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HOUSE AND GARDEN, ANTWERP. BY VINCENT VAN GOGH



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## THE MAN WHO LOVED ISLANDS

BY D. H. LAWRENCE

### FIRST ISLAND

**T**HERE was a man who loved islands. He was born on one, but it didn't suit him, as there were too many other people on it, besides himself. He wanted an island all of his own: not necessarily to be alone on it, but to make it a world of his own.

An island, if it is big enough, is no better than a continent. It has to be really quite small, before it *feels like* an island; and this story will show how tiny it has to be, before you can presume to fill it with your own personality.

Now circumstances so worked out, that this lover of islands, by the time he was thirty-five, actually acquired an island of his own. He didn't own it as freehold property, but he had a ninety-nine years' lease of it, which, as far as a man and an island are concerned, is as good as everlasting. Since, if you are like Abraham, and want your offspring to be numberless as the sands of the sea-shore, you don't choose an island to start breeding on. Too soon there would be overpopulation, overcrowding, and slum conditions. Which is a horrid thought, for one who loves an island for its insulation. No, an island is a nest which holds one egg, and one only. This egg is the islander himself.

The island acquired by our potential islander was not in the remote oceans. It was quite near at home, no palm-trees nor boom of surf on the reef, nor any of that kind of thing; but a good solid dwelling-house, rather gloomy, above the landing-place, and beyond, a small farm-house with sheds, and a few outlying fields.

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Down on the little landing bay were three cottages in a row, like coastguards' cottages, all neat and whitewashed.

What could be more cozy and home-like? It was four miles if you walked all round your island, through the gorse and the blackthorn bushes, above the steep rocks of the sea and down in the little glades where the primroses grew. If you walked straight over the two humps of hills, the length of it, through the rocky fields where the cows lay chewing, and through the rather sparse oats, on into the gorse again, and so to the low cliffs' edge, it took you only twenty minutes. And when you came to the edge, you could see another, bigger island lying beyond. But the sea was between you and it. And as you returned over the turf where the short, downland cowslips nodded, you saw to the east still another island, a tiny one this time, like the calf of the cow. This tiny island also belonged to the islander.

Thus it seems that even islands like to keep each other company.

Our islander loved his island very much. In early spring, the little ways and glades were a snow of blackthorn, a vivid white among the celtic stillness of close green and grey rock, blackbirds calling out in the whiteness their first long, triumphant calls. After the blackthorn and the nestling primroses came the blue apparition of hyacinths, like elfin lakes and slipping sheets of blue, among the bushes and under the glade of trees. And many birds with nests you could peep into, on the island all your own. Wonderful what a great world it was!

Followed summer, and the cowslips gone, the wild roses faintly fragrant through the haze. There was a field of hay, the foxgloves stood looking down. In a little cove, the sun was on the pale granite where you bathed, and the shadow was in the rocks. Before the mist came stealing, and you went home through the ripening oats, the glare of the sea fading from the high air as the fog-horn started to moo on the other island. And then the sea-fog went, it was autumn, and oat-sheaves lying prone; the great moon, another island, rose golden out of the sea, and rising higher, the world of the sea was white.

So autumn ended with rain, and winter came, dark skies and dampness and rain, but rarely frost. The island, your island, cowered dark, holding away from you. You could feel, down in the wet, sombre hollows, the resentful spirit coiled upon itself, like a wet dog coiled in gloom, or a snake that is neither asleep

nor awake. Then in the night, when the wind left off blowing in great gusts and volleys, as at sea, you felt that your island was a universe, infinite and old as the darkness; not an island at all, but an infinite dark world where all the souls from all the other bygone nights lived on, and the infinite distance was near.

Strangely, from your little island in space, you were gone forth into the dark, great realms of time, where all the souls that never die veer and swoop on their vast, strange errands. The little earthly island has dwindled, like a jumping-off place, into nothingness, for you have jumped off, you know not how, into the dark wide mystery of time, where the past is vastly alive, and the future is not separated off.

This is the danger of becoming an islander. When, in the city, you wear your white spats and dodge the traffic with the fear of death down your spine, then you are quite safe from the terrors of infinite time. The moment is your little islet in time, it is the spatial universe that careers round you.

But once isolate yourself on a little island in the sea of space, and the moment begins to heave and expand in great circles, the solid earth is gone, and your slippery, naked dark soul finds herself out in the timeless world, where the chariots of the so-called dead dash down the old streets of centuries, and souls crowd on the footways that we, in the moment, call bygone years. The souls of all the dead are alive again, and pulsating actively around you. You are out in the other infinity.

Something of this happened to our islander. Mysterious "feelings" came upon him, that he wasn't used to; strange awarenesses of old, far-gone men, and other influences; men of Gaul, with big moustaches, who had been on his island, and had vanished from the face of it, but not out of the air of night. They were there still, hurtling their big, violent, unseen bodies through the night. And there were priests, with golden knives and mistletoe; then other priests with a crucifix; then pirates with murder on the sea.

Our islander was uneasy. He didn't believe, in the daytime, in any of this nonsense. But at night it just was so. He had reduced himself to a single point in space, and a point being that which has neither length nor breadth, he had to step off it into somewhere else. Just as you must step into the sea, if the waters wash your foothold away, so he had, at night, to step off into the otherworld of undying time.

He was uncannily aware, as he lay in the dark, that the black-thorn grove that seemed a bit uncanny even in the realm of space and day, at night was crying with old men of an invisible race, around the altar stone. What was a ruin under the hornbeam trees by day, was a moaning of bloodstained priests with crucifixes, on the ineffable night. What was a cave and a hidden beach between coarse rocks, became in the invisible dark the purple-lipped imprecation of pirates.

To escape any more of this sort of awareness, our islander daily concentrated upon his material island. Why should it not be the Happy Isle at last? Why not the last small isle of the Hesperides, the perfect place, all filled with his own gracious, blossom-like spirit? A minute world of pure perfection, made by man, himself.

He began, as we begin all our attempts to regain Paradise, by spending money. The old, semi-feudal dwelling-house he restored, let in more light, put clear lovely carpets on the floor, clear, flower-petal curtains at the sullen windows, and wines in the cellars of rock. He brought over a buxom housekeeper from the world, and a soft-spoken, much-experienced butler. These too were to be islanders.

In the farm-house he put a bailiff, with two farm-hands. There were Jersey cows, tinkling a slow bell, among the gorse. There was a call to meals at midday, and the peaceful smoking of chimneys at evening, when rest descended.

A jaunty sailing-boat with a motor accessory rode in the shelter in the bay, just below the row of three white cottages. There was also a little yawl, and two row-boats drawn up on the sand. A fishing net was drying on its supports, a boat-load of new white planks stood criss-cross, a woman was going to the well with a bucket.

In the end cottage lived the skipper of the yacht, and his wife and son. He was a man from the other, large island, at home on this sea. Every fine day he went out fishing, with his son, every fine day there was fresh fish on the island.

In the middle cottage lived an old man and wife, a very faithful couple. The old man was a carpenter, and man of many jobs. He was always working, always the sound of his plane or his saw: lost in his work, he was another kind of islander.

In the third cottage was the mason, a widower with a son and

two daughters. With the help of his boys, this man dug ditches and built fences, raised buttresses and erected a new outbuilding, and hewed stone from the little quarry. His daughter worked at the big house.

It was a quiet, busy little world. When the islander brought you over as his guest, you met first the dark-bearded, thin, smiling skipper, Arnold, then his boy Charles. At the house, the smooth-lipped butler who had lived all over the world valeted you, and created that curious creamy-smooth, disarming sense of luxury around you which only a perfect and rather untrustworthy servant can create. He disarmed you and had you at his mercy. The buxom housekeeper smiled and treated you with the subtly respectful familiarity, that is only dealt out to the true gentry. And the rosy maid threw a glance at you, as if you were very wonderful, coming from the great outer world. Then you met the smiling but watchful bailiff, who came from Cornwall, and the shy farm-hand from Berkshire, with his clean wife and two little children, then the rather sulky farm-hand from Suffolk. The mason, a Kent man, would talk to you by the yard, if you let him. Only the old carpenter was gruff and elsewhere absorbed.

