molehill.

David.—She will come down at midnight—just as I am well under way—look at me forlornly and say, “My poor boy, I just can’t sleep for thinking about you and the difficulties that beset you.” Then you know what will happen, Di? My story will fly out of the window. Imagination will crumple and die, and I’ll sit here shorn of what splendor I possess—a poor wretch reduced to the smallness of the actual!

Diantha.—I know. Just as it’s been happening over and over. And she’ll come into the studio and shake her head sadly, just as my gay little people have begun to come forth from space and dance over the paper with their droll antics.

David.—You know we were getting on all right, dear, until uncle and aunt came to visit us. We didn’t have anything in bank to be sure, but we weren’t afraid because we knew we could produce enough for our needs as they came along. But she cripples us with her fears and doubts.

Diantha.—Uncle is just as bad as she is, dear.

David.—Di, would it hurt the poor dears if you gave them a sleeping powder disguised in their glass of milk? Then we might be sure of the night.

Diantha.—It might hurt them. (*Smiling*) They haven’t very stout hearts, you know. And anyway, that would only help for tonight. What we’ve got to do is to send them home someway, David, or they will ruin us. I’ll tell you. Let’s let some telegrams arrive for them!

David (Eagerly).—Uh huh; go ahead!

Diatha.—Well, one to auntie saying that Dora—let’s see—

David.—I believe I’ve got some telegraph blanks here, Di. Not the receiving kind, but they’ll never notice the difference. They are both so ready to believe in calamity. (*Looks in table drawer, finds blanks.*)

Diantha.—We don’t want to frighten the dear old things. I wouldn’t consider this at all if there were any other way of our getting a chance to work. Let’s see. We needn’t make the news anything but a mild calamity, for of course they will magnify anything to sufficient awfulness to serve.

David (Writing, smoking).—Yes—um—we might simply say, “Dora has headache. Come immediately.”

Diantha.—And to uncle, “John has queer pains in chest. Come immediately.”

David (Taking out watch).—If the telegrams come now they will have time to catch the 11:30. We can send their things tomorrow.

It is fortunate they live next door to each other, isn't it?

Diantha.—David, won't the coincidence of both of them getting a telegram arouse suspicion?

David.—Never! On the contrary, they would be surprised at the forbearance of fate if only one misfortune befell.

Diatha.—Well, we needn't feel sorry—playing a trick on them. They'll go off having a beautiful time being miserable together.

David.—Of course, I have no envelopes. But that doesn't matter. Now, I'll ring the bell.

Diantha.—What will they think, though, David, when they reach home and find Dora and John all right?

David.—Oh, don't worry over that! They'll suggest a headache and a chest ache to Dora and John, and Dora and John will immediately have them. That's why I made the affliction mild. I'd hate to bring down severe illness on the poor victims. Now—I'll ring. (*He exits and there is a loud peal of the door bell. Immediately the two older people come running down the steps in their night dress, clutching robes around them. She with her hair in curl papers, and he in night cap.*)

Both.—Oh—oh—a telegram! Some bad news from home. I know it is! I know it is! (*DAVID enters with telegrams in hand.*)

David.—I signed for them. One for you Aunt Laura, and one for uncle. Now don't be alarmed. Telegrams mean nothing in these days. (*AUNT and UNCLE seize the telegrams.*)

Mrs. Pomeroy.—“Have severe headache. Come immediately. Dora.” Headache! I'll bet she's feverish, too. Oh, dear, I'll bet she's got typhoid. Oh! Oh!

Mr. Myers.—John's got severe pains in chest! I must fly to John! If it should be pneumonia!—Or pleurisy! Or—

Diantha.—Oh, don't be alarmed. A headache—a chest ache—are nothing. I daresay they just want to see you.

Mrs. Pomeroy.—Oh, that is just like you, Diantha, to hope for the best so foolishly.

Mr. Myers.—Will we still have time to get the next train? Yes. Then we must hurry, Laura.

Mrs. Pomeroy.—Yes—yes—Hurry! (*UNCLE and AUNT DIANTHA run upstairs. There proceeds an absurd clatter and bumping and thumping as they rush about. DAVID goes to phone and orders taxi, then stands, chin in hand smiling.*)

David.—They are stirred out of their depths of worry over Diantha and me to quite pleasant excitement over new fields of

woe to conquer. (*In an inordinately short time the others rush down the steps, AUNTIE with her hat on sidewise, UNCLE getting into his coat as he descends, LAURA carrying two small hand bags.*)

Mrs. Pomeroy (Kissing DAVID).—Remember, dear David, if the worst comes to the worst and you are turned out of your house my humble home is there to receive you. Alas! There may be an extra room—if Dora dies—as she may—oh, as she may!

David.—Oh, nonsense! Auntie—

Mr. Myers.—Farewell children! I'll pray that calamity doesn't fall upon you. But we must hurry! Pneumonia develops so rapidly— (*Bell rings.*)

David.—The taxi! (*They exit—everybody talking.*)

Diantha (Reentering with DAVID).—Was it a mean trick to play on the poor old dears, David?

David.—Not at all. They literally enjoy poor health in themselves and others. In what a pleasant bustle of excitement they departed. (*He goes to fireplace and stirs logs until they send up a cheerful flame, and takes down pipe, filling it. He lights it and stands smoking thoughtfully, looking into fire. DIANTHA takes blue candles from desk drawer, puts them into old silver candellabra and brings to DAVID's work table, placing them at either end and lighting them. Then she turns down the lamp a little so that the room is full or restful shadows. She goes to window, looking out.*)

Diantha.—A lovely night, full of stars—unfathomable blue—mystery— (*DAVID walks slowly, musingly, to table and sits down, still puffing at his pipe.*)

Diantha (Coming over to DAVID and kissing him).—Well, good-night, dear. I'm going to fall to work in the studio. Got your story?

David (Smiling).—Uh, huh—Mystery tale. (*DIANTHA goes slowly up the steps. DAVID pulls some paper in front of him, and takes up pencil.*)

David.—Um. Mystery. (*Looks broodingly about the room, at the burning logs, the fluttering candles*) The Mystery of the Silver Candlesticks.

(*Falls to writing as curtain slowly descends.*)

A GROUP OF POEMS BY PAUL VERLAINE

TRANSLATED BY WILLIAM A. DRAKE

O HEARKEN TO THE GENTLE LAY

O hearken to the gentle lay,
That only weeps that it may please;
Discreet it is, and faint as breeze
That ripples o'er the moss in May.

The voice was known to you (and dear?),
But now the singer hides her face,
A widow veiled in desolate lace,
Yet haughtily her grief doth bear.

And in the long folds of her veil
Which flutters on the autumn breeze,
The wondering heart, adoring, sees
Truth, like a star, now gleam, now pale.

It says, this voice you know again,
That only goodness is our life,
And that of hate and envious strife,
When death is come naught shall remain.

It tells the vast felicity
Of simple hearts that true love mates,
The tender happiness that waits
In peace unwon by victory.

O welcome the sweet voice, whose glad
And artless wedding song returns.
Go; naught so soothes the soul that burns
Than making other souls less sad.

They are but fleeting pains that flay
The soul that suffers without wrath,
And sure, undoubting, is its path! . . .
O hearken the sagacious lay.

THE SKY ABOVE THE ROOF

The sky unfolds above the roof
 So blue, so calm!
 The goodly tree above the roof
 Sways its green palm.

A bell against that sky we see,
 It sweetly rings.
 A bird in yonder bough we see,
 That plaintive sings.

My God, my God, all life is there,
 Simple and sweet
 And peaceful sounds are wafted there
 From village street.

“What hast thou done, O thou who here
 Sheds endless tears?
 Confess how thou hast wasted here
 Thy youthful years!”

A GREAT BLACK SLEEP

A great black sleep
 Falls o'er my life:
 In slumber deep
 All hope, all strife!

Vanished all things;
 The memory,
 Good, evil—wings . . .
 O, the sad story!

A cradle I,
 By hands immense
 Rocked from the sky:
 In silence, silence . . .

A GROUP OF POEMS

SENTIMENTAL DIALOGUE

In the old park, lonely and frozen fast,
A moment since two ghostly shadows passed.

Their lips are listless and their eyes are dead,
And scarcely one can hear the words they said.

In the old park, lonely and frozen fast,
Two spectres summon up the vanished past.

“Do you remember the old ecstasy?”
“Why would you have me keep that memory?”

“Does your heart beat to mine, as long ago?
Still do you see my soul in dreaming?” “No.”

“Ah, lovely days of joy unspeakable,
When your lips met my lips!” “’Tis possible.”

“How blue the heavens, and our hopes how high!”
“Hope has fled vanquished to the sombre sky.”

So thru the withered weeds they wandered,
And only night could hear the words they said.

MY FAMILIAR DREAM

Often I dream a strange, impressive dream
Of some mysterious woman, whom I love
And who loves me; and who, at each remove,
Alters her form, yet still remains the same.

She loves and understands me, and to hers—
To hers alone, alas!—is opened wide
My enigmatic soul, and I confide
The dew of my pale brow to her sweet tears.

Is she dark, auburn, blonde? It is vagous.
Her name? I know ’tis sweet and sonorous
As names of lovers whom Life banished.

Her eyes are calm as busts in palace halls,
And her faint voice, so soft and grave, recalls
The cadence of dear voices that are dead.

THE WHITE MOON

The white moon shines
Above the wood;
A voice repines,
The branches brood
In trees above . . .
O love, my love.

The ponds reflect
In mirrored deeps,
In black aspect
The reed that weeps
Where the winds yearn . . .
It is the hour; let us return.

A tender, vast
Sense of content
O'er me is cast
From firmament
Where bursts the star . . .
It is the exquisite hour.

IT WEEPS IN MY HEART

It weeps in my heart
As it rains on the town;
Whence does this languor start,
That penetrates my heart?

O sweet sound of the rain
On earth and on the roofs,
To heart outworn of pain,
O the song of the rain!

It weeps without reason
In my desolated heart.
What! is there, then, no treason?
This sadness has no reason.

It is more bitter fate,
Because I know not why,
Having nor love, nor hate,
My heart is desolate.

A GROUP OF POEMS

IT IS NECESSARY . . .

It is necessary, do not you see, for us to pardon
 each other all things.
 In that way we will indeed be happy;
 And if our life has some melancholy moments,
 At least we will be, as it were, two sisters weep-
 ing together.

Sister souls that we are, let us mingle
 Without confused vows the youthful sweetness
 Of solitary walks, far from men and women,
 In the fresh forgetfulness of all that makes us
 exiles.

Let us be as two children, let us be as two young
 girls,
 Weared at nothing, wondering at all things,
 Who journey far, and grow pale beneath the chaste
 yoke-elm
 Without ever knowing that they are forgiven.

PARSIFAL

Parsifal has conquered the women, their gentle
 Prattle and amusing luxury, and his inclination
 For the flesh of the virgin boy, which he tempts
 To love soft, white bosoms and that gentle prattle.

He has conquered the beautiful woman with the
 subtle heart,
 Extending those fresh arms and his excited throat;
 He has conquered hell; he returns to his tent
 With a heavy trophy in his boyish arms.

With the spear which has pierced the supreme side
 He has cured the king, behold, the king himself;
 And, priest of the very sacred, essential treasure.

In a robe of gold he adores, glory and symbol,
 The pure vase where is resplendent the true blood;
 And O, those voices of children sing in the cupola!

I DO NOT KNOW WHY . . .

I do not know why
My bitter spirit
On anxious, foolish wings flies over the sea.
All that is dear to me,
With a frightened wing
My love covers up to the level of the waves.
Why, why?

Sea-gull of the melancholy flight,
My thot—she follows the wave,
Poised upon all the winds of the sky
And turning when the tide walks obliquely,
Sea-gull of the melancholy flight.

Drunk with the sun
And with liberty,
An instinct guides her across that immensity.
And the summer breeze
On the vermillion wave
Softly transports her in a tepid half-slumber.

Sometimes she cries so sadly
That she affrights the pilot in the distance,
When she is delivered to the will of the wind,
and floats
And plunges, all bruised in the swirling wind,
and then so sadly cries!

I do not know why
My bitter spirit
On anxious, foolish wings flies over the sea.
All that is dear to me,
With a frightened wing
My love covers up to the level of the waves.
Why, why?

THE BALLAD OF SAN GRAAL

BY ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN

*“There blows a red rose far away
That spreads its leaves for me;
And friends may go or friends may stay,
But I am for the sea.”*

It was the hour of the Cross
And darkness walked the land;
Joseph had his Saviour's Cup
Within his faithful hand.

He turned it North, he turned it South,
He held it East, then West;
Of all the four high singing winds
It loved the West the best.

Under the gates, beneath the hill
He passed, nor looked aside
But once to see the lonely three
Who on their crosses ride.

He is come down to the deepest sea
That winds the earth around;
He has shaken the dust from off his feet
And quit the cursed ground.

He had not taken seven steps
In the water white with gales
When up there hove a mighty ship
With seven opal sails.

Her seven masts were cedars tall
Once held the stars on high
And phoenixes in Lebanon
That color all the sky.

Three men sang out to greet him fair,
"Now welcome, Joseph true!
Lo, here be Faith and Charity
And Hope to ship with you!

"Out with the sails to the four long winds!
And you shall steersman be.
So set your Cup upon the prow
To give us light by sea."

He has set the Graal upon the prow,
He has gripped the rudder bar;
Up from the Graal a glad flame stood
Like the winsome evening star.

Down slipped the land, up slewed the sea
And up the sea they flew;
They lost the seagulls in their wake,
They lost the mountains too.

The storms went by them like thin smoke,
Great whales like minnows all;
They rode the rims of highest waves,
And never took a fall.

Below the keel they heard sweet bells
In cities down below
And saw the ancient wicked folk
On silver pavements go.

Down from the Graal some sparks there fall
When Charity did cry,
"God give a little weal of light
Where in the dark they lie!"

Up in the West twelve towers came,
Up through the waves and shone
With gold that never mortal man
Before had gazed upon.

THE BALLAD OF SAN GRAAL

“O, Captain mine,” said blue-eyed Hope,
“Yon is a winsome town!
I am for the prow to let
Our silver anchor down.”

“Hold up our anchor white and good
And never let it down.
Yon city is a fairy place
And named Atlantis-town.

“It was a human city once,
Before Lord Noah’s Prime;
Since it was nor bad nor good,
It rises at sunset time.

“And should we anchor in its roads
To make us harbor cheer,
Down deep as Hell ’twould carry us
When the Daystar would appear.”

So North stout Joseph threw his helm,
The Graal flamed as a sun;
Wild through the night they heard the waves
On wicked seacliffs run.

“I fear this is unholy shore,”
Cried Hope, “I hear the yells
Of demons old and black as night
Ringing like brazen bells!

“The night is full of wild seamares
Neighing as they go;
Their teeth they show and come to bring
Our ship and us black woe!”

“Pluck up your heart,” said patient Faith,
“There looms a cleft in sight,
And we may win a grassy bed
Before the morning light.”

White spears of surf fell on the deck,
But ere they felt a blow
The spears were changed to lilies great
And white as driven snow.

Reefs like teeth came up to bite
The fair ship's tender sides,
But over them as soft seaweed
The vessel sweetly glides.

And now they win a crystal pool
Where golden fish abide
Whose starry eyes have never dimmed
Beneath a windy tide.

The sun leaps up and shows a land
Of pleasant appletrees.
"I see the rose!" cries Joseph loud,
And falls upon his knees.

High overhead among thorn-trees
The rose did redly blow
And shake abroad the goodly smell
That heals all human woe.

*"There blows the red rose of My heart
In a place of thorns,"* Christ said,
When, that sad night of all sad nights,
He bowed His fated head.

"Bear up the Graal to the Glaston rose,
And see what luck betide!"
With the Cup grown strangely great
Up they slowly stride.

When down there came a heathen knight
Had a red cock on his shield
And a bitter sword waved like the sea
And bade the four to yield.

THE BALLAD OF SAN GRAAL

But Joseph drew his own blue blade
That on his thigh rode light
And smote the false churl's head away
And made his body light.

Then down there came a second knight
Had a cloak with purple crown;
But Joseph cut him from the crest
To his beard of brown.

Forth there rushed a raven knight,
Mailed head and breast and knee;
Stout Joseph drew and laid him low
To be the raven's glee.

Down rode a host a thousand strong,
A thousand spears stood high,
A thousand spears came down as one,
Sang death as they swept nigh.

A livid lightning from the Graal
Mowed them like a scythe,
A thousand knights went by in smoke
And flames that twist and writhe.

They gained the crest, they reached the rose,
When, lo, a mighty hall
Rose to welcome in the Graal
And its defenders all.

High in the Glastonbury land
It wears the years away,
And San Graal is that hall's sweet light
Forever and a day.

*"Still blows the red rose of the world
And nods to you and me;
And death may rain or life may shine,
But the rose blows endlessly!"*

LITANIES OF THE ROSE

BY REMY DE GOURMONT

Translated by George Williamson

Hypocritical Flower

Flower of Silence

Rose the color of copper, more false than our joys, rose the color of copper, embalms us in your lies, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.

Rose with the harlot's painted face, rose with the prostitute's heart, rose with the painted face, make the pretense of being compassionate, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.

Rose with the childish cheek, O maiden of future treacheries, rose with the childish cheek, innocent and red, open the snares of your bright eyes, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.

Rose with the black eyes, mirror of your nothingness, rose with the black eyes, cause us to believe in mystery, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.

Rose the color of pure gold, O strong coffer of the ideal, rose the color of pure gold, give us the key to your womb, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.

Rose the color of silver, censer of our dreams, rose the color of silver, take our hearts and make smoke of them, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.

Rose with the sapphic look, paler than the lily, rose with the sapphic look, give us the perfume of your illusive virginity, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.

Rose of the purple brow, passion of proud ladies, rose of the purple brow, tell us the secret of your pride, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.

Rose of the old ivory brow, lover of yourself, rose of the old ivory brow, tell us the secret of your virginal nights, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.

- Rose with the lips of blood, O eater of flesh, rose with the lips of blood; if you wish our blood (what would we do with it?) drink it, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose the color of brimstone, hell of vain desires, rose the color of brimstone, light the pyre where you hover, soul and flame, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose peach-colored, velvety fruit of deception, artful rose, rose peach-colored, poison our lips, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose the color of flesh, goddess of good-will, rose the color of flesh, cause us to kiss the melancholy of your cool and tasteless flesh, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose wine-colored, flower of bowers and wine-cellars, rose wine-colored, mad alcohol dances in your breath: breathe into us the horror of love, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose of violet, O modesty of perverse young girls, rose of violet, your eyes are larger than the others, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose of rose, virgin with the troubled heart, rose of rose, dress of silk gossamer, open your false wings, angel, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose of silk paper, adorable image of uncreated graces, rose of silk paper, are you not the true rose, hypocritical flower, flower of silence?
- Rose the color of dawn, the color of time. the color of nothing, O smile of the Sphinx, rose the color of dawn, smile opened on nothing, we shall love you, because you lie, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose the color of hydrangea, O banal delights of distinguished souls, rose neo-Christian, O rose hydrangea, you tire us of Jesus, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose Chinese rose, so sweet and faded, miraculous love of late blooming women, rose of China, your thorns are capped, and they are concealed claws, O velvet paw, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose of blond, light mantle of yellow on frail shoulders, O rose blond, female stronger than the male, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose the color of orange, O fabulous Venetian lady, O patrician, O doge's lady, rose the color of orange, the mouth of the tiger is concealed beneath the silk of your foliage, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.

- Rose of apricot-color, your love imparts heat slowly, O rose of apricot-color, and your heart is like a deep vessel where curlews simmer, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose of chalice-shape, red vase where the teeth bite when the mouth comes to drink there, rose of chalice-shape, our bites cause you to smile and our kisses to weep, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose all white, innocent and milk-colored, rose all white, so much candour terrifies us, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose the color of straw, yellow diamond among the crude colors of the prism, rose the color of straw, we have seen you, heart to heart behind a fan, breathing the perfume of the beard, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose the color of wheat, heavy sheaf with the loose sash, rose the color of wheat, you would like to be bruised and to be crushed, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose of lilac, doubtful heart, rose of lilac, a shower has blighted you, but you will sell all the dearer your oxidized flesh, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose of crimson, O sumptuous settings of autumn suns, O rose of crimson, you lie down and give yourself, imperial offering, to covetous youths, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose of marbled color, rose and red, melting and ripe, rose of of marbled color, you still willingly show the back of your petals, in strictest intimacy, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose the color of bronze, baked bisque of the sun, rose the color of bronze, the hardest darts dull themselves upon your skin, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose the color of fire, special crucible for refractory flesh, rose the color of fire, O providence of fanatics in dotage, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose of flesh-color, rose stupid and full of health, rose of flesh-color, you give us drink and lure us with very red mild wine, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose of the virginal heart, O equivocal and adolescent rose that has not yet spoken, rose of the virginal heart, you have nothing to tell us, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose of currant-red, shame and blush of ridiculous sins, rose of currant-red, we have too often ruffled your dress, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.

- Rose the color of evening, half-dead with ennui, twilight smoke,
 rose the color of evening, you are dying with love while
 kissing your weary hands hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose of blue, rose of iris, monster the color of the Chimera's eyes,
 rose of blue, raise your eyelashes a little; are you afraid that
 we will look at you, eyes in eyes, Chimera, hypocritical
 flower, flower of silence?
- Rose of green, rose the color of the sea, O navel of the sirens, rose
 of green, floating and fabulous bud, you are nothing but
 water as soon as a hand has touched you, hypocritical flower
 flower of silence.
- Rose of carbuncle, rose blossomed on the black forehead of the
 dragon, rose of carbuncle, you are no longer anything but the
 buckle of a sash, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose of vermilion, love-lorn shepherdess lying in the fields, rose of
 vermilion, the shepherd breathes you and the ram has de-
 flowered you, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose of the grave, coldness emanating from corpses, rose of the
 grave, all delicate and pink, adorable perfume of delicate
 decay, you make a pretense of living, hypocritical flower,
 flower of silence.
- Rose of brown, color of dreary mahogany, rose of brown, lawful
 pleasures, wisdom, prudence, and forethought, you regard us
 with haughty eyes, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose of wild poppy, ribbon of model-girls, rose of wild poppy,
 glory of little dolls, are you foolish or artful, toy of little
 brothers, hypocritical flower, flower of slence?
- Rose red and black, rose insolent and secret, rose red and black,
 your insolence and redness have turned pale among the com-
 promises which virtue invents, hypocritical flower, flower of
 silence.
- Rose of the lily of the valley, climber which coils itself about the
 rose laurels in the gardens of Academe, and which also blooms
 in the Elysian Fields, rose of the lily of the valley, you no
 longer have either perfume or beauty, spiritless adolescent,
 hypocritical flower, flower of silence.
- Rose poppy, flower of the laboratory, torpor of the charlatan's
 philtres, rose vinegar on the hood of false priests, rose poppy,
 the hand of some fool trembles on your frill, hypocritical
 flower, flower of silence.

Rose slate-colored, chiaroscuro of dubious virtues, rose slate-colored, you climb and bloom around old solitary seats, rose of evening, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.

Rose peony-colored, modest vanity of fertile gardens, rose peony-colored, the wind only turned up your leaves by chance, and you were not displeased, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.

Rose of snow-white, the color of snow and of swan's feathers, rose of snow-white, you know that the snow is fragile, and you only open your swan's feathers to the most deserving, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.

Rose transparent, the color of clear springs spouting up among grasses, rose transparent, Hylas died of having loved your eyes, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.

Rose of topaz, princess of forgotten legends, rose of topaz, your citadel is a dubious rooming-house, your tower is let by the hour, and your white hands have equivocal gestures, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.

Rose of ruby, Indian princess in a palanquin, rose of ruby, sister of Akedysseril, O degenerate sister, your blood now runs only in the bloom of the skin, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.

Rose of amaranth, princess of the Frond and queen of the Precieuses, rose of amaranth, lover of beautiful verse, we read impromptus of love on the tapestries of your chamber, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.

Rose of opal, O woman of the sultan asleep in the odor of the harem, rose of opal, langour of constant caresses, your heart knows the profound peace of satisfied desires, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.

Rose of amethyst, morning star, episcopal tenderness, rose of amethyst, you sleep on devout and indulgent breasts, gem offered to Mary, O gem of the sacristy, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.

Rose of cardinal, rose the color of the blood of the Roman church, rose of cardinal, you cause the large eyes of the favorites to dream, and more than one once pinned you in the bow of his garter, hypocritical flower, flower of silence.

Rose papal, rose watered by the hands which bless the world, rose papal, your golden heart is of copper, and the tears which bedew your vain letals are the tears of Christ.

Hypocritical flower,
Flower of silence.

THE ATTACK

BY ANDRÉ LAMANDÉ

Translated from the French by Cammie H. Lamy

The order: "Fifteen minutes more!" God! how
My courage fails. Oh! let me travel fast
In dreams along the pathway of the past
Once more, so far and happy it seems now.

Oh! see my struggle, mother, sister—you,
Least of my friends; this agony I hide
From him, my judge, the soldier at my side.
I think I know the thirst that Jesus knew

On Calvary: "Oh Father, take away
This bitter cup; from life which eagerly
Clings to the earth, from my humanity
Remove this awful death." With him I pray.

Afraid? Who? I?—But for the summer bright,
The flowers, sky so blue, the tranquil sea,
For love which on her warm lips brought to me
A falt'ring maiden in the dim twilight,

For life and peace my being cries out still.
But I dare not. I kill. Oh, craven heart!
Pale-browed I stand and wait to take my part
In this unholy task—how faint my will!

"The hour has come." Can it be true? Oh, tears,
Of silent joy! We go! What extasy
That for that murd'ring shower of shells we
Shall wait no longer, feverish with fears.

The hour has come. "Advance, my men!" A leap
Out of the trench. That's all. No music, burst
Of cheers, no songs or flowers. Towards the first
Crest in the ghastly silence on we creep.

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By GUNNAR HEIBERG

Gallant Cassian, A Puppet Play

By A. SCHNITZLER

The Election of the Roulette, A Play of Russian Life in One Act

By WILLIAM BYRON MOWERY

Prologue, A Play in One Act

By CARL GLICK

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THE BALCONY*

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

BY GUNNAR HEIBERG

Translated from the Norwegian by Edwin Johan Vickner and Glenn Hughes

ACT I

*A large room with lofty ceiling.
Early morning. It is still dark.*

ABEL and JULIE enter from an adjoining bedroom which is seen to be softly illuminated. JULIE is dressed in a soft-flowing morning dress. They go toward the door of the balcony, but stop before they reach it.

Abel.—Good-bye! (*Holding her face between his hands, he kisses her*) Good-bye!

Julie (*Caressing his arm with a slow downward motion*).—Yes, I know you must go.

Abel.—My beloved! My beloved! (*Kisses her eyes*) Good bye, pretty eyes of mine—do not cry. I shall be here again to-night. Good-bye my pretty mouth and my white teeth. My darling little ear! (*Kisses her more and more passionately.*)

Julie.—No, no! You must go. It is getting late. He will soon be here. (*Puts her arms around his neck*) You are everything in the world to me. How wonderful to stand beside you thus—to feel you near me—and to think that in a moment it will be over. Everything about me will be empty, dark and cold. Everything changes color when you go; the rooms seem strange to me until you return. How long the day is—for wherever I go, you are not there. I love you!

Abel.—If I could only be with you always!

Julie (*Drawing back the curtains from the door to the balcony*).—You must go.

Abel.—But look! (*They look out over the river. The day is breaking, though the sun is not yet up.*) Look, Julie! We are the first that the sun will shine upon. We shall have the sun for ourselves. Behold, the world! Look, Julie! (*He embraces her.*)

Julie.—And when the sun appears, you go.

Abel.—Poor Julie! And he comes.

Julie.—It does not matter.

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Abel.—Doesn't it?

Julie.—I do not see him. I close everything—my little ear, my big heart, my understanding.

Abel.—Your little understanding.

Julie.—My big understanding. I array myself in sackcloth and ashes. I cover everything over, and strew ashes upon the glowing embers. And in the ashes I place these black pearls which you gave me yesterday, and which my hand shall close around when I die.

Abel.—Julie! Julie! If I only could come to you openly every day,—and be with you openly!

Julie.—It is wonderful as it is now—in secret.

Abel.—But would you not rather—?

Julie.—I don't know. Both openly and secretly . . . but it seems to me that it is doubly wonderful in secret.

Abel.—No! No!

Julie.—Yes! Last night before you came I walked about in the room, stretching my arms in the moonlight. And the moonlight seemed to warm me—but it was only that I was afraid. And each time I crossed a moon-beam, the silence of the night grew greater. Then I began to whisper: "Abel, Abel, Abel," more and more audibly, until at last I whispered it quite loudly; and it seemed to me that the moon and your name and I, and all that is between us, was a great secret which no one knew about.

Abel.—And then I took you gently in my arms and carried you in there, and laid you on the green rug, so that the light from the chandelier flowed down upon the lilac tree and over your beautiful body—over your throat, over your bosom, over your eyes, your arms—your arms! (*They remain silent for a time. Then he smiles.*)

Julie (Seeing his smile).—What is it?

Abel.—I am reading what I wrote upon your bosom: "I love you."

Julie.—Did you write that? What with?

Abel.—With a spray of lilacs. (*They sit cheek to cheek, in silence.*)

Julie (Gently).—I would that I were beautiful.

Abel (Quietly).—You!

Julie.—For I love you so dearly! (*Still more softly*) You must go. Oh, how strong you are! I never knew a man could be beautiful! You must go. Yet when you leave me, it is as if I were going to die. The night and the moon and you melt what the

day and the sun have frozen into ice. I love you! You must go.

Abel.—Good-bye. But give me a smile to treasure until you are mine again. So. You smile out here, but in there you are serious. In that room you divest yourself of smiles as you take off your clinging garments. When you sit up in the corner of the wide bed, and I see the delicate blue veins—

Julie.—Abel!

Abel.—Then you are serious. You glow like a pale rose, like a quiet, bridal torch. And your chastity makes me voluptuous. You are chaste because you will not deny that you feel joy. And even if you did deny it, I could read it in your eyes, that shine and sparkle with a thousand lights . . . You do not deny it.

Julie (Hiding her face on ABEL's breast).—Abel!

Abel.—You admit it. (*Strokes her hair*) Your long black hair!

Julie.—Abel!

Abel.—Don't you?

Julie.—Yes, Abel.

Abel.—You will?

Julie.—Abel!

Abel (Trying to see her face).—Won't you? Say it! Say it! Please say you will!

Julie (Rising).—Now you must go. (*They look at each other and smile.*)

Julie.—Can you write with a spray of lilacs?

Abel.—I dipped it in my mouth. That made it easier.

Julie.—But really, Abel! (*Smiling*) With green letters? How does it look—ugly?

Abel.—No. Very pretty!

Julie (Startled).—Some one is coming. It is he. (*Points toward the balcony*) Hide out there. But don't go down, for it is too light now. (*ABEL goes out upon the balcony. Immediately RESSMANN comes in, hurrying as fast as his age permits. He removes a big red muffler which is wound several times around his neck.*)

Ressmann.—Good-morning, my dove. Why look at me that way? Have you waited long? I'm right to the minute. And now you turn away from me. Did you notice my hollow tooth? It has been aching all night. (*Feels of the tooth*) And the other has been chattering with cold. Well, there was a ship from Sicily, with a lot of duty to pay. Has the mason been here to repair the balcony?

Julie.—No, he has not been here.

Ressmann.—Have you seen the crack out there?

Julie.—Yes.

Ressmann.—I wonder if it has got down to the floor yet. It's very frail.

Julie.—No, it hasn't. I looked at it today.

Ressmann.—So you are beginning to take an interest in our house. Ha, ha, ha! If we could only sell the thing, we wouldn't have to repair it. (*He goes over to the canary-birds and teases them*) How frightened they are! No, they only pretend to be frightened—like women when there are mice in the room. (*He goes over to the parrot and teases it. He puts his finger into the cage, strikes the bird on the bill, makes faces at it, and keeps up a terrible racket*) Ha, ha, ha! Ill-tempered devil! Ha, ha, ha! Yes; it resembles my mother—ha, ha, ha—when she had grown old. Proud lady. So are you, old fellow, just like her. Ugh! You didn't hit me that time. Ugh! But I hit you. Ha, ha, ha! She treated me like a suckling until I was so old that I didn't have any teeth, and was harmless to any bosom . . . So you don't want sugar. Try again! Nothing doing . . . ugh! Ha, ha, ha! Two years ago she died, and it is only three years ago that she sent me out of the room because I contradicted her. Filial reverence, you see. (*Teases the birds in both cages, and roars with laughter. Then grows tired of it, and speaks seriously*) So much for that. Now I want to sleep. Let me know if the mason comes. But don't disturb me for the doctor—he can wait. (*Suddenly picks up a piece of paper from the table and hurries toward the outer door, where he encounters the doctor*) No; I guess I had better not let the doctor wait. It costs too much.

Doctor (Entering, and smiling as he rubs his hands).—But it is you who fixes the fee.

Ressman (Snapping angrily).—The fee won't be any greater, but the feeling of obligation to pay a greater fee becomes greater.

Doctor (Laughing affably).—Ha, ha, ha! “Becomes greater” eh? Well, how do we feel today?

Ressmann.—We feel rotten today. For we have had to wait for the doctor when we might have gone to bed instead. “And the lady?” She is very well. My grey hairs and my thin legs proclaim loudly enough that nothing is ailing her. As yet no confinement! As yet no extra fee! . . . My tongue? Here it is. And my pulse? By all means! And if there are any other curiosities which you would care to inspect, we will retire to the next room. Don't mind the lady. Come on. Are you going to

keep me waiting? . . . Julie, you have forgotten to put out the night-lamp. (*He goes into the bedroom. The DOCTOR, who has been listening with a friendly and indulgent smile, follows him. JULIE runs quickly to the balcony.*)

Julie.—Come! (*ABEL comes into the room. They move toward the outer door.*)

Abel.—I never knew what he was like. It made me tremble with rage.

Julie (Emphatically).—Yes!

Abel.—Hush! Hush!

Julie.—Just think, if he should see you!

Abel.—Aren't you afraid of him?

Julie.—No.

Abel.—He came flying in, didn't he? (*JULIE laughs aloud.*)

Abel.—Hush-shsh! (*RESSMANN puts his head into the room, then comes out. There is a long pause while he looks first at JULIE, then at ABEL. ABEL is silent, and JULIE makes no effort to speak. RESSMANN starts slowly toward ABEL.*)

Julie (At last).—It is a young gentleman who wishes to look at the house. Mr. Abel—my husband.

Ressmann.—Rather early.

Abel.—Yes—I always take a morning walk—in the morning. And as I was passing here, I remembered hearing that the house was for sale.

Ressmann.—Did you think we would be up as early as this?

Julie.—Mr. Abel saw you coming home.

Ressmann (Turning on JULIE).—I heard you laughing.

Julie.—Did I laugh?

Ressmann.—Yes, loudly.

Julie.—Did I laugh loudly?

Ressmann (Returning to ABEL).—From ten to twelve are the hours.

Abel.—But I wish to look at it now. I have thought of buying it and since you are at home—

Ressmann.—That sounds like business. You are right. Suit yourself, Mr. Abel. I am just going to dismiss my physician. Doctor! Doctor! Come here! (*The DOCTOR enters.*)

Ressmann.—You may go! (*The DOCTOR looks good-naturedly at the others as though to imply that RESSMANN must be humoured.*)

Ressmann.—Don't let him deceive you. He feels hurt, but he keeps up a pretence for the sake of the money there is in it. I am a good patient.

Doctor.—Oh—

Ressmann.—Am I not? (*The DOCTOR smiles and shrugs his shoulders indulgently.*)

Ressmann.—Only for the sake of the money. Exactly as I in the case of Mr. Abel. For, mind you, Doctor, here comes this perfect stranger and orders—ha, ha, ha! orders—me to show him my house, though the hours are from ten to twelve, and I should prefer to be—well! And I comply with his request. I bow and say, “Please look around.” Merely for the sake of money. Man passes, but money endureth forever! We are all actors, playing a comedy for one another. And with actors you can take all sorts of liberties if you will only pay for it. Otherwise they will despise and ridicule you. Do you know that, gentlemen? Have you ever been around with actors, Doctor, having a good time, and got drunk and been witty, and talked about parts, and boasted and lied? No? Not really? You have a nature somewhat like that, I think. And you have curly hair, too. Yes, indeed! “Ungrateful as an actor” ought to be a proverb, as a friend of mine who is a poet used to say. That is, he wasn’t exactly a friend of mine; he (*looks at ABEL*) he borrowed money from me. Now you must really be starting along, Doctor, or the strange gentleman will never get to look at the house. Good-bye. Oh, you have forgotten to inquire about my “passage” today. (*The DOCTOR smiles comprehendingly bows and goes out. ABEL shows signs of impatience. JULIE smiles indifferently.*)

Ressmann (*After looking at JULIE and ABEL.*)—And now to come back to business—the house. I am at your service.

Abel.—It is quite time, I should say. And all this is not very pleasant for your young wife, either.

Ressmann.—My young wife, you—! (*Shouts*) Doctor! Doctor! (*The DOCTOR re-enters.*)

Ressmann.—Why haven’t you asked me about my “passage” today. Don’t you know your rigmarole? (*The DOCTOR again smiles in his polite and indulgent manner.*)

Doctor.—Dear me, Mr. Ressimann! Dear me,—!

Ressmann.—And such an absurd expression you use for it! Is it because I am in your clutches that you use such a word? Will there be an additional fee for it? Are you trying to ennoble the plebeian thing with a title? Sir Passage, perhaps? If you were going to ask my young wife about such a matter or the young gentleman, you would hardly say “passage.” For the name doesn’t make things any easier.