Well then, it was a little world to itself, and everybody feeling very safe, and being very nice to you, as if you were really something special. But it was the islander's world, not yours. He was the Master. The special smile, the special attention was to the Master. They all knew how well off they were. So the islander was no longer Mr So-and-so. To everyone on the island, even to you yourself, he was "the Master."

Well, it was ideal. The Master was no tyrant. Ah no! He was a delicate, sensitive, handsome Master, who wanted everything perfect and everybody happy. Himself, of course, to be the fount of this happiness and perfection.

But in his way, he was a poet. He treated his guests royally, his servants liberally. Yet he was shrewd, and very wise. He never came the boss over his people. Yet he kept his eye on everything, like a shrewd, blue-eyed young Hermes. And it was amazing what a lot of knowledge he had at hand. Amazing what he knew about Jersey cows, and cheese-making, ditching and fencing, flowers and gardening, ships and the sailing of ships. He was a fount of knowledge about everything, and this knowledge he

imparted to his people in an odd, half-ironical, half-portentous fashion, as if he really belonged to the quaint, half-real world of the gods.

They listened to him with their hats in their hands. He loved white clothes; or creamy white; and cloaks, and broad hats. So, in fine weather, the bailiff would see the elegant tall figure in creamy-white serge coming like some bird over the fallow, to look at the weeding of the turnips. Then there would be a doffing of hats, and a few minutes of whimsical, shrewd, wise talk, to which the bailiff answered admiringly, and the farm-hands listened in silent wonder, leaning on their hoes. The bailiff was almost tender, to the Master.

Or, on a windy morning, he would stand with his cloak blowing in the sticky sea-wind, on the edge of the ditch that was being dug to drain a little swamp, talking in the teeth of the wind to the man below, who looked up at him with steady and inscrutable eyes.

Or at evening in the rain he would be seen hurrying across the yard, the broad hat turned against the rain. And the farm-wife would hurriedly exclaim: "The Master! Get up, John, and clear him a place on the sofa." And then the door opened, and it was a cry of: "Why of all things, if it isn't the Master! Why, have ye turned out then of a night like this, to come across to the like of we?" And the bailiff took his cloak, and the farm-wife his hat, the two farm-hands drew their chairs to the back, he sat on the sofa and took a child up near him. He was wonderful with children, talked to them simply wonderful, made you think of Our Saviour Himself, said the woman.

Always he was greeted with smiles, and the same peculiar deference, as if he were a higher, but also frailer being. They handled him almost tenderly, and almost with adulation. But when he left, or when they spoke of him, they had often a subtle, mocking smile on their faces. There was no need to be afraid of "the Master." Just let him have his own way. Only the old carpenter was sometimes sincerely rude to him; so he didn't care for the old man.

It is doubtful whether any of them really liked him, man to man, or even woman to man. But then it is doubtful if he really liked any of them, as man to man, or man to woman. He wanted them to be happy, and the little world to be perfect. But any one

who wants the world to be perfect must be careful not to have real likes and dislikes. A general good-will is all you can afford.

The sad fact is, alas, that general good-will is always felt as something of an insult, by the mere object of it; and so it breeds a quite special brand of malice. Surely general good-will is a form of egoism, that it should have such a result!

Our islander, however, had his own resources. He spent long hours in his library, for he was compiling a book of reference to all the flowers mentioned in the Greek and Latin authors. He was not a great classical scholar: the usual public-school equipment. But there are such excellent translations nowadays. And it was so lovely, tracing flower after flower as it blossomed in the ancient world.

So the first year on the island passed by. A great deal had been done. Now the bills flooded in, and the Master, conscientious in all things, began to study them. The study left him pale and breathless. He was not a rich man. He knew he had been making a hole in his capital, to get the island into running order. When he came to look, however, there was hardly anything left but hole. Thousands and thousands of pounds had the island swallowed into nothingness.

But surely the bulk of the spending was over! Surely the island would now begin to be self-supporting, even if it made no profit! Surely he was safe. He paid a good many of the bills, and took a little heart. But he had had a shock, and the next year, the coming year, there must be economy, frugality. He told his people so, in simple and touching language. And they said: "Why surely! Surely!"

So, while the wind blew and the rain lashed outside, he would sit in his library with the bailiff over a pipe and a pot of beer, discussing farm projects. He lifted his narrow handsome face, and his blue eye became dreamy. "*What* a wind!" It blew like cannon shots. He thought of his island, lashed with foam, and inaccessible, and he exulted. . . . No, he must not lose it. He turned back to the farm projects with the zest of genius, and his hands flicked white emphasis, while the bailiff intoned: "Yes, Sir! Yes, Sir! You're right, Master!"

But the man was hardly listening. He was looking at the Master's blue lawn shirt and curious pink tie with the fiery red stone, at the enamel sleeve-links, and at the ring with the peculiar

scarab. The brown searching eyes of the man of the soil glanced repeatedly over the fine, immaculate figure of the Master, with a sort of slow, calculating wonder. But if he happened to catch the Master's bright, exalted glance, his own eye lit up with a careful cordiality and deference, as he bowed his head slightly.

Thus between them they decided what crops should be sown, what fertilizers should be used in different places, which breed of pigs should be imported, and which line of turkeys. That is to say, the bailiff, by continually cautiously agreeing with the Master, kept out of it, and let the young man have his own way.

The Master knew what he was talking about. He was brilliant at grasping the gist of a book, and knowing how to apply his knowledge. On the whole, his ideas were sound. The bailiff even knew it. But in the man of the soil there was no answering enthusiasm. The brown eyes smiled their cordial deference, but the thin lips never changed. The Master pursed his own flexible mouth in a boyish versatility, as he cleverly sketched in his ideas to the other man, and the bailiff made eyes of admiration, but in his heart he was not attending, he was only watching the Master as he would have watched a queer, alien animal, quite without sympathy, not implicated.

So, it was settled, and the Master rang for Elvery, the butler, to bring a sandwich. He, the Master, was pleased. The butler saw it, and came back with anchovy and ham sandwiches, and a newly opened bottle of vermouth. There was always a newly opened bottle of something.

It was the same with the mason. The Master and he discussed the drainage of a bit of land, and more pipes were ordered, more special bricks, more this, more that.

Fine weather came at last, there was a little lull in the hard work on the island. The Master went for a short cruise in his yacht. It was not really a yacht, just a neat little bit of a yawl. They sailed along the coast of the mainland, and put in at the ports. At every port some friend turned up, the butler made elegant little meals in the cabin. Then the Master was invited to villas and hotels, his people disembarked him as if he were a prince.

And oh, how expensive it turned out! He had to telegraph to the bank for money. And he went home again, to economize.

The marsh-marigolds were blazing in the little swamp where the



ditches were being dug for drainage. He almost regretted, now, the work in hand. The yellow beauties would not blaze again.

Harvest came, and a bumper crop. There must be a harvest-home supper. The long barn was now completely restored and added to. The carpenter had made long tables. Lanterns hung from the beams of the high-pitched roof. All the people of the island were assembled. The bailiff presided. It was a gay scene.

Towards the end of the supper the Master, in a velvet jacket, appeared with his guests. Then the bailiff rose and proposed: "The Master! Long life and health to the Master!" All the people drank the health with great enthusiasm and cheering. The Master replied with a little speech: They were on an island in a little world of their own. It depended on them all to make this world a world of true happiness and content. Each must do his part. He hoped he himself did what he could, for his heart was in his island, and with the people of his island.

The butler responded: As long as the island had such a Master, it could not but be a little heaven for all the people on it.—This was seconded with virile warmth by the bailiff and the mason, the skipper was beside himself. Then there was dancing, the old carpenter was fiddler.

But under all this, things were not well. The very next morning came the farm-boy to say that a cow had fallen over the cliff. The Master went to look. He peered over the not very high declivity, and saw her lying dead, on a green ledge under a bit of late-flowering broom. A beautiful, expensive creature, already looking swollen. But what a fool, to fall so unnecessarily!

It was a question of getting several men to haul her up the bank: and then of skinning and burying her. No one would eat the meat. How repulsive it all was!

This was symbolic of the island. As sure as the spirits rose in the human breast, with a movement of joy, an invisible hand struck malevolently out of the silence. There must not be any joy, nor even any quiet peace. A man broke a leg, another was crippled with rheumatic fever. The pigs had some strange disease. A storm drove the yacht on a rock. The mason hated the butler, and refused to let his daughter serve at the house.

Out of the very air came a stony, heavy malevolence. The island itself seemed malicious. It would go on being hurtful and

evil for weeks at a time. Then suddenly again one morning it would be fair, lovely as a morning in Paradise, everything beautiful and flowing. And everybody would begin to feel a great relief, and a hope for happiness.

Then as soon as the Master was opened out in spirit like an open flower, some ugly blow would fall. Somebody would send him an anonymous note, accusing some other person on the island. Somebody else would come hinting things against one of his servants.

"Some folks thinks they've got an easy job out here, with all the pickings they make!" the mason's daughter screamed at the suave butler, in the Master's hearing. He pretended not to hear.

"My man says this island is surely one of the lean kine of Egypt, it would swallow a sight of money, and you'd never get anything back out of it," confided the farm-hand's wife to one of the Master's visitors.

The people were not contented. They were not islanders. "We feel we're not doing right by the children," said those who had children. "We feel we're not doing right by ourselves," said those who had no children. And the various families fairly came to hate one another.

Yet the island was so lovely. When there was a scent of honeysuckle, and the moon brightly flickering down on the sea, then even the grumblers felt a strange nostalgia for it. It set you yearning, with a wild yearning; perhaps for the past, to be far back in the mysterious past of the island, when the blood had a different throb. Strange floods of passion came over you, strange violent lusts and imaginations of cruelty. The blood and the passion and the lust which the island had known. Uncanny dreams, half-dreams, half-evocated yearnings.

The Master himself began to be a little afraid of his island. He felt here strange violent feelings he had never felt before, and lustful desires that he had been quite free from. He knew quite well now that his people didn't love him at all. He knew that their spirits were secretly against him, malicious, jeering, envious, and lurking to down him. He became just as wary and secretive with regard to them.

But it was too much. At the end of the second year, several departures took place. The housekeeper went. The Master always blamed self-important women most. The mason said he

wasn't going to be monkeyed about any more, so he took his departure, with his family. The rheumatic farm-hand left.

And then the year's bills came in, the Master made up his accounts. In spite of good crops, the assets were ridiculous, against the spending. The island had again lost, not hundreds but thousands of pounds. It was incredible. But you simply couldn't believe it! Where had it all gone?

The Master spent gloomy nights and days, going through accounts in the library. He was thorough. It became evident, now the housekeeper had gone, that she had swindled him. Probably everybody was swindling him. But he hated to think it, so he put the thought away.

He emerged, however, pale and hollow-eyed from his balancing of unbalanceable accounts, looking as if something had kicked him in the stomach. It was pitiable. But the money had gone, and there was an end of it. Another great hole in his capital. How could people be so heartless?

It couldn't go on, that was evident. He would soon be bankrupt. He had to give regretful notice to his butler. He was afraid to find out how much his butler had swindled him. Because the man was such a wonderful butler, after all. And the farm-bailiff had to go. The Master had no regrets in that quarter. The losses on the farm had almost embittered him.

The third year was spent in rigid cutting down of expenses. The island was still mysterious and fascinating. But it was also treacherous and cruel, secretly, fathomlessly malevolent. In spite of all its fair show of white blossom and bluebells, and the lovely dignity of foxgloves bending their rose-red bells, it was your implacable enemy.

With reduced staff, reduced wages, reduced splendour, the third year went by. But it was fighting against hope. The farm still lost a good deal. And once more, there was a hole in that remnant of capital. Another hole, in that which was already a mere remnant round the old holes. The island was mysterious in this also: it seemed to pick the very money out of your pocket, as if it were an octopus with invisible arms stealing from you in every direction.

Yet the Master still loved it. But with a touch of rancour now.

He spent, however, the second half of the fourth year intensely working on the mainland, to be rid of it. And it was amazing

how difficult he found it to dispose of an island. He had thought that everybody was pining for such an island as his; but not at all. Nobody would pay any price for it. And he wanted now to get rid of it, as a man who wants a divorce at any cost.

It was not till the middle of the fifth year that he transferred it, at a considerable loss to himself, to an hotel company who were willing to speculate in it. They were to turn it into a handy honeymoon-and-golf island.

There, take that, island which didn't know when it was well off! Now be a honeymoon-and-golf island!

## SECOND ISLAND

The islander had to move. But he was not going to the mainland. Oh, no! He moved to the smaller island, which still belonged to him. And he took with him the faithful old carpenter and wife, the couple he never really cared for; also a widow and daughter, who had kept house for him the last year; also an orphan lad, to help the old man.

The small island was very small; but being a hump of rock in the sea, it was bigger than it looked. There was a little track among rocks and bushes, winding and scrambling up and down around the islet, so that it took you twenty minutes to do the circuit. It was more than you would have expected.

Still, it was an island. The islander moved himself, with all his books, into the commonplace six-roomed house up to which you had to scramble from the rocky landing-place. There were also two joined-together cottages. The old carpenter lived in one, with his wife and the lad, the widow and daughter lived in the other.

At last all was in order. The Master's books filled two rooms. It was already autumn, Orion lifting out of the sea. And in the dark nights, the Master could see the lights on his late island, where the hotel company were entertaining guests who would advertise the new resort for honeymoon-golfers.

On his hump of rock, however, the Master was still master. He explored the crannies, the odd handbreadths of grassy level, the steep little cliffs where the last harebells hung, and the seeds of summer were brown above the sea, lonely and untouched. He

peered down the old well. He examined the stone pen where the pig had been kept. Himself, he had a goat.

Yes, it was an island. Always, always, underneath among the rocks the celtic sea sucked and washed and smote its feathery grey-ness. How many different noises of the sea! deep explosions, rumblings, strange long sighs and whistling noises; then voices, real voices of people clamouring as if they were in a market, under the waters; and again, the far-off ringing of a bell, surely an actual bell! then a tremulous trilling noise, very long and alarming, and an undertone of hoarse gasping.

On this island there were no human ghosts, no ghosts of any ancient race. The sea, and the spume and the wind and the weather, had washed them all out, washed them out, so there was only the sound of the sea itself, its own ghost, myriad-voiced, communing and plotting and shouting all winter long. And only the smell of the sea, with a few bristly bushes of gorse and coarse tufts of heather, among the grey, pellucid rocks, in the grey, more pellucid air. The coldness, the greyness, even the soft, creeping fog of the sea! and the islet of rock humped up in it all, like the last point in space.

Green star Sirius stood over the sea's rim. The island was a shadow. Out at sea a ship showed small lights. Below, in the rocky cove, the row-boat and the motor-boat were safe. A light shone in the carpenter's kitchen. That was all.

Save, of course, that the lamp was lit in the house, where the widow was preparing supper, her daughter helping. The islander went in to his meal. Here he was no longer the Master, he was an islander again and he had peace. The old carpenter, the widow and daughter were all faithfulness itself. The old man worked while ever there was light to see, because he had a passion for work. The widow and her quiet, rather delicate daughter of thirty-three worked for the Master, because they loved looking after him, and they were infinitely grateful for the haven he provided them. But they didn't call him "the Master." They gave him his name: "Mr Cathcart, Sir!" softly, and reverently. And he spoke back to them also softly, gently, like people far from the world, afraid to make a noise.