Doctor.—Dear me, Mr. Ressmann! Dear me, Mr. Ressmann! (*Looks at his watch*) Well, I have other patients to look after.

Ressmann.—Really? Good-bye, Doctor. You are delaying us. (*The DOCTOR goes out.*)

Ressmann.—The ass! I know he is the poorest doctor in town. But he is cheap! And at any rate he is a doctor, and consequently a comfort to me. Queer, isn't it? I know—and yet—we fools! We fools! We cling to life even by the use of our infirmities. Perhaps you would prefer to have my young wife show you over the house?

Abel.—Yes, if the lady would be so kind.

Ressmann.—I am tired, you see. I work all night. She has to sleep alone, poor thing. (*He looks at Julie*) Perhaps it would be best for you to show him the house.

Julie.—If you command me to—

Ressmann.—Command? Why command? We are not alone.

Julie (More meekly).—I mean, if it is your wish.

Ressmann.—I smell Christian blood! Ha, ha, ha!

Abel.—Perhaps my presence is disagreeable to the lady. She looks so serious.

Ressmann.—More serious than usual?

Abel.—Yes!

Ressmann.—Have you had occasion to notice her before?

Julie.—Oh, yes. I often sit at the window gazing out. It is possible that Mr. Abel—

Ressmann.—Gazing? Gazing, eh? That is one of those words with a double bottom. It means a bit more than to *see*, for there is a little heart-room hidden away in it. (*Emphatically*) But you are *my* (*In his usual tone of voice*) You are my young wife. (*In a low tone to ABEL*) After all, I think it best for me to take you around. She can't show you the outside conveniences as well. One must have some regard for the young wife. You understand? (*JULIE sits down on the sofa in the middle of the room where a while before she was sitting with ABEL.*)

Ressmann.—Here is the entry. Light and spacious. (*He has opened the door*) But of course you saw it when you came in. And this is the living room. Warm in winter and cool in summer, just as it ought to be. Plenty of room here for both sadness and gladness. Ha, ha, ha! Noble architecture! You can best

appreciate that when the moon shines in through one of the large windows. My young wife likes to sit here when I am on duty in the evening. But sometimes it happens that before I leave, we two stand together in the moonlight. Moonlight is becoming to her.

Julie.—Mr. Abel knows that.

Ressmann.—He knows that?

Abel.—Yes; I can easily understand it.

Ressmann.—And here is the door which leads to—the Holy of Holies. (*ABEL and JULIE exchange a quick smile.*)

Ressmann.—May the strange gentleman look in, Julie?

Julie.—No.

Ressmann.—Why, of course. By all means, take a look. Virginal, eh. Or, half-*virginal*. Yes, yes. When the moonlight lamp is lit—ah! You would soon feel at home here. (*Closes the door with a bang*) So! Now we will shut it. (*Walks over and sits down beside Julie. Quietly*) Perhaps it does not please you to see me warming this place beside her. (*He looks at them. They return his look intently*) Yes—what could I possibly mean by that? Ha, ha, ha! As if that were the usual way of the world! A venerable old man, a young, pretty woman, a young man who is— is looking for an apartment, and would prefer to pay the landlady in kind. Ha, ha, ha! Why don't you laugh, Julie? (*They all three laugh. There is a short pause*) And yet I hardly think the difference between us would be so great in the sensitive scales that hang beneath the heavens. For I, too, feel proud of being a wretched worm, because then the big things in life seem so gloriously big. Or am I, because I am an old man, any more helpless or absurd than you young people—if one looks at life from a humorous angle? And is not the mysterious also mysterious to me—even though I am not noble? For noble I certainly am not. Eh, Julie? And handsome I am not. Age has twisted my limbs about so that I can only look backward. And I have not found happiness in this world; nor have I made others happy. To do that, some say, is the greatest happiness of all. Ha, ha, ha! (*He shakes his fist furiously at heaven*) But he shall answer for it on the day of judgment! (*After a pause*) There are many who think I am good-natured because I talk so much, and who fear me when I am silent. Hush old fool! (*Continues with the business of showing the house*) And there is the balcony! Always an attractive feature of a house. Especially for the ladies . . . Are you "gazing," Julie? All

ladies some time or other in their lives, want a balcony. Do you know that? And if you knock at the balcony they will open without delay, and say: "My hero! My hero!"—even if your knees shake so that you can't be used either as a hero or as anything else.

Abel.—What is the price of the house?

Ressmann.—A hundred thousand crowns. Very reasonable, I think. The property extends clear down to the river. You can dive into the water from here, if you care to. And after all, what is money? Rust and moth—they never consume gold and silver, by the way. Ha, ha, ha! I am not making much on the sale. I am too honest for that. I always keep on the safe side of the ten commandments. It is comfortable to feel the tables of the law about you. Otherwise one's special talents would grow clear to the sky. Imagine! My special talents! Good Lord! . . . Wouldn't you like to step outside and look at the view?

Julie.—The crack in the balcony!

Ressmann.—That doesn't matter. (*He looks at her*) It's nothing to speak of. The crack harmonizes with the antique character of the balcony. (*Steps out on the balcony*) See, I can jump on it. (*With a tremendous crash the balcony collapses. RESSMANN is heard crying out below.*)

Ressmann.—Julie! Julie! (*ABEL runs out of the room to look after RESSMANN. JULIE stands motionless. Presently ABEL returns.*)

Abel.—His head was crushed. He is dead. (*JULIE kneels and raises her hands toward heaven.*)

Julie.—Thank God! (*ABEL looks at her a moment, then hurries over to her and kneels at her side.*)

Abel.—Yes—Julie!

ACT II

Several years have passed.

The same room as before, but less severely furnished and more liveable.

JULIE is sitting by the window in an old leather-covered armchair. ABEL is walking back and forth in the room. An old servant enters with a traveling-bag, moving about quietly, as though at home. ABEL indicates where he wants the bag. The servant goes out.

Abel.—Oh yes; you are young. I see how vigorously the blood courses through your veins. And you would have me believe that it moves sluggishly—that you are hot and tired as you sit in

the noonday sun. When I sit here in the morning waiting, and you come from your room, it is as if the fragrance of newly-cut hay were streaming in. And even if I did not know it myself, do you suppose I am blind? Don't you think I notice how you kindle a flame in every eye when you enter a room full of people? You move, as it were, through an avenue of lighted candles, some of which flame, and sparkle and flicker as you pass. Others, a few, do not. They are steady and fixed.

Julie.—Abel, Abel! You speak so kindly and so beautifully to me.

Abel.—Then show your gratitude by doing what I ask you. You must sparkle in the light—your youth, your grace, your voice, your smile—all these call for the light. Otherwise what will become of their rays? They will turn inward, they will consume you, burn you to ashes . . . I *want* to torment you. (*Smiling*) Aren't you regretful? Aren't you sorry that you are going with me to improve humanity, when you might be attending Antonio's reception tonight?

Julie (Smiling).—No.

Abel.—He is celebrating his victory.

Julie.—I hate Antonio.

Abel.—Hate?

Julie.—He is distasteful to me. I would rather be at home with you and feel well than to go out alone and feel badly.

Abel (Caressing her playfully).—Alone! When shall I ever have enough time? Every week-day I work for others—and Sunday I must have for myself to build up and to tear down the things in my soul—the latter being not the least important, you may be sure. But you! You are different from me. My work doesn't mean as much to you as it does to me.

Julie.—Oh yes, it does, it does!

Abel.—Why, often you don't even know what it is you have copied for me. Ha, ha, ha! But my work and my thoughts are, after all, nothing new to you. For I have shared it all with you.

Julie.—With me?

Abel.—Surely you know that. Don't you sit here listening to me when I am turning the words over in my mind, and getting my ideas in shape?

Julie.—Of course I do. And I think: How handsome you are!

Abel.—Am I handsome when I am at work?

Julie.—My heart leaps whenever you step forward to address

the people; and the audience greets you with a smile, because you are so handsome, and because they feel that your words come straight from your heart.

Abel.—Yes, I suppose they do get something—But now you are going to dance.

Julie.—To dance?

Abel.—Yes. You are going to dress in those marvelous colors of yours that delight the eye. You shall laugh. You shall ride on horseback. You shall drink champagne. You shall set men's minds whirling; and pretty speeches will be made to you. There is so much beauty in the world! And that, after all, is your nature—live up to it! As I do. I do what I like—you should be free too. Take your liberty and enjoy it. Julie, we shall have a great celebration, and invite in all our acquaintances—including Mr. Antonio.

Julie.—Not Mr. Antonio.

Abel.—Why? Because he has told you he loves you?

Julie.—Yes!

Abel.—Then, just for that, accept the challenge! I doubt if there is a single thing under heaven that he and I could agree over. But does that prevent me from admiring his force, his genius for leadership, the greatness of his personality? And in spite of these things, he has never forgotten his old mother, and his invalid sister.

Julie.—I have spoken to him five times, and each time he has come straight up to me and whispered: "I love you."

Abel.—Yes, that is a bit unusual these days, isn't it? Never another word?

Julie.—I have forbidden him to speak to me.

Abel.—And I dare say he has not obeyed.

Julie.—For a whole year he has not spoken to me.

Abel.—But that can be gotten round in a thousand ways: by glances, letters, salutations . . . Remember our own case.

Julie.—I remember our case.

Abel.—One must not give up everything for fear of what might possibly happen at some future time.

Julie.—But it is by *being together* that people come to mean something to each other, isn't it?

Abel.—On the other hand, I never want to see the day when you might come to me and say: "There is something that is dead within me. Why did you bind me?" . . . Are you asleep?

Julie (Smiling).—No. I am dreaming of my happiness.

Abel.—Dreaming?

Julie.—We are happy, aren't we?

Abel.—When one talks about happiness, then one is not happy, sweetheart. (*He takes her hand,*)

Julie.—It seems to me I drop to a lower plane of life when I am away from you. For when I am with you, everything becomes insignificant compared with your thoughts. I never feel like laughing when you are serious; nor of being frivolous when you speak so gently. I never wish to dance when I can see your eyes glowing with the love of humanity. There is nothing binding in that silken skein which holds our lives together—it is only a web of happiness in which I can breath freely. Outside it I cannot.

Abel (Holding her hand).—Julie! Julie! Do you remember our mornings on the balcony in the old days?

Julie.—I remember.

Abel.—Yes, that was pleasant. But how far I have gone beyond all that!—I mean, in my thoughts. (*JULIE turns and looks attentively at him. He continues without noticing it.*)

Abel.—Oh, Julie! How blind are those who believe that by-gone ages were greater than the present. This is the renaissance! For when have we mortals felt so great, and when have we felt so small, as now, in our own glorious age? When have men grown so far apart, with each soul seeking room for greater expansion? *Nihil a me alienum puto.* I can't tell how thankful I am to be living in this age. There are no limits placed upon us. We are approaching great secrets. But we must never stop, never rest. To rest is disease; to stop is death for every individual. Am I not right? Do you understand?

Julie.—But love?

Abel (Eagerly).—Love in one hand—all else in the other—choose! Yes! For love stops mankind. Love has nothing to do with civilization. It is the only natural force that cannot be subdued. A humanity with heart, but without love and what goes with it—that is the goal of spiritual progress in the world. Hence we must arm ourselves with all our weapons. For if love wins, we become mad, foolish, blind, unrighteous. Love is at home in darkness; it steals our intelligence, our character, our will.

Julie.—And I?

Abel.—Hush! We must keep it secret, at any rate. We

mustn't own up to it. Don't you remember, Julie?

Julie.—Yes, I remember.

Abel.—You are the chief evidence against all my theories; for I can't imagine how I could exist without you. (*JULIE has risen. They stand looking at each other, smiling. Then they take hands.*)

Abel.—But, you see, it is not my fault, Julie.—Are you angry with my theories?

Julie.—No. I admire you because you make everything harmonize.

Abel.—That is, I think, because I have no desire to be like other people, and because I never demand that others be like me. You see, I am supposing that principle to be the highest wisdom of life that we can reach.

Julie.—Shall I help you pack?

Abel.—Thank you.

Julie (Jokingly).—You mustn't take only papers and books.

Abel.—No, don't worry. I shall also take my best suit of clothes. (*Going to her*) I'll be back in a little while, then we'll drive straight down to the night train. (*Kisses her forehead*) My beautiful bird! Fly out of the nest, and you will discover that you have wings.

Julie.—It is so comfortable here. (*ABEL goes out. JULIE sits down again in the armchair. The servant enters. JULIE watches him. He says nothing but indicates with a smile that he has come for the traveling-bag. He goes out noiselessly. JULIE turns down the lamp which stands before her, making the room darker, then stretches herself and closes her eyes. She remains thus for a time. A cello can be heard playing far-off. The sound dies away. A man enters from the balcony. He goes toward JULIE without her hearing him. At last she becomes aware of his presence, and turns. He stands looking at her.*)

Antonio (Quietly).—I love you.

Julie (As if not quite awake).—Did you come from the balcony.

Antonio.—Yes. (*JULIE rises suddenly and rushes to the other end of the room.*)

Julie.—What do you want?

Antonio.—I love you.

Julie.—What is that to me?

Antonio.—It is something to me. And I am concerned with myself. I love you. You have lifted me up. I walk as if I were treading on air. I stumble and bump into walls. I grow red and

pale many times a day, like a woman—I, who consider happiness to consist in having a tough skin. (JULIE *laughs in excited good-humor.*)

Antonio (Still serious).—But there must be an end to this. (JULIE *laughs again.*)

Antonio (As before).—Today, in parliament, I spoke your name aloud. They thought I was crazy. So did I, for a moment, when the superior member next to me looked up in amazement. (JULIE *laughs again.*)

Antonio.—But I got out of the dilemma.

Julie (Laughing).—How did you get out of it?

Antonio.—Oh, I said something about Shakespeare's Juliet.

Julie (After another laugh).—But—your grand reception?

Antonio.—Yes!

Julie.—You left it?

Antonio.—When the guests came, one by one, and you were not among them—then I left. I came here.

Julie.—But you knew we were not coming.

Antonio.—Yes, I knew.

Julie.—But, what will the guests think?

Antonio.—Come away with me tonight!

Julie.—Go away with you?

Antonio.—On the night train.

Julie.—But the guests? Your position? Your influence! The victory you have just won! Your reputation in the country!

Antonio (Going over to her, and speaking gently).—On the night train; in two hours.

Julie (Starting back).—You are coarse.

Antonio.—If my longing for your body is coarse, then I am coarse, for I am filled with longing! If it is coarse for my soul to be sick with longing both night and day and forever, then I am coarse—for I love you. (*Cries out*) Love you! Love! Love! Come with me, and we shall live in far-off places as long as you desire. We shall wake each morning in a new, strange place. Then some day we shall return, to find our power grown greater, and our hands grown stronger. We shall bend necks, and break wills, and sway opinions with us. For there are fairy-tales without magic princes—and it is a living fairy-tale when one can will so much that one does not need to wish.

Julie.—A fairy-tale!

Antonio.—Your eyes said, Yes. (JULIE *puts her hands over her eyes.*)

Antonio (Crying out).—There, you see! (*Goes over to her, speaking softly*) Everything can be forgotten.

Julie.—I am happy!

Antonio.—Happy! Happy! How I loathe that word! Are there no such things as death, sickness, suffering, meanness, cowardice, vileness, disorder, injustice, senselessness? How, then, can there be happiness? Happiness! What good will it do me when people say one day: “I remember when I was a child he used to come to our house to visit my parents?” Then it will be too late. Now is the time!

Julie.—I do not believe that everything can be forgotten.

Antonio.—The only thing which remains is the regret that everything can be forgotten. And one may even escape that regret, if one hurries.

Julie (Shaking her head).—Oh, no—no, no!

Antonio (Emphatically).—Has life taught you differently?

Julie.—But you, yourself! You who have always been so good and so tender toward your mother and your sister. Do you think you could forget them?

Antonio.—I have forgotten them. I thought of them while they were in trouble. Now I have made them happy; and they sit quietly enjoying their happiness.

Julie (Impetuously).—Could I forget—?

Antonio (Interrupting).—Yes. Haven't you forgotten your mother, your father, your child?

Julie.—Julie!

Antonio.—What is Julie to you now? What has the little child who died so many years ago to do with your life now? Such memories are only perfumes that make one drowsy.

Julie.—But if he were to die—if Abel were to die!

Antonio.—Then he would be dead. And you would feel no more grief than if I were to die. Therefore, let him go on living.

Julie (Loudly).—How dare you—you whom I do not love!

Antonio (Slowly).—Because now I cannot stop.

Julie.—I will not!

Antonio.—You shall!

Julie (Screaming).—I will not! (*ANTONIO looks at her a long while, then speaks slowly, as if to himself.*)

Antonio.—Can it be possible that I do not love her any more?

Julie (Frightened).—What?

Antonio (Breathing heavily, as if awakening. Quietly).—To

me you are the only one. Without you, I am not alive.

Julie (With a shade of apprehension).—I am afraid.

Antonio.—Yes. (*JULIE attempts to escape. He seizes her. She screams in fright and confusion.*)

Julie.—I am happy. Happy! Happy! . . . Yes, I see your eyes! . . . How dare you—! This happy peace—this calm security, which you with your strong arm, will never be able to bring me. Oh! my brain is whirling . . . everything is dropping away . . . Have I not lived these many years in happiness? There is something called happiness! Ah, you—your beard gets in my eyes! . . . This is against my will—it is—it is— (*ANTONIO, who, while she was speaking, has been standing quietly, retaining his hold of her, now kisses her. There is a pause, during which they stare into each other's eyes.*)

Julie (Pointing to the balcony and speaking softly).—Did you come from there?

Antonio.—Yes.

Julie.—How? Why did you come that way?

Antonio.—Because you had given your servants orders not to admit me.

Julie.—But my husband!

Antonio.—He has gone. I knew he was going to leave.

Julie (Very quietly).—Do you love me?

Antonio (Releasing her for a moment).—Julie! There are deeds so great, and people so strong that I weep to think—but my tears are tears of ambition. Julie! Julie! I have achieved much, and people honor my name, and bow before me, but I aim higher still. And when these dreams come over me by day, I drive them off until night comes. I fear lest some one discover them. And when night comes, I am afraid to be alone with them; I hide them until daylight. Julie! I can forget them all; I can tear them all from me. I do forget them all; I do tear them from me, because I love you!

Julie.—But, my dear—my dear—I beg of you—

Antonio.—Love you! Love so much that I forget you are in this room. Love so much that I forget how beautiful you are, and do not feel how you look at me. I do not see how big and light the room is—I who stand here in the dark! (*Falls on his knees and kisses her hand.*)

Julie.—He may come.

Antonio.—Now it does not matter. (*He rises. ABEL enters. ANTONIO looks quickly at JULIE.*)

Julie.—Why should you have come just now! (*She pauses and looks at both men*) You could have come any time before, and it would not have mattered. But of course it had to be just as Mr. Antonio kisses my hand! And you don't seem at all surprised, either.

Abel (Courteously and pleasantly).—No; it does not surprise me that Mr. Antonio should wish to kiss the hand of my pretty wife.

Julie.—You have not asked why Mr. Antonio is here.

Abel.—I thought Mr. Antonio was giving his grand reception tonight—to which he so kindly invited us . . .

Antonio.—Yes.

Abel.—Considering that, I *am* astonished.

Antonio.—The reception has been postponed.

Julie.—It is very clear from Mr. Antonio's manner that he was reluctant to have to postpone it.

Antonio.—I have to attend an important meeting in Parliament, and my sister has been taken ill, and . . .

Julie.—More than one reason always sounds suspicious. (*To ABEL*) Otherwise you are not astonished to find Mr. Antonio in our house?

Abel.—On the contrary, it pleases me.

Julie.—Yesterday I lost my black pearls in the theatre—my favorite jewels—and I didn't tell you, because they were your gift to me. Mr. Antonio has found them.

Antonio (Searching his pockets eagerly).—Yes.

Julie (Smiling).—And has brought them to me. (*Points to her neck.*)

Antonio.—Yes.

Abel.—That is very kind of you.

Julie.—But it was not until tonight that Mr. Antonio discovered who was the owner of the pearls. You seem restless.

Abel (Smiling).—I am afraid we shall miss our train. (*To ANTONIO*) I deliver my second important lecture tomorrow.

Antonio (Still a trifle sulky).—I understood that it was to be today.

Julie.—But you have not thanked Mr. Antonio for coming. And what are you going to give him as a reward for finding the pearls?

Abel (Smiling).—As a reward? Perhaps he will drink a glass of champagne now that there is to be no reception.

Julie.—Yes! You suggested before that I should drink

champagne. You will, won't you, Mr. Antonio? (*A servant enters.*)

Servant.—The carriage is ready. (*ABEL gives the servant his orders. The latter goes out quietly. The others sit down.*)

Abel.—We serve our fellow-men in different ways, Mr. Antonio.

Antonio.—Serve?

Abel.—Yes! Well, serve is perhaps the wrong word; for after all we merely develop ourselves by enjoying the personal freedom for which our hearts yearn—by enjoying the great privilege of living in our beautiful age. There is in our natures something active which we must satisfy (*with a smile toward ANTONIO*) even if it should accidentally benefit our fellow-men. (*The SERVANT has come in with champagne.*)

Abel.—I am happy to see such an illustrious man as you, Mr. Antonio, in our house. And I am even happier to see the pleasure it has given my young wife. (*They drink. Half-aloud to JULIE*) You look so proud and free and happy, and you talk so gaily and vivaciously. (*The servant enters again.*)

Servant.—The carriage is waiting.

Abel.—Fetch my brief-case. It is in my bedroom. (*The SERVANT goes into ABEL's bedroom.*)

Abel.—But you have not changed your dress. And perhaps you haven't packed, either.—Well then, I suppose I'll have to go alone. Early the day after tomorrow I shall return. Good-bye. Pardon me, Mr. Antonio. No, don't get up, please. My wife will be glad to have you stay. Drink my health, Julie—for remember, it was I who gave you the pearls. I have insisted all along that you should enjoy Mr. Antonio's company, and I suggested the champagne as his reward. Good-bye. (*With a friendly gesture he goes out, followed by the servant. The other two remain as they are for a time. ANTONIO looks toward the door through which ABEL has just passed, then he looks at JULIE. A short pause.*)

Antonio.—Does he think we are old people or children? (*Another pause.*)

Julie (*Quietly, musingly*).—Why should he distrust us?

Antonio.—Why should he trust us? (*JULIE laughs suddenly and involuntarily.*)

Antonio.—Yes! Am I not a man? Are you not beautiful and—in love with me?

Julie (*Without looking at ANTONIO*).—You would never go away and leave me alone with a stranger.

Antonio.—No! (*Goes toward her.*)

Julie.—Yes; you are a man!

Antonio (*Embracing her violently.*)—Is he not? (*JULIE does not answer.*)

Antonio (*Laughing.*)—Is he not?

ACT III

Early the next morning. It is still dark.

On the table are fruit, champagne, and tall goblets.

ABEL enters softly, carrying a hand-lantern. By its light one can see his kind, serious face. He looks at the table, nods and smiles. He walks to JULIE'S door, where he listens a moment. Then he crosses the stage toward his own door. Suddenly he stops, raises the lantern above his head and looks around the room. Discovering nothing, he is about to go on, but changes his mind, and returns to JULIE'S door. He stumbles against a chair; then stops and listens as though he expected the noise to have some result. He moves suddenly forward, but comes to an abrupt stop. His hands drop helplessly to his side, and he shakes his head feebly. He goes quickly out upon the balcony, near which he has been standing.

After a little while, ANTONIO enters from the door in the back-ground. He is not fully dressed, and carries in his hand a lighted candelabrum. He looks hastily around.

Antonio.—No; you were mistaken. There was no one. (*He goes in again. ABEL'S face has been visible between the curtains of the balcony. He comes back into the room, pale and staggering. Finding himself in front of the big easy-chair in the foreground, he sinks into it, setting the lantern on the floor. He sits bowed. Then he strikes his knee feebly a few times.*)

Abel.—Oh, no! No! No! (*The door opens and ANTONIO enters. Standing in the doorway he looks back into the bedroom.*)

Julie (*From within.*)—What is it?

Antonio.—No! Remain standing thus—with your arms up-lifted. Everything is new about you! Yes, smile! All the others are one; you are thousands! (*ABEL listens attentively. ANTONIO goes to the table, sets down the candelabrum. The room is half-lighted now. He picks up a bottle of champagne. Something suddenly occurs to Abel, who noiselessly unlocks a case which stands on a small table beside him. He takes out a revolver and satisfies himself that it is loaded. He then turns in the chair so that he will be able to leap up more readily. There is a pause.*)

*Julie (From within),—*Just think, if it had been he!

*Antonio (Smiling calmly).—*Yes.

*Julie.—*But he won't come.

*Antonio.—*No! (*After a moment*) Suppose he should—
with a revolver in his hand?

*Julie (Appearing suddenly in the doorway).—*Then you must shoot first. (*A convulsive tremor passes through ABEL. He lays the revolver gently aside. ANTONIO embraces JULIE violently.*)

*Antonio.—*Do you love me?

*Julie.—*Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes! (*ABEL smiles. Then he pretends to sleep. He starts up once, as if dreaming, then pretends to sleep again breathing with the regularity of a sleeper. Light from the candelabrum shines upon JULIE and ANTONIO. The little light from the hand-lantern falls upon ABEL. ANTONIO seats himself at the table, and JULIE sits on his lap. ANTONIO lifts his glass; she lifts hers. They drink. Then they look at each other a long while.*)

*Antonio.—*How yellow your bosom shines. It shines out of the darkness by its own light. (*Suddenly*) You look like Rembrandt's woman. (*He kisses her bosom.*)

*Julie.—*Whom do I look like?

*Antonio (Offering a toast).—*To all the moments of life!
(*They drink and look at each other again.*)

*Julie.—*Beloved! There is a prince in every fairy-tale. (*She pulls out a twig of a lilac branch, which she had concealed among her clothes*) Write on my breast that you love me.

*Antonio.—*With what?

*Julie.—*With this.

*Antonio.—*I can't write with that.

*Julie.—*Yes, you can.

*Antonio.—*No.

*Julie.—*Don't you want to?

*Antonio.—*No.

*Julie (Smiling).—*Must one be master?

*Antonio.—*Yes; one must be master.

*Julie.—*You are serious when others smile—and you smile when others are serious. (*Smiling*) I wonder if that is the secret of your power over people.

*Antonio (Laughing).—*There is no round-about way with you. You ask about everything that you want to know. (*Kisses her*) Everything! Don't you?

*Julie.—*Yes—everything!

Antonio.—Everything. So that your brain quivers.—Your whole body?

Julie.—Yes, yes! For you give me yours.

Antonio.—What's that you say?

Julie (Calmly).—You hold my heart so firmly in your hand that it may never sleep again.

Antonio.—And your memories?

Julie.—I have hidden them, and shall never take them out as long as you stare—stare—(*Kisses him*) stare like a panther into my eyes. (*A pause. During the last few speeches ABEL has picked up the revolver again. He holds it to his forehead for a moment, then shakes his head and smiles. He rises, quite calm, holding the revolver in his hand. JULIE starts up. ANTONIO rises stiffly, his eyes on the revolver.*)

Abel.—We had to come back by special train. There had been a wash-out . . . (*The others look at him in amazement*). No one was hurt.

Julie.—What—has—that—to do with this?

Abel.—I mean that I did not come to spy.

Julie (Furious).—What has that to do with this? (*Pointing*). He and I! (*ANTONIO has slipped over to ABEL's side, and reaches swiftly for the revolver, but does not get hold of it.*)

Abel.—Oh, that! (*Puts it away smilingly. Then he speaks in a loud voice and with great seriousness*) Neither the roar of the gun, nor the blood could help me, for I feel that there are greater sorrows. (*They look at one another. Finally he breaks the silence*) Yes, that is what I feel—It seems to me that every human soul is like an island, that every bridge is on the point of falling, and that it is a joy to cultivate one's own island. The storm and the stars and eternity cause me to think, and when I think, I feel. But when the souls of two persons meet, then one must wait for the other; and sometimes both of them must wait, and then they remain standing, getting nowhere. But when two human bodies come together, it is like shutting the door on all that is holy, and throwing away the key. So it seems to me, and I act accordingly. Why should I pretend what I do not feel? (*JULIE looks at him and laughs suddenly.*)

Abel (Gently).—You laugh?

Julie.—Yes, I laugh. (*Laughs more loudly.*)

Abel.—Why?

Julie.—And you ask me why? You, who can love the souls of all the world, but not a woman—not me!

Antonio (Forcibly and sternly).—Julie!

Julie (Turning swiftly to ANTONIO).—Do you take pity on the souls? Do you take his part? Are you going over—well then, go, go, go!

Antonio (More meekly).—Julie.

Julie.—Go, go, go!

Antonio (Affectionately).—Do you wish me to go? (JULIE does not answer. She and ANTONIO look at each other, then look away.)

Abel (Quietly and with a touch of irony, to ANTONIO).—One shall be master! (ABEL goes toward the balcony, stops, reflects, then turns to ANTONIO.)

Abel.—Is it possible that you came from the balcony?

Antonio.—Yes.

Abel (With a faint smile as if at a memory).—Did you! (He draws the curtain aside. One sees that it is growing light. He returns quickly to the others, speaking forcibly) Do you remember that morning when we knelt and thanked God because we had attained what we most fervently desired? Now we have attained what we desired. You and he and I. (After a pause when no one answers) But perhaps we do not feel so grateful when we have gotten all we wish. (A breath of wind blows open the balcony door. The sun breaks forth. The candles flicker. ABEL starts again toward the balcony, then stops.)

Abel.—Look! The sun rises. I wish to follow quietly in its footsteps. (He goes out upon the balcony) ANTONIO and JULIE stand listening, staring out toward the balcony. A pause. JULIE takes ANTONIO'S hand.)

Julie (Whispering).—Have you civilized the love out of your body? (ANTONIO continues to stare after ABEL. Then without turning, he reaches out and seizes JULIE by the hair, forcing her to bend back her Head.)

Antonio.—No! (ABEL comes and crosses quickly to the outer door. He turns to them.)

Abel (Quietly).—What is this sorrow compared with the fact that some day I must die? (He goes out. ANTONIO sits down resting his head on his hands. JULIE looks toward the door with a smile, and then at ANTONIO. At last she speaks.)

Julie (In a whisper).—Beloved!

CURTAIN

THE LIFE AND DEEDS OF DADA*

BY WILLIAM A. DRAKE

IN view of the six indifferent years which have passed since the first pronouncement of Dada as a movement in art, the present agitation of our young men in dispute of its facts and portents is slightly intriguing. It is not an impeachment to be blithely confessed in the tea-rooms that the star of Dada arises in Greenwich Village as it sets over Montmartre, nor is it to be intimated that this new gospel of Nothingness, which in the last analysis is as ancient as the book of Koheleth, while it may be a *mouvement* of subtle and far-reaching origins in Europe, cannot presume to any designation more dignified than that of a passing and essentially futile *fumisterie* as it is thus tardily transplanted to a soil whose diversity is unindulgent of its genius and whose very composition at every point defeats its ends.

There are Parisians who believe that Dada is dead; there are also Americans who believe Prohibition to be an accomplished fact and Mr. Sumner necessary in the scheme of things. There is a certain profundity in the remark accredited to M. Jacques-Émile Blanche, when Dada first began to engage public attention, that "*Dada ne subsister a qu'en cessant d'être.*" It is precisely this that has come to pass. To every surface appearance Dada is dead. But, by this very token, Dada becomes a living thing, an undying ideal. The paradox is as monstrous as the hoax it perpetuates.

The *mouvement* Dada had its official inception in 1916, in the cafe Voltaire, in Zurich. Its authentic father is M. Tristan Tzara, whose small, almost gnome-like figure, apparently teeming with cerebral activity and black wrath, is familiar to every sojourner in Montmartre. Tzara is reputed to be a Rumanian Jew, and did arduous service during the war writing Dada manifestos in his Swiss retreat for the world's dismay. He remained the undisputed high-priest of the cult throughout the period of its major activity, by dual right of his faculty of conceiving the most

*The author desires to acknowledge the generous assistance rendered by M. Philippe Soupault, noted poet and directeur of the Dada organ *Littérature*, in the preparation of this paper.

ingeniously perfect vacuity of thought and giving it enduring expression in the most ambiguous (and quaintly unrheterical) French.

Dada was a forward child from birth. It had nothing whatever to say, but it clamored to be heard. For three years the varied, yet hopeful, tintinabulations of Dada were obscured in the bark of the *mitrailleuses* and the roar of the 79s. Then, the war over, Paris again turned to the arts. Dada promptly claimed the rostrum, and was as promptly laughed to scorn; but, invincibly fortified behind its wall of impertubable Nothingness, it merely smiled at derision—and kept on shouting. Dada was Nothing, it sought Nothing, tended Nowhere; the reiterated denial of any serious purpose disarmed in advance every onslaught of criticism. We laughed and publicly decided that this was only the grandstand play of a group of *les jeunes* amorous of the pale saffron spotlight.

But privately we were still curious, unsatisfied with such a verdict. There were men associated with the movement whose past accomplishments could not be flippantly dismissed—writers like Georges Ribemont-Dessaignes, Max Jacob, Paul Morand, Louis Aragon, Philippe Soupault, André Breton, Jean Paulhan and our own exquisite Walter Arensberg; painters like Vassile Kandinski (who introduced Abstract Expressionism into Russia as early as 1909), Francis Picabia, Max Ernst, Arp, Marc Chagall, that astounding caricaturist of human foibles, Georg Grosz, even the Cubist Picasso and of Americans the painter Joseph Stella, the critics Walter Pack and Marsden Hartley. Picabia, indeed, as painter and poet was an influence in Dada second only to the indefatigable Tzara. He, at least, proclaimed a definite *motif* in forsaking the art in which he had already accomplished no inconsiderable things. “I have tried to give philosophy to Dadaïsme,” he once said. “My idea is that novelty, even if it lasts only five minutes, is more worthy than immortal work which provides eternal *ennui*.”

First the Parisian *cognoscenti*, sensing a possibly authentic reaction in this festival of celestial nonsense, began seriously to enquire of Dada what it was all about. Mme. Rachilde unbent from her Olympian austerity sufficiently to write an article against Dada, and by taking notice of the movement helped to establish it. M. André Gide justified Dada as a post-bellum reaction carried into the fields of language and painting, and gave space in *La Nouvelle Revue Française* (7^e Année, N^o 83, 1^{er} Aout 1920, pp 208-

215) to a really masterly defence "*Pour Dada*" by the eminent Dadaist André Breton, whose critical talents are certainly among the finest in modern France. To the same issue (op cit, pp 216-237) the editor, the learned Jacques Rivière, contributed an astute and suggestive "*Reconnaissance a Dada*," in which he considers, with a receptivity and alert analysis surprising in one of his scholarly traditions, the psychological aspects of the movement. J. H. Rosny, Victor Auburtin, J-E. Blanche, Edmond Jaloux and other critics of substantial authority expressed more or less reserved interest in the movement; journalists began extending the ramifications of Dada into every activity of life—one issue of *La Renaissance* (9^e Année, N^o 27, 2 Juillet 1921, p 6281), for example, carrying a leading article by Ernest Tisserand on "*Du Dadaïsme et de la Finance*"—and Dada became, if not a popular craze, at least an object of public curiosity, and its name a definite and expressive figure in the popular language, as differentiated from the "*cheval dans le langage des enfants*" and the "*idée favorite de Larousse*."

The *mouvement* Dada, like that reality it so resolutely scouted had its good points and bad, its seers and charlatans, its tide and ebb. In its broad hospitality it received all comers to its ranks and required no credentials, and its varied reflexes might be accommodated to any interpretation, by simple virtue of the fact that they signified nothing whatever. There were, as is the case in every artistic movement, every class of passionate reformer and café *poseur* represented. The sincerity and talents of some of these men stand beyond reproach; there were others who contributed nothing beyond endless rhetoric; there were still others who privately took the whole business in a spirit of buffoonery, who came up to Montmartre by night for their wine and talk and passed their days in the long pursuit of a quite different art in their little studios on the Rive Gauche, along the narrow avenues which branch off the boulevard Montparnasse and the boulevard Raspai.

For Dada, whatever else may be said of it, can never be accused of having hidden its light. As a press-agent feat, the mere thought of the prominence given the movement for four years in the public prints is enough to make any ambitious journalist bite his nails in chagrin. Dada never pretended to modesty; it flew to the spotlight with avidity and zest. The invention and energy of these young men in their bids for public attention constitute an individual triumph. Never were there such consummate *poseurs*.

Their pet abomination is the *bourgeoisie*—Dada takes neither official nor private cognisance of these slow freight of humanity. But let one once vindicate his essential Dadaism, and he is vociferously acclaimed of the elect. In one Dada bulletin we find this maganimous assurance: "*Vivent les concubines et les concubistes. Tous les membres du Mouvement Dada sont présidents.*" There follows a list "*Quelques Présidents et Présidentes*" which confirms some 76 persons in this rather vulgar eminence, and on the back cover, in a sweeping grandiloquence of liberality, is inscribed, "*Tout le monde est directeur du Mouvement Dada.*" More than this could no man ask!

Such exhibitions were Dada's *metier*, and the advantage was pursued with a vengeance. One performance followed close upon another, each with its special *genus* of absurdity, and age could not wither nor custom stale their infinite variety. When Paris heard how, at the sound of a gong, seven leading Dadaists gravely stalked to the platform where they were shaved by seven barbers before reciting their poems, Paris fatuously believed itself immune from further shock. But this was only a slight beginning. Soon jazz bands became the indispensable accompaniment of Dada programmes; Tzara, as Mr. Aldous Huxley remarks, took to reciting "his onomatopoeic poems to the accompaniment of an electric bell of eight-inch calibre" (The Chapbook, London, vol. 2, no. 9, March 1920), and the result was—Dada triumphant!