The island was no longer a "world." It was a sort of refuge. The islander no longer struggled for anything. He had no need. It was as if he and his few dependents were a small flock of sea-

birds alighted on this rock, as they travelled through space, and keeping together without a word. The silent mystery of travelling birds.

He spent most of his day in his study. His book was coming along. The widow's daughter could type out his manuscript for him, she was not uneducated. It was the one strange sound on the island, the typewriter. But soon even its spattering fitted in with the sea's noises, and the wind's.

The months went by. The islander worked away in his study, the people of the island went quietly about their concerns. The goat had a little black kid with yellow eyes. There were mackerel in the sea. The old man went fishing in the row-boat, with the lad. When the weather was calm enough, they went off in the motor-boat to the biggest island, for the post. And they brought supplies, never a penny wasted. And the days went by, and the nights, without desire, without *ennui*.

The strange stillness from all desire was a kind of wonder to the islander. He didn't want anything. His soul at last was still in him, his spirit was like a dim-lit cave under water, where strange sea-foliage expands upon the watery atmosphere, and scarcely sways, and a mute fish shadowily slips in and slips away again. All still and soft and uncrying, yet alive as rooted seaweed is alive.

The islander said to himself: "Is this happiness?" He said to himself: "I am turned into a dream. I feel nothing, or I don't know what I feel. Yet it seems to me I am happy."

Only he had to have something upon which his mental activity could work. So he spent long, silent hours in his study, working not very fast, nor very importantly, letting the writing spin softly from him as if it were drowsy gossamer. He no longer fretted whether it were good or not, what he produced. He slowly, softly spun it like gossamer, and if it were to melt away as gossamer in autumn melts, he would not mind. It was only the soft evanescence of gossamy things which now seemed to him permanent. The very mist of eternity was in them. Whereas stone buildings, cathedrals for example, seemed to him to howl with temporary resistance, knowing they must fall at last; the tension of their long endurance seemed to howl forth from them all the time.

Sometimes he went to the mainland and to the city. Then he went elegantly, dressed in the latest style, to his club. He sat in

a stall at the theatre, he shopped in Bond Street. He discussed terms for publishing his book. But over his face was that gossamy look of having dropped out of the race of progress, which made the vulgar city people feel they had won it over him, and made him glad to go back to his island.

He didn't mind if he never published his book. The years were blending into a soft mist, from which nothing obtruded. Spring came. There was never a primrose on his island, but he found a winter-aconite. There were two little sprayed bushes of blackthorn, and some wind-flowers. He began to make a list of the flowers on his islet, and that was absorbing. He noted a wild currant bush, and watched for the elder flowers on a stunted little tree, then for the first yellow rags of the broom, and wild roses. Bladder campion, orchids, stitchwort, celandine, he was prouder of them than if they had been people on his island. When he came across the golden saxifrage, so inconspicuous in a damp corner, he crouched over it in a trance, he knew not for how long, looking at it. Yet it was nothing to look at. As the widow's daughter found, when he showed it her.

He had said to her, in real triumph:

"I found the golden saxifrage this morning."

The name sounded splendid. She looked at him with fascinated brown eyes, in which was a hollow ache that frightened him a little.

"Did you, Sir? Is it a nice flower?"

He pursed his lips and tilted his brows.

"Well—not showy exactly. I'll show it you if you like."

"I should like to see it."

She was so quiet, so wistful. But he sensed in her a persistency which made him uneasy. She said she was so happy: really happy. She followed him quietly, like a shadow, on the rocky track where there was never room for two people to walk side by side. He went first, and could feel her there, immediately behind him, following so submissively, gloating on him from behind.

It was a kind of pity for her which made him become her lover: though he never realized the extent of the power she had gained over him, and how *she* willed it. But the moment he had fallen, a jangling feeling came upon him, that it was all wrong. He felt a nervous dislike of her. He had not wanted it. And it seemed to him, as far as her physical self went, she had not wanted it

either. It was just her will. He went away, and climbed at the risk of his neck down to a ledge near the sea. There he sat for hours, gazing all jangled at the sea, and saying miserably to himself: "We didn't want it. We didn't really want it."

It was the automatism of sex that had caught him again. Not that he hated sex. He deemed it, as the Chinese do, one of the great life-mysteries. But it had become mechanical, automatic, and he wanted to escape that. Automatic sex shattered him, and filled him with a sort of death. He thought he had come through, to a new stillness of desirelessness. Perhaps beyond that, there was a new fresh delicacy of desire, an unentered frail communion of two people meeting on untrodden ground.

But be that as it might, this was not it. This was nothing new or fresh. It was automatic, and driven from the will. Even she, in her true self, hadn't wanted it. It was automatic in her.

When he came home, very late, and saw her face white with fear and apprehension of his feeling against her, he pitied her, and spoke to her delicately, reassuringly. But he kept himself remote from her.

She gave no sign. She served him with the same silence, the same hidden hunger to serve him, to be near where he was. He felt her love following him with strange, awful persistency. She claimed nothing. Yet now, when he met her bright, brown, curiously vacant eyes, he saw in them the mute question. The question came direct at him, with a force and a power of will he never realized.

So he succumbed, and asked her again.

"Not," she said, "if it will make you hate me."

"Why should it?" he replied, nettled. "Of course not."

"You know I would do anything on earth for you."

It was only afterwards, in his exasperation, he remembered what she had said, and was more exasperated. Why should she pretend to do this *for him*? Why not for herself? But in his exasperation, he drove himself deeper in. In order to achieve some sort of satisfaction, which he never did achieve, he abandoned himself to her. Everybody on the island knew. But he did not care.

Then even what desire he had, left him, and he felt only shattered. He felt that only with her will had she wanted him. Now he was shattered and full of self-contempt. His island was smirched and spoiled. He had lost his place in the rare, desireless



levels of Time to which he had at last arrived, and he had fallen right back. If only it had been true, delicate desire between them, and a delicate meeting on the third rare place where a man might meet a woman, when they were both true to the frail, sensitive, crocus flame of desire in them. But it had been no such thing: automatic, an act of will, not of true desire, it left him feeling humiliated.

He went away from the islet, in spite of her mute reproach. And he wandered about the continent, vainly seeking a place where he could stay. He was out of key; he did not fit in the world any more.

There came a letter from Flora—her name was Flora—to say she was afraid she was going to have a child. He sat down as if he were shot, and he remained sitting. But he replied to her: "Why be afraid? If it is so, it is so, and we should rather be pleased than afraid."

At this very moment, it happened there was an auction of islands. He got the maps, and studied them. And at the auction he bought, for very little money, another island. It was just a few acres of rock away in the north, on the outer fringe of the isles. It was low, it rose out of the great ocean. There was not a building, not even a tree on it. Only northern sea-turf, a pool of rain-water, a bit of sedge, rock, and sea-birds. Nothing else. Under the weeping wet western sky.

He made a trip to visit his new possession. For several days, owing to the seas, he could not approach it. Then, in a light seamist, he landed, and saw it hazy, low, stretching apparently a long way. But it was illusion. He walked over the wet, springy turf, and dark-grey sheep tossed away from him, spectral, bleating hoarsely. And he came to the dark pool, with the sedge. Then on in the dampness, to the grey sea sucking angrily among the rocks.

This was indeed an island.

So he went home to Flora. She looked at him with guilty fear, but also with a triumphant brightness in her uncanny eyes. And again he was gentle, he reassured her, even he wanted her again, with that curious desire that was almost like toothache. So he took her to the mainland, and they were married, since she was going to have his child.

They returned to the island. She still brought in his meals, her own along with them. She sat and ate with him. He would

have it so. The widowed mother preferred to stay in the kitchen. And Flora slept in the guest-room of his house, mistress of his house.

His desire, whatever it was, died in him with nauseous finality. The child would still be months coming. His island was hateful to him, vulgar, a suburb. He himself had lost all his finer distinction. The weeks passed in a sort of prison, in humiliation. Yet he stuck it out, till the child was born. But he was meditating escape. Flora did not even know.

A nurse appeared, and ate at table with them. The doctor came sometimes, and if the sea were rough, he too had to stay. He was cheery over his whisky.

They might have been a young couple in Golders Green.

The daughter was born at last. The father looked at the baby, and felt depressed, almost more than he could bear. The millstone was tied round his neck. But he tried not to show what he felt. And Flora did not know. She still smiled with a kind of half-witted triumph in her joy, as she got well again. Then she began again to look at him with those aching, suggestive, somehow impudent eyes. She adored him so.

This he could not stand. He told her that he had to go away for a time. She wept, but she thought she had got him. He told her he had settled the best part of his property on her, and wrote down for her what income it would produce. She hardly listened, only looked at him with those heavy, adoring, impudent eyes. He gave her a cheque-book, with the amount of her credit duly entered. This did arouse her interest. And he told her, if she got tired of the island, she could choose her home wherever she wished.

She followed him with those aching, persistent brown eyes, when he left, and he never even saw her weep.

He went straight north, to prepare his third island.

### THE THIRD ISLAND

The third island was soon made habitable. With cement and the big pebbles from the shingle beach, two men built him a hut, and roofed it with corrugated iron. A boat brought over a bed and table, and three chairs, with a good cupboard, and a few books. He laid in a supply of coal and paraffin and food—he wanted so little.

The house stood near the flat shingle bay where he landed, and where he pulled up his light boat. On a sunny day in August the men sailed away and left him. The sea was still and pale blue. On the horizon he saw the small mail-steamer slowly passing northwards, as if she were walking. She served the outer isles twice a week. He could row out to her if need be, in calm weather, and he could signal her from a flagstaff behind his cottage.

Half a dozen sheep still remained on the island, as company; and he had a cat to rub against his legs. While the sweet, sunny days of the northern autumn lasted, he would walk among the rocks, and over the springy turf of his small domain, always coming to the ceaseless, restless sea. He looked at every leaf, that might be different from another, and he watched the endless expansion and contraction of the water-tossed sea-weed. He had never a tree, not even a bit of heather to guard. Only the turf, and tiny turf-plants, and the sedge by the pool, the sea-weed in the ocean. He was glad. He didn't want trees or bushes. They stood up like people, too assertive. His bare, low-pitched island in the pale blue sea was all he wanted.

He no longer worked at his book. The interest had gone. He liked to sit on the low elevation of his island, and see the sea; nothing but the pale, quiet sea. And to feel his mind turn soft and hazy, like the hazy ocean. Sometimes, like a mirage, he would see the shadow of land rise hovering to northwards. It was a big island beyond. But quite without substance.

He was soon almost startled when he perceived the steamer on the near horizon, and his heart contracted with fear, lest it were going to pause and molest him. Anxiously he watched it go, and not till it was out of sight did he feel truly relieved, himself again. The tension of waiting for human approach was cruel. He did not want to be approached. He did not want to hear voices. He was shocked by the sound of his own voice, if he inadvertently spoke to his cat. He rebuked himself for having broken the great silence. And he was irritated when his cat would look up at him and mew faintly, plaintively. He frowned at her. And she knew. She was becoming wild, lurking in the rocks, perhaps fishing.

But what he disliked most was when one of the lumps of sheep opened its mouth and baa-ed its hoarse, raucous baa. He watched

it, and it looked to him hideous and gross. He came to dislike the sheep very much.

He wanted only to hear the whispering sound of the sea, and the sharp cries of the gulls, cries that came out of another world to him. And best of all, the great silence.

He decided to get rid of the sheep, when the boat came. They were accustomed to him now, and stood and stared at him with yellow or colourless eyes, in an insolence that was almost cold ridicule. There was a suggestion of cold indecency about them. He disliked them very much. And when they jumped with staccato jumps off the rocks, and their hoofs made the dry, sharp hit, and the fleece flopped on their square backs—he found them repulsive, degrading.

The fine weather passed, and it rained all day. He lay a great deal on his bed, listening to the water trickling from his roof into the zinc water-butt, looking through the open door at the rain, the dark rocks, the hidden sea. Many gulls were on the island now: many sea-birds of all sorts. It was another world of life. Many of the birds he had never seen before. His old impulse came over him, to send for a book, to know their names. In a flicker of the old passion, to know the name of everything he saw, he even decided to row out to the steamer. The names of these birds! he must know their names, otherwise he had not got them, they were not quite alive to him.

But the desire left him, and he merely watched the birds as they wheeled or walked around him, watched them vaguely, without discrimination. All interest had left him. Only there was one gull, a big handsome fellow, who would walk back and forth, back and forth in front of the open door of the cabin, as if he had some mission there. He was big, and pearl-grey, and his roundnesses were as smooth and lovely as a pearl. Only the folded wings had shut black pinions, and on the closed black feathers were three very distinct white dots, making a pattern. The islander wondered very much, why this bit of trimming on the bird out of the far, cold seas. And as the gull walked back and forth, back and forth in front of the cabin, strutting on pale-dusky gold feet, holding up his pale yellow beak, that was curved at the tip, with curious alien importance, the man wondered over him. He was portentous, he had a meaning.

Then the bird came no more. The island, which had been full of sea-birds, the flash of wings, the sound and cut of wings and sharp eerie cries in the air, began to be deserted again. No longer they sat like living eggs on the rocks and turf, moving their heads, but scarcely rising into flight round his feet. No longer they ran across the turf among the sheep, and lifted themselves upon low wings. The host had gone. But some remained, always.

The days shortened, and the world grew eerie. One day the boat came: as if suddenly, swooping down. The islander found it a violation. It was torture to talk to those two men, in their homely clumsy clothes. The air of familiarity around them was very repugnant to him. Himself, he was neatly dressed, his cabin was neat and tidy. He resented any intrusion, the clumsy homeliness, the heavy-footedness of the two fishermen was really repulsive to him.

The letters they had brought, he left lying unopened in a little box. In one of them was his money. But he could not bear to open even that one. Any kind of contact was repulsive to him. Even to read his name on an envelope. He hid the letters away.

And the hustle and horror of getting the sheep caught and tied and put in the ship made him loathe with profound repulsion the whole of the animal creation. What repulsive god invented animals, and evil-smelling men? To his nostrils, the fishermen and the sheep alike smelled foul; an uncleanness on the fresh earth.

He was still nerve-racked and tortured when the ship at last lifted sail and was drawing away, over the still sea. And sometimes days after, he would start with repulsion, thinking he heard the munching of sheep.

The dark days of winter drew on. Sometimes there was no real day at all. He felt ill, as if he were dissolving, as if dissolution had already set in inside him. Everything was twilight, outside, and in his mind and soul. Once, when he went to the door, he saw black heads of men swimming in his bay. For some moments he swooned unconscious. It was the shock, the horror of unexpected human approach. The horror in the twilight! And not till the shock had undermined him and left him disembodied, did he realize that the black heads were the heads of seals swimming in. A sick relief came over him. But he was barely conscious, after the shock. Later on, he sat and wept with gratitude, because

they were not men. But he never realized that he wept. He was too dim. Like some strange, ethereal animal, he no longer realized what he was doing.

Only he still derived his single satisfaction from being alone, absolutely alone, with the space soaking into him. The grey sea alone, and the footing of his sea-washed island. No other contact. Nothing human to bring its horror into contact with him. Only space, damp, twilight, sea-washed space! This was the bread of his soul.

For this reason, he was most glad when there was a storm, or when the sea was high. Then nothing could get at him. Nothing could come through to him from the outer world. True, the terrific violence of the wind made him suffer badly. At the same time, it swept the world utterly out of existence for him. He always liked the sea to be heavily rolling and tearing. Then no boat could get at him. It was like eternal ramparts round his island.