It has been some years now since Francis Vielé-Griffin claimed the prerogative of every artist to his "personal rhythm;" now Tzara claims for every Dadaist the right to "dance according to his personal boomboom," whatever that may be. The *matinées* and *soirées* continued with unabated vigor, manifesto followed manifesto, *salons* were established, and new antics devised for the confoundment of the public. One of the most engaging events of the past season was the mock trial of M. Maurice Barrès, in the absence of that gentleman.

Another popular diversion was a series of walking tours through Paris and its environs, under the personal guidance of a group of Dada poets.

One stands more amazed than amused in contemplation of the antics of which the excesses we have observed are only a small part, before the literature which has neither rhyme nor reason and the art which suggests neither impression nor image. To most of us it is all a gigantic hoax, a bid for sensation at any cost, and

nothing more. But the more thoughtful, and perhaps more initiate, hesitate to subscribe to this facile judgment. They see Dada as an ominous thing, a cynical, destructive impulse, profoundly nihilistic, intending nothing less than the complete leveling of our decadent modern civilisation. They see it as the logical, indeed the inevitable, reaction of the war; in a deeper sense, as the flux of corruption violently bursting forth after a century of accumulated spiritual decay and nervous repression, into a flood of vehement, inchoate hatred and scorn of all that signifies traditional culture—as the first spasm of that universal dissolution which precedes the inverse process of destructive creation that must result when, the order of synthetic creation having lapsed, we at last have perceived the shifting sands beneath the topheavy edifice of our vaunted culture.

Thus the basic origins of Dada go back much farther than the Zurich *séance* of 1916. Victor Auburtin, the Genevan critic, vaguely surmises Germanic influences, but this theory applies only superficially.

It is true that Georg Grosz, the German modernist who is unfortunately less well known in America for his masterly Cubist painting "*Der Abenteurer*" than for his repulsively cynical lithographs (Musterbook I, Chicago, 1921) wrote Dada poetry long before Tzara had made himself aware to the world, and that certain German extremists—such as Hans Richter, César Klein, Kurt Schwitters, Walter Petry, von Boddien, Otto Möller and others—have lingered upon this border for a decade. But this is at least equally true of certain Russian poets and painters: Malyebitch may antedate Picabia, but certainly such men as Kandinski, Krutchenych and Stravinski must be awarded precedence; and it must be admitted that, while the Russian Imagist movement dates scarcely two years back, the *Bubnovy Valet*, so exquisitely Dada, has been with us twelve.

However Tristan Tzara and his original council may have come by their first impulse, we must search the soil of France for the true origins of Dadaïsme. Dada is far from being an accidental irruption; it is, in the fullest sense, historically justified, and its development has been both gradual and normal. Its poetic origins are manifested as far back as, and beyond, the beginnings of Symbolisme. Some of the tonal vagaries of Rimbaud, much of the meaningless rhythmic extravagance of Mallarmé, have had to do with paving the eventual way for Dadaïsme. Jules Laforgue contributes his small part, as does Jean Cocteau, and the

youthful Jean de Tinan who links the two writers. Gustave Kahn is a modern classic precursor and, were we to pursue the enquiry to a too-fine point, we should find Robert de Montesquiou, Saint Pol-Roux and a score of talents as diversified, qualifying such moderns as Blaise Cendrars, André Salmon, and Guillaume Apollinaire, as the logical steps to bring us at length to the Dada Parnassus.

Proceeding from this point, we have two internal views of Dada, the one artistic, the other political. In his article *pour Dada*, M. Breton quotes (p 212) Lautréamont's maxim, "*Il n'y a rien d'incompréhensible.*" Parenthetically, it may be recalled that it is to Breton's close friend and associate, M. Phillippe Soupault, we owe Ducasse's famous preface to his *Poésies* (Paris, Au Sans Pariel, 1920) in a cherishable form. Thus the Dada camp may be somewhat arbitrarily divided into two distinct factions, the one under Soupault, Breton and Aragon and including such men as Eluard, Ribemont-Dessaignes, Ernst, and Morand, which seeks a purely artistic reformation; the other, under Tzara and Picabia and including the body of the more vehement young artists, which would kindle a destructive and essentially political brand.

The spirit of the artistic revolt is fairly well defined in Breton's article in *La Nouvelle Revue Française*, although we must never in our consideration of the movement lose sight of the fact that there are no two Dadaists who have ever held the same views of anything at the same time. Addressing M. André Gide in his article, M. Breton hurls at that worthy the Dionysian apothegm, "*mesurée à l'échelle Eternité toute action est vaine, et nous tenons l'effort demandé pour un sacrifice puéril.*" He proceeds (p 211):

L'obscurité de nos paroles est constante. La devinette du sens doit rester entre les mains des enfants. Lire un livre pour savoir dénote une certaine simplicité. Le peu qu'apprennent sur leur auteur, et sur leur lecteur, les ouvrages les mieux réputés devrait bien vite nous déconseiller cette expérience. C'est la thèse, et non l'expression qui nous déçoit. Je regrette de passer par ces phases mal éclairées, de recevoir ces confidences sans objet, d'éprouver à chaque instant, par la faute d'un bavard, cette impression de déjà su. Les poètes qui ont reconnu cela furent sans espoir l'intelligible, ils savent que leur oeuvre n'a rien à y perdre. On peut peut aimer plus qu'aucune autre une femme insensée.

"*L'esprit humain me semble ainsi fait qu'il ne peut être incohérent pour lui-même,*" says Paul Valéry, and this the artistic faction took for the *credo* of its endeavors. Dada in art sought a complete

spontaneity of creation, but finding the pressure of historic symbols and habitual forms inescapable, it flew to Nothingness as to a potent purge that would reduce the entire structure of tradition, and thus afford an open space upon which a new and ideally liberal art might be founded. In this relation Dada may be taken to represent the extreme of the growing contempt for our ancient maxims of art and the formalism of absolute aesthetics, for our preoccupation with serious purposes and our feebly sarcastic chant of "*L'Art pour l'Art*." Oswald Herzog, in an article on "*Der Abstrakte Expressionismus*" (Sturm, heft 50, 1919), gives us a statement which with equal felicity may be applied to the artistic attitude of the Dadaists. "Abstract Expressionism is perfect Expressionism," he writes. "It is pure creation. It casts spiritual processes into a corporeal mould. It does not borrow objects from the real world; it creates its own objects . . . The abstract reveals the will of the artist; it becomes expression. Abstract Expressionism is the representation of a process—life in itself: it is representation in the present. The artist's intuition contains no image of any existing object. He creates forms which are and must be bearers of his inner experience. He fashions objects which though not borrowed from nature are nevertheless changed into nature." In this connection a paper by Georg Marzynski on "*Die expressionistische Methode*" (Der Cicerone, xii, heft 13, pp 501-506) might be read to advantage, for in certain ultimate aspects the movements complement one another.

Compare this attitude with that of M. Paul Dermée, as expressed in his definition of Dada in his organ, *Z1* (March 1920; *vide* F. S. Flint, *The Chapbook*, London, Vol. 11, No. 17, Nov 1920, pp 6-7):

Dada is fundamentally a religious attitude, analagous to that of the scientist with his eyes glued to the microscope.

Dada is irritated by those who write "Art," "Beauty," "Truth," with capital letters, and who make of them entities superior to man— Dada scoffs at capital-letterers atrociously.

Dada, ruining the authority of constraints, tends to set free the natural play of our activities. Dada therefore leads to amoralism and to the most spontaneous and consequently the least logical lyricism. This lyricism is expressed in a thousand ways of life.

Dada scrapes from us the thick layer of filth deposited on us by the last few centuries.

Dada destroys and stops at that. Let Dada help us to make a complete clearance, then each of us rebuild a modern house with central heating and everything to the drain, *dadas* of 1920.

In his introduction to the lithographs of Georg Grosz, in the first issue of the *Musterbook*, Hi Simons quotes, in a somewhat different relation, Willi Wolfradt's statement, that "only absurd means will bring what is familiar to us to absurdity" (*Der Cicerone*, 1919). "So Expressionism," continues Mr. Simons, "screams boorishly into the mentally deranged and never ceasing noise of this age—and produces the stillness for holy song." There is an eloquence of sincerity in this faith. Even those of us who are undismayed classicists at heart, who love the old songs and old pictures and still believe that, nightingale or no nightingale, Sappho's Greek is sweetest poetry, who still prefer the lady of Botticelli's *Magnificat* to Moriz Melzer's striking but peculiarly angular *Madonne*, even we must confess the sterilities of modernity and the stifling restrictions which our long past with its achieved glories has lain upon the creative intellect. That we have need of a new impulse, even a new art shaped and designed to the altered spirit of our time, we must, however reluctantly, admit. We have essayed gradation and change, but to no avail—the labor is too long, the time too brief. There is something wistful and pathetic in the way we cling to all that is rendered heroic by the centuries and turn with suspicious anger upon all that is novel. It is natural that some, in the impetuous iconoclasm of youth, should attempt the demolition of the entire fabric of artistic convention in the cause of a new and untrammelled spirit. As Constantine Umanski says, in the introduction to his monumental work on *The New Art of Russia* (I quote from the manuscript translation of Mr. Louis Lozowick), "This historic process applies equally to every land: a rapid dethronement of the older art (public taste cannot serve here as a criterion) which is unrelated to the quickened *tempo* of our age, and an accelerated growth of the younger, more vital art which is born from the elements of haste, destruction, the city, the machine, drawing its most intensive energy from this very *tempo*."

We must here pause to caution the timorous against allowing the possible political consequences to Dadaïsme to agitate them unduly. That Dada has political designs is undeniable and that some of them are frightful to hear must be admitted but the name of Dada is synonymous with that destructive energy which is diffused between the lips.

The French Dadaists are theoretical anarchists in an admirably comprehensive and singularly cosmical sense; and their anarchy is so complete that they would destroy anarchy itself.

It is of them that Mr. Sheldon Cheney speaks in his excellent article on the movement (The Century Magazine Vol. 104 No. 1, May 1922, p 29), when he claims "This is Dada's virtue, that it is beyond all iconoclasts. Destroying images is not enough; it is necessary to go on and destroy iconoclasm, for with our self-conscious culture that in itself has become an image. And when that is destroyed, Dada will destroy Dada, hell will be plumbed, and then the light again." All this is quite disquieting to contemplate, but not precisely specific. The German Dadaists, however, less extreme in their designs for the land where anarchy has become almost a banality, are more nicely particular in their specifications. They content themselves with communism: that is to say, they demand to be fed at public expense, to control the educational system of the nation and not a small part of the nation's destinies, and certain other minor but exquisitely concrete matters. L. Zahn, in an exceptionally fair-minded examination of the subject entitled *Dadaismus oder Klassizismus* (Der Ararat, Nr 7, April 1920, pp 49 *pass.*), records in detail a few of these demands. "*Sinnloserklärung*" he aptly calls the movement, amplifying the definition, "*Dada: Lautformung gedankenloser Unbewusstheit, phonetisches Symbol der Sinnlosigkeit.*"

But, nihilistic or communistic, we need take no heed of the political aspirations of Dada. Dada, as such, has no desire for control of anything except its "individual boomboom." It is a protest, a shout of Gargantuan laughter. Its more serious leaders and adherents dream of presumable upheavals on a gigantic scale, but these belong to the future; and while they may be the consequences of Dada, they cannot emanate directly from the movement. "Dada is a razing to the level of infantile ridiculousness the cultural structures upon which militarism is founded . . . a universally inclusive, desperately serious, supremely conscious hoax intended to undermine the whole fabric of decadent European society," says Hi Simons, in the *Musterbook*. Dada is all this, but its only significance lies in the *fact* of its expression. As the eccentric expression of an impulsive spiritual protest against the poverty and falsity of our culture, it strikes a climax to many similarly insurgent movements which, be they abortive or successful, will leave their mark upon the literature, art and thought of the next generation. The revolt is upon too gigantic a scale and is too intrepid in its design not to bear a certain fruiting. We are living in a great age, in an age of cataclysmic change, when outworn ideals are being discarded and new

dreams rising into being. For us the Middle Ages have not yet ended; we know that we stand at the threshold of a new historic era, which will bring changes in every phase of human life so profound that they are beyond the capacity of mind to grasp. Having exhausted the resources of periodic development, we must destroy and build anew. Thus arises Dada, not in consummation, but in exemplification of the sternly progressive modern spirit which sweeps away the monuments of the past, cobwebs and marble arches alike, to clear a space where the liberated soul may breathe and dream.

EXILED

BY DAVID P. BERINBERG

Tell me, beloved, do the ships still ride
 Down the broad river to the rolling sea?
 Do the stars shine,—as once they shone, when we
 Talked by the river of the city's pride?

Beloved, I have left my mother's side
 Spurning her beauty,—spurned she would not be!
 Over a thousand leagues her mystery
 Calls! Oh! beloved, she is not denied!

What are the wonders of the seven seas
 To her wild beauty? What the poet's dream?
 What is the music of the sylvan stream?
 What my old songs? How vain are all of these!
 Where her proud glory by the river lies
 There is the open door of Paradise!

GALLANT CASSIAN

A PUPPET PLAY

By A. SCHNITZLER

Translated by Moritz A. Jagendorf

A garret room arranged in the late 17th century style in a small German town. Through the window, roofs and gables of houses show; beyond, rises a hilly landscape over which hovers the red glow of the setting sun. The room is in disorder: a trunk is open, so is a wardrobe. The latter is half emptied; linen and clothes lie about on chairs. MARTIN is occupied packing a travelling bag. SOPHIE is beside him.

Martin.—Don't weep, sweetheart—don't weep.

Sophie.—I am not weeping.

Martin (Without turning).—I can tell by your breathing that you are weeping.

Sophie.—Shall I help you?

Martin.—Yes, you might. Look, there in the wardrobe,—way on top are some handkerchiefs.

Sophie (Goes there).—All now . . . silken . . .

Martin.—Give them to me. I hope you don't begrudge me taking new silk handkerchiefs on my journey.

Sophie.—And that beautiful lace ruff. You finally did buy it from the Persian merchant.

Martin.—Certainly. Would you want your lover to travel dressed like a workman? Come, hand me the ruff. (*SOPHIE carries it to him slowly. He points to the ruff*) Isn't this another tear?

Sophie.—Forgive me.

Martin.—Well . . . (*Good humouredly touching the ruff lightly with his lips*) Now you can see I am not angry with you. But *do* be calm. You should reconcile yourself. (*Busily working*) It isn't forever.

Sophie.—I hope not.

Martin.—Then why all this?

Sophie.—But for how long?

Martin.—For how long! Why have me lie when I am trying to be truthful? I don't know for how long.

Sophie.—March is over.

Martin.—I know.

Sophie.—The violets were in full bloom in the meadows outside the town the last time we walked there.

Martin.—What about it?

Sophie.—Will you be back when the elder blooms?

Martin.—Perhaps sooner . . . perhaps a little later . . . Perhaps when the glowing peaches are ripe . . . how am I to know? I will surely return some time,—if I am still alive . . . and, I hope I will be.

Sophie (Anxiously).—If you enlist, Martin . . .

Martin.—Enlist . . . I am not even thinking of it. I haven't the slightest desire to knock about in the world. That isn't in my line.

Sophie.—Once you are gone! Who knows? I have heard how recruiting officers entice men, with cunning and trickery. Your cousin Cassian about whom you have told me so many fine things, is a soldier, isn't he?

Martin.—Fearless, gallant Cassian! Oh, with him it's an entirely different story. He killed two robbers when he was only thirteen. To him a human life is of no more value than a fly. He is a rare fellow!

Sophie.—I should like to meet him.

Martin.—Cassian! . . . There's a hero! I'll wager anything sooner or later he'll be a colonel, general . . . perhaps . . . field marshal. Oh, if I were Cassian, I would have conquered a dukedom long ago. I'm sure we'll still hear something like that about him one of these days. However, that is all very well for the devil of a fellow like Cassian! As for me . . . I am peaceful and play my flute.

Sophie.—And if they offer you a good fee in advance?

Martin.—Money! Am I a beggar?

Sophie.—Martin, if you keep up this way there'll be soon little left of the money you won.

Martin.—I suppose you mean the measly thousand ducats I won from the students here . . . from the beggarly town. How much do you think this thousand really means to me?

Sophie.—You haven't heard the stories they tell about you.

Martin.—I can well imagine.

Sophie.—That you are in league with the devil.

Martin.—Cleverness and good fortune mean deviltry to them.

Hm . . . they may see it come true! (*Walks about arranging his toilet.*)

Sophie.—O Martin! Martin!

Martin.—What is it now?

Sophie.—Remain here, stay at home! I have a sad presentiment that you will not remain true to me.

Martin (Taken aback).—Did I ever give you cause?

Sophie.—What do I know about you? It was only last autumn that you came into our town and Christmas when you first kissed my lips.

Martin.—Since then you've learned many things!

Sophie.—Was it your first kiss—even as it was mine?

Martin.—I swear it was.

Sophie.—Martin! . . . did you never kiss any of the beautiful ladies who danced in the ballet last autumn?

Martin.—None.

Sophie.—Weren't you in the theatre every evening? Didn't you wait at the Town Hall Square till the wee hours to see the actresses pass by on their way home?

Martin.—I knew none of them, never spoke to any of them.

Sophie.—And the flower,—that you fought so hard for

Martin.—Enough of this childish talk.

Sophie (More insistent).—What was her name . . . the one who threw the flowers to you?

Martin.—I don't remember.

Sophie.—She danced that night as the Athenian slave maiden.

Martin.—Quite possible.

Sophie.—How plainly I see her before me. Her black locks curled about her shoulders like quivering snakes in the white snow. All who saw her were mad with delight. The crown prince showered red roses on her on the stage—O I remember! Hundreds waited for her afterwards on the street. And when she came, bouquet in hand, they all shouted loud with joy, and she smiled, looked about her and scattered flowers among the crowd—and you, yes . . . you stooped down to hunt after one and kept it—I saw it!—next to your heart.

Martin (Involuntarily puts his hand to his heart. Glances furtively at SOPHIE to see if she has noted anything) Bah! What of it! She is gone, I never heard anything of her.

Sophie.—I fear, Martin, that you will forget and betray me for just such a one.

Martin.—What a stupid idea.

Sophie.—Remember, Martin, they are all false, those who

wander homeless through the world—no matter how lovely they dance and sing. Besides, it would be just as great a loss to you if you should forget me!

Martin (Impatient).—What time is it?

Sophie.—The bells are ringing the Vesper hour—Martin.

Martin.—Three more hours! . . . three long hours until the post leaves.

Sophie.—Long! . . . long . . .

Martin.—Was I rude?

Sophie (Breaking down).—Why . . . why are you leaving!

Martin.—How many more times will you ask that foolish question? Because some inexplicable power is driving me . . . the hot blood that's in me . . . blossoming Spring in the world . . . I would see new things—new cities! . . . The walls stifle me here . . . I cannot bring any song over my lips . . . (*Walks up and down; notices SOPHIE'S restless glance*) There is something horribly stupid about a parting hour . . . Mustn't you go home, Sophie?—it's getting late.

Sophie.—If you wish, Martin, I'll leave at once.

Martin.—Not that I want you to—but mother . . .

Sophie.—I can stay out late tonight. I wanted to accompany you to the post house.

Martin.—Oh—Well, that'll be nice. We can eat supper together then.

Sophie.—Certainly.

Martin.—Come, let us go.

Sophie.—Where to?

Martin.—Suppose—like last time, to the river—to the Golden Swan Inn.

Sophie.—There? . . .

Martin.—Don't you wish to go there?

Sophie.—You know—the place is full of soldiers and students—who look at you so.

Martin.—Is that the only reason? That won't annoy us.

Sophie.—You came mighty near a bloody duel the last time we were there.

Martin.—It wasn't my fault. I won't have any man look at you in any way that is disrespectful.

Sophie.—Wouldn't it be much nicer and cozier, if we stayed at home?

Martin.—Yes it would be. But there is nothing to eat.

Bridget has been away since this afternoon, and my valet won't be here until it's time to carry the bag to the post.

Sophie.—I would rather bring something myself.

Martin.—Would you?

Sophie.—Some cold meat, pastry, oranges and dates—will that do?

Martin.—What a darling child you are! How will you spend your evenings while I am away?

Sophie.—Think of you—what else will I do! (*They embrace sadly. It is well nigh dark in the room. Heavy steps are heard on the stairs. Both look up surprised. CASSIAN appears, in fantastic uniform.*)

Cassian (Very loud and violent).—Am I in the right place?

Martin.—Cousin Cassian!

Cassian.—That's me . . . Whence comes the voice . . . It's my cousin Martin's, ringing from out the dark . . . Greetings, Cousin Martin! . . . and a most pleasant good evening, lovely maiden.

Martin.—No matter how dark it is he can always see a handsome girl.

Cassian.—More wisdom than sharp eye . . . If it were old aunt Cordula, you would have struck a light long ago.

Martin.—Sophie, strike a light! Now you will see the playmate of my youth, my father's brother's son, the valiant Cassian, face to face. (*SOPHIE has stepped up to CASSIAN and looks at him. Both stare one the other in the eye for a time. Then she strikes a light.*)

Martin.—Where do you come from Cassian? Where are you going? How long will you remain here? What brings you here?

Cassian.—Too many questions for a hungry, thirsty and tired man.

Martin.—Now you'll have to take care of three, Sophie. Hurry a bit—you know we have but little time. Cold meat, pastry, oranges, dates—what do you say to this?

Cassian.—And not a word about wine, girl? That is sad indeed.

Sophie.—I'll bring everything,—everything you wish.

Martin.—Come back quickly!

Sophie.—Au revoir. (*Leaves.*)

Cassian (Stretching out on the bed).—Excellent! Oh, I could rest here fully twenty-four hours!

Martin.—If you wish you needn't go at all. I am leaving.

Cassian.—That's fine. You can then give me your room for a night.

Martin.—For as many as you want.

Cassian.—And the charming girl who is bringing our supper.

Martin.—Oh! There my right to dispose and yours to question ends.

Cassian.—Oho! A year ago you would never have had such a quick and clever reply.

Martin.—And a year from today I might perhaps instead of an answer . . .

Cassian.—Run through me with your dagger. Rather let me say it before it comes to a bad turn. And that would be stupid, for I wish to remain good friends with you. Give me your hand.

Martin.—You are welcome.

Cassian.—Let me have a look at you. You have changed. The shy uncouth manners are gone . . . It seems the city has educated you. Do you still go to church?

Martin.—O Cassian, life has plenty of heaven and earth! What do I need church and priest for!

Cassian.—Excellent! Excellent! What has happened to you? Have you stolen the Persian Shah's crown off his night table? Are you off tomorrow in a gilded carriage with six white horses to East India? Have you poisoned the Archbishop of Brabant and are they on your trail? Are you off on a journey to hunt lions in Africa? Has the Sultan invited you to his harem? Or are you really the fellow who recently attacked the post between Worms and Mainz, in which rode the handsome Countess of Wespich and her lovely daughter? You must be the fellow then who hung the driver on a tree and presented both the ladies with offsprings born day before yesterday at the selfsame hour.

Martin.—No, nothing like that.

Cassian.—Ah! I thought perhaps . . . but the girl who went to get us dates and oranges is a princess in disguise?

Martin.—Oh lord! She doesn't figure in this at all.

Cassian.—Devil! Here is a fellow who can make Cassian inquisitive—and my little cousin Martin at that!

Martin.—Listen (*Takes a flower from his bosom*) this is from one to whom I have never even spoken, and with whom I am madly in love. She danced here last fall—her name is Eleanora Lambriani . . . (*He totters.*)

Cassian.—What is the matter?

Martin.—I turn dizzy when I mention her name?

Cassian.—Eleanora Lambriani . . . The Duke of Altenburg's mistress.

Martin.—She was!

Cassian.—She who danced unveiled one night in the park at Fontainebleau, before the King of France and his officers!

Martin.—A fool who never appreciated her! She was intoxicated with her own beauty.

Cassian.—Who threw the Count of Leigang from the window into the yard so that the dogs leaped on him and tore off his ears?

Martin.—It was only one story high and he lost but one ear.

Cassian.—She who once swore to make for ninety-nine nights a different lover happy, none of whom should be less than lord—who kept her word,— and on the hundredth night brought a Savoyard boy and his hurdy-gurdy into her sleeping chamber—?

Martin.—Yes, that is the one! The miserable one, loveliest, most beautiful! And I desire her—I must have her! And then die!

Cassian.—Would you? . . . It's possible you might get her for a penny;—but then she may also ask ten thousand ducats for a kiss of her finger tips. She might tear her silken chemise at your first desirous glance,—and she may send you against ten thousand Turks before she'll permit you to open her shoe buckle.

Martin.—I am ready.

Cassian.—Do you know where she is at this moment?

Martin.—In Hamburg. There she is dancing at the feast in honor of the monarchs' gathering. Tomorrow morning I'll be there.

Cassian.—Where have you buried your treasures?

Martin.—To-day they are still in other men's wallets, but tomorrow, before evening I shall be a rich man.

Cassian.—How will you accomplish that?

Martin.—Don't you know that all of Europe's famous gamblers will gather at Hamburg during the festivities? Whoever plays with me,—his riches are mine. The day is long for the lucky, and in the evening I'll go to the theatre, take a seat in the Proscenium, watch Eleanora dance and wait before her door to lay all my wealth, my heart and my life at her feet.

Cassian.—And if she won't listen to you?

Martin.—Then I'll be a corpse at midnight.

Cassian.—Your imagination is dying too quickly. At one

I will dance with you on your grave a minuet and the Emperor of China will watch us from a balloon.

Martin.—You are right to make merry over me, Cassian, for you know only my hopes and wishes, but not my power and art. You do not know that I must win.

Cassian.—Must!

Martin.—However the dice fall, they fall in my favor.

Cassian.—You are certain?

Martin.—As certain—as I have eyes and hands.

Cassian.—Have you tested it?

Martin.—Certainly. First I played with myself. When I was certain of it, I invited some of my friends, students like myself. One brought the other, all lost and to-day here is in my pockets the good shekels of the whole town. It isn't much, a thousand ducats, but it is sufficient for fitting myself out like a gentleman, fare and a start.

Cassian.—I am itching . . . Are you absolutely certain of what you said?

Martin.—Try. Here is a cup and dice; let us play.

Cassian.—Excellent. (*Takes cup in hand*) But what about the young lady who was to bring us supper?

Martin.—Poor child! You remember Cassian, the time I said goodbye to you last fall,—when you joined the regiment and I returned to the University,—I was then an innocent boy, who never had kissed a girl, had never sworn love. Could I come thus before Eleanora . . . I did not dare! In Sophie's arms I learned how to kiss; to her I swore those oaths girls love to hear. I played at passion, jealousy, tenderness and now I know how to make of a woman what I desire. There is but one more test,—that I be strong enough not to quake before the woman I made love to. Before I leave the city, I will tell her that I'll never see her again; you'll be witness how she will hasten to this window and throw herself down.

Cassian (*Shaking the dice*).—The stakes, cousin Martin! How, only a ducat?

Martin.—I commence that way.

Cassian (*Throws*). Three.

Martin (*Throwing*).—Four.

Cassian.—That wasn't wonderful.

Martin.—Not more than I needed.

Cassian.—Ten.

Martin.—Eleven.

Cassian.—Twelve . . . Ha, now you'll fail.

Martin.—Twelve.

Cassian.—Devil! Eleven.

Martin.—Twelve. Continue.

Cassian.—Continue? I am done. I haven't a single penny left in my bag. (*SOPHIE enters.*)

Cassian.—Gracious, lovely lady, here is one who is at this moment poor as a church mouse . . .

Martin.—You should not say that . . . Here my friend, is one ducat. I lend it to you most willingly.

Cassian (*Putting it in his vest pocket.*)

Sophie (*Prepares the table, fills glasses.*)—So it is really true that he has a system whereby he invariably wins.

Cassian.—So it seems . . . thanks. To your health my lovely one. Your health, cousin Martin . . . Had anyone told me yesterday that today I would be at a well set table, among friends . . . O what a lovely head dress you are wearing!

Martin.—It is really pretty. You did not wear it when you left to get supper.

Sophie.—I live so near, so I ran up to my room for a moment I really should be well dressed when my lover receives such noble visitors.

Martin.—She knows how to wear things, doesn't she?

Cassian.—And she also knows what tastes well. I swear that the truffle pie, when I breakfasted at the Duke of Adalusia's, was pauper's fare in comparison!

Martin.—That seems hardly possible. The Inn from which it comes is a very modest one and the cook most likely has never been out of the city . . . Am I right, Sophie?

Sophie.—You are wrong, Martin. When I was in my house I decided to go across the market place to the "Holy Pilgrimage Camel" instead of the cheaper place. There they have a cook whom the Grand Duke of Parma drove from his domain because he cooked so well that the Princess insisted on marrying him.

Cassian.—Long live the Grand Duke, the Princess, the "Holy Pilgrimage Camel"—and you too my lovely girl! (*They drink.*)

Cassian.—Delicious . . . I never dreamt the cellars here were filled with such wonderful wines.

Martin.—There is no lack of that in town. And cheap as any other place as well. Thirteen penny the bottle. Am I right, Sophie?

Sophie.—No, Martin. This is the finest wine the "Holy

Pilgrimage Camel" has. A bottle costs one ducat.

Martin.—Devil! Did they trust you on your looks?

Sophie.—No. I left the golden bracelet as trust, the one you gave me recently . . . shouldn't I have done it since we have such a noble visitor . . . ?

Cassian.—My thirst is fine, but the wine is better,—and your kindness my lovely one, is still better than thirst and wine. Permit me to kiss your hand, lady.

Sophie.—Don't call me "lady" please. I feel ashamed. My mother is a poor widow, and my father was, in his lifetime, a citizen blacksmith.

Cassian.—You may tell this to one who understands less of women and the world. Your father was not a blacksmith.

Sophie.—I assure you, Sir . . . my mother was an honorable woman.

Cassian.—We'll not dispute that my dear,—that your mother according to your best knowledge was most honorable,—but I'll swear while carrying you under her heart, she must have dreamt of the Goddess Venus,—and kept her image in mind. Such happens even to the most honorable of women. I know of a lady to whom a Moorish prince appeared in a dream and who then gave birth to a coal black girl. (*Bells are heard.*)

Martin (Restless).—Dessert! Time is passing! How? Nothing else? So you forgot something after all Sophie, notwithstanding your unusual care.

Sophie.—O no! (*She brings a tray of fruit.*)

Cassian.—Wonderfull! They smell as if they had just been picked.

Martin.—How did you get such marvelous fruit? I never knew there was such fruit in town.

Sophie.—Sheer accident. I saw the tray in the window of Silvio Renatti.

Cassian.—Fine enough for a princely table.

Sophie.—They were for just such a table. The mayor receives the Lord of Dessau to-day, who is stopping off here on his way to the war camp.

Martin.—Well . . . am I the Mayor? Is this the Lord?

Sophie.—No, not quite.

Martin.—Or have I given you more jewels than I remember, and you had enough to pay for it.

Sophie.—O, no. For this I paid in a much different coin.

Martin.—What kind, if I may ask?

Sophie.—The young Italian who was in the shop asked for a kiss . . .

Martin.—And you paid.

Sophie.—Was it wrong—we have such a noble guest?

Cassian.—You have acted nobly and hospitably beyond words, lady. But I swear, even if this fruit came from burning Sicily; if he who plucked it died of sunstroke; if he who brought it to our country died of home sickness,—and mayor and lord turn mad because they lose the fruit,—even then the Italian asked too great a price . . . and he'll pay for it before I leave the city. Now let's enjoy it. (*They eat*) (*SOPHIE looks at CASSIAN and MARTIN looks at her. Silence. Then.*)

Martin (*To CASSIAN*).—Where do you come from?

Cassian.—From where? Shall I tell it in a few words or relate the whole history?

Martin.—In a few words, if you will.

Cassian.—It isn't such a simple matter to relate. I am coming from a battle, where two horses were shot under me, and three caps from off my head. Before, I was imprisoned in a place where a few of my comrades were eaten by rats. Previous to that I was at court where I with seven others were placed against a wall to be executed, but all the bullets passed by me tho they killed the other seven. We were thrown into a grave and a vulture who had carried off my comrades to his nest picked me up in his claws too. On the way he dropped me from an enormous height. Fortunately I fell on a hay stack. Then I was in a forest where some merchants took me for a ghost and in their fright left me all kinds of fine things and good money. I was also in a merry little house where Croatians, Tscherkessian and Spanish ladies fought mad duels over me and in their fury almost destroyed me. I escaped through the chimney and jumped five stories. In short: I went through as many adventures as ten others could not have found in a life time.

Sophie.—Marvelous.

Martin.—Strange! . . . And out of these thousand dangers you escaped, without a scratch.

Cassian.—I would say this if I was a braggard, but I am not—look!

Sophie.—I don't see anything.

Cassian.—How—my lady, you do not notice the broken nail on my small finger? (*He drinks. SOPHIE looks at him in great wonder.*)

Martin (*Constantly getting more peeved*).—Now we know where you came from . . . but where are you going?

Cassian.—As soon as I have recuperated from my wound I'll join my regiment.

Sophie.—O if you would only take me along!

Martin.—Are you mad Sophie?

Sophie.—What shall I do here now? I would imagine a handy girl would be welcome anywhere in war time.

Cassian.—Your hand, lady. Here, your offer is accepted.

Martin.—What did you mix in her wine Cassian.

Cassian.—What matters to you what this girl does, since you are going on a journey.

Martin.—Don't do it Sophie,—don't do it. Think of your mother!

Sophie.—Is your regiment far from here?

Cassian.—It's a journey of about a day and a night.

Martin.—Hell! Devils!

Cassian.—What's the matter?

Martin.—This is infuriating. My valet isn't here yet. I shall miss the post.

Cassian.—Is the hour too long for you? Come cousin, I too don't love wasted minutes . . . What do you say, another game!

Martin.—What, with you? You forget you haven't a copper.

Cassian.—Oh! But my kind rich cousin lent me a ducat. I hope I can spend it as I please.

Martin.—On my soul, that you can. I shall take pleasure to relieve you of jerkin, stockings, sword and shirt as well.

Sophie.—Martin, what is the matter; why do you treat your guest in such a shameful fashion.

Cassian.—The dice.

Martin.—A mean stake—a measly stake! I shake—twelve. Now the joke is ended.

Cassian.—Wow! I can do the same! Twelve.

Martin.—Ten.

Cassian.—Eleven.

Martin.—Two.

Cassian.—Three—all that.

Martin.—Can't you see? Are you afraid? Four.

Cassian.—Five.

Martin.—Eleven: My luck is turning.

Cassian.—Twelve.

Martin.—Continue.

Cassian.—There is no use . . .

Martin.—You think so! Here is my travelling bag, well filled. There is more in it than you imagine . . . (*He throws*) Eleven.

Cassian.—Twelve! And it belongs to me.

Martin.—Here—my wardrobe!—my bed—my bed clothes—You'll be paid! Eleven.

Cassian.—I know I'll be . . . twelve! Won. And now enough.

Martin.—Enough? Once again! My servant will be here soon—once again, it can't keep on this way!

Cassian.—What can you put up?

Martin.—All I have on my body. Devil with it! My servant! . . . the place on the post . . .

Cassian.—Not enough.

Martin (*Pointing to SOPHIE*).—And she too.

Sophie.—Martin! . . . I will give myself away. (*She seats herself on CASSIAN'S knee and embraces him.*)

Martin.—Scoundrel! Scoundrel! What did you mix in her wine? Do you hear me? I said scoundrel!

Cassian (*Leaping up*).—Oh, is that the game.

Martin.—Come on! Come on!

Cassian.—Before the town gate! We'll settle it there.

Sophie.—For Heaven's sake! Cassian, Cassian!

Martin.—There isn't enough time to go to the gate. There is plenty of room right here.

Cassian.—At your pleasure, cousin.

Sophie.—Cassian, shall I lose you so soon (*CASSIAN laughs.*)

Martin.—There is no time for laughing. On! On! (*They fence.*)

Cassian.—Not bad! That was well done—about seven or eight years more and you would be a dangerous opponent—tho perhaps not for me. (*Stabs him in the heart.*)

Martin (*Sinking down*).—Woe! Woe!

Sophie (*Running up to CASSIAN*).—Has anything happened to you?

Cassian.—I am sorry, cousin Martin . . .

Valet (*Enters*).—Here I am, noble sir.

Cassian.—Your master is right here take the bag . . . So!

Martin.—My eyes are dim.

Cassian.—What did you say cousin Martin?

Martin.—The shadow of death . . .

Cassian.—What was her name . . . Eleanora Lambriani . . . It would be worth taking one more day furlough . . .

Sophie.—Eleanora Lambriani—what is that I hear! The Athenian girl! That was her name.

Martin.—Yes, you jade! Now you know it! Eleanora . . . here is her flower . . . I have kept it . . . it is the same one . . . take it cousin Cassian . . . bring it to her . . . greet her . . .

Cassian.—By heaven, I'll deliver it to her and a great deal more that'll give her pleasure.

Sophie.—How, you will leave me for Eleanora Lambriani?

Cassian.—I cannot deny it. But not until to-morrow morning.

Sophie.—Woe is me! (*Runs up to the window and leaps out.*)

Martin (*Wants to run after her but sinks down*).—Sophie! Sophie! (*CASSIAN leaps after her thru the window.*)

Martin (*To the Valet*).—Woe! Woe! I cannot move! Look—the window . . .

Valet (*To the window*).—A great marvel has happened. The leaping gentleman caught the leaping lady and both have arrived below without a scratch.

Cassian (*Howling from below*).—Hey there! Knave! The handbag! Quick! I don't want to miss the post. Besides I must tickle an insolent Italian between the ribs.

Valet (*Calls down*).—At once, gracious sir.

Martin.—Give me the flute, before you go . . . Thanks . . . Wait! On the way to the post, ring the bell at the cross-road house number seventeen.

Valet.—Number seventeen . . .

Martin.—My strength is ebbing. Let them call for my body at midnight. Do you hear?

Valet.—Midnight. I'll order it, sir. (*Leaves.*)

Martin (*Plays the flute*).—It is bitter to die alone, when but a quarter of an hour ago you were in love—rich and full of the most beautiful hopes. This is a poor joke and I am not at all in the humor of playing the flute. (*Drops it and dies. In the distance the postillion's horn is heard.*)

CURTAIN

HUYSMANS, TRAPPIST AND LITTERATEUR

BY VIRGIL GEDDES

JORIS-KARL Huysmans was one of those men for whom the significance of a spiritual ideal might be said to have eclipsed itself when brought into contact with a medium of expression; to Huysmans, in particular, when he attempted to give it an importance and existence in the form of his novels. All art, by the nature of its first existing as an intangible reality in the mind of man, of necessity requires a measure of artistic faith, whether taken for its own possibilities, a means to an end or as an aesthetic equivalent. Huysmans found himself caught in the vortex of two opposing faiths, the material faith in his writing and that other faith, religious and worshipful of spiritual desire, which continually mocked his ventures in expression. And it was the frequent burning of this religious faith at white heat which made sole conviction in his art impossible, and gave him that skeptical exterior demeanor of a mystic coupled with the antics of a satyr at play. The inadequacy of the venture continually brought forth a prerogative for playful derision; but his chronicles have perpetuated for us a complete account of the evolution of a soul. Huysmans recognized the futility of art, and the irony of the undertaking in conjunction with the process and aspirations of the soul; and taking advantage of a skilled thrust and parry of sarcasm did not hesitate to use it with effect on his contemporaries, and obey, at the same time, the truth of his own contradicting impulses. And possessing, as he did, the dual equipment of an almost concealed inner faith and an exterior, voluble and flippant cynicism, it made of him, as a man of letters, a sort of prestidigitator and legendary epithetician.

Says Remy de Gourmont, "Huysmans is an eye." *La Cathedral* remains as supreme evidence. But there is evidence, in fact, in the eye for detail that runs through all the novels from *A Rebours* on to *L'Oblat*: Even the stark realism of those earlier sketches preceding his novels, and about the time of his inclusion

in *Les Soirees de Medan*, with their Flemish painter's passion for sumptuous meats in market windows, fleshy women oozing over benches, the accentuated coloring of drunkards and street reprobates, and much other sensuous externals manifest to the eye, reveal the beginnings in Huysmans of that curious mixture of material satanism with an equal indulgence in gloating over possible artistic beauty. The facility in Huysmans for pure cleverness, in this instance, came very near drawing him into that category of writers who succeed, in every generation by one means or another, in establishing a literary fashion of the day, a vogue that for the moment exists with much furor, but the importance of which fades with the coming of a new youth in letters. But what saved him from mere morbid contemplation and a repetition in himself of another Baudelaire, and led him on to the creation of the superb *En Route*, was an ever active exercise of intellect and a rising rebirth of spiritual faith, beyond and distinct from the art of literature which he practiced and transcending, for him at least, its ever obvious limitations. That he never succeeded in making it a separate entity is doubly manifest in all that he wrote. Whatever his eyes included, and even for an artist they saw and included a good deal, as the amount of meritorious work in his many books proves, the incisive synthesis of his habit of rapid epithetical thinking left scarcely a visual image go untouched of a personal meaning. And primarily personal in everything, what Huysmans saw meant the immediate application of ideas concerning it, otherwise he was not apt to see it.

Huysmans' retreat to the Trappist monastery and his final and belated, if not postponed, conversion to the faith with which he had for some time been much preoccupied has been cited as an indication of seriousness in his character to such an extent that the episode, as biography, has taken on uncertain proportions. It is true, as stated in the beginning of this article, that his Catholic inclinations infringed upon his literary reactions, but a man who can conceive and formulate in prose as many sided a personage as Durtal does not contain, in accordance with the rules of nature, enough of the ceremonious in his makeup to permit him swallowing *en masse* the petty larceny escape from the world allotted to a Trappist monk. The affair came at the end of his literary career, after he had spent the whole of the full force he was capable of in literature, and had come to realize, more or less, the decadence of Huysmans himself. If decadence, as quoted from Verlaine, was in truth "the art of dying beautifully," then he surely managed

to comply faithfully to his period in the end. But what accentuated his desire for escape was the growing boredom pressing upon him, when all that he could say in the art of writing had been said, and the praise of fashionable followers and admirers had grown shallow music to his ears; explained fully, I think in the words of Durtal in that last paragraph of *En Route*. " 'If they,' he said, thinking of those writers whom it would no doubt be difficult not to see again, 'if they knew how inferior they are to the lowest of the lay brothers! if they could imagine how the divine intoxication of a Trappist swineherd interests me more than all their conversations and all their books! Ah! Lord, that I might live, live in the shadow of the prayers of humble Brother Simeon!'"

The cry in this is not of supplication or atonement, but for a release from the world's stupid, incessant habit of action without significance, from the world's desuetude of mental and spiritual inaction, judged so, of course, from his own personal and literary way of thinking. It was his assertive conviction of the futility of all effort; his way of revolting against the farciality of moving among material objects and things. He may have been aware that he was drawing near to a process of routine which was, outwardly at least, as stupid as the one he was leaving, but it did promise that distraction he was so much in need of and provided, in the impressive beauty of its solitary seclusion, a form of serious entertainment equal to that of all he had previously tested for its literal meaning. And the literary mind is, first of all, avariciously in need of serious entertainment, otherwise it would not labor in creating that absorbing diversion known as literature; and Huysmans, as we have noted, being much on appearances, despite his inner volitions, found in the profound and simple sequence of the life of the Trappist monks a retreat from the eternal bedlam of Paris, its writers, its dilettantism and its superficial ways. Lack of perturbation was a strong attraction in favor of the monasterial order, and it is difficult to believe that holy vows were ever for him more than a secondary issue. It was once more the man of the world giving his mental disquietude to another extreme, but this time knocking at the door for a period of sanctimonious behavior.

But whatever he attached to the importance of his adventures in conversion, as a novelist purely the influence of Huysmans is not dead. He represents, and not only to French minds, the expression of a world gone weary of materialism; a truth coming home, even in America, faster than can be realized. He wrote

contemporary with the domination of realism in French literature, but his novels as representative indications might be said to be of the florid denouement of that period of crass realism, in that they foretell the direction in which the French literary mind was moving. More than one mystic in letters followed closely upon him. Maeterlinck, the modern poets, and even notable figures in the visual arts, have much of Huysmans' madness of denial in seeking out worlds away from materialism, there to accept its state of existence or practice their art undisturbed of harassing conflicts. But in vital appeal Huysmans holds his preeminence, in that he records minutely the transition; and thereby proves the value of the novel, as a medium seldom run to insane or unintelligible extremes. Encompassing every movement of his time, feeling much of it, and reacting almost continually in everything, his articulation is, nevertheless, clear, precise and definite: a demonstration of logical and preconceived form. And he remains perhaps the most important fictional chronicler of that vast and bountiful epoch of intellectual energy known to us as the French decadence.

AUTUMN EVENING

BY DAVID BERENBERG

Bare branches silouhetted on a sky
 Rose tinted with the dying of the sun;
 Gay crumblng leaves the vagrant wind sweeps by;
 The murmuring of waters as they run;

The roaring of the city dying down
 And sinking to a vague and minor key;
 The cloud drifts floating high above the town,
 And far away the singing of the sea!

Gentle the wind,—the world is mellow now,
 That once was harsh, and will be harsh again.
 Gather the harvest then; bare twig and bough
 Remind us that we gather fruit in pain!
 Lest the leaves wither,—ripe fruit will not wait,—
 Gather the harvest, soon it will be late!

THE ELECTION OF THE ROULETTE

A PLAY OF RUSSIAN LIFE (1850) IN ONE ACT

BY WILLIAM BYRON MOWERY

CAST

ILYIN ROTROFF, *the condemned prisoner*

PIOTR BASIN, *a middle-aged peasant*

OLD AKIM, *an old peasant*

CORPORAL FEODOR, *in charge of the squad detailed to guard the prisoner*

ANNA ROTROFF, *wife of the prisoner*

MATRAK AND ANUITA ROTROFF, *children of the prisoner, aged eight and six*

NIGOR

ANDREY

TROYSKI

} *Soldiers, heard but not seen*

SCENE, *In the house of the prisoner*

TIME, *Three o'clock of a winter night*

SCENE

In the hut of the prisoner. A door leads out right, a heavy massive door with a latch on the inside. In the corner behind the door there is a stool. Near the corner at the back there is a small window. To the right of the window and removed from the wall there is a square, heavy table with a wooden bench extending half way around it to right and back. In front of the table there is a stool.

To the left of the table, about four feet away, there is an Ikon, a small one on a large wooden base . . . the usual Madonna and Child Ikon. A single candle on the base is the only light in the hut.

In the left corner by the wall there is a stove. It is the usual large, flat concern with an upper part where one may lie when one is very cold, and with a small left portion for cooking and putting fuel in.

The floor is uncarpeted, a few rushes being scattered over it. Outside, the wind can be heard whipping around the house.

AT RISE

The young peasant, PIOTR BASIN, is sitting on the stool in the right corner. He is about twenty-eight years old, of good stature, is wearing his sack coat and large fur cap in the house.

ANNA ROTROFF sits on the right end of the bench near to PIOTR. She is a small, delicate woman wearing a look of much recent suffering. She stares moodily at the door.

OLD AKIM sits on the left corner of the bench. He is sixty, and has a long, white beard. He has removed his fur cap, showing his white hair and grizzled countenance.

Between the Ikon and the stove a man lies asleep. A fur coat is thrown over him as if to keep him warm. He stirs uneasily in his sleep; and the others glance at him often and speak softly from fear of waking him.

At the extreme left end and in front of the stove two children lie asleep with their arms about one another. A cloak is thrown over them, too.

Old Akim.—My old wife could not come this night to stay with you. One of the children is sick with a fever, and she had to stay. She will come tomorrow and help you, Anna.

Anna (Weeping softly at the mention of the word, 'morrow').—She is good, old Mother Dorie. But may there be no morrow, Akim.

Old Akim.—Do not weep, Anna Rotroff. It will only make Ilyin's last moments sorrowful, and his heart is heavy now. Let us be thankful to the Great White Father that the old custom of letting the prisoner condemned to death spend the last night at his home has not been set aside; and let us be thankful that we have him with us tonight, to make his going easier. (*He points to the man on the floor.*)

Anna (Vehemently and half hysterically).—The deputy was the friend of Kirilov; and was to marry his sister. The deputy would never have condemned Ilyin had he not been a friend of the Kirilov Estate. He knew all that Kirilov had done to us . . . gave us flinty soil to till, but we paid full rental; took away our fuel rights in the woods, but Ilyin still had to chop for the Manor; took away our gleaning rights, but Ilyin still had to give his three weeks at harvest time to the lord. And when he had starved us, he insisted upon the rents being paid . . . at the dead of winter; and insulted and struck Ilyin with a cudgel there at the door. Any other judge would have freed Ilyin from the guilt of slaying Kirilov in the woods.

Old Akim.—No deputy would have freed him after his confession. What matter if the killing were just . . . Ilyin is a muzhik, and for a muzhik to raise his hand against a lord is death. There is nothing to be offered in his defence. Besides, those dogs, Vassieliev and Spatski, told of seeing Ilyin hiding the pistol in the woods where they were chopping. Kirilov met Ilyin in the middle of the woods; and Ilyin hid the pistol near where he shot him. He could have escaped if those dogs had not spoken out for their whip-master. Be comforted, Anna. Ilyin has struck down one of those masters. (*A clock outside and at a distance strikes three. ILYIN is awakened by the noise and sits up. He is medium sized, energetic, and about thirty-three. He looks like and is dressed like the young peasant, PIOTR. He passes his hand across his forehead.*)

Ilyin.—What time is it? Why did you let me sleep? What was it I heard striking?

Old Akim.—It struck three. The noise awakened you.

Ilyin (Arising and starting to pace the room with head cast down).—An hour yet, an hour. I have an hour yet, have I not, Akim?

Old Akim.—Yes, you have a whole hour yet. It is an hour till four. (*Outside a sharp military command is heard. ILYIN looks nervously at the door. OLD AKIM goes to the little window and looks out.*)

Old Akim.—They are changing the guards. It is cold tonight; and they are standing one hour shifts. The last shift is going to its places.

Piotr Basin.—Where did these soldiers come from, Father?

Old Akim.—They came from Kornka yesterday afternoon. It is but ten versts of a march. They came only to guard Ilyin.

Piotr Basin.—Who is in charge of these troops; and how many of them are there, do you know?

Old Akim.—There are ten of them. Corporal Feodor Stephelyeff is in charge of them, so Cobbler Povli told me this evening. (*To ILYIN*) Do you know this corporal, Ilyin?

Ilyin (Stopping a moment in his pacing).—No! I have not seen him. The deputy's guard brought me home this evening. I have had no chance to see this Corporal Stephelyeff.

Old Akim (Turning again to the window).—He has posted the new guard; and is telling them to maintain strict watch. (*A little pause*) He is coming toward the door. He is coming in, Ilyin. (*The CORPORAL knocks, and the old peasant goes to the door, opens it slowly and admits the corporal. He is a sturdy, medalled*

soldier of eight and twenty. He stands a moment looking around, without seeing the young peasant in the corner.)

Corporal Feodor.—Ilyin Rotroff . . .

Ilyin (Whirling sharply, and standing in the shadow of the Ikon).—What! It isn't time to . . . go yet. The order says four o'clock. I won't go yet, I won't . . .

Corporal.—Be calm, Ilyin Rotroff. I merely came and looked in to see that you had not escaped. You have almost an hour yet. (He goes out. The people inside the hut recover from the frightened attitude his appearance gave them. ILYIN resumes his pacing.)

Ilyin (Laughing nervously).—Escaped, Jesu, with five guards outside, and it freezing cold. Piotr, did you hear him say, 'escaped'?

Piotr Basin.—Compose yourself, Ilyin. Don't fret about escape . . . there's no chance. Besides, why should you want to live? It's a gray, half-life at the best . . . mud and rain, snow, hunger and rent.

Old Akim (Speaking slowly at first, and then getting more and more excited).—Yes, yes, why should one want to live? It's a fight to keep alive even. No beast works as hard as we do . . . all day in the mud and rain. A muzhik is lower than beast. Look at me! I never saw a happy day in my life, nor my father before me. He was a muzhik and tended the stock on the Kirilov estate. There were fourteen of us children. We lived in a corner of the barn. The pigs and sheep ran in between us at night, and water from the rotten straw in the loft trickled down. The pigs and sheep had plenty to eat and clean straw to sleep upon, while we were begrudged cabbage soup and potato bread.

Today, I, Old Akim, walked ten versts to work and made half a rouble. Yesterday, Maistre Andrey at Kornka bought six hundred roubles of wine for his daughter's wedding but I have no flour at the home. Ilyin, you are worse off than I . . . you are deeply in debt. Why do the rifles worry you?

Piotr Basin.—True, father, true. Why does Ilyin fret? He will merely be saved a few years of starving, suffering and slaving. If we could go naked and eat grass like horses, we would all have enough and be happy. But we need clothes to keep us warm, and we can't eat grass. Every disease plagues us, and the lords do as they will with us. You are lucky, Ilyin. I wish I were in your place. (The clock is heard again, striking the half hour. The people within the hut become silent as they realize that only half an

hour remains. ILYIN pauses in his pacing, stands still, and listens. The last sentence of PIOTR seems to come to him . . . to be remembered but not understood, as PIOTR leaves his stool in the corner and comes to the one in front of the table.)

Ilyin.—In my place . . . dead in my place. (*Buries his face in his hands*) God, in an hour I'll be dead . . . Like to be dead in my place! (*Uncovers his face, stares a moment before him as if smitten by an idea, then whirls sharply to PIOTR*) Ha! Piotr, listen. You can take my place. Listen! You can take my place. We can change clothes, and you can pull my cap down over your face. The corporal did not see you, Piotr; and I was in shadow. We are the same size. It won't be light. You'll be buried at once. I could get your papers and go away. (*Goes up close to PIOTR and speaks excitedly.*) Piotr, Piotr, do you hear me, listen . . .

Piotr (*Starting up as if alarmed by the suggestion*).—No, no, no! We could never do it. They would find it out . . . something would go wrong. We could never fool them. No, no.

Ilyin (*Interrupting, and going quite close to PIOTR, and becoming terribly insistent in his pleading*).—Wait. What could go wrong? It will be dark. They won't ask you any questions, but just back away and shoot. The grave is ready. You would be buried in an hour from now; and I could take your papers and escape to America or to the Argentine. In one day I can be at the station of Vryli. In three weeks I can be in the new country. You say you don't want to live any longer, Piotr. You have no children or a wife, Piotr . . .

Piotr (*Interrupting nervously*).—I'll work for yours when you are gone, Ilyin.

Anna (*Starting up wildly from the corner of the bench and imploring PIOTR*).—Save him, Piotr, good Piotr. Look at these children . . . at me! Have pity, Piotr.

Piotr (*Hiding his face and groaning*).—Oh, oh, oh. (*The Boy wakes at the noise and begins crying and rubbing his eyes.*)

Matrak.—Mamma, Mamma, I'm cold and afraid. (*The little girl is awakened also and begins crying.*)

Anna (*Clasping the knees of the young peasant and looking up at him beseechingly*).—But listen, Piotr. It's all the same with you; but with him . . . we can't lose him. For heaven's sake, be kind, Piotr. I'm not asking this for myself, but for these children . . .

Piotr (Fairly shouting).—No, no, no!

Ilyin (Going up close and laying his hands upon PIOTR'S shoulders.) Brother (PIOTR tries to shake off ILYIN'S grasp, but ILYIN restrains him) Brother, little Brother

Piotr (Breaking loose from ILYIN and running frantically toward the door) No, no. Go away. Let me go! Why should I want to be shot? I can't do it. Let me go! (He runs out the door.) (The others within the hut are dazed by the quick succession of events. They stand rigid. Outside is heard the heavy footsteps of PIOTR as he slams the door and runs into the night. There is a sharp metallic sound, like the cocking of a musket.)

Corporal's Voice (Sharply and excitedly).—Shoot, Nigor, the prisoner is running away. (A shot, a scream, and a heavy fall is heard. Confused voices call for a light. There is silence for a moment.)

Corporal's Voice.—Dead . . . right through the heart. You've a fine eye in the dark, Nigor. (A pause) The fool might have had half an hour longer if he had been quiet. Why should he run out like a rabbit chased by a ferret? He thought to escape, probably, in the cold and snow.

Nigor's Voice.—He didn't stop when I clicked my musket at him. I could take no chances on catching him, Feodor.

Corporal's Voice.—There is little difference, Nigor. What is half an hour to him? It was his own fault. Come! Let us lay him in the shelter of the hut where the wind will not reach him. And you, Nigor and Andrey, go clear the grave of snow. (A pause) Jesu, it is cold. I will step inside the hut till they get back. (The people within the hut stand still, not seeming to realize the situation. They are still stunned by the sudden turn events have taken. ILYIN stands in the center of the floor with his hand raised to his forehead as if trying to think. Steps are heard coming toward the door. A knock.)

Corporal's Voice.—I want to come into the house for a minute or two. Let me in. (At the sound of the CORPORAL'S voice, ANNA springs up and rushes over to ILYIN, pushing him into the corner behind the Ikon.)

Anna.—They think they have shot you, Ilyin. Don't you see? They will not know if we delude them the next few minutes. Get down in that corner and lament for Ilyin Rotroff. (Turns to OLD AKIM) Hear me, Father. We can save him, with Piotr's papers. In an hour Ilyin can be saved.

*Corporal (Knocking again and louder).—*Let me in. Let me in. At once. *(The old Peasant goes to the door and lets the CORPORAL in. He walks up to the stove, avoiding the sight of ANNA who has thrown herself upon the table as if broken with grief. The CORPORAL takes off his gloves and rubs his hands. He is very near to ILYIN who is crouched in the corner behind the Ikon. At the sight of his rifle and the sound of his rattling sword, the children begin crying. The little boy creeps around the Ikon to ILYIN.)*

*Matrak.—*Papa, I am afraid of the soldier. Will he hurt us with his sword?

*Corporal (Laughing, but with a half-pained expression at hearing the query of the child and seeing his fear of him).—*We soldiers of the Little White Father are Ogres to all good people. Muzhiks scare their children to sleep with tales of us. Jesu, we are human beings with human hearts. *(Bitterly)* This work in blood is not of our will, yet the people call *us* murderers. They should point at those who command us, and who would shoot us if we did not obey. *(A short pause. The CORPORAL turns to the stove again)* I thought these were the children of the prisoner; are they yours, brother? They call you father.

*Ilyin (Without looking up).—*Yes, they are mine, Corporal Feodor.

*Matrak.—*Papa, what is wrong with mamma? Look at her. *(The boy points to ANNA. The CORPORAL turns and looks also. He shows perplexity. ILYIN tries to silence the lad; but the CORPORAL looks at him and he desists.)*

*Corporal.—*How is this? These are your children and the wife of the prisoner is their mother. How is this, brother? *(ANNA looks up at him, trying to collect her thoughts. ILYIN does not answer.)*

*Anna.—*They call me mother because I have cared for them since they were babies. Piotr, here, is their father; but his wife died when they were very small. Ilyin and I took them and cared for them. *(The CORPORAL nods rather slowly that he comprehends, lights a cigarette, and starts to walk back and forth in front of the stove. ILYIN's gaze follows him as if he were hypnotised.)*

*Corporal (As if to relieve the awkward silence, and take the minds of the people off the sorrow they are contemplating).—*It is cold outside; and the wind is rising more and more. I remember that on such a night three years ago, I was guarding a house in a situation like the one tonight, only there were several prisoners in it with their families. One of them ran out of the house . . .

not the one condemned to death. We shot him down because he did not stop at our challenge. We had a grave to fill, and took the man to fill it without inquiring if we had the right man. What did it matter? We could report to the deputy that we had filled the grave. In a few days we were sent away to other posts . . .

Ilyin (Eagerly and anxiously).—Did the prisoner to be shot escape with his life?

Corporal.—Why, surely. We discovered our mistake later; but the grave was filled, we had shot a man; and the officials did not know. The prisoner left the country safely. Do we soldiers care that the lords should have their orders obeyed, or that the wrong man should be taken? We are only concerned in saving ourselves.

Ilyid.—Then you are not intent upon punishing the right man?

Corporal (Looking keenly at ILYIN, who had risen to his knee).—No, we are not. (*Breaking off the subject, he glances sharply at ILYIN who, noticing his gaze, shrinks back into the corner*) Brother, when I was in here a moment ago, I did not see you. (*Silence a moment.*)

Ilyin.—I was sitting behind the door when you came in the first time.

Corporal.—Sitting behind the door, or hiding behind the door? (*ILYIN is silent.*)

Corporal (Pursuing the subject not as one who is greatly interested, but rather nonchalantly).—Why should you hide? Are you, too, afraid of us soldiers?

Ilyin (Very excitedly, and trying to avoid the gaze of the CORPORAL).—I was not hiding, I was not! What makes you think I was hiding? I tell you I was not. (*The CORPORAL comes up close to ILYIN. He gives a quick start as of surprise, but completely suppresses whatever emotions may have been his. ILYIN continues to avoid the gaze of the CORPORAL.*)

Corporal.—Be calm, brother, be calm. Why should you be so wrought up and insist you were not hiding?

Ilyin.—But you seem to think I am . . . that I am not . . . that I am trying to hide from you. I am Piotr Basin . . . Piotr Basin, a poor peasant. Why should I try to hide from you? Why should you think I was trying to hide from you?

Corporal (Looking down at ILYIN, and speaking slowly and purposefully).—So! You are Piotr Basin. Good! Honest muzhik, probably. You are therefore useful to the estate. Why should you worry? So long as you are useful and want little you will be safe. Yes, safe, Piotr Basin. (He walks to the door, opens it a little piece, and the snow whirls in. He speaks to the men without) Are they come yet from opening the grave?

Troyski's Voice.—No, Feodor. They are old women, Andrey and Nigor. Jesu, it is cold, Feodor.

Corporal.—They will be back in a few minutes, Troyski; and I'll take you back to Kornka so fast you will be warm. We will have the burial over in five minutes, and old Theodewritche's ale at Kornka will warm you up, Troyski. (He turns to the interior and closes the door. He walks back to the Ikon and lights a cigarette. ILYIN has become much bolder, and talks freely now.)

Corporal.—You are a laborer, Piotr Basin? Where do you labor?

Ilyin.—I work on the Kirilov estate in summer, and chop wood in winter.

Corporal.—You have no family, I understood, Piotr.

Ilyin.—No, Corporal Feodor. The Great White Father did not will that I should have.

Corporal.—You are honest, Piotr, and industrious; but a man of little wants. Life can neither be very dear to you, or very hard. Only to those who passionately desire can life be precious. This Ilyin Rotroff had a family, and was impulsive. He had many wants, did he not, brother? You should have taken his place, Piotr Basin, and died for him. What import is a few years to you?

Ilyin.—Even a worm wants to live, Feodor. It is sinful to yield up our life before our time.

Corporal.—No, brother, it is only sinful to waste life; and if you had given yours in place of Ilyin's, it would not have been wasted. Tell me, Piotr, did not Ilyin ask you to take his place? Did he not beseech you, brother? (ILYIN does not answer, and his old fearing manner returns.)

Corporal.—Since he beseeched you, why did you not take his place? He had a wife and children

Ilyin.—I shall work for his wife and his children, Feodor.

Corporal.—For Ilyin's wife and his children! But these are your children, Piotr Basin.

Ilyin (Quickly and nervously interrupting).—Yes, yes, yes, they are mine. I said Ilyin's because he has cared for them since since they were small.

Corporal (Smiling at this statement and looking steadily at ILYIN who gets more and more nervous under his gaze. He throws his cigarette into the stove, and lights another deliberately) Let us suppose, Piotr, that you had taken Ilyin's place. Would it not have been easily possible for Ilyin to escape?

Ilyin.—Yes, yes . . . I don't know. I don't think so.

Corporal.—Could Ilyin not have taken your papers and gone to Vryli?

Ilyin.—Yes, he could have done so.

Corporal.—And after he got to Vryli, could he not have shown the papers to the agent, and got a transportation order to Dantzic?

Ilyin.—Yes, he could have done so.

Corporal.—And at Dantzic are there not many companies that will ship men to the Argentine or to America? And could he not have signed with one of them?

Ilyin.—Yes, he could have done so.

Corporal.—So, therefore, if you had taken his place, he could have escaped to the New Country; and sent for his family later, and all would have been happy within a year or two. But it is not all so smooth as it seems. There are many difficulties in the road. I know of them, certainly. (*ILYIN rises up to his full height at this remark. The CORPORAL smiles and puffs on his cigarette. ANNA draws near the two.*)

Ilyin,—Difficulties . . . what of them . . . what difficulties?

Corporal.—Well, at Vryli, it would have been necessary for Ilyin to tell the agent that he was going down into the Province of Thack to visit a brother during the slack work in winter. He would not permit one to leave the province if his intentions were to leave the country . . . especially when one is employed on an estate.

Ilyin (Repeating the words of the CORPORAL and weighing them intently).—To visit a brother during the slack work in winter.

Corporal.—And after he would get down into Thack it is only a few hours ride into Dantzic. If you had taken Ilyin's place and he were escaping, he would tell the agent at Thack that he was a sailor on the Sansen Line, returning to Dantzic because the ship was sailing on the next day. The agent would swear and

ask for his papers; and Ilyin would tell him how beautifully drunk he had gotten on country ale, and had lost all papers. And if Ilyin would then tell him also that he was without a kopek more than enough to get him to Dantzig, and were to ask him for a loan of half a rouble, he would believe Ilyin and let him through with a good, sound cursing.

Ilyin.—A sailor on the Sansen Line . . . drunk . . . lost papers . . . want rouble . . .

Corporal.—Good! And then in Dantzig there are many looking for such as you would be . . . as Ilyin would have been, but they must work secretly. One of them would have come up to Ilyin and said:

“Brother, the times here are getting worse steadily until it is difficult for a man to keep himself . . . and as for families, they are only for the lords. Yes a family, a wife is only for the lords. There are other places across the seas where all have wives and children.”

“True, brother, true,” Ilyin would have answered. “The times are bad and getting worse. I have heard of those lands you speak of.”

Then the stranger would give Ilyin a cigarette and would tell him that he could show him how to get there; and within an hour Ilyin would have signed up with some company. He would tell the port agent that the Kirilov estate had no need of laborers . . . that it was turning its farm lands into pasture and sending many, many of its old muzhiks into the Crimea to other farms; and the port officer would issue a passport under those conditions.

Ilyin.—No need of laborers . . . turning farm land into pasture . . . sending men away into the Crimea. (*Outside are heard the footsteps of the returning men. They knock at the door.*)

Nigor's Voice.—We are ready, Feodor. Let us hasten, for the wind is filling the grave again with snow. Let us go, Feodor. (*At the sound of their voices the Old Peasant rises and comes up to the table, looking intently at the scene. ILYIN clings to the Ikon for support, so great is his agitation. ANNA tremulously takes his hand.*)

Andrey's Voice.—Come, let us go, Feodor. Jesu, it is cold out here, but you are warm.

Corporal (Walking to the door and addressing the soldiers outside).—Do not be impatient. (*Goes outside, letting the door remain open.*)

Nigor's Voice.—What are you searching the prisoner for, Feodor? (*The CORPORAL does not answer. There is intense silence a moment. Then the CORPORAL reenters with a paper in his hand. All three of the people in the hut shrink back as they see him re-enter, and see a paper in his hand. The CORPORAL looks at the paper carefully, and then goes up to ILYIN.*)

Corporal.—This is a certificate of freedom of indebtedness to the estate. It is almost impossible to get out of the province without one. (*Hands the paper to ILYIN who takes it mechanically*) It is to be presented to the agent at Vryli and the port official at Dantzig, but of course not to the agent at Thack. (*He backs toward the door, and motions to the soldiers without to take up the body and leave for the grave. Then he turns to the people within*) It is easy to get to the New Country, but one cannot be sure. It is like the turn of a wheel. It may stop at death, or it may whirl past death and stop at another peg. Only be very careful, Ilyin Rotroff, and may the blessing of the Great White Father be upon you. (*He turns and goes out.*)

CURTAIN

A LABORATORY EXPERIMENT IN POETRY

BY FLORENCE MARY BENNETT

Among the soul-quelling questions propounded to poor Job by the Ruling Power of the Universe, there does not chance to be one which defies him to measure the sun-beam or to weigh the substance of a poem. But such interrogations are not dissimilar to those hurled at the afflicted one. Possibly one may regard Job as a type of the spirit of man, not merely tried by fleshly ills, but tortured intellectually by the myriad puzzles of the cosmos. Equipped with the modern habit of scientific research, he should fare a shade better than he did under that recorded stupendous inquisition. The method penetrates to all crannies of modern thought, whether one be called to collate by the card-catalogue system tried and true recipes for cooking, to tabulate the time-reactions of a given individual to certain homely stimuli, or verily to analyse the sunbeam by the orderly wizardry of the spectro-scope.

Hence to confess to having counted poets and poems may not appear an entirely unconscionable thing, the method being useful and fashionable in the accredited intellectual circles, howbeit the exercise may in the sequel be found to have led the mind to no more wisdom than did wrestling with the famous scholastic problem as to how many angels may stand on the point of a needle.

The counting and tabulation came from postulating a query regarding the kind of poetry which is actually appearing, month by month, or week by week, in our magazines. It may reasonably be argued that one would get the best survey of the poetry of to-day by ascertaining just what some of the leading magazines think worthy of publication in this line. It may be objected—and here rests the thesis for the journal devoted exclusively to poetry—that poems are, by the average editor, regarded merely as non-essential ornamentation, if not actually as mere convenient space-fillers. Yet, after all, certain magazines do give definite room thereto. And it is currently regarded as honourable to the individual of literary tastes to be named as a contributor to certain files.

The magazines examined were those which come regularly to my library table, and I am sure that the group is fairly representative of many homes: *The North American Review*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *Scribners*, and *Good Housekeeping*. The period chosen for scrutiny covered the last twelvemonth. Out of this experiment emerged the names of One Hundred and Nineteen poets.

The fact alone is impressive. Indeed, one might call the practice of poetry prevalent. Fifty-five of these persons are recorded in "Who's Who in America," all of them listed there as writers, not all of them, however, having acquired their fame in authorship primarily as poets.

The last clause gives a very nice starting-point for the discussion. It is not a random theory that anyone with a natural aptitude for literary composition can write poetry. England long since appreciated this in her educational system, inculcating early in the boys of her great public schools the stern habit of writing verse, not only in English, but also in Greek and Latin. A tremendously good habit it is, precious for developing genuinely good style with the pen! The habit prospers the more wholesomely if the practitioner be intimately aware that rather infrequently is the product worthy of publication.

A group of American men and women interested in the art of poetry formed in 1909 an organization known as *The Poetry Society of America*, the members of which are required to show facility in writing verse or marked critical ability in that field. The formation of such an association was a manifestation of real interest in poetry and, quite properly, on the heels of this enterprise has come the establishment of magazines,—following one after another, until there is a goodly group of them—devoted solely to poetry. Also publishing houses of age and stability have gathered the courage to put forth many volumes of verse. The rumour was current during the War that there was a great demand for such volumes in the trenches. Of course, there were scoffers who cried that the books of poetry represented the house-cleaning efforts of those who gave books to the soldiers. But is it odd that a young fellow facing the chance of sudden horrible death should have sought, in leisure moments, the spiritual wings of lyric utterance? Every man is supposed to crave poetry when he is in love, and most men are said to practise the art, although usually in secrecy, under that emotional stress in their youth. Accordingly it is easily conceivable that the exaltation derived

from sheer courage in the hearts of the young men boldly adventuring and risking all should have made poetry welcome. We may believe then that the vogue thereof was not dimmed by the War. In various cities now, large and small, one finds "Poetry Societies," "Poets' Corners," "Rhymers' Clubs,"—bands of devotees called by all sorts of suggestive names, some of them loosely knit to the Society in New York, others free-lances, all servants of the poetic art. Writers of verse go hither and yon, speaking about poetry and reading from their own work or that of their friends, to drawing-room groups and to audiences that crowd large halls. Schools and colleges are introducing courses in contemporary poetry and are urging their students to try a hand at the task of such self-expression.

And so, indeed, not only by the witness of the One Hundred and Nineteen names, we may know that there is a Movement. What is it worth? There is a question for our Job!

The leisurely perspective of years is generally regarded as a pre-requisite to sound literary criticism. The progress of the years, in itself leisurely, is cruel to the average aspirant in the arts. Yet every age has had its canons of taste, established chiefly by the touchstone of study of the past, maintained by brisk application thereof to the creative work of the present. Our own time seems to be peculiarly devoted to theorising. No period has been more self-consciously "literary" and "artistic" than the present. In particular, there is, if one may judge by published reviews and by the talk in educated circles, a feverish desire in this country to prove ourselves nationally great by creative work in letters. It might seem that there is small call for strain and stress since we possess already Hawthorne, Poe, Cooper, Emerson, Henry James, Mark Twain, Walt Whitman, each a confessed master of a sort, each—with the possible exception of Henry James, and I should not except him—distinctively American. Really the worst thing that can be said against the present as an artistic age is that it under-rates proved values, that it craves the bizarre and the exotic, that it makes art a fashionable fad, that its serious workers become, almost perforce, self-conscious. As a matter of fact, well educated persons are not faddists, nor are they marked by affectations. They do not rave about Beauty and Inspiration, but they know beauty when they see it, regardless of the time of its manufacture, and they are decorously humble before true inspiration.

Our literary magazines, quite as much as the advertising catalogues of publishers and book-sellers, are marred by *gush* about favourite writers. An essayist who has "found" an artist or who holds a brief for a "movement" must, in the nature of things, have his ecstasies; a professional reviewer should steady his nerves before he takes his pen in hand.