He kept no track of time, and no longer thought of opening a book. The print, the printed letters, so like the depravity of speech, looked obscene. He tore the brass label from his paraffin stove. He obliterated any bit of lettering in his cabin.

His cat had disappeared. He was rather glad. He shivered at her thin, obtrusive call. She had lived in the coal shed. And each morning he had put her a dish of porridge, the same as he ate. He washed her saucer with repulsion. He did not like her writhing about. But he fed her scrupulously. Then one day she did not come for her porridge: she always mewed for it. She did not come again.

He prowled about his island in the rain, in a big oil-skin coat, not knowing what he was looking at, nor what he went out to see. Time had ceased to pass. He stood for long spaces, gazing from a white, sharp face, with those keen, far-off blue eyes of his, gazing fiercely and almost cruelly at the dark sea under the dark sky. And if he saw the labouring sail of a fishing boat away on the cold waters, a strange malevolent anger passed over his features.

Sometimes he was ill. He knew he was ill, because he staggered as he walked, and easily fell down. Then he paused to think what it was. And he went to his stores and took out dried milk and malt, and ate that. Then he forgot again. He ceased to register his own feelings.

The days were beginning to lengthen. All winter the weather had been comparatively mild, but with much rain, much rain. He had forgotten the sun. Suddenly, however, the air was very cold, and he began to shiver. A fear came over him. The sky was level and grey, and never a star appeared at night. It was very cold. More birds began to arrive. The island was freezing. With trembling hands he made a fire in his grate. The cold frightened him.

And now it continued, day after day, a dull, deathly cold. Occasional crumbings of snow were in the air. The days were greyly longer, but no change in the cold. Frozen grey daylight. The birds passed away, flying away. Some he saw lying frozen. It was as if all life were drawing away, contracting away from the north, contracting southwards. "Soon," he said to himself, "it will all be gone, and in all these regions nothing will be alive." He felt a cruel satisfaction in the thought.

Then one night there seemed to be a relief: he slept better, did not tremble half awake, and writhe so much, half-conscious. He had become so used to the quaking and writhing of his body, he hardly noticed it. But when for once it slept deep, he noticed that.

He woke in the morning to a curious whiteness. His window was muffled. It had snowed. He got up and opened his door, and shuddered. Ugh! how cold! All white, with a dark leaden sea, and black rocks curiously speckled with white. The foam was no longer pure. It seemed dirty. And the sea ate at the whiteness of the corpse-like land. Crumbles of snow were silting down the dead air.

On the ground the snow was a foot deep, white and smooth and soft, windless. He took a shovel to clear round his house and shed. The pallor of morning darkened. There was a strange rumbling of far-off thunder, in the frozen air, and through the newly-falling snow, a dim flash of lightning. Snow now fell steadily down, in the motionless obscurity.

He went out for a few minutes. But it was difficult. He stumbled and fell in the snow, which burned his face. Weak, faint, he toiled home. And when he recovered, he took the trouble to make hot milk.

It snowed all the time. In the afternoon again there was a muffled rumbling of thunder, and flashes of lightning blinking

reddish through the falling snow. Uneasy, he went to bed and lay staring fixedly at nothing.

Morning seemed never to come. An eternity long he lay and waited for one alleviating pallor on the night. And at last it seemed the air was paler. His house was a cell faintly illuminated with white light. He realized the snow was walled outside his window. He got up, in the dead cold. When he opened his door, the motionless snow stopped him in a wall as high as his breast. Looking over the top of it, he felt the dead wind slowly driving, saw the snow-powder lift and travel like a funeral train. The blackish sea churned and champed, seeming to bite at the snow, impotent. The sky was grey, but luminous.

He began to work in a frenzy, to get at his boat. If he was to be shut in, it must be by his own choice, not by the mechanical power of the elements. He must get to the sea. He must be able to get at his boat.

But he was weak, and at times the snow overcame him. It fell on him, and he lay buried and lifeless. Yet every time, he struggled alive before it was too late, and fell upon the snow with the energy of fever. Exhausted, he would not give in. He crept indoors and made coffee and bacon. Long since he had cooked so much. Then he went at the snow once more. He must conquer the snow, this new, white brute force which had accumulated against him.

He worked in the awful, dead wind, pushing the snow aside, pressing it with his shovel. It was cold, freezing hard in the wind, even when the sun came out for a while, and showed him his white, lifeless surroundings, the black sea rolling sullen, flecked with dull spume, away to the horizons. Yet the sun had power on his face. It was March.

He reached the boat. He pushed the snow away, then sat down under the lee of the boat, looking at the sea, which nearly swirled to his feet, in the high tide. Curiously natural the pebbles looked, in a world gone all uncanny. The sun shone no more. Snow was falling in hard crumbs, that vanished as if by miracle as they touched the hard blackness of the sea. Hoarse waves rang in the shingle, rushing up at the snow. The wet rocks were brutally black. And all the time the myriad swooping crumbs of snow, demonish, touched the dark sea and disappeared.

During the night there was a great storm. It seemed to him



he could hear the vast mass of the snow striking all the world with a ceaseless thud; and over it all, the wind roared in strange hollow volleys, in between which came a jump of blindfold lightning, then the low roll of thunder heavier than the wind. When at last the dawn faintly discoloured the dark, the storm had more or less subsided, but a steady wind drove on. The snow was up to the top of his door.

Sullenly, he worked to dig himself out. And he managed, through sheer persistency, to get out. He was in the tail of a great drift, many feet high. When he got through, the frozen snow was not more than two feet deep. But his island was gone. Its shape was all changed, great heaping white hills rose where no hills had been, inaccessible, and they fumed like volcanoes, but with snow powder. He was sickened and overcome.

His boat was in another, smaller drift. But he had not the strength to clear it. He looked at it helplessly. The shovel slipped from his hands, and he sank in the snow, to forget. In the snow itself, the sea resounded.

Something brought him to. He crept to his house. He was almost without feeling. Yet he managed to warm himself, just that part of him which leaned in snow-sleep over the coal fire. Then again, he made hot milk. After which, carefully, he built up the fire.

The wind dropped. Was it night again? In the silence, it seemed he could hear the panther-like dropping of infinite snow. Thunder rumbled nearer, crackled quick after the bleared reddened lightning. He lay in bed in a kind of stupor. The elements! The elements! His mind repeated the word dumbly. You can't win against the elements.

How long it went on, he never knew. Once, like a wraith, he got out, and climbed to the top of a white hill on his unrecognizable island. The sun was hot. "It is summer," he said to himself, "and the time of leaves." He looked stupidly over the whiteness of his foreign island, over the waste of the lifeless sea. He pretended to imagine he saw the wink of a sail. Because he knew too well there would never again be a sail on that stark sea.

As he looked, the sky mysteriously darkened and chilled. From far off came the mutter of the unsatisfied thunder, and he knew it was the signal of the snow rolling over the sea. He turned, and felt its breath on him.

# THE INWARD TURNING EYE

(For Muriel Draper)

BY R. ELLSWORTH LARSSON

## I

Season of grey  
and fallow light  
this  
is not either day  
nor night  
this cold  
grey light is vapour  
rising from decay  
of cold  
leaf mold

Heavy the lid  
of sky  
the heavy lidded eye  
of sky turns inward  
—inward  
the inner eye

inward on the vast  
grey vapours  
of a decomposing past

## II

(And no king  
walks the thrashing  
tangles of the wood  
and no queen wanders  
by the cackling stream  
nor sits beneath the leafless  
shriven trees)

This is not either  
 day  
     nor night  
             this cold  
 grey light

    and I  
 on sluggish paths  
                     marooned

## III

                                    And  
 only when golden flowers  
 golden fruits  
 shall bloom from inert leaves  
 of carved and polished crystal  
 brassy sheaves  
                                     and through the steaming  
 pane  
     the lamps of grim  
 uncivil streets  
 assume a thousand  
 golden petals  
                                     golden coronals

  only  
 when sudden lights shall bloom  
 and you are here again  
 within this room  
                                     can I attempt  
 to say what I have looked for—  
 what I found  
                                     in light  
 that seemed a vapour  
   rising from the ground

## DISTORTION

BY LEO STEIN

**S**INCE Cézanne, it has become evident that distortion has some important relation to art, that it is something other than exaggeration, and that possibly it may be something essential. . . .