If one speaks at all of modern poetry, one cannot elude the necessity to refer to the controversy between *vers-libristes* and the practitioners of the older method. And yet in some quarters it is considered hopelessly out of date to mention the topic. I am sure that those who struggled earnestly for *vers libre* were entirely sincere in their contention that the thing at issue was not merely freedom of technique, but also freedom of subject-matter. To write in this style is not simply to write without rhyme and in lines of wondrously uneven length, but it is to write in a certain manner. It is disconcertingly hard to find an adequate definition of *vers libre*. I think that the wayfarer will always have to distinguish it by its metrical deficiency and its uncanonical appearance on the printed page. The esoteric coterie who write in this form have various shades of delicate discrimination, suitable no less for rigid exclusion than for complaisant inclusion. Miss Amy Lowell, as spokesman for the group of writers who name themselves "Imagists," prefers to call the style *cadenced verse*. The term may be misleading, inasmuch as every kind of verse has its cadences, but technical terms are not necessarily born of pure reason. In a recent article in *The Literary Review* (January 21, 1922), Miss Lowell declares that the writers who announce that *cadenced verse* is dead and "Imagist poetry relegated to the waste-paper basket" do not at all understand the facts. "*Cadenced verse*," she says, "was never considered to be more than one of many forms by the chief practitioners of it. The Imagist point of view has spread far and wide, in its entirety, and in its modifying effect on other types of verse." Miss Lowell, as she wrote, had before her four volumes of poetry to review, one of them "Hymen," by "H. D.," an Imagist of her own special group, and in this volume "H. D." had used rhyme. Miss Lowell's comment on the fact is: "She essays rhyme, seldom fettering herself to strict metrical pattern, but employing it freely and often most happily." "The Imagist point of view" she sets forth in this article by a quotation from a paper by Mr. John Gould Fletcher in a recent number of the *Freeman*. She remarks that "Mr. Fletcher derives this point of view which, for some reason

he does not name, from the influence of Oriental poetry." This is the passage which she quotes from him: "The Western mind is either materialistic or abstract; the Oriental mind is objective. There can be no poetry written about nature which aims at stating nature completely, unless we of the West come to realize that our abstract thought about the object, as well as the material of which the object is composed, meet in the object itself. In such a view of nature the distinction between romantic and classical has no meaning." What perversely difficult things words are! The passage quite lacks point without a clear definition of *classical* and *romantic*. One wonders whether Mr. Fletcher has cast out from his interpretation of the former term all the devils bred of Boileau's false ideas of Greek poetry. Mr. Fletcher elsewhere—i. e. in his preface to one of his volumes of poetry, *Goblins and Pagodas*—gives a concrete illustration of the way in which a poet works *imagistically*:—Granted, as theme for a poem, a cheap, badly printed red-bound book, which lies on his desk, and which he has possessed several years; there are three ways of treating the subject: (1) in the manner of "the Victorian tradition," whence the reader would obtain the writer's "sentimental reaction towards certain ideas and tendencies in the work of another"; (2) in the manner of the realist, who would dwell on details of the book's external appearance, complaining possibly of his poverty and gibing at the author of that red book for not having realised the sufferings of the poor; (3) in the manner of Mr. Fletcher—an Imagist—who finds that neither of the former ways possesses any novelty. This third, this novel, way is best described in Mr. Fletcher's own words:—"I should select out of my life the important events connected with my ownership of this book, and strive to write of them in terms of the volume itself, both as regards subject-matter and appearance. In other words, I should link up my personality and the personality of the book, and make each a part of the other. In this way I should strive to evoke a soul out of this piece of inanimate matter, a something characteristic and structural inherent in this organic form which is friendly to me and responds to my mind." Is not the passage an admirably key to much that is written in this new manner of poetry, whether by professed Imagists or by penmen of another cockade? The subject-matter of new verse seems very often to a dispassionate onlooker astoundingly trivial. Why such elaboration of detail, such a marshalling of images from far lands, to describe some little thing of no importance? Why

should the reader be supposed to care extravagantly for the sense-impressions of the writer? True, any man who works as an artist takes for granted some sort of interested audience somewhere. But surely the reading public cannot be supposed to be microscopists and pathologists!

Some twenty years ago, Mr. William Butler Yeats was insistently telling the people to whom he lectured that English is a "pebble worn smooth," that if this exhausted old vernacular were to be used for vital poetry, a new stock of poetic furniture must be imported. The Irish revivalists did not succeed in making Gaelic the language of the world, literary or civil, nor did they I believe, write their own chief works in that tongue. However, I imagine that their earnest voices did something toward changing the manner of poetry. I don't know whether they, or other influences of the period, were responsible in this country for that theory of *prose-writing* which took a firm footing in college curricula, whereby the freshman was, to his astonishment, wrenched away from the familiar type of "composition" and set to writing "themes" on plain every-day subjects. How desperately brains were tortured for an unusual way to write, day after day, about apple-boughs or corn-stalks or "the scene from my window!" I recall still with a glow a personal triumph when I described the fragrance of a chrysanthemum in terms of the flavour of an olive. Is not that sort of thing a special note that one catches in modern poetry of the type discussed above: that struggle for the startlingly simple, the unusual, that preciosity? Place for example Mr. Fletcher's description of trees over against Mr. Joyce Kilmer's poem called *A Tree*. Mr. Fletcher's is this:—

The trees, like great jade elephants,
 Chained, stamp and shake 'neath the gadflies of the breeze;
 The trees lunge and plunge, unruly elephants:
 The clouds are their crimson howdah-canopies,
 The sunlight glints like the golden robe of a shah.
 Would I were tossed on the wrinkled backs of those trees.

This is Mr. Kilmer's:—

I think that I shall never see
 A poem lovely as a tree.

A tree whose hungry mouth is prest
 Against the earth's sweet flowing breast;

A tree that looks at God all day,
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;

A tree that may in summer wear
A nest of robins in her hair;

Upon whose bosom snow has lain;
Who intimately lives with rain.

Poems are made by fools like me,
But only God can make a tree.

It seems to me that from this comparison the first emerges as a bit of laboratory-work, a note-book sketch, but distinctly not a finished poem. The strain put on the imagination to grasp satisfactorily the force of the simile which is the sole point of the piece results in an effect of *grotesquerie*. I am willing to have whole processions of elephants, if the poet can handle them. I like the very sound of Kubla Khan's Xanadu, I like to be transported by *poesy* to spicy Orient lands. But, to tell the truth, these arboreal elephants make me want to laugh. The simile has been sought in the sweat of a quest for something novel. It is dreadfully hard to fancy to oneself that a tree looks like an elephant. Perhaps in India the trope would be less difficult. I am conscious of the same sort of thing in this really lyric thing by "H. D.," which she calls *Oread*:

Whirl up, sea—
Whirl your pointed pines,
Splash your great pines
On our rocks,
Hurl your green over us.
Cover us with your pools of fir.

It would be an interesting test, having given the title, to read that to an average audience of men and women,—of the kind who would go to hear a talk on poetry,—and then to ask each to write on a slip of paper a brief statement of his understanding of the poem. I think that the person who quickly comprehends it must be pretty well versed in the genus *Oread*.—However, "H. D." does not choose common-place subjects. For some people there is a delicate kind of comfort in her preferring Greek nymphs and sea-lilies to bath-tubs and yard-sticks.

The passion for the unusual in expression, especially when the appointed task is to make the common-place unusual, is conceivably a drain on the powers of observation and comparison.

Mercifully, the style itself, or rather, the metrical toil, is not—in the judgment, at least, of the uninstructed—replete with difficulty.

What really are the technicalities involved in writing *vers libre*? Miss Lowell certainly has been the chief spokesman in this country regarding the theory and practice of the art and likewise she has acquired fame for her individual work in this style of writing. It is noteworthy that *The North American Review* has in a recent issue this remark in the columns devoted to biographical comments on contributors:—"Miss Lowell is ranked by sensitive critical judgment as the most brilliant and accomplished representative in America of 'The New Poetry'." Presumably then her exposition of the technique of *vers libre* should have distinguished authority. In her preface to her book called *Some Imagist Poets*, there is a passage which she herself quotes in a second volume of hers of later date, *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry*." This I take as giving, in a manner to which she must attach special emphasis, her views on the technicalities of free verse. She says:—"The unit of *vers libre* is not the foot, the number of syllables, the quantity, or the line. The unit is the strophe, which may be the whole poem, or may be only a part. Each strophe is a complete circle; in fact, the meaning of the Greek word 'strophe' is simply that part of the poem which was recited while the chorus was making a turn around the altar set up in the centre of the theatre. The simile of the circle is more than a simile, therefore; it is a fact. Of course, the circle need not always be of the same size, nor need the time to negotiate it be always the same. There is room here for an infinite number of variations. Also, circles can be added to circles, movement upon movement to the poem, provided each movement completes itself, and ramifies naturally into the next." That is truly an exploit in *definition libre*. As a contribution toward an inquirer's understanding of *free verse*, it is obscure. The introduction of the Greek term *strophe* is genuinely misleading in this context to one who is conversant with Greek poetry of the classical period and, used very loosely as it is here, it is not helpful to the person to whom Hellenic poetry is unfamiliar. I think that one may properly glean from the definition the idea that some sort of stanza is the unit of *vers libre*. Yet in the illustration which Miss Lowell gives, *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry*, pp. 264-266), she deals entirely with cadences, not with stanzas or strophes, choosing as her example for discussion that poem of "H. D.'s" which I

quoted above, *Oread*, she remarks that it will quickly be seen that this is made up of five cadences:—(1) “Whirl up, sea;” (2) “Whirl your pointed pines;” (3) “Splash your great pines on our rocks;” (4) “Hurl your green over us;” (5) “Cover us with your pools of fir.” For clarity’s sake then, and remembering that Miss Lowell prefers to call *vers libre* “cadenced verse,” we must substitute the cadence for the strophe in conceiving of the unit of *vers libre*. For my own delectation I tried the experiment of writing out a scheme of metrical notation for this little poem called *Oread* using in my blindness, toward the determination of feet, the normal stress accent of the English language. This is my result:—

$\frac{_}{_}$ > | $\frac{_}{_}$ \wedge
 Whirl up, sea —
 $\frac{_}{_}$ \cup | $\frac{_}{_}$ \cup | $\frac{_}{_}$ \wedge
 Whirl your pointed pines,
 $\frac{_}{_}$ \cup | $\frac{_}{_}$ | — \wedge
 Splash your great pines
 $\cup\cup$: $\frac{_}{_}$ \wedge
 On our rocks,
 $\frac{_}{_}$ \cup | $\frac{_}{_}$ | $\frac{_}{_}$ \cup | $\frac{_}{_}$ \wedge
 Hurl your green over us,
 $\cup\cup\cup$ | $\frac{_}{_}$ \cup | $\frac{_}{_}$ \cup | $\frac{_}{_}$ \wedge
 Cover us with your pools of fir.

To the student of Greek and Latin prosody, this is perfectly familiar, granted the fundamental difference between quantitative poetry and that of stress accent, as a scheme of logaoedic verse. I have also worked out in the same manner the first stanza (“Call you ’em *stanzos*?” quoth Jaques) of a poem of Miss Lowell’s, *Venus Transiens* (Pictures of the Floating World, 1919):—

$\frac{_}{_}$ | $\frac{_}{_}$
 Tell me
 \cup : $\frac{_}{_}$ $\cup\cup$ | $\frac{_}{_}$ \cup | $\frac{_}{_}$ \wedge
 Was Venus more beautiful
 \cup : $\frac{_}{_}$ | $\frac{_}{_}$
 Than you are,
 $\frac{_}{_}$ \cup | $\frac{_}{_}$ \wedge
 When she topped

∪ : ∟ ∪ | ∟ ^
 The crinkled waves,
 ∟ ∪ | ∟ >
 Drifting shoreward
 ∟ ∪ | ∟ ∪ | ∟
 On her plaited shell?
 ∟ ∪ ∪ | ∟ ∪ | ∟ >
 Was Botticelli's vision
 ∟ ∪ ∪ | ∟
 Fairer than mine;
 ∟ ∪ ∪ | ∟ ∪ | ∟ >
 And were the painted rosebuds
 ∪ : ∟ ∪ | ∟ ∪
 He tossed his lady
 ∪ : ∟ ∪ | ∟ ^
 Of better worth
 ∪ ∪ : ∟ ∪ | ∟ ∪ | ∟ >
 Than the words I blow about you
 ∪ : ∟ ∪ ∪ | ∟ > | ∟ ∪ | ∟ ^
 To cover your too great loveliness
 ∟ ∪ ∪ | ∟ ^
 As with a gauze
 ∪ : ∟ ∪ | ∟ ∪
 Of misted silver?

This is far from saying that these particular poems are eminently Greek. I merely wish to show that it is possible to measure this mysterious thing, the "cadence" by the foot or the musical bar. I believe it safe to assume that Miss Lowell's "circles upon circles" refer to the infinite possibilities of building lines on and on in a logaoedic poem, where the technique is not bound fast by the necessity of matching antistrophe to strophe. It is thus that Greek dithyrambs grew, and it is the manner in which portions of choric odes were executed in the drama. As every student of prosody knows, the opportunities for "substitution" in the logaoedic rhythm are numerous. I have tried this experiment of formally noting the metre of quite a large heterogeneous group of poems in *vers libre*, whence I have gathered some interesting bits of rhythm, simple and complex. Sometimes one has lively encounters with abrupt changes of tempo, as in the case with Greek *dochmiacs*.

It has not required a modern *furor* to show that rhyme and rigidly regular metre are not essential to poetry. Milton himself used rhyme under inner protest, the lover of the classical that dwelt in him expostulating against it, the musician in him instinctively recognising that it added beauty to the monotonous stress-accent of the lines in lyric pieces. It was the same infallible taste which led him to abandon the desire to write his epic in hexameters, directing him instead to the unrhymed pentameter, which suits the natural swing of spoken English. The transition phase in European poetry between the unrhymed quantitative-kind developed by the Greeks and the sort that depends for metre on the stress accent is delightfully illustrated in Latin folk-songs and hymns of the early Christian centuries.

It is rather sad to find that the *vers libriste's* freedom is seriously curtailed, not only by that necessity laid upon him to chose his words with desperate originality, but also by this unconscious, or subconscious, slavery to metre. But "polyphonic prose" seems to offer the modern poet gorgeously wide space for his rambles. This form of writing might be dubbed the letting loose of the emotional self in prose. It is curiously similar to that sort of thing against which we were warned in schoolhood days as "bad form," the use of lyric style, the habit of "dropping into poetry" in the midst of prose composition. Its practice would conceivably lead headlong into sentimentality of the worst kind. Undoubtedly it is with sense of this danger that Miss Lowell says that it is "an exceedingly difficult form to write, as so much depends solely upon the poet's taste."—Truly it is to "the poet's taste" that the world must trust for the "winged words" of poetry. The trenchant question which the critics of this generation might well put to the artists of all kinds is an inquiry as to the good taste of the creators.

"Imagism" I conceive to be closely related, in theory as well as accomplishment, to that modern school of painting called "Expressionistic" which requires of the individual artist that he present, as exactly as possible, the impression that an object makes on him. His mind is the reflecting mirror for as much of the universe as can send its rays to that particular polished surface. I confess that I find most of the mirrors to be either convex or concave. "True, oh unamiable critic," the *imagist* may reply, "but mirrors of curved surface illustrate optical laws quite as accurately as do those of plane. And the great point in our art is to tell the truth as the special mirror reflects it." I see that if I

am to quarrel, it must be with the ripples and the cracks and the curves in the mirrors, rather than with the images. There is poignant temptation to press the analogy to its conclusion. In the process there would be a thorny field to traverse of psychological, and also aesthetic, investigation. And it is usually idle to play too long with a figure of speech. To do that acceptably belongs to the great mytho-poetic artists of diction.

Vers libre is not confined to the *imagists*. Certainly no book of poetry has been more widely advertised and circulated than Mr. Edgar Lee Masters' *Spoon River Anthology*, which came out in 1915. In spite of his subsequent volumes, including even the much discussed *Domesday Book*, *Spoon River* seems still to be Mr. Masters' unique contribution. To make a satirical study of a community in terms of its grave-yard was an original and ingenious literary accomplishment. Furthermore, the brutal frankness of the portraits undoubtedly gave the book its initial vogue. That it will endure a whit longer than "The Big'low Papers" seems improbable, the style,—that subtle thing which is indubitably the great preservative of the written word,—being of no intrinsic importance. A similarity to the Greek Anthology has been eagerly pointed out by admirers, but this practically does not extend beyond the fact that each epitaph is spoken in the first person and is brief. Greek at present enjoys the peculiar distinction of being cited as a grand prototype for this and that by persons who know almost nothing about that literature. And yet I am decidedly of the mind that Mr. Masters got suggestion for his book by reading a prose translation of some of the epigrams in the ancient Anthology. In much the same manner, Walt Whitman must have consciously used as his model for much of his work the King James version of the Old Testament.

This is really an important point in the study of modern poetry. In many instances the writers have largely depended for their style on translations—especially prose translations—from all sorts of sources:—Greek, Hindu, Jewish, Amerind, Chinese, Japanese. Commerce, travel, motion pictures, a tendency to read avidly and heterogeneously, interest in science and quasi-science, curiosity regarding surgery and psychology, the thirst for new regions and unfamiliar philosophies,—all of these things have introduced strangely coloured threads into the patterns of poetry. Also, as in house-decoration, there has been often a strong desire to be baldly simple; or, again, one may be in the mood to copy some distant period or some outlandish design or to arrange a

series of aesthetic shocks. Mr. Carl Sandburg might be likened to the Leyden jar to which our delicate grandmothers resorted for thrills supposedly tonic.

It is rather a droll fact that in the critical writings of admirers of *vers libre* there is an odd reluctance to acknowledge the indebtedness of the style to Whitman. Miss Lowell, for example, explicitly says of Mr. Fletcher that, although for a time he had been a close student of Whitman, his poems show no trace of that influence. Perhaps these more modern theorists have grown ashamed of poor old Walt. On Mr. Sandburg his note of American nationalism would jar; the daintily treading *imagists* would shrink from his ruthless casting away of the European tradition of culture and the arts; Mr. Masters perhaps might scarcely realise his debt. But I think that the verdict of a few more years will show them all to be fishes who swam in Walt's school, adapting his style to their own æsthetic foibles, derived from a study of French *macabre* literature and the reading of many translations. He was big enough to emerge as a genius despite his uncouthness. He had something to say, however crude at times the concept and the expression, whereas the lesser ones laboriously search for subjects.

It appears to be unfashionable to trace the strands of influence in modern poetry. The poets are inclined to think of themselves either as revolutionists or creators of a new style. Yet one might inquire whether the idylls of Mr. Edwin Arlington Robinson and those of Mr. Robert Frost would ever have been if there had not lain behind them Tennyson's *Dora* and *Aylmer's Field* and *Enoch Arden*. No thought of plagiarism belongs to this query. A child who resembles father or grandfather is not a plagiarist. Certainly Browning's influence on later writers has been tremendous, the special witnesses thereto being diction, literary manner, and the frequent composition of brief narrative characterisations of tragic import. Also I think that, more obscurely, there is a considerable debt to Emerson, whose winsome originality in poetry hardly ever receives comment. Emily Dickinson, that strange, secluded figure of an earlier generation, might likewise be named.

I have swung far afield from my starting-point, "adding circle to circle," as if this were a group of "cadenced strophes." I return to a re-perusal of my gleanings from the magazines heaped up on my table, that is, to certain plain statistics gathered from my list of poets and poems.

Vers libre, I find, does not predominate. In the group which I have, as indicated at the beginning of this paper, arbitrarily evolved, there are but eleven poems in this style. Only four of the whole group of one hundred and sixty-five poems are other than lyrics in design and execution. These four are a character idyll by Miss Lowell, a poem called "Idyll" by Mr. William Alexander Percy, a piece of abstract literary criticism by Mrs. Schuyler Van Renssalaer, and a ballad by Miss Marguerite Merington. There are seven examples of unrhymed poetry which is not *vers libre*,—most of this conventional blank verse. Fifteen years ago aspirants in poetry were sternly forbidden by the best magazines to send in "blank verse." But this manner of poetry, even for short pieces, has verily been called again from its grave, we may believe. It is interesting to note that quite a large bouquet of sonnets has been culled from my list,—in all, nineteen,—a significant fact, especially when collated with another manifestation of present-day concern with this elegant, artificial, difficult, and—for many moods and subjects—most satisfying verse-form. I refer to the recent establishment of a journal devoted to this art, *The Sonnet*.

Of course, I have made my own anthology from the whole group of poems. We all do that instinctively as we read, although very rarely do we preserve a formal record of our selection. I would point out to lovers of poetry that it is by reading poetry *diligently*,—in the good old meaning of that word,—that one secures its riches as a possession.

My last statistical statement! I was rather amused to observe the infrequency with which the same writers appear in more than one magazine of the group. Only fourteen names out of the one hundred and nineteen had such distinction.

Mr. Maxwell Anderson declared recently at a meeting of The Poetry Society of America that "no great poetry is being written, no poet is representing his age, no ideals are left, no standards remain." In the first issue of *The Measure*, a new poetry magazine, of which he was chosen as editor for the first three months, he writes in similar vein: "This is not, at any rate, an age favourable to great poetry. It remains an age favourable to lightly motived lyrics and superficial sketches, rather than to impassioned utterance that endures. Contemporary prophecy, what there is of it, is spoken in asides, in hints and falterings. In no previous age have fundamentals been questioned as they are questioned now." Picking up that gauntlet may prove a wholesome exer-

cise for poets and their friends. Often an age that produces little of enduring merit shows itself able in criticism. It may be that out of this questioning of fundamentals may come, not only noise and foam and froth, but a new Aphrodite.

There prevails an epidemic of writing in America. Yet one would hesitate to characterise this as vicious. It is a symptom, like those which belong to our national system of education, of the growth of the democratic idea.

The poets, as well as the other artists of the days, are taking themselves tremendously in earnest. One who attends their gatherings cannot fail to be impressed with their earnestness. Surely it is a good thing to be in earnest! Perhaps it is a near-good thing to pretend to be in earnest. The serious manner of the devotee, whether sincere or assumed, again and again makes a man "the thing" in fashionable circles.

Out of my scanty study the question looms, in other phrasing, but consonantly with Mr. Anderson's daunting statements:—Does poetry, apart from rather modest lyric utterance, belong to the past? The rise of artistic prose has possibly been ominous to the older sister art. In every language of which we know a poetic has long preceded a prose literature. During Milton's time artistic prose in English, that is, prose designed to give aesthetic pleasure to the reader, did not exist. But having once come into being, prose-writing waxed mighty in the land. The history of this development in English literature is enormously interesting. What does the modern reader actually seek in poetry except lyric utterance? If a man sit down to hours of unalloyed joy with a book, will he choose one in poetry? Given the average cultivated person, if he had before him a story in two versions, one in good prose, the other in verse, which would he unaffectedly prefer to read? Mr. John Neihardt, for example, has set himself a great task,—to write the poetic epic of our country. But is his work genuinely wanted? If poetry is to be great, its appeal to the general reading public should be real. It seems to me that if I were encouraging a young man or woman of marked poetic ability to accomplish in his craft something other than lyric work, I should urge him to exercise his talents in the field of the masque, the pageant, and the drama, where there appears to be a true demand for his art. In particular, I think it would be a delightful thing to write really beautiful *libretti* in English poetry for the favourite operas. Personally I cannot see why these should not be sung in our own opera houses. But if this may not be, it would be a

boon to those in the stalls to have in hand a lovely version in our vernacular of the words sung in another tongue. I believe also that musicians and poets could, by artistic collaboration, build up a native lyric drama of distinguished beauty. Who knows also but that the time may come when the Moving Picture, having become truly artistic, may present its explanatory legends in the form of poetry? It would be well if every person interested in literature and the other arts which interpret and adorn life would seriously think over the modern situation, especially considering what arts are in a real way vital in our civilization and how they minister to its noblest development.

The thing of prime importance is to move all artists, poets and others, whatever their name and sign, beyond pre-occupation with self. Let them love the beautiful, let them worship hard work, let them labour at a big task, let them be exquisite in workmanship. Let poetry become that which the word first meant:—something made, a creation, a grand objective reality wrought by man's imagination.

MUSING ON CAMELOT AND AVALON

BY GUSTAV DAVIDSON

Musing on Camelot and Avalon

I dreamed you stood before me, Guenevere,
And I was Launcelot, your heart's most dear.
But when of Arthur, him I thought upon
Who loved us both so well, and how anon
There fell from lips of that most envious peer,
Sir Agrivain, the word we came to fear,—
And how that iron face turned deathly wan:—

Then seemed I to repent me of our sin
The which we gave up earth and heaven for.
We knew no greater joy than love to win.
And love was rooted deep in our heart's core!
But honor fights back to an origin,
And there are gods we cannot long ignore.

PROLOGUE*

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

BY CARL GLICK

CHARACTERS

A POET

A BUSINESS MAN

A POLICEMAN

SCENE OF THE PLAY, *a small town, somewhere in America.*

TIME OF THE PLAY, *the present. Midnight.*

It is hard to determine whether the scene is a bridge, a street, or a corner in a park beneath an arc light. However, for local color, you might make the scene one that your audience would immediately recognize. But be sure that it is night,—very late at night. You might have the town clock strike twelve. Then let the curtain rise on a dark stage. That is, partly dark, with just enough light to let us see the characters. A flickering bunch light in the wings will do this very nicely.

Since this is a glimpse of the night life in a small town,—(it doesn't matter where,—East, West, Middle West, South,—they are all alike)—there are no persons passing. But when your eyes become accustomed to the semi-darkness you see a man.—A tall, thin, dark man. But maybe in your town he is short and fat. No matter. It is what he says that counts and not what he looks like. He wears a clinging rain-coat and a slouch hat. Really he looks like a detective out of a cheap melodrama. His hands are long and slender. He is very moody. But he is not a detective. He is a poet. Let me introduce you to him as such. And pay attention to what he says. He is very serious,—although maybe somewhat crazy.

Poet (Aloud to himself as he pauses and scribbles on a piece of paper).—“Above the calmness of a thousand stars, where shine in dim . . . shine in dim . . .” No, that won't do. That won't do at all . . . “Above the calmness of a thousand stars, below some stupid citizens fast asleep in bed” . . . No. I can't make fun of them. They wouldn't understand.

*For all amateur or professional acting rights to this play apply to Norman Lee Swartout, 24 Blackburn Road, Summit, New Jersey.

They'd resent it sure. And things are hard enough as it is. (*It is perfectly natural for him to speak aloud like this. Poets often do it at night, I am told. Especially when alone. Although that is immaterial*) "Above the calmness of a thousand nights the sleeping epic of the city never stirs." Can I call this town a city? (*He scratches out everything that he has written*) "Above the sleeping village shone the stars . . ." No. It isn't a village, either. "Above the calmness of a thousand stars . . ." (*He pauses in meditation*) (*It begins to drizzle a little rain. But he is not aware of this. Poets pay no attention to the weather. That is why so many of them are always ill. A policeman enters. He doesn't carry a club. But he is a policeman just the same. I shall not attempt to describe him. You probably know what policemen look like better than I do. He passes along, looking suspiciously at the poet, who does not see him. Then he comes back.*)

Poet.—"Above the calmness of a thousand stars, that far away from roofs . . ." (*Quickly*) No. I don't like that at all. (*The policeman comes forward and touches him on the elbow.*)

Policeman.—Say, what are you doing up this time of night?

Poet.—What are you?

Policeman.—Do you know who you are talking to?

Poet.—No . . . But you ought to be in bed, whoever you are. It's past midnight.

Policeman.—I asked you a question. (*He can say "ast" or "axed," depending upon the nationality of the policemen in your town, and how far you can go in offending them.*)

Poet.—I answered it.

Policeman.—What are you doing?

Poet (Patiently).—I'm writing a poem.

Policeman.—A what?

Poet.—A poem . . . A poem about this town.

Policeman (To himself).—This is a new one on me. (*To the poet*) Why don't you do it in the daytime?

Poet (In great surprise).—In the day time? I'm busy then. I work in one of the stores here in town. I don't have time to write in the day. Night is the only time I get to think by myself.

Policeman.—If you stay up at night, you won't get to work in the morning, bright eyed, as you young fellows ought.

Poet.—I know. That's what worries me. But I don't think I'll go to work in the morning. I think I'll play sick. I'm always unfit, after a night spent in writing a poem, for work the next day.

I simply can't get down to my usual tasks. Then, it is so hard to get up early in the morning.

Policeman (Growing angry).—Look here. Are you trying to kid me?

Poet.—No!

Policeman.—Do you know who I am?

Poet (Gaily).—To me you are a stranger. I haven't decided yet whether or not you are interesting. I may like you. I may not. Time will tell.

Policeman (In a big voice).—I'm a policeman!

Poet (In a bigger voice).—Well, I'm a poet!!

Policeman.—I've been on this here beat for six years, now, and I ain't ever seen anybody yet, but you, who stays up all night to write a poem.

Poet (Sadly and thoughtfully).—I'm not surprised. This town isn't that far advanced yet.

Policeman.—Say,—don't you hand me anything like that. We've got more miles of paving than any city in the state. We've got the largest soap factory in this part of the country. Our banks increased their deposits fifty percent in the last two years. We have eighteen schools . . . fifty churches . . . and a free public library . . . (*Of course, these statistics can be changed to meet local conditions*) Our city government is a peach for its kind . . . (*He might have gone on indefinitely, if the poet didn't interrupt.*)

Poet.—I know. And now it's time you had a poet or two. (*With growing fervor*) You can get along without the soap factory and the paving. Your churches don't do you much good. And you would be just as well off without a city government. But I can't understand how you have managed to exist without a poet!

Policeman.—I believe you're a nut!

Poet.—I know I am. That's what people have always said of me,—every time I have appeared.

Policeman.—You mean you go from town to town?

Poet.—Oh, no! I was born here,—on Fifth Street. Merely speaking of poets in general.

Policeman (He is strangely suspicious).—Let's see what you have written.

Poet.—I have only one line so far. But I rather like it. "Above was the silence of a thousand stars."

Policeman (Looking up).—But how can you say that? It's raining.

Poet.—Well, it's like that anyway. It's always like that. (*He speaks with adolescent enthusiasm*) We just can't always see them.

Policeman (Irritated beyond measure).—Say . . . Move on! Go on, move on! Go on home to bed. Don't stand there kidding me like that.

Poet.—But I can't move on. I haven't finished my poem. I won't be able to sleep until it is done.

Policeman (Showing his star with more than ordinary modesty).—See this?

Poet.—Why should I move on? What have I done contrary to law and order? I haven't disturbed the peace, have I? I just stand here quietly and mind my own business. That's true, isn't it?

Policeman.—Darn suspicious.

Poet.—Just because you are used to dealing with sneak thieves, and pickpockets, and women who walk the streets is no sign that you should be suspicious of a poet. Now is it?

Policeman.—I don't see why not. You don't act like an ordinary man going about his business.

Poet.—How do you know? Have you ever met a poet before?

Policeman.—No! Thank God!

Poet.—Well?

Policeman.—But it's darn suspicious this time of night, you standing there in the rain writing a poem about the stars that you can't see. You're as good as disturbing the peace. I could bring in charges against you, all right.

Poet.—I haven't said a word to anyone but you, have I? I haven't tried to stop anybody? There isn't a citizen in this town whose complacency I have attempted to disturb. (*We almost imagine that to himself he adds the word, "Yet."*)

Policeman.—But how do I know but what you may?

Poet.—You don't.

Policeman.—Anyway, it's time you was going home to bed. You need the sleep if you are going to get up and go to work in the morning.

Poet.—But I'm not going to work in the morning. I've already decided that. I loathe work.

Policeman (His eyes narrowing).—Who do you work for?

Poet (Naming one of the big stores).—Phillips' Department Store. I'm in the wash-goods department.

Policeman.—H'm!

Poet.—So you see it wouldn't be quite the thing to arrest me, would it?

Policeman.—Mr. Phillips is in the city council.

Poet.—Sure. You'd have to explain to him. (*He considers the matter closed.*)

Policeman.—Well, I'll let you stay this time, but don't write any more poems at night.

Poet.—Thanks . . . Have a cigarette? (*He holds out a case.*)

Policeman.—Nope. Thanks. I smoke segars.

Poet.—H'm. (*He turns away*) (*The policeman stands scratching his head in perplexity.*) (*At that moment the brisk walk of a young man is heard, and there enters upon the scene, a handsome, strikingly virile young fellow. His clothes are well cut. His figure is athletic. He fairly beams prosperity.*)

Policeman (Recognizing him).—Good evening, Mr. Smith!

Smith.—Oh, hello!

Policeman.—Going home?

Smith.—Yes. I've been at the club with some of the boys. We've been having a hand at poker. I cleaned up eight dollars.

Policeman.—That's good . . . Say, Mr. Smith, are you in hurry?

Smith.—No.

Policeman.—Then I'd like to ask you a few questions. (*They retire to a corner of the stage, leaving the poet alone.*)

Poet.—"Above was the silence of a thousand stars . . . calm symbols of . . ." (*His voice fades away as he writes.*)

Smith (To the policeman).—What is it?

Policeman.—It's about that fellow over there. (*He points to poet.*)

Smith.—Well?

Policeman.—He says he's a poet?

Smith.—Poet? Hump! (*He shows great scorn*) Well, what about it?

Policeman.—Damn funny his standing there writing poetry at night. I think he's a nut.

Smith.—I'll talk to him. (*He goes up to the poet*) Hello, you . . . What are you doing here?

Poet.—Minding my own business. What are you?

Smith.—Don't get fresh.

Poet.—Don't you!

Smith.—Do you know who you are talking to?

Poet.—Do you?

Policeman (Interrupting).—This is Mr. Smith, of Smith Brothers Soap Company.

Poet.—Oh! Never heard of you!

Policeman.—He talked just that way to me.

Poet.—Still I suppose soap has its uses.

Smith (Somewhat ruffled. His right to the crown has been questioned in the presence of a policeman).—I should hope so. Especially if you live in this town.

Poet.—Towns don't differ.

Smith.—I mean, strange that you never have heard of me!

Poet.—Have you ever heard of me?

Smith.—No! I'll have to say I haven't.

Poet.—Well, you may sometime,—when people still use soap.

Smith.—What are you doing anyway?

Poet.—Since you already know, I'll have to tell you again. I'm writing a poem.

Smith (Seeing a glimmer of light, smiles).—Oh, I see. For advertizing purposes.

Poet (Does not lose patience).—No. Because I prefer writing poetry.

Smith.—Writing poetry at this time of night? Do you make any money at it?

Poet.—No. Not a cent.

Smith.—Then why do you do it?

Poet.—Why do you make soap?

Smith.—Why, man,—that's the way I earn my living.

Poet.—Well, I suppose someone must.

Policeman (To SMITH).—There. What did I tell you. Isn't he a nut?

Smith (Impatiently).—Just wait a minute. I'll question him some more . . . (To the POET) See here, what are you doing this for?

Poet.—You mean writing poetry? Writing a beautiful poem about the stars and the town?

Smith.—Oh, you are writing a poem about the town?

Poet.—Yes. It's going to open people's eyes to the beauty in the commonplace things of the town.

Smith (Indignant).—Did you know I am President of the Chamber of Commerce?

Poet.—No! Are you? . . . Still I suppose in a way you are necessary.

Smith.—So what do you mean by saying this town is commonplace?

Poet.—Well, isn't it? So far as I can discover, I'm the only poet here.

Smith (Puzzled).—What do you do for a living?

Poet.—Work. What do you?

Smith.—I'm connected with the Smith Brothers Soap Factory. Then you do this on the side?

Poet.—Wholly on the side.

Smith (Turns to policeman).—He's harmless. There isn't any use in talking with him. He doesn't make his living this way, so it's all right.

Policeman.—But suppose that other people started to write poetry? Suppose that a lot of people here took it up? See what a nuisance it would be? I think I ought to arrest him for an example.

Smith.—Of course if it becomes dangerous we might pass a law against it. (*Turning to the poet*) What good will it do you anyway?

Poet.—No good, probably. (*Sighs*) That's the worst of writing poetry instead of making soap. You see, no one will know I wrote poetry until after I'm dead and buried. Right now the town has the soap factory and the paving and the city council. When I'm dead, they'll find out they had me, too.

Policeman.—He's got the swell head.

Poet.—But it will be too late then. I shall have my triumph nevertheless. I wager I shall be discovered by someone who has never heard of this town before.

Smith.—If he talks like that I don't know but what we ought to shut him up. It might hurt the town. (*To the policeman*) Have you ever had a case like this before?

Policeman.—No. That's what's so damned funny. I don't know what to do with him.

Smith.—Nor I.

Policeman.—If he'd only break a window, or rob a store it would be easy enough. But when he just stands there and talks . . . Still I think it is dangerous. I guess I'd better arrest him.

Smith.—Go ahead.

Poet (Who has been writing his poetry).—“Above the music of a thousand stars.” I’m getting it. That’s bully. (*Shouting with joy*) “Above the music of a thousand stars. Below the town in slumber sleeps.” (*He hastily writes.*)

Policeman (Touching him on the arm).—See here. You are under arrest.

Poet.—Just a minute while I write these lines. (*He is busy for a moment*) Now what is it? But just listen to this.

Policeman.—Now calm down. Calm down!

Poet.—It’s great! Listen!

“Above the music of a thousand stars.

Below the town in slumber sleeps.”

Now if I can only get a word to rhyme with sleeps. Peeps? Deeps? Creeps? What do you think?

Policeman (Pompously).—You’re under arrest.

Poet.—For what?

Policeman.—For disturbing the peace! Ain’t that right Mr. Smith?

Smith.—It certainly is.

Poet.—But what will you do with me? And just as I was getting it to come right!

Policeman.—Put you in jail. And then in all probabilities make you leave town. We don’t want any poets here. Do we, Mr. Smith?

Smith.—We most certainly do not.

Policeman (To Poet).—So come along.

Poet.—Jail? You know I can write poetry there just as well as here.

Policeman.—We’ll take your pencil and paper away from you.

Poet.—Oh, that makes no difference. I can write without those.

Policeman (In despair).—Say, what are we going to do with you?

Poet.—If I might make a suggestion?

Policeman.—Well?

Poet.—You might let me go? It’s late now. You’ve spoiled my inspiration, and I don’t think I’ll be able to write any more poetry tonight.

Policeman.—If I let you go, you promise you’ll go home to bed?

Poet.—Yes. Tonight!

Smith (Wisely).—I don't know but what that's the best. He really hasn't done anything you can arrest him for. Now has he?

Poet.—Have I?

Policeman.—No. That's the worst of it. You haven't.

Poet.—Well, then, are you going to let me go?

Policeman.—What do you think, Mr. Smith?

Smith.—I suppose if you arrested him, I'd have to appear against him, and swear to it that he was disturbing the peace?

Policeman.—You would.

Smith.—Then, by all means, don't arrest him. Besides, I don't know but what if he writes poetry, I might be able to use him.

Policeman (Releasing the poet).—Oh, well. If you can do anything with him, he's yours.

Smith (To the poet).—See here, you. If you write as you say . . .

Poet.—I certainly do write.

Smith.—Well, why don't you go in for advertizing? That's where the money is!

Poet.—Yes, I suppose so.

Smith.—There isn't anything in this stuff about the stars and the moon. You can't make money by that kind of thing. Now do you?

Poet.—I'll have to admit I don't. Oh, occasionally I sell a poem to some newspaper. But not very often. I don't make my living that way, you understand.

Smith.—Then why don't you go in for something that pays. I mean, write the kind of poetry that sells. Now if you could only write a poem about our soap,—I'd pay you for it. And pay well.

Poet (Astonished).—You mean, that I shall write you a poem about your soap,—about Smith Brother's Soap,—the Soap that cleanses?

Smith.—Exactly. I could use it for publicity. For advertizing. I think it might go.

Poet (Thoughtfully).—I have never thought before that it would be possible to write a poem about soap.

Smith.—Well, think it over.

Poet.—You'd pay?

Smith.—Sure. I said so. Pay well. Five dollars a poem, and it might lead to a place in our advertizing department at a good salary.

Poet.—I'll have to think it over. I never thought that this would happen to me.

Smith (Starting away).—Do you go my way? Walk along and we'll talk it over.

Poet.—Soap! Soap!

Smith.—Good-night, officer.

Policeman.—Good-night. (*The POET and SMITH move away.*)

Poet.—Soap! Poems about soap! By George, I believe I have an idea.

Smith.—That's good. You'll have to tell it to me. (*They move on talking. The policeman is left alone.*)

Policeman (Stands for a moment looking after them).—I guess I'd better keep an eye on him. He might do some harm to Mr. Smith. I don't trust these poets. (*He starts after the poet and MR. SMITH.*)

(At this point, you might as well drop the curtain.)

SHOLOM ALEICHEM

BY CHARLES A. MADISON

THOSE acquainted with the Hebrew language know that the phrase *Sholom Aleichem* means "peace be upon you," and that it is the common expression of greeting among the Semitic peoples. These two words have now assumed a greater significance among the Yiddish reading Jews. Sholom Aleichem is at present the pseudonym of Sholom Rabinowitch, their most beloved author. The mere mention of his assumed name fills the minds of these Jews with a delight quite excluding any other connotation.

Familiar and endeared as Sholom Aleichem is to his own people, he is hardly known to the American public. And so intrinsically idiomatic and localized is his style, being that of the true humorist, that little of what so charms his Yiddish readers can ever reach the pages of the translator. Yet human nature is one the world over, and Sholom Aleichem is in the final analysis a master of the human heart. Much of what he has written breaks thru the barriers of language and subject-matter; this portion of his work should be as comprehensible and as interesting to the non-Yiddish reader as is the like part of Mark Twain's writings to the non-American reader. This is my belief, and this the reason for the following essay.

The structure of this essay has caused me some hesitation. Believing that the function of the critic begins only after the reviewers have written their last word, I was here confronted with a situation where my readers have neither read, nor may ever read, the work of the author I am about to criticise. This being the case, I felt it incumbent upon me to write more or less on the pattern of a Johnsonian "life." If any read this essay who have an adequate knowledge of the writings of Sholom Aleichem, I pray their indulgence of what to them is mere repetition.

Sholom Aleichem was born on the eighteenth of February, 1859, in Pereyaslev, Poltava. His father, Reb Nochum, was "a tall man, with a forever-worried face, a broad, wrinkled forehead, a sparse, finely-formed beard. He was pious and sagacious,

knew Hebrew, played chess, was a connoisseur in pearls and diamonds, and was considered the richest man in town Voronko. His mother was of the tribe of Amazons; she was "a fast worker and managed the general store."

Sholom Aleichem's first memories are of Voronko, not far from his birthplace. "Voronko was a small and pretty town. Its width and length could be traversed in a half hour by one possessing strength and a pair of legs. It was without a railroad, without a seashore, and noiseless except during the two semi-annual fairs . . . It was a very, very, small town, but so many beautiful stories and legends were woven about it, that they alone could fill a volume."

Sholom (I shall so call him until his maturity) early deposited these stories and legends in his memory. His first companions, especially the story-concocting Schmielek, greatly influenced the plastic mind of the future author. They would tell him story after story, inventing them in the process, in payment for some delicacy. Schmielek knew of the Voronko Treasure, supposed to have been deposited by Bogdan Chmelnitsky, and communicated it to Sholom in the following words: "Don't you know Chmelnitsky? What a child you are! Chmelnitsky was a bad man, a regular Haman even before Chmelnitsky's time, [a Yiddish saying here exploited for its humor]; even a babe knows that! This Chmelnitsky, this evil one, this Haman, had robbed the rich Poles and Jews of billions of roubles, and brought it all to us, to Voronko. Here he buried it one night on the other side of the cemetery by the light of the moon, hid it very deep in the ground, covered it with grass, and bewitched it in a manner that no son of man should ever find it."

"To copy, to imitate, to mimic," were talents early developed in young Sholom. He says: "to grasp the ridiculous in everything and everyone: that was almost a disease in me. I, involuntarily, used to mimic everybody." He found something worthy of imitation in every person he met, to the amusement of bystanders and the confusion of his parents. Quick in mind and action, charged with juvenile wit, and in possession of a vivid memory, he soon knew the history of the townspeople to the minutest detail. How thorough was his knowledge of these people one learns from his character stories; for this little Voronko later became the prototype of his composite Kaserilevke.

This blissful period of Sholom's childhood ended when his father became financially involved thru the dishonesty of a part-

ner. Practically bankrupt, the family moved back to Pereyaslev, where it began to operate an inn. Sholom was then too young to realize the economic causes of this change, and he much welcomed it; to him change signified the conquest of new worlds, the experience of strange wonders. Study was now his chief occupation.

When Sholom entered his teens he began to read the Hebrew writers of the day. Their works soon stimulated him to compose simple imitations. Thus, having read Mapu's *Love of Zion*, he wrote *The Daughters of Zion* soon after. Some time later, when he came into the possession of a translation of *Robinson Crusoe*, this being his first acquaintance with general literature, he at once began to compose *A Jewish Robinson Crusoe*. Both attempts were mere juvenile exercises. He was also beginning to feel the charm of the fairer sex, and his heart experienced a passion before he was fourteen.

Experience, aided by the sorrow after his mother's death and his father's marriage to a shrewish woman, hastened his mental development. He subconsciously observed and analysed whatever he saw; his unappeased curiosity compelled him to scrutinize and interpret all his sense-data. He was very eager to study the people about him. He sought the acquaintance of the numerous cantors and musicians that regularly patronised his father's hostelry; he entreated admittance to their rehearsals, and eavesdropped upon them whenever possible. These singers and musicians later furnished him the theme for *Yosele Solovei* and *Stempenyu*, two of his first novels. Nor did he ignore the friends of his father, most of them of a literary turn of mind; it was one of these men who initiated him into the secrets of the lottery game, which was to play a significant part in many of his stories.

Two years after his first infatuation he was again robbed of his emotional equanimity, this time by the beautiful daughter of a cantor. He courted her zealously and persistently. When he believed himself on the verge of success, she eloped with a Gentile youth. The shock quite unsettled the high-strung lover. A protracted and severe illness followed. When he quitted the sick-bed his youth had already gone the way of time. He was now a man.

At the age of seventeen he found employment as a teacher in a village near by. A semester of it gained nothing but experience and he returned home. When hope was at an ebb, chance brought him a tutorship to the daughter of a rich provincial Jew. With

this family he remained three years. When twenty-one, he was freed by his employer from military service. Unfortunately, this man discovered the growing love between teacher and pupil, and Sholom was again without a position. Kiev, the city of his hopes, was his next destination; but a brief sojourn therein gained him only the acquaintance of the police and a deceitful attorney, and parted him from his savings.

Several months later he was selected as the administrative Rabbi of Lubni, a town in Poltava. This position he held until 1883. While Rabbi he published several sketches in the Hebrew magazine *Hamelitz*. When the first Yiddish newspaper appeared in 1883, he began to submit some poems, sketches, and *feuilletons*, to this weekly. Most of them were accepted. *The Pocket Knife*, one of his children-stories, was published in 1885. This story was received with such acclamation that it revolutionized his "style and future life." It showed him the tendency of his true genius. From that time on he occupied himself mostly with the humorous portrayal of Jewish life.

In the meanwhile Sholom Aleichem, the name he now adopted, had pacified the rich landowner, whose daughter he loved, and the tutor and pupil became man and wife. When his father-in-law died in 1888, the young author became the possessor of several hundred thousand roubles. Now wealthy, he strove to become the Maecenas of Yiddish literature. A yearbook, called *The Yiddish Folk-bibliothèque* was his first achievement. The contributors to this publication, carefully selected, were the first Yiddish writers to be paid for their efforts. In the two years of its existence, the yearbook contained articles and stories of the best writers, as well as the publisher's own *Stempeyu* and *Yosele Solovei*.

In 1890 the stock exchange relieved Sholom Aleichem of his wealth, and he moved from Kiev to Odessa to become a stock broker and general insurance agent. While thus employed, he could not but observe the numerous Jews who like himself were building castles in Spain while hunger gnawed within. In 1892 he materialised this study in the form of *London*, the first of the remarkable letter-series between Menachem Mendel and his wife Shayne Shayndel. In 1893 he returned to Kiev. In the same year he published the first story of *Tevieh the Dairyman*, the character destined to become his most artistic creation.

He soon found himself the central figure in the Jewish literary circle of Kiev. Forced to depend upon his writing for a liveli-

hood, he wrote his stories in quick succession. They were everywhere favorably hailed. Popularity became his undeniable companion. Promising and would-be young authors found him their kind friend and adviser; Jewish affairs appropriated much of his time and concern. The massacres of 1905 drove him from Russia. For a time he sojourned in New York, where he wrote for the Yiddish journals and theatres. In 1907 he was again in Europe giving successful readings of his works in many of the larger cities. His twenty-fifth year as a writer was celebrated in 1908. In that year, while in Minsk for a reading, he caught a severe cold, and became very sick. On the advice of his doctors, he went to Nervi, Italy, to recuperate. The next six years found him in Italy as often as circumstances permitted. The World War sent him to New York again. The death of his eldest son and the dreadful condition of his fellow Jews in Europe proved too great a strain for his delicate constitution, and on May 13, 1916, his heart gave way.

II

The work of Sholom Aleichem is the artistic expression of his experience. However he may have distended, enhanced, or elaborated upon his sense-data, his imagination never fed upon itself. Not a story but tells of some one, or some phase, of his own generation of Jews. Those of the small town naturally impressed him most. Their genuinely religious spirit, their meek submissiveness, their pathetic existence, fired his humor with greater heat than did their city brethren. In contemplating them, and they most occupied his thoughts, he was often compelled to smile in order not to weep. They are therefore not only the subject of most of his stories and monologues, but also the recipients of his truest sympathy.

Sholom Aleichem had a natural predilection for sympathetic laughter. The Jews of his acquaintance, those as yet untouched by the wand of modernity or those in the process of acclimating themselves to the strange atmosphere of the city, accelerated this tendency. Most of these Jews were very poor. This poverty, caused by medieval stagnation in the town and by governmental restrictions in the city, quickened their conceits in petty enterprises and lulled their reason in the fantastic hope of sudden gain. Sholom Aleichem saw them thus exposed, and his stories are the humoristic expression of what he saw. In the remainder of this section of my paper I shall give the compass and general content of his work.

How the genius of Sholom Aleichem differs from that of Mendele, his teacher and contemporary, is seen in the very names of their composite towns. One comparison will suffice. The elder of these two writers named his most famous town Kabtsansk meaning Poorville, to signify the material condition of its inhabitants. Kaserilevke, the home of Sholom Aleichem's chief characters, has a similar connotation. Yet how wide the disparity! Let Sholom Aleichem explain: "The Jewish poor have many names. They have been called the needy, the impecunious, the indigent, the impoverished, the beggar, the mendicant, and the dependent. The name of each is expressed in either pity or contempt. But they have another name: the Kaserilek. This name is pronounced in a wholly different tone. One says for instance, 'My, but I am a Kaserilek!' A Kaserilek is not merely a starveling, a luckless fellow, he is, if you please, a poor man not downcast because of his poverty. On the contrary, he enjoys it!"

Kaserilevke, the setting for most of Sholom Aleichem's stories is situated in a corner of the world, "orphaned, dreamy, hypnotized, interested only in itself." Nothing is of matter to its residents except their immediate wants, tho their curiosity is as wide as the world. They are insignificant yet self-centered, poor yet jolly, naive yet full of mother-wit. When they are asked how they earn their living, they reply: "How we earn our living? Just as you see, ha, ha! One lives . . ."

The following is a description of a typical Kaserilek: "Moishe was,—but I cannot tell you what he was. He was a Jew! Whence his income was difficult to discover. He lived like many other thousands, tens of thousands of Jews in Kaserilevke: he kept himself about a rich squire, that is, not about the squire himself, but about the administrators of the estate, and not so much about these underlings of the squire, as about the Jews dealing with them . . . But whether this brought him an income is a matter of speculation for the idle, because Moishe disliked to boast of his fortunes or bewail his misfortunes. He always appeared happy, with cheeks always red; one mustache was somewhat larger than the other, his hat inclined to one side, and his eyes were always friendly and smiling. He was always in a hurry, and always, at any time, ready to walk ten miles in the service of friend and stranger alike." Such a man might arouse pity in some authors, contempt in others; many would ignore him altogether; the humor of Sholom Aleichem thrived upon such as he.

Yoshe Heshel is a finer specimen: "He is one of those Jews

who are always in a hurry, always on the go; who are ever head over heels in business: a business consisting of nothing but wind. Such as he live on wind. He conceives the world as a fair, to which one comes sniffing, sniffing for some bargain. Void of any well-defined project, he comes to a county-fair ready to barter for everything within sight, to buy and sell from hand to hand, regardless of profit or loss. A rouble more or less is of no matter, so long as the transaction is honest. At the end of such a fair his enterprise leaves him penniless, but undismayed. He only strokes his beard, and says to himself: "Now that I have, praised be His name, concluded the business of the fair, I must run somewhere to get a loan for travelling expenses."

Yoshe Heshel is incapable of earning a livelihood. In order to provide for the necessities of life, his wife and daughters have learned to make shirts. But they seldom have sufficient work. "What do they do when there is no work? They suffer hunger: that is, they go to bed on an empty stomach, and, with the help of God, rise on the morrow to continue their fast. You may be certain no man will ever know of it. Yoshe Heshel is not the man to tell tales, to bewail his lot, or to solicit help . . . He would rather die! Yes, die! In short, Yoshe Heshel is of the poor-proud who suffer hunger on the quiet, without ceremony, without trumpetry. Not even the charitable know of his suffering. It is fortunate that Yoshe Heshel is a Jew, and a very pious, honest Jew, who believes in God, who serves God, who loves God ardently, who loves God's Spirit as a lover his Bride . . . Usually shy, dispirited, a worm for everyone to tread upon, he changes into a pert fellow once in the synagogue. Here, in the house of Jehovah, he does not believe in riches, in aristocracy; he reduces everything to mere dust; he is convinced that all are equal before God." That Yoshe Heshel becomes an object of mirth, altho ostensibly so pathetic a character, is due to Sholom Aleichem reluctance to make a thesis out of his adversity. It is rather on the pliant adaptability to this adversity, Yoshe Heshel's manner of unconsciously avoiding or submitting to the cudgels of fate, that the humor of our author dwells.

This mode of portraying character reaches a sublime height in *An Easy Fast*. Treating the same subject of poverty at its greatest moment of exaltation, when life yields to its perseverance, a theme usually treated with silence. Sholom Aleichem divests it of all terror, and compels the reader to laugh, yes laugh! even as a tear unconsciously accompanies the fate of the

victim. *An Easy Fast* tells the story of Chaim Chaikin, an elderly man no longer able to work. The fact that he is wholly dependent upon the meager earnings of his children pains him terribly; he dislikes being a burden, even upon his own children. His heart feels cramped whenever he is forced to eat in their company; he knows that his presence at the table deprives them of an extra morsel. To avoid this excruciating feeling he resorts to fasting. When there is no cause for fasting he tries to avoid his solicitous children; he remains to the last at the synagogue; he takes a stroll just before the evening meal is to be served. When they insist on his remaining at table, he secretly distributes his portion to the younger children. He begins to breathe more freely, however, at the approach of a religious fast. No one dare ask him to eat on such a day. If possible he prepares for the fast by abstaining from food on the day previous in order "to make it easier."

Once, when the fast of *Tisha-b' Ab* was about due, he began to fast the day before, and in order not to be forced to eat, he came to the synagogue early that afternoon. There he leisurely sat down on an overturned bench, removed his shoes as is the custom for this occasion, and began to read from a book of lore. A drowsiness gradually possessed him, and he closed his eyes. Hallucination soon followed. "And Chaim Chaikin keeps his eyes shut, and he finds himself before a queer world, a new world, one which he has never, never yet seen. Angels hover before him in observing them he recognizes his own children, all of them, grown-up and babes. He desires to tell them something, but he cannot speak . . . He wishes to apologise to them, that he is not guilty . . . Not he! . . . How can he, Chaim, be blamed because so many Jews have collected together in so small a place to crowd, oppress, and eat one another? How is he to blame if men force human beings to sweat, to bleed? How is he to blame if people have not yet reached the stage where one man would not exploit his fellow man as he would a horse, and where a horse too is to be pitied, being the creation of God, a living thing? . . . And Chaim Chaikin keeps his eyes shut and sees everything, the whole world, all worlds; and everything is clear and light, winding like smoke; and he feels that something is leaving his body, from within, from the heart, and rises, rises straight up, separating from his corporeal self; and he feels himself light, very, very light; and he emits a deep sigh, a very prolonged sigh. He feels relieved . . . Then:—nothing, absolutely nothing . . ."

Here is another phase of Kaserilevke. Mordechai Nosen,

the richest Jew in the town, is quite a different man. And one feels at once Sholom Aleichem's sympathy growing cooler and his humor becoming less genial. "Mordechai Nosen is a tall man with long hands, thin and withered. His face, as square as that of a Chinaman because of protruding cheekbones, is covered with a sparse beard. He appears as if harboring some secret: his lips are always shut, his mouth slightly to one side; his mien is always serious, his forehead full of wrinkles; he never speaks loudly, never an extra word. But he becomes a changed man when in the presence of the town officials. The wrinkles from his forehead disappear, his face brightens, his lips unlock, his mouth straightens; he begins to talk:—a truly different Mordechai Nosen. Do you know why he acts so humbly when with the officials? Solely for the love of eminence, out of pure vanity; only for the words, "Why Reb Mordechai Nosen, who else is so esteemed by the officials as you?" uttered by a fellow Jew in need of some favor. Indeed, for the word "esteemed" he would suffer all humiliation and expense! A peculiar man is Mordechai Nosen."

Some of the wealthy Jews make it their custom to provide an annual feast for all the townspeople. As is natural, the poorer the Jew the less is made of him. *Hannukah Pancakes* describes such a scene. In this case the rich Steiner family is the host. Several tables are reserved in the rear of the house for the poor, whom the family factotum treats with great arrogance. The poor, desirous of the meal, yet deeply humiliated, devour the pancakes in haste and confusion. On their return home they give their fancy free play, and their humbleness is for the moment forgotten. The falling snowflakes give their fancy a new turn: "How would it, for instance, incommode the Lord almighty," so think these poor Jews, "if, for example, these snowflakes should suddenly turn into diamonds and sapphires? We would then bend down, fill our pockets with handfuls, come home, and say to our wives: 'Here, Esther; do with them as you please. If you wish, turn them into jewelry for yourself; if you wish, turn them into money; if you wish, into both; only leave me alone.' I should then not need to depend upon the Steiners, and their pancakes; as we say in our prayers, 'Deliver me not into the hands of man.'"

Kaserilevke, however, did not contain only poverty and its distressful consequences. Many idyllic veins quickened its sombre life of yesterday. First there was the Sabbath, on which the most wretched Jew was transfigured into a spirited, leisure-loving man, forgetful of the week with its cares and anxieties. The

serene atmosphere, the ease of mind, and the inner peace, that pervaded the Jewish community on a Sabbath afternoon, was one of its undeniable charms. Then came the several holidays, bringing sunshine and joy into the soul of all. And if Sholom Aleichem was able to extract a smile from the dross of life, his joy from what was genuinely pleasant, was truly exuberant. Without the need of diverting pathos his humor became broad, sometimes even loud, and always carefree and natural. In his *Reminiscences*, *Stempenyu*, *Yosele Solevei*, and in numerous short stories, the more sunny phase in the life of the Kaserilevke Jews is depicted with much geniality and picturesqueness.

In the life of the small boy Sholom Aleichem discovered another source of joy. His four volumes of juvenile stories supplied Yiddish literature with an entirely new element. These youthful heroes distinguish themselves thru their love of life; they are not the little Jews of other authors, but irresponsible, mischievous urchins. S. Niger says of them: "What a blessing was the healthy, naïve humor of the child to the Jewish reader! No other author was able to gather the scattered seeds of childish humor from among the Jews and plant them with so much art in his children-portraits. In this achievement Sholom Aleichem is even more unique than in his creation of Teviah, certain features of whom being found in other writers."

These children play games, run, jump, fall, get hurt and do not mind it. They play pranks, are punished, and immediately invent new ones, as is the way of children. Every holiday, every season of the year, finds them eager to get the most out of the immediate moment. It seems that they have some intuitive foreboding of the care and anxiety that awaits them in the years to come, and are therefore the more athirst for mischief and laughter. Even in the midst of sorrow, when the faces of their elders are long and knit, amusement is ever their dominant thought. Their physical and mental lustiness is highly contrasted with the lack of this healthy aspect in their parents and guardians. No matter what the circumstances, the principal theme of these boy-stories is always the boy anxious to act the child in opposition to the parents, Rabbi, or customs compelling him to act the little man.

The Pocket Knife, *The Violin*, *The Watch*, *The Flag*, etc., concern the youth who desires all these boy-treasures, but who is prevented by poverty from owning them, or by his father from playing with them. *The Pocket Knife* will serve as an example.

What Jewish boy living in a small town was in possession of a real pocket knife? Even if his father could have afforded the purchase, the boy would not have dared to ask for it, because the possession of a knife was considered unbecoming to the Jewish youth. Yet every boy longed for such a plaything, and usually succeeded in acquiring something with a sharp edge. Once the owner of the precious instrument, it was very necessary for him to keep it hidden from the eyes of the other members of the family. Woe to him when discovered! In this story the father finds his son toying with a sharp-edged blade and says: "A knife? What a child! What a lad! Can you not be with a book? A youth of eight years! I'll show you knives, you hoodlum! Knives all of a sudden! . . . The only plaything for a Jewish boy from his fifth birthday is a book; not a children-story, but a religious tract!" The Jewish father loves his children only too zealously; his strictness comes merely from his anxiety for their future welfare. Some time after the incident of the pocket knife, the boy becomes dangerously sick. When passing a crisis, he hears his father talking to him in so soothing a tone that the thought comes to him: "If I were not ashamed, I should like to give him a hug and a kiss, but hee, hee, hee, how can one kiss a father?" And the Ghetto child seldom kisses his father, even as the child in the Puritanic family rarely kissed his.

Altho Sholom Aleichem has written at length of the boy, he has hardly touched upon the Jewish girl. In his neglect of her may be seen how dependent his imagination was on his sense-data. The Jewish boy is rarely in the company of his sister. It is only when he reaches the age of puberty that he finds some secret understanding of the enigmatic sex. This was the case with Sholom Aleichem, and his *Song of Songs* has a youthful maiden for its heroine. This story reveals the poetical nature of our author, and reminds one very much of a symbolical portrayal of Princess Sabbath or the Maid of Zion. It is so refreshing in theme, so pure and biblical in style! In contrast to the Kaserilevke stench described in other stories, this one comes like a waft of a rose. Indeed, it is like the discharged perfume of a May garden, with the Rhythmic waves purifying and ennobling naive adolescence, artless, innocent love.

III

When circumstances forced the Jews to migrate into the cities they at first presented a bizarre sight. Without means, unskilled,

unsophisticated, they became the helpless pawns of chance. In the desperate attempt to survive, they began to create work for themselves out of every conceivable means. The Moishes and Yoshe Heshels, soon citified, became agents, brokers, salesmen, etc . . . These *Luft*-professions hardly provided them with enough to keep body and soul together. This precariousness caused them to long for a substantial income, to dream of a suddenly acquired fortune. But conditions were unfavorable: there were too many after too little. Undaunted, they began to curry the favor of Chance, to pay homage to Luck. In thus allowing their fancy to feed upon itself, it was but to be expected that the minds of some would go off at a tangent, in the realm of the grotesque. Their hopes grew more fanciful, their beliefs more fatalistic. The lottery was in high favor. It appeared so wonderful to come into a fortune at a stroke! to cease forevermore to worry over the means of subsistence. Sholom Aleichem was for a time identified with these Jews. He was one of them. Story after story was therefore concerned with their mirth-provoking actions, their oddities of mind and their ludicrous conceits.

Economic instability was not the only danger besetting the Russian Jews; their existence was made even more precarious thru the animosity of the Russian government. Few Jews succeeded in avoiding the consequences of its numerous restrictions. The draft, the limited citizenship of the Pale, the percentage norm in the schools, etc., and the attempt to avoid them, resulted in many comic and pathetic situations. Sholom Aleichem quickly grasped the significance of these incidents, and his interest in them resulted in a number of excellent short stories and monologues. Two stories, dealing with the same theme, will adequately illustrate the range, the subtlety, and wholesomeness of his art.

The Lottery Winner describes the cleaving of the new generation from the old, and the aggravated results due to educational restrictions. Benjamin, the son of a very pious beadle, shows unusual talents as a child. He is much the pet of the community. His father's pride and joy is without end. When Benjamin grows older, and learns of the world outside the synagogue, he conceives a longing for a university education. Knowing full well the attitude of his father towards things worldly, he leaves home for the city without anyone's knowledge. After an intensive preparation, he receives a high rating at the entrance examinations. Thus far all is well. But when he applies for admission, the percentage norm excludes him. The news of this strikes

the youth with the force of a thunderclap. In a fit of despair he apostatizes, and is at once welcomed by the university authorities.

When news of this act reaches Benjamin's father, the whole town is already discussing the unpardonable act. The shock nearly stupefies the old man. Shame and anguish silence his tongue and drive him from the sight of man. He feels himself degraded amongst the children of Israel. As is the Jewish custom the wretched beadle and his family consider Benjamin as dead, and sit down on the ground for the seven-day mourning.

One of the close friends of the sorrowing father comes to comfort him. Let Sholom Aleichem speak: Ysroel [the beadle] sits on the floor with his head between his knees; Simeh [his wife] has covered her face with both hands and is softly crying; and Pesel, Sosel, and Brochtze [his daughters], with red, swollen eyes, sit and gaze blankly, each in a different direction. The sorrow and humiliation of their misfortune keeps them from looking one another in the face . . . The visitor wishes to say something, but he knows not what. After several attempts at vocalization speech finally comes, but once started he knows not how to stop, how to extricate himself without pain to his auditors . . .

“ ‘Te,’ he addresses his friend with the first words that come to his mind, ‘everything is for the best. It is only, as we say, a trial of the Lord, because everything, you understand, comes from Him. Nothing may be done without His permission; a human being does not move his little finger here below before he is commanded to do so from above . . . He is, what’s the use of talking, a real master, oi, a master! And he is being obeyed and very much obeyed, oi, oi, oi . . . Therefore, you understand, everything is as it should be. The evidence of this comes from the fact that if things should have been different, they would have been so: for who can compel Him to have them thus and not otherwise? And if He should desire things to be otherwise, could one have them different? No! Then let things better be different, that is, let them better be thus and otherwise . . . ’ ”

As in *An Easy Fast* this story is truly pathetic. What could be more calamitous, more excruciating to the pious Jew than the apostatization of a beloved and only son? Yet so unalloyed and irresistible is Sholom Aleichem's humor, that the reader's attention becomes focused not on the sorrows of the characters but on the manner in which they accept and respond to these sorrows. Had this beadle been of the Learian mold, the result would no doubt have been tragic; but being a Kaserilek, a reflective, sub-

missive Jew, clinging to life with all the tenacity of his being, he is made by Sholom Aleichem in the highest degree humorous.

Restrictive education is treated in a purely comic manner in *Gymnasium*, a monologue. The father in this story is the successful city Jew. He is already able to think of things other than economic; his ambitions are those that come with prosperity. His wife is a social climber; she wants her son have a complete education; he should at least "be a doctor or a lawyer." But the governmental restrictions frustrate all their plans, and the greater their efforts, the more futile the result.

This story describes the attempt to place the son in a gymnasium. The following passage may convey the tone of the composition. The father, who relates the entire story, thus describes his interview with one of the gymnasium principals: " 'What may you wish?' the principal inquires and asks me to be seated. So I say quietly into his ear: 'Gracious Sir,' say I, 'we,' say I, 'are not rich people; we have,' say I, 'a small establishment, and an extraordinary good son, who,' say I, 'wants to study, and I also want him to, but my wife especially desires it . . . ' but again he asks me: 'What is your wish?' So I move even closer to him and repeat: 'Dear Sir,' say I, 'we,' say I, 'are not rich people; we have a small establishment, and an extraordinary good son, who,' say I, 'wants to study, and I also want him to, but my wife especially desires it . . . ' And I stress the *especially* he should understand me. But he, having the mind of peasant, does not comprehend me, and now asks me in anger: 'What do you want?' So I slowly put my hand in my pocket, and slowly take it out, and tell him slowly: 'Understand me, Gracious Sir . . . ' and put my hand in his and squeeze it . . . In short,—it's done! He immediately grasps my meaning, takes out a little notebook, and asks me my name and the name of my son, and in what class I should like him to enter. At this I thought: 'That's the way to talk!'"

This monologue is deservedly one of Sholom Aleichem's most popular short stories. Here the reader laughs for reasons exactly the opposite of those in *A Lottery Ticket*. The situation is purely comic. The father does not experience true sorrow; he is only inconvenienced. Tho ostensibly venerated with the sophistication of the city, he very soon discloses his Kaserilevke origin; a true wiseacre, he readily mocks at others. And Sholom Aleichem's style, giving the Russianized Yiddish of the city Jew, charges every phrase with a droll, contagious laugh.

Not a few of the Jews who had entered the Russian cities

during the third quarter of the nineteenth century, found themselves in comfortable circumstances at the beginning of the twentieth. With wealth came leisure. Fashion with its accompanying frivolities gained entrance among them. Family discord and estrangement, social jealousy, gossip, scandal, and other vices most frequent among the *nouveaux riches*, assailed them. Summer vacations and excursions to famous doctors became indispensable to the overfed women. Sholom Aleichem recognized in these people the former residents of Kaserilevke, divested of their geniality. Thus they impressed him, and thus he portrayed them. *Summer Life* is a description of this parvenu class during vacation time. It is written in the epistolary form, being the correspondence between those on vacation and those remaining at home. The insincerity, pettiness, jealousies, and vanities of these correspondents are delineated with subtle humor, tho often marred by the broadness of caricature. Sholom Aleichem here, as elsewhere, showed his lack of sympathy with the wealthier class of Jews. His heart seemed to grow cold at the sight of them; he observed them with his intellect only. His flow of humor often ceased when depicting the life of the rich, and the bitterness of satire or the ridicule of the comic came forth instead.

The revolutionary movement with its branching 'isms, and the various forms of Zionism, were at this time finding ready disciples among the Jewish youth. The disintegrating conditions of the country, the massacres, the general turmoil seething in the hearts of a people prior to any immediate change, the anxious expectations and palpitating hopes before the dawn of a new era, greatly affected them. Their overseriousness, their sincere idealism, often as fanatic as the belief of their fathers in Jehovah, clashing with the solicitude and practicality of their more materialistic parents, brought misunderstanding and animosity into the Jewish home. In *Family Discord*, a play, Sholom Aleichem describes the results of this turbulence. With the father so engrossed in business that he wholly neglects his family, and with the mother old-fashioned and indulgent, the children become the prey of their environment. The older son and daughter, maturing just prior to the revolutionary wave, and overcome by the sudden wealth of their father, are engulfed in a sea of luxury and debauchery. The younger children, caught in the surge of unrest, emerge as fanatic revolutionists and Zionists. The brunt of this discord is borne by the parents. Painful as the theme is, Sholom Aleichem has made of it a comedy in the vein of *The Merchant of Venice*.

Softened by humor, the unavoidable pathos of the situation is robbed of its sting by subdued mirth.

The years following 1905 mark a new epoch in the life of the Russian Jews. Finding life almost impossible in the realm of the Czar, they began to migrate to the United States. Westward and ever westward, group after group wandered thru Austria and Germany to the ocean steamships coming to this country. Innumerable obstacles and inconveniences met them everywhere; yet onward and yet onward these immigrants moved to their destination. Sholom Aleichem, too, was an immigrant; their experiences were his experiences. Nothing eluded his keen senses. In *Motel: Towards America*, he succeeded in writing a veritable epic of the Jewish life during the first decade of this century. Beginning with a description of the small town, where modern thought was getting a timorous welcome, Sholom Aleichem takes his characters thru Russia, across the border to Austria, thru Belgium, into London, and finally to the ocean liner. He makes the reader visualize the migratory wave as it rises in Russia, strikes the protruding reefs of the border, surges past on crest and in trough thru Central Europe, befriends the turbulent Atlantic, and ends its wearisome voyage at the shores of New York.

In *Motel: In America* and *New Kaserilevke*, Sholom Aleichem follows these immigrants to New York, and describes them in their new environment. As they adjust themselves to the strange and pulsative life of New York, as they learn the rudiments of the new language and acquire the new habits of thought, he portrays them with great human insight. With his quick ear and penetrating eye, he notices their every move, perceives their every thought; and from this material he culls the comic incidents, the oblique actions, and gives them artistic form.

IV

I have attempted to show the scope of Sholom Aleichem's work. In doing this I have necessarily included only that part of it which would best illustrate the artistic predilections and inclusive interests of our author. Now, however, when the reader is somewhat acquainted with the content of his writings, I feel ready to probe his art as a creator of character. For to my mind literature only then becomes a fine art when it succeeds in bringing to the reader human beings, creations that grow, mature, and rise to great imaginative heights. Without such artistically real characters literature, especially if it be fiction, is at best a lifeless ro-

mance. Sholom Aleichem has given to the Yiddish reader a number of people more real than those of flesh and blood, and in what follows I shall interpret the four characters which have most impressed me, and which to my thinking embody his supreme artistic expression.

When a well-known Jew becomes dear to the heart of his townsmen, his name undergoes lengthening. Reb Yosef, the superannuated Rabbi of Kaserilevke, has long been known as Reb Yosefel. Not a soul in the town but adores the venerable old man when he enters the pages of Sholom Aleichem. He is an idyllic character in every respect. The hero of many stories, he is pictured as a revered patriarch of eighty, possessed of much good sense, and actuated in everything by the deepest altruism.

Afflicted with many of Job's visitations,—homeless, lonely, poor, and sickly,—he is saved from complaint by his implicit faith in the goodness and rectitude of Jehovah. Considering himself as a mere speck in the ever-to-be praised world of God, he is naturally modest and self-depreciative. With the words, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity," he succeeds in allaying all his misery. "He has reached the conviction," Sholom Aleichem tells us, "that all the suffering and wretchedness with which the Lord visits him comes from one of two ways: either it is a trial, a visitation from His beloved name, a castigation while in this sinful, foolish world, or he really deserves the punishment, if not for his own sins, it is surely for those of his poor sinning brothers, the children of Israel, who are responsible for one another, and are due to suffer for each other. This is the conclusion Reb Yosefel arrives at, and he never complains even for a moment. He discards this world with its vain pleasures, dismisses it with the smile of a philosopher . . ."

Reb Yosefel is the Rabbi of the old order, the Rabbi that is fast disappearing, together with the civilization he represents. He is still the old patriarch, concerned for his flock, not because they are his parishioners but because they are Jews. Honest and sincere in all things, showing a love and sympathy that is intuitive, keeping soul and body in their respective places with scholastic rigor, he succeeds in inspiring his fellow Jews with all the reverence, awe, and poetry that go far to redeem the superstitions and customs of his period. Endowed by his creator with the composite Jewish virtues, he is kept from becoming a mere shadow thru unceasing activity. A philosopher and humorist, he has consecrated his life to this service of his people. And he finds so much

to do! So he goes about Kaserilevke soothing the sore at heart, advising the perplexed, chastising the uncharitable, collecting for the needy. And in every act he talks, moves, and thinks in an unforgettable manner. The two following incidents well illustrate his character.

Reb Yosefel undertook to provide his beloved town with all needed improvements, not thru his own means, since he was always penniless, but by collecting small contributions from the charitably inclined. When the idea of an old folks' home came to him, he proceeded, as usual, to collect funds. One day a rich merchant came to town. Reb Yosefel at once went to see him concerning his project. When he arrived at the hotel, he was told that the guest was not to be disturbed. Reb Yosefel, however, tapped on the door to announce his approach and entered before any reply came forth. This air of freedom and apparently brazen mendicancy, together with the quaint dress and unwelcome familiarity of the intruder, so angered the wealthy stranger that he lost control of himself and gave the old Rabbi a cuff on the ear. The victim did nothing except to feel his face for blood, and then said mildly: "Well, so be it; this you gave *me*, so to speak. What now, my good man, will you give for the decrepit sick, I mean for the old folks' home?" When the Rabbi left his irate stranger, one side of his face was redder and shinier than the other, but he was in possession of enough money to begin building the old folks' home.