Distortion for a theory of aesthetics does not necessarily imply a neglect of the rational order. It is the result of a different way of taking the material. There hangs in the next room the picture of a woman sewing. The action of pushing the needle through the cloth is beautifully rendered. For the purposes of science a moving finger occupies successive points at successive moments, but in this picture the finger is at all moments where it is and where it isn't. On the canvas it occupies a definite place, but there is so much of suggested movement that when I look at the hand I do not see it confined to that or any other spot. It belongs definitely in the composition, but the composition is a dynamic one and therefore any element of that composition is not only where it is inventorially to be found, but is also anywhere where it works. The distortion which is of the essence of aesthetic expression is the distortion that makes effective such action at a distance. It produces what we call the unity of the work of art. No aesthetic expression is without it. Aesthetic unity can be obtained only by breaking through the defined contours of the inventorial object, and through effecting a fusion of the content. Every aesthetic expression is dynamic, and therefore involves distortion.

There is such a thing as distortion in science as well as in aesthetics, but that is a very different kind of thing. The self is concerned essentially in science only to the extent that there is a felt interest in knowledge—curiosity, it is often called—which directs the individual towards the processes of science. Of course there are personal conditions of this direction of interest, but the important thing is that the self should not pervade the result. Through the self is brought about the contact between the individual and the things, but the scientific object into which the self enters as a factor, is a scientific object which has been corrupted.

The scientific object is complete in itself because of its double nature. It involves abstraction but not distortion. The aesthetic object being single depends upon the self, whose purposes bring about a distortion of the naturalistic, atomistic character of the individual thing which enters into the composition of the aesthetic object.

Both the scientific and the aesthetic objects are cognitive objects, but there is this important difference that for the scientific object knowing is a purpose, an interest, while for the aesthetic object it is not. For science we want to know what something is, and to get this result we relate it to something else. But in aesthetics we want the object to serve the ends of the self, and in the course of satisfying this purpose we create a cognitive object. Often we satisfy the demands of the self with things that are known on the outskirts rather than in the focus of attention, and so we get the group of attenuated aesthetic objects which I shall call environmental, and which, like decoration, or landscape gardening, serve to give a particular background and atmosphere. In this the knowledge of the object is minimized. But in the purer aesthetic experience at its maximal state, the object is intensely seen. We look at it, however, not because we want to know that particular thing, but because it offers to the self a more or less adequate accommodation.

Distortion in aesthetics means simply that the things which are normally given in the course of practical experience, are selectively and in combination so treated as to satisfy an end of personal interest, and that in the course of this process their inventorial identity is respected, not for its own sake, but only in so far as the present attitudes of the self are compatible with it. By way of instance I recall what Matisse said to me several times, during that period when his pictures showed the most extreme distortion of natural forms. He said that he never began a picture without hoping that this time he would be able to carry it through without any distortion that would disturb the ordinary on-looker. But his greater demand was for certain qualities of plenitude and rhythm, and before he had managed to work up his inventorial items of human bodies and accessories to the conditions of his pictorial intention, they had been pulled entirely out of shape.

In Cézanne's pictures the conditions of distortion were the same.

It was done on purpose but not, in childish language, intentionally on purpose. It happened once that a young painter asked me why Cézanne had distorted the dish in a certain picture that was before us. I told her to look at the picture, and to imagine the dish drawn as a proper ellipse. Of course she saw at once that this would not do. It would have been possible to have done a picture with the plate as a good ellipse, but in that case Cézanne would have had to make compensating distortions elsewhere. The kind of result that he was after could not be obtained by keeping a group of normally seen objects constant to their normal appearances. No aesthetic whole would allow of this completely, and Cézanne's less than some others.

. . . . .

The specific distortions that are the conditions of all aesthetic seeing, explain the education that makes the connoisseur. The average person in respect of art is like the average person in respect of manners. In his native conditions, and without paying especial attention, he naturally shows his personal characters of grace or stolidity, his ease or stiffness, or whatever. But the same person on his good behaviour, especially in unfamiliar conditions, may lose entirely his normality of conduct. This happens because he cannot establish a satisfactory relation between that which appears before him and his self. This could happen only if he were virtually unconscious of the peculiarities of the particular situation, and took his own way like a bull in a china-shop; or if he were discriminatingly aware of it, and abstracted from the situation those elements with which he could deal, and tactfully avoided the rest. The connoisseur is in a similar position. Often he takes his self so absolutely as a standard that he can pronounce on anything, with no more preparation than to see the thing. Sometimes he is sufficiently discriminating to know the measure of his self, and avoids pronouncements where he cannot penetrate. Others have less fixity of the self, and these can establish new relations with what they encounter. They not only recognize realms in which they are not competent, but they are ready to find their way, if possible, with as-yet-unheard-of conditions. Beware of the cultured person who is ready at a moment's notice to give a critical

opinion on anything. Such a person is eminently competent to write a history of art, but he is good for little else. Sometimes he cannot even write a history of art. In that case he is usually a second-hand radical.

It is commonly said that in art the whole man comes to expression, but that science is concerned with abstractions. Art is never purely aesthetic—there is always involved something more than that—but even so, art does not appeal to the whole man. It does appeal to him as a whole, but that is a different matter. The expression in aesthetics is always indeterminate, and therefore there is an indeterminate extent of the self involved. We know that in science there is a specific minimum which is the interest in knowing, and that its definite test is verification. But in aesthetics there is nothing verifiable. A change in opinion does not prove the previous one wrong, for often one comes back to it later. Another self-grouping seems to be involved. An aesthetic object is authentic if at any moment it is actually perceived as such. No picture is invalid, or definitely bad, if it represents any person's seeing. All we need to do is to put ourselves in that person's place, and we too will see it so. Perhaps we cannot do this, and certainly in many cases we do not want to, but that does not alter the facts. Either the self conditions, and enters into the object, or else it does not. There are some intrinsic conditions that measure the purity of a work of art as an aesthetic object, but I know of none that can determine whether one work or another fulfils these conditions, except a personal appreciation. Let any man stand by his appreciation, and he can with a perfectly good conscience defy the opinions of the most assured superiority. He is safe against all attack.

What the self involved in aesthetic experience at a particular moment is, one cannot say. It is the organized product of someone's past modified by many adventitious, floating factors. Success or disappointment in some passing matter of business or love may have as much effect on any particular expression, as one's philosophy or religion. An ideal practitioner ought perhaps to ignore the passing event, but there is just as good a reason why he should ignore his philosophy and his religion. If we go behind the fact of what he at the moment is, we cannot stop short of demanding the normal man, the absolute human being. That

## THE SULKY LOVER

demand is not worth entering on. To entertain it speculatively, would mean to have a competent philosophy. To entertain it practically, would mean to produce the man. The one enterprise is no more within the field of actual competence than the other. Therefore aesthetic distortion cannot be reduced to a system. It depends not only upon the changes imposed upon the inventorial things by the act of unifying them, but furthermore upon the irreducible idiosyncrasies of this man and that other who does the unifying.

## THE SULKY LOVER

BY L. A. G. STRONG

Now let the cock crow out his throat,  
 The pheasant strut in pride,  
 The gull go brilliant past the point,  
 The rower beat the tide:

I only sulk to show my love,  
 Hard knuckles under chin:  
 Sit in this hollow full of sand  
 And see the tide come in

Wishing my stony angry mind  
 Were quiet as the tide,  
 And that to-day were yesterday:  
 Wishing for holes to hide

The stupid thing I've done, the hurt  
 I try to understand,  
 As easy as I bury this  
 Poor paper in the sand.