At another time he was at the head of a delegation sent to a neighbouring city to collect funds for the sufferers of a recent fire in Kaserilevke. While canvassing some of the wealthier Jews, he and his fellow townsmen were arrested for entering the city without the necessary permission. Thru the intervention of one of the city Jews they were soon set free. Before releasing them the officer in charge, amused by this quaint group of rustics in terror of their fate, asked who was the "chief Rabbi" among them. This question put fear into the hearts of the delegates; their imagination immediately concocted some dreadful punishment. Only the old Rabbi was unafraid. " 'It is I,' Reb Yosefel said with a peculiar tone, and stepped forth with such courage as if prepared to take the whole condemnation upon his own head, as if ready to sacrifice himself for his fellow Jews at a moment's notice. Handsome, very handsome was the eighty-year-old graybeard at that moment. His yellow, wrinkled face shone as if illumined by a holy nimbus. A youthful fire was lit in his aged

eyes; but his hands trembled and his shoulders shook. He waited for what was to be said to him, ready for everything, for the worst that evil people might be moved to do. Whom should this octogenarian fear? He placed one hand on the small of his back, and looked at his inquisitor with such boldness and self-esteem, that the death-fearing Kaserilevke delegation saw their Rabbi in a new light . . . ”

Sholom Aleichem showed a filial attachment to Reb Yosefel; he depicted him with the vividness and expressiveness that comes from strong love. It is therefore only natural for the reader to become imbued with the like emotion. Because of this love, this intuitive sympathy, the yellow, wrinkled face, the kind, shining eyes, the noble soul and pure mind of Reb Yosefel, hallowed in the reflection of a philosopher, easily gain a niche in his imagination. And this image becomes more vivid and more venerated with time.

V

“I can bet you any amount that no one in the whole world is so satisfied with the warm, sunny spring as I, Motel, the son of Payse the cantor, and the neighbour’s calf, who is called Meny (it is I, Motel, who have named her thus).” These naïve words in the first paragraph of the first book bearing his name, bring eight year old Motel into being. He is the principal of Sholom Aleichem’s boy creations. He represents in its youthful state the mediate generation, the inheritor of the Kaserilevke culture and the destined father of the city-born-and-bred American or European Jew.

Motel and Meny come out on this first day spring, and both enjoy it immensely. After describing his own pleasure, Motel tells this of the calf; “Meny, the neighbour’s calf, first dug her black, wet chin into the dung, then kicked three times with her front hoof, lifted her tail, jumped on all fours, and issued a dull *me*. The *me* seemed so comical to me that it made me laugh, and I imitated exactly the same *me* with the same intonation. This must have pleased Meny, for she soon repeated the same movements with the same jump and intonation. I, naturally, imitated her to the minutest detail. Thus several times: I gave a jump; and so the calf; the calf gave a *me*, I a *me*.”

This interpretative attitude is found in Motel not only towards animals but also toward his elders. Every word, every act, appears comical to him if it does not coincide with his preconceived idea of it. Thus when his father is very ill, and his mother is

forced to pay the doctor's bills by selling the furniture, piece by piece, he thinks it amusing that she should conceal the truth of this from the patient. It appears to him as a violation of ethics that a mother should lie and a father be fooled, and therefore ridiculous. But if the lie is a laughable matter, the manner of its execution is even more so. He thus describes the cause for laughter in this scene: "What's the matter?" father asks from the sick-room. 'Nothin,' mother answers him wiping her eyes, and lower lip and jaw tremble so that it is impossible not to burst with laughter." His childish mind, unable as yet to distinguish between the qualities of his sense impressions, unaware that human beings are above animals in that their actions are not mere reactions to stimuli, is amused as much by his mother's lie, because of the evident moral breach and because of his consequent superiority to his father, who is being fooled, while he is not, as he is by the jump and *me* of Meny, which were as unexpected. What child has not experienced this attitude?

Not knowing that the last moments of his father's life are at hand, not able as yet to grasp the significance of this fact, he feels elated whenever the home is depleted of some article. He is conscious only of the excitement it affords him, of the greater space it provides for his play. It is only when his father is actually dead, and the wailing of his mother leads him from his play into the house, that the concrete evidence of pain and sorrow produces in him like emotions. He says: "My mother continues to wail and faint in turn while in the arms of my brother Elihu. And my brother Elihu, who does not cease crying himself, continues to reproach her: 'Today is a holiday, mother, today is Pentecost, mother! Mother, it is forbidden to cry, mother!' And at once everything becomes clear. And I feel a cramp in my breast and a tug at my soul, and I want to cry, and I don't know what for . . . And I pity my mother . . . And I go up to her from behind, and tell her in the manner of my brother, as tears roll from my eyes, 'Today is a holiday, mother, today is Pentecost, Mother! Mother, it is forbidden to cry, Mother!'"

Sorrow has weakened his mother's tear-duct. Experience teaches him that her tears are the consequence of unpleasantness, but he cannot as yet understand their full significance. He says: "Crying is a common thing with her, and she must do it daily. Crying is as natural with her, as is, for example, eating or praying with you. I do not understand how a person can have so many tears." But he develops rapidly, and some time later we know

that he has a glimpse of the truth: "When Elihu began to scold her for her continuous crying, she said, 'What a foolish child you are! Do I force my tears? Tears come . . .'" And in what follows we find him interpreting her state of mind with greater sympathy than his brother.

Motel grows and develops with every related incident. He discloses to us his inmost thoughts, and in a manner that impresses them indelibly in our minds. We learn his impressions of whatever he comes in contact with. Whether it be his townspeople, the immigrants, or the various objects he observes, Motel describes what his senses perceive and his imagination transforms. And each of his narratives reveals the wholesomeness, the simplicity, the sensitiveness of the Boy's soul. How impressionable his mind is, and how pliant! He adjusts himself to every situation without a jolt or jar. His heart continually throbs with deep sympathy; his love for living things is quick and strong; his intuitive powers enable him to appreciate the more delicate nuances of life. He is in truth a child philosopher: he is naturally reflective: he wants to grasp the *why* of Life. And underlying his entire self, creating the basis and form of his every thought, is a rich vein of humor, delicate and refined.

The reader of these narratives soon finds in Motel a part of his youthful self. There is no doubt in his mind that Motel is a real boy. Indeed these stories not only refresh the reader's memory of his own youth, but also cause him to feel those boyish emotions which he has never experienced or experienced only vaguely. In thus extending and enriching the reader's emotional life, Sholom Aleichem soared to great artistic heights.

VI

In the preface to the second edition of *Menachem Mendel*, Sholom Aleichem says: "Menachem Mendel is not a hero out of a novel, and especially not a mere imaginary figure. He is an every day Jew with whom the author is personally and intimately acquainted. Meeting in 1892 at the Odessa Minor Bourse, we went thru, hand in hand, all the seven compartments of Gehenna. We speculated on the Yehupets stock exchange, 'travelled' to Petersburg and Warsaw, withstood many crises, drifted from one enterprise into another, finding—oh, woe!—not much in any, and were compelled to do in the end what most Jews do—migrate to America."

These are indeed the bare facts of Menachem Mendel's ex-

perience. But he means much more to the reader. He is the composite personification of the Yoshe Heshel type. He is the supreme *Luftmensch*: the extremely grotesque product of the Ghetto, after a two thousand year old struggle to survive under adverse and often impossible conditions. With Menachem Mendel business, speculation, get-rich-quick schemes, are no longer the means of gaining a livelihood, altho he still believes this to be the case, but a passionate and inevitable end. What fascinates him is not wealth itself, but the idea of acquiring it. His continued failures do not for an instant keep some fantastic scheme from evolving and maturing in his mind. In fact, he often borders on paranoia, and Dr. Eliashev interprets him as "the Jewish insanity streak in the person of an insignificant Jewish businessman."

He is already the father of three children when he goes to Odessa to receive the remainder of his wife's dowry from a broker's office. The "curb" atmosphere immediately fascinates him. The fact that a few speculators have amassed large fortunes in a very short time, fires his imagination with the grandeur of doing likewise. He feels jubilantly optimistic, and writes to his wife that she will soon have a wealthy husband. Indeed, he is so childlike, his mind so undiscerning, that he begs comparison with eight year old Motel. He is soon penniless, as was to be expected. For the moment he wishes he were dead. But only for the moment. He receives his fare for home, and goes with it to Yehupetz instead. There he embarks on another wild-goose adventure, is enmeshed in the maze of the stock exchange, and soon becomes one of its chronic habitues.

His wife, Shayne Shayndel, is of a more earthy mold; her imagination never runs away with her. She knows the mind of her spouse. When luck temporarily sides with him, and he is the possessor of several hundred roubles, he is again jubilant. But not she. She writes to him: "You fly from Odessa to Yehupets, from Yehupets to Boiberik! What? You are jubilant, excited? 'Stocks', 'Transports', 'Portfolios,' indeed! You beguile yourself with the idea that one can become rich in the time it takes to say, 'Hear, O, Israel!' 'A delusion,' mother says, 'is worse than a disease.' Stupid! Why talk of fortunes, lucky fortuities, stocks, dividends? Nonsense! They are all worth an egg-shell! One does not get rich empty-handed . . . "

This reproach does not discourage Menachem Mendel. He is so immersed in the "curb" gossip, that he is parted from all

common sense. The fact that Brodsky, a prominent Kiev millionaire, is a member of the stock exchange, is unimpeachable evidence to his mind of the stability of speculation. In a post-script he writes: "You must think, dearest wife, that I am the only one to deal in stocks. Brodsky also trades with them. The difference is: when I wish to order stock, I must first figure out how much I can stomach; while when Brodsky begins to buy, he orders 1,000 shares, 5,000 shares, 10,000 shares. Brodsky is no joke! When he rides thru in his carriage, Krestchatek [the principal street in Kiev] trembles, and all the Jews doff their hats, and I among them. It would be fine if I should some day become a Brodsky! With the help of God, little stupid . . ."

In the end he loses faith in the stock exchange, and becomes an agent. He writes to his wife that "one need only be able to lie, and be insolent into the bargain, and one is already fit to be an agent." He, however, can do neither. He engages in turn in the brokerage of sugar, real estate, forests, sugar mills, oil, marriage, and insurance. He even turns author at one time. Each project at first finds him ready to revolutionize the field, only to touch the dregs of despondency after the first rebuff. He begins as optimistically as a full-blown, glistening soap-bubble, only to share its fate at the first prick. His mind knows no mean. No enterprise he engages in but is at first faultless and oozing with profits; but he soon discovers it to be "mere mud," worthless. His unlimited faith in each succeeding business is truly remarkable; yet so natural does it seem, that the least practical caution would not be in accordance with the reader's conception of his character.

Menachem Mendel, like Don Quixote, is an essentially comic character. He is at the mercy of a fantastic imagination, his fancy, unhampered by reason, inevitably leads him to some exaggeration, to some extremity. While Reb Yosefel and Teviah have religious faith as the centre of their existence, Menachem Mendel has no anchor whatsoever. His every act and thought appear therefore abnormal and ludicrous in their very expression. The reader is made to feel highly superior to him; he laughs at him at first as at a child, an inferior, with a tinge of contempt. But as he follows the activity of this luckless fellow, he realizes that the naive and sincere enthusiasm over matters without a bottom is not the mere consequence of a diseased imagination; he rather feels that the twist of the absurd in Menachem Mendel's character is in truth due to an unfortunate environment. Without a pro-

fession of any kind, without any worldly knowledge, taught to deride anyone differing with his own *weltauschauung*, and wholly inexperienced in the ways of life, it is not to be wondered at that he plunges into every scheme without a second thought. No man exercises his intellect to any extent on an empty stomach, and Menachem Mendel is ever engaged in a dire struggle for existence. The fact that he remains honest, faithful, and genial under adverse circumstances, suffuses his character with a certain ideality. The reader does not cease to laugh at the unfortunate man; but the laugh is no longer mocking: it now comes from the heart, full of sympathy.

VII

Every artist has his magnum opus: every writer secretes his inmost self in at least one of his books. Sholom Aleichem was no exception. Tho he has stamped his personality upon his most insignificant story, the work in which Teviah, the dairyman, is the chief figure has drawn most upon the deepest recesses of his soul. In the character of Teviah, Sholom Aleichem has embodied his highest humor, his truest philosophy; during the twenty years in which the stories concerning him were written, he has concentrated his utmost love, his most glowing sympathy, his deepest spiritual probings, upon this poor dairyman.

Teviah is a character very dissimilar from Menachem Mendel. Indeed, in a study of Sholom Aleichem's creations one is at once struck with the fact that they readily distinguish themselves by their resemblance to either one or the other of these characters; they are either subjects for pathology, or spiritually centripetal. Teviah has no Menachem Mendelian fancy; riches attract him with no more than common zeal. Menachem Mendel's imagination rises rocketwise at the least stimulus; Teviah's mind is too practical, too reflective, to be disturbed by non-essentials. The speculator acts as if he were a scatter-brain; the dairyman procures his bread with the sweat of his brow.

Teviah's fictional life begins when he is already the father of five children, all girls. He is a God-fearing man and very punctual in the exercise of the conglomerate ritual of his religion. Of Kaserilevke origin, he is a true product of the medieval point of view, actuated by its philosophy, and limited by its traditions and habits of thought. According to his thinking, life is only the corridor to a better world. This thought later enables him to withstand the most harrowing blows of fate.

Tevieh's mind is much troubled about his dowry-less daughters. He is not unaware of the beauty and accomplishments of each and every one, but he knows that this means little to those accustomed to the marriage-portion. Alas! how little he knows the minds of his daughters and with what dowries fate is to provide them! He is soon to learn, however, and much to his grief. The first opportunity comes when a wealthy butcher of his acquaintance proposed to marry his eldest daughter, Tzatel. Somewhat startled at the idea that his beautiful daughter should become the wife of this hard-hearted man, Teviah is about to yield when Tzatel falls upon his neck and will not let go until he promises not to force her into this marriage. She refuses to marry without love! but she is already in love, and with a youth of her own age. His poverty does not incommode her, she says. What is Teviah to do? How is he to prohibit her marrying the man of her choice? Can he provide her with a more acceptable husband? So Tzatel marries the young man and reaps the caresses of love and poverty.

Hodel, his second daughter, becomes the mate of a revolutionist. Teviah feels much perplexed: that a young girl should become the betrothed of a strange youth without the consent and blessing of a father seems inconceivable to him. Yet this is the situation confronting him at present. What should he do? Should he prevent her from meeting the brazen youth? Should he drive her from the house? He only consoles himself with the thought that she might have done something worse, and allows her to go her ways. When the young man is arrested and sentenced to Siberia, Hodel decides to accompany him to his destination. No words of Teviah can persuade her to the contrary. Again he accepts the decision of fate, and tho his heart almost breaks at the thought of her departure, he provides her for the long journey with whatever he is able.

Teviah next experiences the most agonizing experience possible to a Jewish father. Eve, his third daughter, becomes enamoured of a Gentile and apostatizes. This time he balks: the blow struck at the central point of his existence; if he can not avoid this thunderclap of fate, neither can he submissively yield to it. While the beadle in *The Lottery Ticket* is staggered by the like blow, Teviah is sorely wounded and for the first and only time enraged. One need only reflect upon the scene in the forest where Eve runs after him to beg his forgiveness, how he forcibly turns from the natural inclination to take her into his arms and

flees as from a witch, to probe the depth of poignancy harrowing his soul.

This is not the end of his afflictions. His next daughter, Shprintze, falls in love with the handsome but fickle son of a rich widow. This is not at all to the taste of the young man's mother, and she immediately sends him to another part of the country. When the meek and trustful girl realizes the impossibility of her union with her lover, she commits suicide by drowning. Teviah's grief can be grasped only by those who have read these stories and feel how passionately he loves his children.

One more daughter is left to Teviah. As beautiful as her older sisters, she has no difficulty in attracting the neighbouring young men. But her mind dwells on her aged and unhappy father. She wishes to ease his remaining years. To accomplish this she marries a rich but vulgar bachelor from Kiev. Teviah rejoices: at least one daughter well married! He receives money from her and believes her happy. But when he visits her one day he sees the unbreachable gap between his daughter and her husband, and understands her sacrifice . . .

As I have sketched his life, one would not at all think it a fit subject for the humorist. Nor ordinarily is it. Yet the readers of this volume laugh much and often. This is wholly due to the art of Sholom Aleichem. Written as a series of ten monologues related by Teviah to the author, the life of their narrator is developed gradually with each episode. Entering their pages as a common dairyman, he slowly towers forth as a modern Job, a Lear deceived not by his daughters but rather by unkind circumstances. But thruout this growth of character and elevation of soul, one is not allowed for a moment to forget his Kaserilevke origin: it enters like an oblique ray of light in a shadowed room. This results in humor.

The Kaserilevke elements in Teviah,—his fatalism, his naïveté, his love of biblical quotations,—are woven into the fabric of his character with consummate art. Each monologue is interspersed with a number of misquoted and misinterpreted passages from religious lore,—Teviah having but a smattering knowledge of it,—that are inherently comical and unavoidably rouse the impulse to laughter. Then his artless point of view, his simplicity of mind and quaintness of outlook, coming in conflict with things modern and attempting to repulse them or to adjust itself to them, cannot but bring forth mellow mirth. But the highest humor comes from the fatalism and genial philosophizing with

which Teviah enshrouds his dolor. Each of these elements is skillfully brought in to relieve the tension at the proper moment. As Teviah's misery is from its nature contagious, the reader laughs the more heartily in order to avoid the flow of tears from coming to the surface. Thus, after the truly tragic scene in the forest, between him and Eve, when he tries to find relief in the thought: "A man's a fool! A wise man must not set his heart upon his misery, and must understand that life is as it should be, because if it was to have been different, it wouldn't have been as it is,"—a thought similar to that in *The Easy Fast*,—one is only too ready to be comforted with him. The laughter in this instance is not at Teviah's idiosyncrasies so much as for the relief of sympathetic sorrow.

Teviah would have been a very miserable man indeed, had he not been able to reflect upon his misery with a philosophic smile, with the conscious feeling that it was only a trial of the Lord, a Job-like test. He knew full well that it was not for him to change the ways of fate; but he was also aware that he could, at least in part, control the effect of its unavoidable cudgellings. And if his mind was reflective, his heart was warm and expansive. He was naturally altruistic. He felt the pettiness of life; but he also realized of what depth of sorrow the heart is capable, the significance of everything else when compared with that sorrow, and the necessity of alleviating that same sorrow. Hence his all-embracing sympathy. To benefit anyone he would deny his instinct of conservation, restrain his self-love, resign whatever authority he might wield. To arrive at such true humility one must first reduce everything to its fundamentals, strip all values of their unessentials, lower all pomp and vanity to their relative futility. This altruistic attitude, sometimes calling his entire consciousness within its scope, brought him forgetfulness and relief whenever reflection was ineffectual. The readers of Sholom Aleichem well understand the great art and insight necessary for the expression of such an attitude; no other Yiddish author enjoys such love, such affection, as is given to the creator of Teviah.

VIII

Humor is the noblest form of the comic: it generates genial sympathy. Humor sees the incongruities of life, and desires to lessen the poignancy arising from them. It therefore attempts to soften with mirth the wretchedness of existence, to span with a smile the abyss that separates man from man. A humorist sees

the weaknesses and foibles of man with greater clarity than the satirist, but he seldom forgets that he too is not free from them. Unlike the satirist, his mind is never overwhelmed by human meanness or stupidity; he visualizes the human world as a puny microcosm, not to scold or scorn but to amuse. "Let us laugh while we may; sorrow will stop it soon enough"—is the precept of the humorist.

Sholom Aleichem's generation was pregnant with the seeds of humor. It was in the process of transition: circumstances were relegating its medieval form of life to the irrecoverable past, leaving it to accustom itself to modern life as best it may. Naïve and gullible, it was bewildered by the maze of modernity, confused in its values of the real and the seeming; but necessity gave it no respite: it was compelled to seek the means for its subsistence from the first. For a time it naturally committed fantastic and ridiculous acts. To the superficial observer these acts appeared highly ludicrous; he saw not the genuine pathos underneath. But Sholom Aleichem knew his generation intimately. Addressing the reader at the beginning of one of his stories, he says: "I come, my dear friend, from Kaserilevke. There I was born, there I was brought up; there I received my education, and there I was married. Afterwards I sailed forth in my little bark on the great wide, and powerful ocean called Life, whose waves cover the housetops. And altho one is always being tossed and rocked on its raging surface, I have not for a moment forgotten my dear beloved home, Kaserilevke, long may it exist, not my dear beloved brothers, the Kaserilevke Jews, may they thrive and increase. Whenever I hear of some misfortune, a calamity, a disaster, I think at the moment: 'What is going on *there*, in my native home?'" Seeing therefore the oblique direction of the thoughts and deeds of his fellow Jews, he dug deep into the element of pathos and brought forth unalloyed humor.

Sholom Aleichem himself may indeed be termed Kaserilevke's supreme achievement. His self was blended so successfully with that of his people, that in one sense his works do not bear so much the stamp of the individual author as that of his composite generation, poetically interpreted. Had he lived in the days of yore, his writings would have been truly epical. As it was, his works became the literary expression of his age, even as *The Iliad* and *Die Nibelungenlied* were of theirs. He had little of the self-consciousness of the modern artist. His senses seldom allowed him leisure for reflection: they crowded his consciousness with im-

pression upon impression: they stimulated his imagination to incessant activity. The merest perception, the most trivial conversation, excited his irrepressible humor. Out it would! and artistically. And as he was ever with and of the Jews of his generation, he unknowingly became their chronicler, recording their thoughts and deeds while giving expression to his merriment.

How unconscious an artist he was may be gathered from the following incident. While still a young man he came one day to his friend Mendele, to have him criticise his latest story. "What is your purpose in writing it?" asked his senior. The query nonplussed him for the moment. Sometime later he writes: "I confess that this was to me a new America discovered. It is now five years that I am writing, have written, praised be His name, so many things, and not once have I asked myself 'What is my purpose?' What purpose can a writer have? A writer desires to write, for if he would not desire to write, he would not be a writer . . ."

As the artistic voice of his people, Sholom Aleichem brought little of his ego to the surface. His artistic self was chameleon-like in its complete blending with the character under portrayal. It is never Sholom Aleichem who is felt in the story; one is only conscious of the people he writes about. Each character is in possession of his own manner of speech, his own idiosyncrasies and weaknesses. Not a story but its creations appear to come straight from the Ghetto. This impersonal method was so natural to Sholom Aleichem that more than three-fourths of his work was either in the monologue or in the epistolary form.

This naturalness of his stories has made Sholom Aleichem the most read of Yiddish authors. Jewish readers no longer think of his work as mere literature; it has become in truth a part and parcel of Jewish life. Not a concert, not a friendly gathering, but has "something of Sholom Aleichem" on the program. His stories have become an integral part of the Jew's entertainment. And the modern Jew, provided he is not completely assimilated, enjoys a Sholom Aleichem story the more enthusiastically the farther removed he is from the Ghetto. The reason for this is obvious. While the orthodox Jew still frowns upon the joys derived from fiction, his more cultivated brother finds in Sholom Aleichem the link between his present environment and his childhood experiences.

Paradoxical as it may be, Sholom Aleichem is also the most personal of Yiddish writers. His work is one long confession in

the manner of that in the writings of Goethe. All his children-stories are in truth episodes, real and imaginary, of his own youth. Motel is a correct portrait of our author when a child. The love element in his stories is mostly of his own experience. All his stepmothers come from Berditchev because his did; all cooks have black mustaches when in his stories because the cook who impressed him most was so adorned; most of his fathers are coughing and sickly because his father was thus affected. One need only read his *Reminiscences* to realize how much of his own life and attitude was introduced into his fiction. Being a philosopher, and feeling the vanity of man, he created his characters in his own image; they possess a passive faith in whatever is, and tend to acclimate themselves to every external change without questioning its necessity or rectitude. His two chief characters, Teviah and Menachem Mendel, are the bilateral development of the young Sholom-Motel. Tho they in one sense represent the two dominant traits of the Jewish people,—the love of spirituality and the striving for economic independence,—they form, even more so, the complements of our author's own character. And old Rabbi Yosefel is only the projection of the Teviah element some years into the future.

Sholom Aleichem had no well developed inventive faculty; his imagination was weighted down by actuality, dependent always on sense-data. He therefore wrote little about girls and women. When they did enter his stories, they were mostly drawn after those he knew most intimately. Those characters which he drew from fancy lacked the vividness and individuality of his genius.

This paradox in the work of our author, being at once personal and impersonal to a high degree, resolves itself, however, when one considers the first as the self of the artist, an inevitable element in all works of art, and the second as the unconscious expression of the most representative of Ghetto Jews. Yet this apparent division in the work of Sholom Aleichem is seen only by the critic. The reader is conscious of no paradox: he accepts these stories as his own: he considers them as the work of Sholom Aleichem, no longer the name of an author but the symbol of Jewish humor.

Sholom Aleichem, as all humorists, could not write a great novel. The mind of the humorist is not inclusive; his genius lies not in the weaving of plots and the concocting of intricate situations. He is, rather, interested in man as he moves among men.

Man laughs best and acts most laughably when in the society of others. But not all actions of men are of interest to him; his art requires only what is seemingly incongruous, or pathetically ludicrous, or seriously grotesque in the life of mankind. He continually limits himself in breadth in order to reach a greater depth; his method is rather like a dart that flies to the heart of things, but penetrates only a small area. The novelist, on the other hand, must deal with life as a whole, probe its vital elements, develop its essential problems. His method should encompass the largest possible area; he must feel and describe every phase of human activity with equal sympathy and with like disinterestedness.

The works of Sholom Aleichem known as novelistic, are either single short stories elaborated to the length of a hundred or more pages, or several short stories woven together loosely and somewhat artificially. In neither case is there to be found the unity, the motivation, the breadth, and the gradual development of the true novel. These works of the author are only redeemed from mediocrity by the numerous passages written in his best vein that are to be found in them. This criticism applies especially to his later novels, which show more the haste of the journalist than the painstaking of the artist.

Many minor defects might be pointed to in his work. Compelled to depend on his writings for a livelihood, he often allowed his pen to outrun his ideas. The result was not only repetition, both in plot and in language, but also in hurried and in some instances even trivial writing. I must also note that his style, rhetorically considered, is in no small degree hyperbolic, especially in his minor works; he frequently repeats some exaggerated expression of a character to the length of caricature, much to the dilution of his otherwise pure humor. Other faults might be unearthed. But these flaws diminish into insignificance when the work of Sholom Aleichem is judged in its entirety. They are driven from one's mind, even from that of the critic, by his great positive achievements. One merely remembers that his work gave almost perfect expression to the life of his generation, that it taught the same generation to smile in the face of sorrow, and that it, more than that of any other Yiddish author, instilled a love of literature into the Scripture-fed Jew.

I have now written what I have set out to write about Sholom Aleichem. Because of my limited purpose, I have neglected, or have merely touched upon, a considerable portion of his work. It was not my aim, however, to analyse and to interpret individual

stories so much as to treat their art and content in their entirety. I shall therefore consider my work successful, if I have conveyed in the large, that idea of the author which he suggests in the following dedication to his *Reminiscences*: "Dear loving children: I dedicate to you this work of my works, this book of my books, this song of songs of my soul. I know that this book is, like every work of man, not without faults. Yet who knows as you do how much it has cost me? I have put into this work the most precious of my possessions: my heart . . . Read it from time to time. Perhaps you or your children may learn something from it; how to love our people and appraise its spiritual treasures that lie scattered in the dark corners of the Diasporah the world over. This shall be my best reward for the more than thirty years of devoted work in the field of our mother-tongue and literature."

STREAM OF TIME

BY GUSTAV DAVIDSON

I know not what remembrances of you
 Will linger with me in the after-days
 When you are gone with all your gold and blue
 Beyond the touch of hands or reach of praise.
 There may come other summers of emprise
 Endowed with all the ancient dreams anew;
 And sudden magic in another's eyes
 May reinvoke the beautiful and true.

Yet as I stand here in the stream of time
 Musing the while where chance may bear us hence
 When this brief hour of faith is ended quite,
 Already you have gained that far-off clime
 Lifted above the tides' impermanence
 And crowned with stars unfathomed in our night.

THE SON LEFT IN THE PLANTATION OF MULBERRY TREES

BY CHIN LIN CHEN

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

TENG PO TAO
HIS BROTHER'S WIFE
YUAN TENG
FANG TENG

ACT I

SCENE I

A rich man's hall.

Enter PO-TAO TENG and his steward.

Teng.—A prosperous family should educate its children. Only in this way can they become great.

Man is mortal. Like blossoms floating on the surface of a lake, so is the man who dwells upon the face of the earth. When the high winds blow, the blossoms are scattered and disappear.

I, Po-Tao Teng, had a younger brother Pc-Chien. To my great grief he died in middle-age. As today is the anniversary of his death, I shall take my own son and my brother's son to my dead brother's tomb to pay respect to his memory. Steward, call your young masters. Tell them to meet me here in the hall.

Steward.—O Masters. O Masters! O Masters!

(Enter YUAN TENG and FANG TENG.)

(They make a deep obeisance to PO-TAO TENG.)

We are here, father. What is your will for us?

Teng.—Today, my son, is the anniversary of your uncle's death; you are to accompany me to his tomb to pay your respects to him. Steward, see that the offerings are carried up to the tomb.

(They all leave the house and walk down the road to the tomb.)

Teng (Aside).—I am full of grief for my younger brother, who died in middle age. I am the more sorrowful, because he has left behind a helpless boy, my nephew. At the sight of this mound of clay, this lonely grave, I am moved to anguish. *(TENG performs the ceremonies, then YUNG TENG kneels down on the right and FANG*

TENG, *on the left*, TENG *sitting at the head of the grave and speaking to it.*)

Teng.—Po Chien, my beloved brother, to-day I come with these two boys to pay my respects to you. I burn this paper money in token of my regard for your memory. (*Then he burns the paper money.*)

Teng.—Oh, my younger brother! The sight of your grave stirs me deeply. I am moved to shed tears like rain. Lend me thine ear. We shall always love and respect each other. When you were still with us, we never ceased to converse together, and so our family prospered. How sad it is that you died in middle age! Oh, you lie under the earth like a peerless jewel.

Yuan Teng.—Oh, uncle, I am much grieved that you are sleeping the long sleep. When can I see you?

Fang Teng.—Oh, father, how miserable I am now! How happy I was when you lived! I think of you day and night. Oh, father, do you hear me?

Yuan Teng.—Father—how can I find my uncle?

Teng.—Oh, how can you find your uncle? Here lies your uncle. Call upon him.

Fang Teng.—Ah, Uncle, how can I reach my father?

Teng.—Oh, you wish to reach your father. Aye! He is buried in this grave. Call upon him. Call upon him by name.

Fang Teng.—Father, I call upon you. Why do you not answer me?

Teng.—Po Chien, younger brother, these two boys call upon you. Have you heard them? Why do you not answer them? Are you deaf or are you dumb? Can you not rise up from your long sleep?

Teng (Aside).—Listen. This child wants his uncle. How can I express my anguish? The other child wants his father. I feel as if a dagger had been plunged into my heart. Oh, my younger brother, wait a little longer and I will join you.

Enter STEWARD.

Steward.—Oh! Woe is me! The chieftain of Hoswui has brought a horde of brigands to overrun our province. They have looted everything in their path. Even now they approach our village.

Teng.—Alas! Woe upon woe! Tragedy upon tragedy! Let us hasten home. (*Exit.*)

SCENE II

A room in PO-TAO TENG'S house. Enter PO CHIEN'S wife.

Po Chien's Wife.—Cursed am I in that I have outlived my husband. (*Enter TENG with two boys.*)

Teng.—Oh, my sister, here is terrible news! A band of brigands from Ho Swui has come to loot our province. In a few minutes they will enter our village. Oh, what are we to do?

Po Chien's Wife.—Let us flee. My uncle lives in Tung Kwaun. We will take refuge with him there.

Teng.—Good! Then we must leave at once. Steward, make ready for our immediate departure. (*The servants and family all kneel down.*)

Teng.—All of my family are gathered around me upon their knees. Steward and servants, listen to what I say. I must take my family away. The brigands are coming to loot our village. I want you to watch everything in the house. It may be that our home will escape them. When I return, I will *divide my property among you*. Oh, I hate to leave you. (*Exit.*)

(*TENG to his family.*)

Steward.—Oh! comrades, our master has gone. He has entrusted his house to us. What shall we do?

Servants.—We can do nothing. We can only sit still and await the coming of the brigands. Be not downcast. Let us drink and eat for to-morrow we may be dead. (*All exit.*)

SCENE III

A country road. Enter the chieftain with his brigands.

Chieftain.—I, Sni Lo, lead my troops to loot the cities and towns. On, comrades, on.

SCENE IV

A wild place on a mountain. Enter Teng, his son, his nephew, and his sister-in-law.

Teng.—While walking over the green hills, we see the white clouds on every side.

Yang Teng & Fang Teng.—Oh, where is our home?

Po Chien's Wife.—We are fleeing so rapidly for our lives that we have no time to think of our belongings.

Teng.—As the hills are so high and the streams are so deep,

how shall we proceed?

Po Chien's Wife.—We must forget our thirst, our hunger, and our weariness. We must think only of escaping.

Teng.—With one hand I cling to the ivy and climb up the hill while with the other I help my boys to ascend.

Po Chien's Wife.—Woe is me! My feet are so sore and yet I must struggle on.

Teng.—The white mist surrounds us on every side, and I cannot see where we are.

Po Chien's Wife.—Oh, if only we can reach Tung Kuan, we shall be safe.

Teng.—The sight of flags and banners floating in the far distance gives me great anxiety. I see the brigands coming over the horizon like a swarm of bees. At all costs I must descend the hill in order to find some shelter for my family. (*TENG's family is separated by the coming of the brigands. TENG and his two boys escape in the tumult but PO CHIEN's wife disappears.*)

Teng.—Oh, I am terror-stricken! Ah, my son, where is your aunt?

Yuan Teng.—I do not know.

Teng.—My nephew, where is your mother?

Fang Teng.—Alas, I am afraid that she has been captured by the brigands.

Teng.—What is it that you say?

Fang Teng.—My mother has been kidnapped.

Teng.—Woe is me! (*TENG swoons.*)

Teng (Aside).—The shock of this news will drive me out of my senses. My soul flees from my body in terror. Oh! my brother's wife is lost. How can I find her? Ah, Woe is me!

(*TENG speaks to his nephew.*)

Teng.—Oh, my nephew, I think your mother cannot have gone far. Perhaps we can overtake her. (*They get up and walk up and down the stage. Then YUAN TENG halts and cannot go on.*)

Yuan Teng.—Oh, father, I cannot walk any farther!

Teng.—You are tired. Well, stand on the slope and I will take you on my back.

Yuan Teng.—Father, you are too old. I am afraid that you cannot carry me.

Teng.—Old as I am, I am still hale and hearty. Come, I am ready. (*TENG carrying his son proceeds to walk a few steps, FANG TENG gets angry and jealous.*)

Fang Teng.—When my cousin is tired of walking, my uncle

carries him. But because I am an orphan there is no one to take care of me. Oh, how wretched I am! I want to die. (*Then he falls senseless on the stage. TENG at once puts his son down and comes to the spot where FANG lies. He picks him up and makes every effort to bring him back to consciousness.*)

Teng.—Oh! I am so wretched! I have awakened from a dream. Do not be angry. I know you are tired. I shall try to carry your cousin a few paces, and then I will come back for you. Come, stand on the slope and I will put you on my shoulder. (*TENG carries his nephew and YUAN TENG walks in the rear. After a few paces YUAN stops and cannot walk farther.*)

Teng (Sil.)—Alas, my two boys can walk no farther! If the rebels overtake us and kill my son, I must not complain, but if they kill my nephew, how shall I ever meet my brother when I pass to the kingdom of Terrors? Oh, what shall I do? I am undone! (*He looks around and sees the plantation of mulberries and then an idea comes to him.*)

Teng.—Alas! this must be my decision. Surely it is better for me to tie my son to a tree and carry my nephew with me in our flight for life. Yes, I am resolved to do it. (*He speaks to the two boys.*)

Teng.—You are tired and hungry. Look, there are excellent mulberries growing luxuriously. Which of you will climb the tree and pick a few in order to satisfy our hunger?

Fang Teng.—Oh, I am so hungry. Let me climb up.

Yuan Teng.—You are too young. Let me climb the tree to pick the mulberries.

Teng.—Yes, you are the one to do it. (*YUAN TENG climbs up the tree to pick the mulberries, while FANG stands under the tree to pick them up. TENG strips his belt from his waist and ties YUAN to the tree.*)

Yuan Teng.—Oh, father, why do you tie me to the tree?

Teng.—Alas, my son, your cousin is weak and small and cannot walk any longer. If the brigands overtake us and kill you, it does not matter; but if they kill your cousin, how shall I face your uncle in the next world? Therefore, I carry him away, and leave you tied to the tree. I will give you an appeal for help written in my own blood. If the brigands come here and kill you, I shall pray to see you again in the next world. If they do not come, you may be rescued by some passerby and then perhaps we shall meet some day in the future. Alas! Yuan Teng, my son, my son! Today I must sacrifice the affection that a father bears to his son. Oh! I am torn with grief as though a dagger had been plunged into

my heart. I will tear off a piece of cloth from my coat, and I will bite my middle finger to make it bleed. (*He takes the piece of cloth as paper and the blood as ink, and writes the appeal in which he tells his reason for tying his son to a tree.*)

Teng.—This is what I have written, “My home is in Wen Sui in the province of Shan Si. I fled hither to avoid the invasion of the province by brigands. I am driven to sacrifice my son in order to save my nephew so that I may never be accused of selfishness by the public.” Alas, the blood upon my finger has dried up and there is yet so much to say. (*He puts the appeal into the front of his son’s shirt and calling his nephew, prepares to depart.*)

Teng.—Alas! My nephew, let us be going.

Fang.—Oh, uncle, I do not want to go unless you are willing to untie my cousin.

Teng.—But your mother is coming. Let us go and meet her.

Fang.—Where is she?

Teng.—There she is. (*He catches FANG and puts him on his back and starts to go away. His son calls him with a voice of agony.*)

Yuan.—Oh, father, my father! (*TENG casts back a look of anguish to his son tied to the tree. Then stepping forward with determination, he carries his nephew off the stage.*)

Enter PO CHIEN’S WIFE.

Po Chien’s Wife.—Why is this boy tied to a tree? Let me go forward and untie him. (*She releases YUAN from the tree, she recognizes him.*)

Po Chien’s Wife.—Why are you here, my nephew? Where is your father and your cousin?

Yuan.—Alas my aunt, they are gone and here is the appeal my father wrote; please read it quickly.

Po Chien’s Wife.—I will do so,—(*she reads the appeal*) I am going to adopt you as my son. Let us go to Tung Kuan, where we may meet them.

Yuan.—How happy I am! (*They exit.*)

JULIO HERRER Y REISSIG

A DISCIPLE OF EDGAR ALLAN POE

BY THOMAS WALSH

THE influence of our poet, Edgar Allan Poe, upon the literature of modern France, Italy and Spain has often been noted; but it is among poets of South America, a distinguished flowering of the modern muse which has not had the general acknowledgment it deserves, that we find the full tide of homage and imitation.

In the poetry of Rubén Darío and José Asunción Silva, to quote only the most distinguished of the Hispanic Parnasus, there is an adoring attitude toward the author of "The Raven" that will surprise even a declared North American admirer. There is no poet, however, who has gone so far in his appreciation of Poe as Julio Herrera y Reissig, the great figure in modern Spanish poetry who not only strives to embody Poe's phrasing and tonalities, but also quotes whole passages from his imaginative poems as from some Holy Scripture of today. We are impressed by such whole-souled devotion to attempt an English version of *Berceuse Blanca* a celebration in verse of a lament for another Ligeia, embodying not only many of the effects of Poe, but showing as well the gorgeous character of a grief panoplied in the Hispanic manner, which, it seems, has been the true, if thus far overlooked, fountain-head of much of Poe's own fantasy. Julio Herrera y Reissig was born at Montevideo in 1875, and after a short unhappy life, passed away in 1911, leaving his works to be collected by the critics under the titles of *Los peregrinos de piedra* (The Pilgrims of Stone) (Montevideo, 1911) and *Las Pascuas de tiempo* (The Festivals of Time) (Montevideo, 1913). It has been a favorite occupation of the critics of Spain and South America to dispute how far the mind of Herrera y Reissig wandered from the common lines of reason; his work, indeed, seems to show the effect of narcotics and inflammation of the imagination to an extraordinary degree; as in modern pictorial art and music, the transitions in his writings are so sudden and unusual as to startle the conservatives; but we would be slow to admit that they are altogether abnormal.

BERCEUSE BLANCA

A toi, Juliette, a toi

Homage to the Virgin at the bedside shrine attended
 By the pallid tapers gleaming on the solace of her face;
 From the censer waves a breath of shadowy perfume blended
 Through the lattices and hangings of the altar's misty lace.

And the rhythmic rising-falling of her slumber-burthened breast
 Is like moonlight swaying lightly on some dying lake afar;
 Loreley is harping through the soul; and Death in circling bar
 Lurks in opal conspiracy mid the deep abyss of rest.

Silence, Light, O silence, silence! Bend, O Lily, bend thy brows!
 Needless bring not Venus' philters hither now to hold me bound
 Thought in me is ceaseless lurking in Assyrian dragon's drowse.
 Slumber, have no fear, my darling, slumber in thy dream profound!

Slumber, so that through thy dreaming in the hollow grave beneath,
 Through the holy dawns my spirit as a visitant may come,
 And with fragile touch of marble and of rose may stir the wreath
 O'er thine eyelids vaguely searching through Death's drowsy halidom.

With her hands in rare enamels and soft jacinths all aglow,
 Hands as smooth as soothing waters gemmed with calmness and
 with peace
 As of Lethe, hands of deathly alabaster plinths of snow,
 Holy hands, the hands of mystic deities of vanished Greece—

See, her hands reposing weariedly in Gothic pose would dream
 Of some snowy dream, I know not what, of other worlds than
 this;
 Radiant like old Byzantium's storied window-panes agleam,
 Spread their bead-like kisses careless in a rosary of bliss.

Silence, Light, O silence, silence! Sleep, my darling, sleep, O sleep!
 Needless here that Venus' legions should their witcheries deploy;
 Slumber fast and fear thou nothing! Here before thy feet I keep
 Trembling watch as mid the forest would some timid-hearted
 boy.

Wings are fluttered softly. Slowly melting eyes are staring round
 With the glancing of the moonlight and the vesture of the sun;
 See, 'tis Poesy divine has come from out her heavenly bound,
 Arms across her bosom folded where the hymns of glory run.

Slumber, so that through thy dreaming mid the glow my spirit
 holds
 To the very heavens shall journey Jacob's ladder to the stars
 While thy tresses dark shall fashion the one shadow point that
 mars
 The mirage of dying daylight that thy brow in sleep enfolds.

Through the gauzes half-unreal mystically there appears
 Stretched upon the couch a spectre of the Springtime worn and
 pale
 Like the drugged magnolia across the weary stretch of years
 Illumined faintly in the glow of Death's besilvered twilight veil.

Woven in the Eastern tapestry,—beneath a palm-tree's shade
 Is seen a shepherdess bent over, with her head in heedless mood,
 All unconscious that against her breast from out a bowered wood
 Love's young archer plans his mischief with an arrow-point dis-
 played.

And this the sighful song she sings:—"O come, O come, and plant
 thy dart
 Here amid my sea of grievings; hold thy kisses to my wound;
 Beneath disdain, O bury me and let my bitter death impart,
 Without another word to thee, how much content of life I found"

Repose, O Light, repose, repose thee; veil, O Lily, veil thy brows;
 Needless bring not Venus' philters hither now to hold me bound
 Love is watching at thy bosom in Assyrian dragon's drowse;
 Slumber, have no fear, my darling, slumber in thy dream pro-
 found!—

Dreamings strange possess the Virgin! Dreamings of such trifles
 vain,
 As of that poor withered sister rose within its lonely vase,
 Of the Mage Aladdin's wonders, or the other sisters twain
 Stuffing bonbons in their satin slippers, as the story says.

Through her bosom play the glances of the moonlight and of silk,
 And her sleep is palpitating on the high Olympian bed
 To a rhythm of the heavens, as an egg of Leda's ilk
 Fecundated by the moonlight deified above her head . . .

The expression half-distracted gleaming in her draperies,
 And her half-permitted smiling, are so lovely in their spell
 That tonight, without a doubt, she has forgotten litanies,
 Or, in musing on her lover, sang herself to sleep so well.

Oh, what moulding and what beauty in the curving of her form!
 Something of a prayer is chanting there in harmony obscure;
 She is lovely, so the Angel watching o'er her slumber warm
 Trembling asks, is he her guardian or her lover true and pure.

Slumber, so that through thy dreaming in the hollow grave be-
 neath,
 Through the holy dawns my spirit as a visitant may come,
 And with fragile touch of marble and of rose may stir the wreath
 O'er thine eyelids vaguely searching through Death's drowsy
 halidom.

There her gentle hands as silvery as waters in a pool,
 Opals of oblivion that seem to dream of death,
 Her hands whose fivefold petals are as perfumes rare and cool,
 Lie asleep upon her bosom that the marble envieth.

O my pallid-veined Nirvana! O Lutzuna wraith divine!
 On her breasts transparent tremble crystallations as of wine;
 While the ghostly exhalations of the heliotrope would shine
 From her gentle eyes illumined from old autumns in decline.

See how glow her blue-black tresses on the whiteness of her breast,
 Where enshrined is all of music, all of radiance, all of youth;
 In a striking wonderment of contrast is her spell confest,
 As if day was sudden darkened mid the noontide's brightest
 truth.

And her jewels—they are orbed in a zodiac of light,
 Trembling joyously in beauty throughout Paradise serene,
 As though like stars that fain would glorify the darkened empy-
 rene,
 Now that day upon her pillow has withdrawn its eyes from sight.

Who at seeing thus her trancing, mid the mystery untold
 Will deny the prodigy that so affronts the boast of day;
 A Judith of the newer law, whose gracious victor hands uphold
 Amid the silences afar the severed world's high head at bay.

Wings are fluttered softly. Slowly melting eyes are staring round
 Maya's veil is drawing open, and Alcestis' kiss is given;
 Coming with her head erect and as with holy chanting crowned
 Poesy serene is coming, coming down the ways of heaven.

Silence, Light, O silence, silence! Sleep, my darling, sleep!
 Needless here that Venus' legions should their witcheries deploy
 Slumber fast, and fear thou nothing. Here before thy feet I keep
 Trembling watch as mid the forest would some timid-hearted
 boy.

*Afar there sounds a motif out of Brahms, as if upon the keys
 Of an exotic pantheism enunciating graphic notes;
 A swallow-song is thundered forth, as though narcotic reveilles
 Were scratched by frogs upon their oboes and the insects reedy
 throats.*

Woven in the Eastern tapestry, beneath a palm-tree's shade,
 Is seen a shepherdess bent over with her head in heedless mood,
 All unconscious that against her breast from out a bowered wood
 Love's young archer plans his mischief with an arrow point dis-
 played.

What a vagueness to the music! oh, what harmony of form!
 Hark, the silence that encloses all the melody obscure
 She is lovely so the Angel who is watching o'er her form
 Trembling droops his wings, her lover and her guardian secure.

Hail unto the harmony that in her body hymns!
 Like a host of grace supreme! In her, creation breathes,—
 From the eucharistic mystery the holy monst'rance limns
 To the speechless nakedness the Star of stardom wreathes!

O'er her silent lips there stirs the rhythm of heaven's air;
 The hidden violet is but a perfumed censer swung;
 How often hath my spirit in the silence round her hung,
 Trembling, waiting for the break of pearly smiling there!

Bid her incorporeal being seek the gates of Ulalume!
 Through her bosom stir she glitters of the mystic crystal wine;
 And her eyes are vaguely lighted through the bleak autumnal
 gloom,
 Like the ghostly fireflies playing round the heliotrope's decline.

What a queenly nonchalance! What euphony distraught!
 Just as though some weakened star had swooned into her grace;
 From her proportions rare new song Geometry has caught,
 And Fate speaks out a holy prayer upon her silent face.

The garlands that the alabastine Seraphs wave on high
 Drop sheaves of lyric verdure on her breast that lies asleep;
 The noiseless nights expand themselves unto her dais-keep,
 And not a star that shines above but steals her curtains nigh.

Bow thy face, my Lily! Sleep, my darling, sleep!
 Needless here that Venus' legions should their witcheries deploy
 Slumber fast and fear thou nothing. Here before thy feet I keep
 Trembling watch as mid the forest would some timid-hearted
 boy!

O what deluges of Aeons! O what heraldings of rose!
 O what universal tremors! O what sacrificial rites!
 With what ecstasy of fire spread the heavenly azure lights!
 What inspired Alleluyas through creation's length unclose!

Drooping willow, harp of silence, vessel of omniscience rare!
 Mystic senses that preserve their essences most clear!
 Night of stars and silver urn of quintessentials fair,
 Thou art all the Lyre of life and all the Sphynx of fear!

O thou Prayer of the Saviour! Rainbow on the ways of peace!
 Rest, amid the Sybil swirlings in the vastnesses of skies!
 Chalice, breathing in the shadows fragrances that never cease;
 Thou art all the Pentagram, the all of Destinies!

The bravery of thy forehead claims a diadem supreme,
 An aureole or empress crown, as that of Hungary;
 Thy robe as white and silver as an utmost Arctic dream
 And thine Auroral collaret of gems the Northlands see.

Thou art Glycéra, Diotíma, Atalanta, all
 The sphynx art thou, Thou art the all of song upon the Lyre;
 For thee the thirty Steeples of my melody aspire,
 And at thy feet my haughty powers slumber where they fall!

Crystal centre of the moonlight, O thou gem of matchless price!
 In the code of beauty's lovers the philosophy and norm;
 Pythagoréan ritual urn with ideals pure as ice;
 Flesh inspired with ecstasies, and Ecstasy itself of form!

O Iphigenía, surging through the dream to the Unseen!
 O Diana, through whose glowing marble never comes a care!
 Starlight of a Hundred Poems, drunken where no Thought has
 been!
 Life's Cathedral shrine, the Curve's Osquestrion most fair!

Silence, Light, O silence, silence! Bend, O Lily, bend thy brows!
 Needless bring not Venus' philters hither now to hold me bound
 Thought in me is ceaseless lurking in Assyrian dragon's drowse.
 Slumber, have no fear, my darling, slumber in thy dream pro-
 found.

Slumber, so that through our dreaming the eternal and the dead,
 The invisible, the drunkenness that never knew a smile
 And the speechless Sphynx shall lead the chorus when we wed
 Beneath the couch of gloom within Death's royal domicile.

To the grave, mid where the mourning and the sighing ceaseless
 breathe,
 Bearing to thy body life and warmth my soul shall come;
 And with fragile touch of marble and of rose shall stir the wreath
 O'er thine eyelids vaguely searching through Death's drowsy
 halidom.

VIA CRUCIATA

BY ROBERT P. TRISTRAM COFFIN

Every house kept holiday,
Garlands bordered all the way.
 Between their fathers' knees small boys
 Filled the air with lusty noise;
The show was coming! in it were
Two thieves, besides a carpenter.

Up they came; one thief stood high,
Shaking black curls against the sky,
 Bold beside his guards he strode
 As if he still could rule the road
At sundown and demand his fee
Of kingly roadside robbery.

The other thief was bent and dumb
As one who faces Kingdom Come;
 His black eyes moved like those of rats
 Hedged all about with waiting cats.
But the carpenter, whose eyes were grey,
Gazed on ahead and far away.

Up the hill and up the street,
Bruised and blistered through the heat
 From walls of houses oven hot
 And glances scorching past all thought,
The carpenter and the thieves went by
To the Hill where lovers never lie.

Children-in-arms held on high
Pelted them as they came nigh;
 The thieves with bitter faces dodged
 In spite of the beams on their shoulders lodged,
But the carpenter seemed like to fall—
He bore the biggest beam of all.

The thieves were a mirthful pair to see,
But the carpenter pure levity,
 For he was rigged out like a king
 With purple robe and tinselling,
And a crown too tight for one that reigns
Upon his temples left some stains.

A red hen out to look for grains
Met the man who wore the stains;
He stepped aside with creaking bones
To let her search the cobblestones
For golden kernals. Clucking thanks
She passed between the jeering ranks.

A lad like David when he kept
Watch over sheep when his brothers slept
Ran to cast a stone, and tripped;
Down from his shoulder the great beam slipped,
And the carpenter knelt with gentle care
To raise the child and smooth his hair.

Purple and jeers, a crown and curse,
Tongues that cut and wounded worse
Than any stones that bitter day
Which cut the living flesh away,
And under the feet of the carpenter
Three-day shrivelled palms there were!

“Here is the carpenter who would try
To build him a house that touched the sky,
A house to hold the stars and men
When the earth is turned to dust again.
Here is the man who hewed and sawed
To make a house for the living God!

“Here is the one whose kin we knew—
Bred of men who draw and hew.
Joseph, who has an ass for friend,
Has got a son who knows no end!
Man-grown when morning stars were new,
Who shall be a youth when the years are through!

Long live the King!—make way, make way.
Who tramples down temples no man may stay!
Knees bend to him in all the lands,
All birds and beasts are in his hands,
His are the uttermost parts of the sea,
His to rule everlastingly!

“The spittle on his beard is pearl,
 The stones are palm leaves that we hurl,
 Dust on his hair is the oil of kings,
 High on his back his mace he brings,
 The drops on his brow are ruby stones—
 Up with him to his throne of thrones!

“He has two thieves for retinue
 Of such shall be the Kingdom New,
 Hands that buffet him reach to raise
 Him beside the Ancient of Days,
 Voices that cry ‘to the Hill with him!’
 Are only shouting ‘long live the King!’
 Up the hill His Highness goes
 To give an audience to crows.”

But still the carpenter held his peace.
 Under the taunts that would not cease,
 Frail and pale and like the rose
 That winds have torn at summer’s close,
 He passed in silence, and his eyes
 Were softer than the saddened skies.

Then suddenly the tall thief bowed
 And wept before the mocking crowd;
 He knelt and kissed the path where were
 The frail white feet of the Carpenter;
 Then up he rose, his head held high,
 His eyes the hue of morning sky.

Deep in the crowd there rose a shout,
 And the David lad came dancing out
 Singing shrill song as cherubim
 Make with their wings in praise of Him,
 Dancing as if his feet were shod
 With the burning wings of the sons of God.

And the little red hen found such a grain
 As never had grown in sun and rain
 Through a thousand years, and ate her fill
 And opening her beak sang with a will.
 But the Carpenter with sad calm face
 Went up the hill to His Trysting Place.

ETERNALS

BY GUSTAV DAVIDSON

A thousand times I gazed up at the stars
And thought: "How can ye, changeless the ages through,
Keep fresh your glory to our mortal view?"
And yet, as I behold them this fair night,
How strangely new!

A thousand times I wearied of the world,
And cried out, as despair within me grew;
"What hast thou, life, still beautiful or true?"
And yet, amidst a whole grey world of doubt,
Springs faith anew!

MICHAELANGELO

BY EMILE VERHAEREN

Translated from the French by E. H. Pfeiffer

When Michaelangelo entered the Sistine Chapel,
He tarried there, as if upon the look-out,
While his eye measured the height of the vault
And his step the path from the door to the altar.
He watched the light pour through the windows
And figured out how he would have to master
And curb his task, that seemed to rear before him,
A flashing and unbridled steed before him.
Then he set out, at evening, for the open country.

The lines of the valleys, the masses of the mountains
Peopled his brain with their mighty contours.
He caught in the knotted and massive trees,
That the night-wind forcibly twisted and bent,
The strain of a back or the swell of a torso,
Or the stretching up unto the sky
Of great uplifted arms.

And so,
For him, in moments such as these,
Lo, all humanity—gestures, strides,
Rest, attitudes and poses—took
Form and stood revealed for him
There, in the wider aspect of things.

Back to the town he came, at night-fall,
Now glorying in himself and now disgusted,
For not one of the sights that he had seen,
Had, in his eyes, been soothed into a statue.

The next evening, his heavy mood,
Bursting within—a cluster of black grapes—
Sudden he started out to pick
A quarrel with the pope . . .
“Why choose him, Michaelangelo,

A sculptor, and force him to paint
On hardened plaster a holy legend
High up on the top of a chapel's dome?
The Sestine is dark, its walls are badly built;
The reddest sunlight cannot chase night from it!
What use to drive oneself into a fury
On a funereal ceiling,
Tinting shadow and gilding darkness?
And then, besides, what woodsman then would furnish
The vasty lumber for so huge a scaffold?"
The pope made answer, countenance unchanging:
"For you they shall lay low my highest forest."

Forth, into Rome, went Michaelangelo,
Hating the pope, hating the world,
Hating all men, sure that a thousand foes
Lay hid in ambush, close to the palace-wall,
Jeering already the sombre violence,
The mighty grandeur of the art
That he was even now preparing.

Sleep was for him no longer anything
But stormy gestures flung across his thought.
When he stretched out, at night, upon his back,
In bed, his nerves continued roaring on,
Even as he tried to rest.
He was forever trembling.
Like an arrow lodged in a wall;
Still to add further to his daily ills,
He was tortured by the complaints
And by the ill-luck of his relatives.
His terrific brain
Seemed a furnace full of ravening fires,
Wild with brandished flames.

But the more his heart kept suffering,
The more that bitterness and hate
Slashed into it, the more he
Braced himself to front and face
The moment of lightning and miracle
When suddenly his work would flash
Forth, before him;—yes, the better

He worked out in his believing soul
That dark and flameful masterpiece
Whose triumph and whose fearfulness
He bore within.

There came a time in May when matins chimed,
When Michaelangelo did finally
Enter the Sestine, might within his brain.
His ideas he had garnered into sheaves:
Exact and certain groups
Of sweeping noble line
Broke into motion, in the even light,
Before his gaze.
The scaffold had been so firmly erected
It might well have led to the very heavens.
A great gleamful day glided under the dome,
Embracing the arches,
Bursting all things with bloom.

Michaelangelo climbed the wooden ladders,
Alert, his legs three rungs at each stride
Overswinging.
A new flame glowed beneath his eye-lids;
High up, his fingers throbbed and fondled
The stones that he was bent upon reclothing
In glory and in beauty.
Then he came down again—one headlong stride—
And bolted with a mighty hand the door.

He cloistered him for days, for months,
For years, all-zealous to maintain
Pride and its mystery around
His manifold and lonely work.
Each morning he leaped, at birth of day,
With the same heavy step across
The threshold of the chapel,
And like a violent, dumb laborer
While the sun made his tour around the walls,
He plied his hands at their immortal work.

Already in twelve spaces, set aside
By him for them,

Lo, seven prophets and five sybils sought
To pierce the ancient, obscure books,
Whose text, immovable, halted before it,
The moving future.

Along a cornice beautiful bodies gleamed,
Daringly breaking into motion and
Their lower form or back did people
The ceiling's vast expanse
All with their flowering vigor
And their golden flesh.
Pairs of naked children did support
The frontons; garlands flung,
Here and there, festoons. The long
Serpent of brass came forth from his cavern,
Judith flaunted herself in Holophernes' blood,
Goliath crashed to earth—a monument;
And toward the skies mounted the prayer of Hamen.

And without mistakes and without erasures,
And day after day, and without rest,
The masterpiece took final form
In the fullness of its construction.
Soon the Creation in the dome's center reigned:
There one could see God like a wrestler
Struggling
With chaos and the earth and the waters;
The moon and the sun marked with a double seal,
In new and glowing spaciousness,
Their place appointed.

Jehovah was leaping and flying through space,
Bathed by the light and borne by the wind;
The sky, the sea, the hills did all show forth
Alive with a broad, slow energy,
And duly set in order.
Before her creator, beautiful Eve, astonished,
Lifted her tender hands and bent the knee,
While Adam felt the zealous God, his finger,
Touching his fingers, and
Summoning him unto all-mighty tasks.
Cain and Abel were preparing

Their offerings; and the devil,
Turned woman and temptress, did adorn
With heavy breasts the dominating tree.
And under the golden vine-branches
Of his closed field the nakedness of Noah
Had fallen prone upon the ground;
And the black deluge spread, like a flight of birds,
With vasty wings of water
Over the woods and the world.

In the midst of this giant task
That single-handed he accomplished,
Blazed Michaelangelo with Jehovah's fire.
And all-surpassing art gushed from his brain.
The ceiling was peopled with a new race of beings,
Majestic, violent and brooding.
His genius burst forth, austere and convulsive,
Like that of Dante or Savonarola.
Mouths that he opened uttered other words;
Eyes that he kindled other destinies
Beheld;
Under the noble brows, within the lofty bodies
His great deep soul did rumble and did throb.
He re-created after his own heart
Man and the world, all so magnificently
That to this day, high on the Sistine's dome,
His own all-mighty gesture he has fixed
In the gesture of God.

Then came a crisp autumnal day,
When finally the word went forth
That in the chapel the task was finished,
And that the work was good.
Praise rose like a tide at sea
With seething wave and clarion murmuring,
But Julius the Second, Pope,
Hesitant ere he drew his own conclusion,
Wrought with his silence havoc,
Like a conflagration,
And the painter took flight into his solitude.
He went back, as if glad, into his ancient torment,
And rage and pride, and their strange sorrow,

And dark suspicion, scarce restrained,
Stirred once again,
Set loose their tragic hurricane
Through and through
Michaelangelo.

NEW STAR

BY GUSTAV DAVIDSON

Each builds the world as he has dreamed it through
Some high philosophy or dark despair;
And having done, each draws the circle there
That shuts him in. Yet ever will ensue,
With sudden vision, revelations new
Till then not shadowed forth or made aware;
So each must cast his world again, more fair—
Only to shatter it and build more true.

Thus had I marked the limits of the spheres
Before you came. My heart's close empery
Suffered no comet-stars to throw their spears
Over the verge. I had not learned to see.
But when you burned from out the void of years
I wrote "new star" in my astronomy.

A FAIRY TALE

BY ILYA ERENBURG

Translated from the Russian by Jacob Chaitkin

The masons sang: We are young! Let us build to the sky! What care we? There is so much gold in our hearts! We will build a new city on the mountain; we will build the whole world anew! Our towers shall pierce the old sky; electric lamps shall burn for us in place of stars; to the Martians we will shout our greetings!

And while the bricklayers were yet running up and down the scaffolding, piles of rugs were already being carried into the spacious halls. In one night it was built, a city most high. And what did it not contain! Tame rhinoceros gamboled in the gardens; stairs wound their way straight into the sky; infants debated philosophical questions; aged men frolicked, with uplifted skirts; and all day long everybody played checkers and sipped coffee.

No one felt sad, for no loved; no one was resurrected, for no one ever died. But all ascended in swift autoplanes, tenderly caressed one another, and only at times grunted (when remembering the poor, lean earth.)

Thus, not knowing youth or age, they lived a day—or perhaps a year. Lest some one should steal into their kingdom from without, they put three leopards on watch at the golden gates.

It was evening. On the public square violins were singing drowsily. Languid maidens were chewing chick-meat. Youths were spouting subtle poetry, and writing with their finger-nails on flower petals.

Then a Beggar appeared on the square: sick, stinking, in a tattered mat. The violins barked in a shocked voice. The ladies jumped on top of the fruit-vases.

“That’s the leopards for you! What they should have had is a watchman with dogs!”

"What an odor! Look here, monsieur, you don't belong here! You must be here by mistake! Are you looking for anybody?"

"I am going to the Holy Mountain to pray off my sins. I am blinded by the snow, and the wind has deafened me. Most gracious benefactors, allow a poor beggar to warm here until morning!"

And they all answered in a chorus—the wise infants, the parrots, the pug-dogs, the gay elders, the Siamese cats:

"O, how sorry we are! Too bad you walked so long! We haven't a bit of free space! Go down to earth, we remember having seen there hotels and furnished rooms. Our city is so small. We have only five hundred halls: one hundred halls for drinking Chateau d'Yquom, one hundred halls for sighing in the mornings, one hundred halls for reading Persian lyrics, one hundred halls for riding tame kangaroos. You see everything is taken! Good day! Au revoir!"

The Beggar closed his bitter mouth with a finger; he shivered from the chill near the orange-trees. On his brow appeared bloody sweat-drops, on his palms opened the old nail-sores; and a long funereal moan sounded in the air, like a wind.

The lustres went out. The walls shook. The divans sank. The Siamese cats meowed sadly, and somewhere a bird chirped: "Paul what has happened? Why don't they put on the lights?"

Then all became quiet. There was no longer any city! Night, snow, quiet, and some portieres flapping in the wind, and a blue dock-tailed moon shining on splinters of soup-plates.

The ladies' bare shoulders shivered under their ostrich-feathers, the men were so cold they clutched their bellies, the infants whined, forgetting all about Schopenhauer.

"I wanted to put on a warm dress . . . You said it wasn't necessary!"

"I don't see any automobiles—I don't see even a plain cab!"

"This is terrible! You know, I haven't dined yet!"

"You are forgetting I am in the seventh month . . . I shall die . . . Of course you wish it!"

"Perhaps we ought to pray? There have been such cases before in history, have there not? Our Father, Thou art in Heaven . . . You don't remember how it goes? . . . "

The Beggar was still trembling at the sad birch-tree, on his brow glistened bloody hoar-frost. Then he lowered the finger from his mouth and said:

"I am so little—I live in hares' burrows, I pass the night in the house of a snail, in the nest of a lark. I could find no room in your vast city! Your marble halls were too small for me! You had stars, golden vases, tender-voiced violins; you had a city in flowers and flames;—I stood and wept over your poverty: you had no room for me. What shall I give you? My mat is in tatters, and there is but forest and snow all around us. How shall I receive you? I have no high city, I haven't even a simple hearth. But have faith! have faith! And what if it is cold, what if it snows! My heart is open to all! Do you doubt? Do you ask how you will all be able to enter? Fools! A whole world took refuge in it!"

Thus the Beggar. Hot tears were falling. The earth was breathing white vapors. The snow began to melt, and among the last year's foliage appeared new herbs, such wretched ones! And then spring flowers arose, and there was an Easter fragrance. White-breasted swallows pressed close to the earth and sang. Tears fell, stirring the soil, waking it, warming it. Tears, or the April shower, perhaps.

And ancient gentlemen in drenched silk hats and ladies without powder-puffs sat in the sun, wept with tears of innocence, rejoiced that spring had come in the middle of winter: "O heart of Christ O sun of May! How good it is to bathe in thy rays!"

The Beggar alone still trembled from the icy wind. A December snowfall still pricked his face. No! He will never be warm! We hear Thy voice, but in our desolate hearts is such darkness! Such cold!

The Lord have mercy upon us!

Moscow, 1919.

THE FORETASTE OF THE FRUIT

BY LAWRENCE PARMLY BROWN

The serpent spake; but Eve reluctant stood,
Wide-eyed and speechless, pallid as the moon,
Till he was gone. She sighed and clasped her heart,
As thither flew a pair of snowy doves,
Straight to the tree. In amorous content
They billed and cooed and pecked the red-ripe fruit.
It bled: and Eve stretched forth her hand and touched,
But quick drew back, with all her fingers wet;
For lo! before her, ruddy as the sun
In morning mist, young Adam sudden came!
As though to hide the little gasp she gave,
She pressed her wetted fingers to her lips:
A taste of honeyed dew was in her mouth,
Undreamed before. She smiled on Adam then,
And placed her finger-tips, all wetted still,
Upon his lips: and so he tasted, too.
They stood amazed: their foretaste of the fruit
Thrilled them with strange desire and delight.
The blushing Eve grew rosy to her breasts,
As snow-clad hills are tinted in the dawn;
Then Adam took her in his ardent arms—
The pulse of nature stopped—the heavens reeled—
And their lips met, and clung, as though all time
Had been too short for that first kiss of earth.

COWARDS ALL!

BY FRANCES AVERY FAUNCE

"I dislike poetry—which impresses me as the coward's escape from the difficulties of prose through the back door of melody."

W. L. George.

Prose is the haughty lady of the house:
So brave a creature would not deign to choose
The staircase to the garret, or espouse
The "back door" that the servants have to use.—
Poor slipshod Shakespeare shuffled through this "door
Of melody." The prints of other men,
As "cowardly" as he, had gone before,
Homer, and Virgil with his shiftless pen.
What was it Milton found was "death to hide"?
Why keep these older poets on our shelves?
If Tennyson and Wordsworth had half tried,
We need not still deplore their lazy selves.
They loafed about the kitchen, so did Burns,
Waiting for some "escape" through idle ways.
Keats nothing dared, Poe dealt in simple turns,
And R. L. S. fled back to childhood days.
The makeshift path of poesy deludes
Good souls this very day: take Alfred Noyes,
And Kipling, Thomas Hardy,—worthless dudes!
How indolent their muse's rhythmic voice!
Pity the men and women of our land,
Pale shrinking spendthrifts of soft hours of ease,
"Too proud to fight"—in prose—, they lend a hand
To lax harmonic lines of unbought peace.
I had forgot the mediaeval hymns,
Faint-hearted is the only word for such:
All fervent songs, the ages through, are whims
And if they mention faith, faith can't be much.
I cannot tell the names of all the folk
Who chose the line of least resistance. Why,
George Herbert and old Dante are a joke,
Bliss Perry's recent book, a flagrant lie!

Poor Aristotle, Plato, and the rest
Of all the critics down through Sidney's time,
Have wasted science on an idle jest,
Creating theories as false as rhyme.

If this is how the poets went and came,
I'd like to take the "back door" out to fame!

MOOD

BY JOSEPH L. FREEMAN

Now love is mighty, but it has an end:
Beauty is brief; youth is a waning breath;
And passion is a gift which the gods lend
Only to take away. These all know death.
Snows melt, and flowers fade, and vows are broken;
Bright summers tarnish, warm desires grow cold;
Lips forget lips, and tongues forget words spoken:
All songs fall silent and all tales are told.
Beauty must die, and love and men must die;
And perfect hearts must break before the rest:
Isolde must perish, and Francesca cry
Her love forever on a phantom breast;
Dim convents must imprison Heloise,
And Hero must be lost in the dark seas.

THE DOWAGER TO THE CLOCK

BY BLANCHE RUCKER MARTIN

We both are old, and sadly out of place;
In this gay swirl of life we crowd the rim.
The Time you serve has splotched your yellowed face;
My children do not like this corner dim
Where I sit in an old chair, scarred and frayed,
And read from books whose pages come unsewn,
Till wavering line by faded eyes is made
As vagrant as the leaves the wind has blown
Beyond my reach; then you take pity on
The woman bent and worn who dreads to stir,
And thru the dusk the names she loved at dawn
Your kindly wagging tongue repeats to her.
Your voice falls clear upon my dulling ear;
Your tuneful chimes sing of my golden year.

THE CLOCK REPLIES

BY BLANCHE RUCKER MARTIN

Old age and dreams for us; we serve Time past,
Our faces cunning mosaics of his art;
But you dream out unto the heavens vast,
I only count the "Aves" of your heart—
Your bead's-man to that hour when dusk shall glow
With all the roseate tints of dawning youth,
And dark shall whisper, soft as falling snow,
Of Love's eternal balm, outpoured to soothe
The heart that lower beats. In that stilled time,
When breath is bated, and the eyes shall close
To fleeing moments, let my faithful chime
Strike a faint note of that great song that grows
On lips that molder, while its strains suspire
To swell the volume of the heavenly choir.

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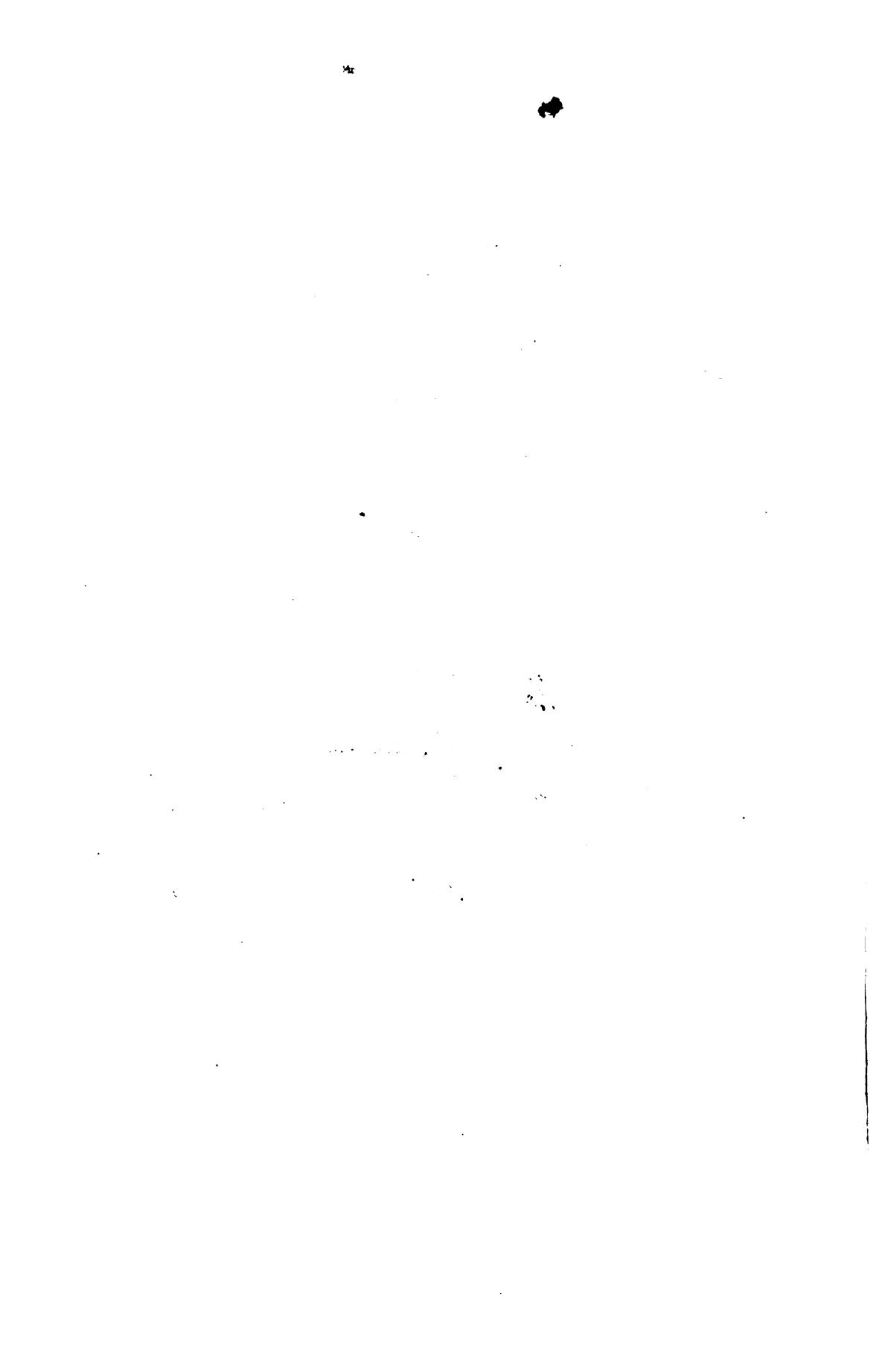
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