*Property of the National Gallery, Berlin*

JACK DEMPSEY. BY ERNESTO DE FIORI





*Property of the National Gallery, Berlin*  
JACK DEMPSEY. BY ERNESTO DE FIORI





*Courtesy of the Flechtheim Gallery, Berlin*

THE SWEDISH DANCER, CARINA ARINA. BY ERNESTO DE FIORI



# TONES

BY MANUEL KOMROFF

## THE ORGAN

**I**T was all true. Prudhon was a master craftsman—the very best in Paris and I really believe the best in the whole world. He could make a little box no larger than a postage stamp, all out of tin. It looked like nothing at all, but when you took it in your hand and opened the little cover you realized that it was as fine as a bit of jewellery. I became his apprentice.

He taught me how to draw out the curves and angles, and make projections. He taught me how to solder with hot irons and also with the blowpipe. He was very lenient and kind about all things excepting the quality of work, and in this he was very strict. He never allowed a poor job to leave the shop. If it was poor it had to be done over.

All this has little or nothing to do with the organ in Saint John. I tell it to you only because I must begin at the beginning and this is how I came to work for Prudhon, the master tin-smith. I was about thirteen years old when I first went to him and I was eighteen when my apprenticeship was over. A year before my apprenticeship was over we heard about the building of the new Cathedral Saint John and we also heard, as a kind of a rumour, that they were having trouble with the pipe organ. But as it had nothing to do with us we soon forgot all about it.

One day, however, a cab drove up to the door of our shop and a gentleman got out and asked for Prudhon.

“He has gone home to dinner,” I said.

“So early?” He looked at his watch.

“Yes. He goes when he likes. We take care of the work. He usually returns about three o’clock.”

“About three o’clock,” he reflected looking at this watch. “I will come back later. It is very important. You see Master Prudhon has been recommended to us—as—well, we desire his

advice about bending some tin tubing. I am from the Harmony Organ works and . . . Well, that's all right, I will be back later. You think"—then he hesitated and looking about the shop saw that we were working on rough galvanized iron pipes and two metal tanks for a photographer. "You think—it's a little out of his line, I dare say, isn't it?"

I laughed in his face as hard as I could. "Out of his line," I said with a sneer. "It's about tin sheeting and you say it is out of the master's line. Ha! Ha!" I forced myself to laugh.

He stepped back a bit embarrassed.

"You will be lucky," I added, "if he consents to annoy himself with you. He is an old man and does not like to meddle with other people's business."

"It's advice we need."

As he said this I drew from my pocket a small flat cigarette-box and said to him, "Help yourself. The box, the hinge, and all are of one piece of metal. You cannot see the joints. Take it in your hand and get the feel of it."

He took the box and as he examined it, said: "Fine work. Fine work. He does good work."

"Good work—nonsense!" I cried. "That's not his work. That box was made by his boy apprentice. His work is in the head. He has brains—he knows." And I pointed to the wall where a long strip of wrapping-paper hung. "That's the pattern for a spiral ventilator for the Louvre. We cut the metal from his pattern and it fits together just like the cigarette-box. Out of his line—Ha! Ha!" And I laughed again.

"Yes. Yes. I will return after lunch. Be so good as to give him my card when he returns."

He came back that afternoon and in the morning he came again. In the end it fell upon us to make the pipes for the great organ for Saint John. At first we were to do only the big ones—those that the organ factory had tried to make and failed to get perfectly straight—but in the end we had to do the entire lot.

It was a big job and we made special anvils as long as the room to rest the tubes upon. Everything was figured out scientifically and all measurements were checked back by Prudhon himself. Everything was down to a millimetre. But one day the master paused over the bench and shook his head.

"It's too long," he said. "It is certain to warp. The vibration



of a column of air that size is sure to twist it. It must be reinforced.”

I showed him the plans that had come from the organ company. But he only shook his head and said, “They don’t know.”

We finally decided to put a metal channel down the entire length of the back of the giant tubes. In order to do this it was necessary to heat up the entire tube so that the solder would flow evenly. At first we dropped long bits of charcoal into the tubes, but this scheme was not very satisfactory for it did not heat evenly. Some other plan was needed.

The master himself took a hand at this problem and in the end we stood the tubes up at an angle and got a strong blowpipe underneath that was supplied by four rubber gas tubes and a huge blacksmith’s bellows. The flame entered at the bottom and like a serpent’s tongue you could see it tease out of the top. Some of the tubes were over five metres long. The scheme worked and the job was soon done.

When this heavy work was over, the tubes were polished inside and out and the delicate slot that produces the tone was cut. We sent all the little tubes to the organ factory for tuning, but the big ones were delivered direct to Saint John and were tuned on the organ itself.

Before they were delivered, however, there were one or two which I thought should be gone over again for the solder had not flowed quite evenly and I did not want to let anything go out that could be criticized by the master. To do this I came in early one morning and got the blowpipe and bellows working. But now the slots had been cut to make the tone, and when the flames rushed through, it made a noise that sounded terrific.

The pipe roared and you heard the rushing of air and the spitting of fire and between it all was the low, deep, sonorous tone. It frightened you for it sounded like a devil’s fury. Hell’s Fire.

The old man came into the shop to see what was wrong, but only smiled when he saw what was going on. In the afternoon I repeated it for the benefit of the men from the organ company. And for a whole week or more they came down to hear the wild tones of Hell’s Fire. I gave it that name myself.

Master Prudhon was himself very much interested in this accidental discovery and one night as we were washing up he took me aside to explain it.

“You see,” he said, “there is a conflict. You really have two columns rushing at different pressures through the same tube. The flame is at low pressure and fills the entire tube, but the air from the bellows sets up a second column around the flame. The conflict is between two pressures in the same tube.”

This gave me an idea and while all the tubes were already delivered, there were still two or three imperfect ones standing about that could be used for experimenting. I tried many tricks and in the end I got something that produced the same sound without the use of the flame. I accomplished this with a small sieve made out of a bit of tin that had a collar around it. This would allow most of the air to rush past and only a certain proportion was caught in the sieve which was reduced in pressure. It produced the same wild rushing noise as the flame. It was Hell's Fire.

No organ in the world had ever reproduced the voice of fire. And no organ has since.

### THE LITTLE ORGAN

Soon afterwards I finished the little fire organ for Charlotte. The theatre made special scenery and secured extra lights. In fact everything was done to help bring out the effect. Large coloured posters were made showing bright flames leaping out of several large organ pipes and behind these flames you could see the arms and legs of a dancer. The name “Charlotte Voss” and “The Fire Dance” stood out in large letters.

On the opening night Charlotte was as nervous as she could be. There were moments, she told me later, when she imagined that the whole act would fail and that the public would not approve. Then she feared that the lights would not work properly for they had only one rehearsal with the new scenery. As for the music, she was certain that the conductor would take it all too fast and try to insert a jazz rhythm. Twice he had to be stopped at the last rehearsal and asked to retard.

Marie, her dresser, was tying her hair in a tight knot in order to conceal it under a wig made of silver strands so that the flame-coloured lights would flash their reflections and envelope the entire head.

"It's a good house to-night," she said.

"How do you know?"

"The Violet Sisters just came off and even they got a big hand to-night."

"*Claque?*"

"A little, not much."

"It will be so much more difficult for me."

"Don't be so nervous, my child."

"Oh, I can't help it."

"You had better be careful and not get into the draught of the big fans. You get yourself all heated up and that is how you catch cold."

"Oh, Marie, hurry—you will make me late."

"Yes, and to think of the poor unknown soldier."

"What has that to do with anything?"

"Oh, it is so sad," replied Marie. "So sad. To think that nobody knows who he is and there they went and selected the draughtiest spot in Paris—right under the Arc de Triomphe. . . ."

"Oh, Marie, you are so funny. Hurry or I will be late."

"Don't worry, they will wait for you."

"No, but the conductor will be angry and will try to make time by hurrying through the score."

"That's because he has a bad disposition."

"How do you know?"

"He told me so."

"What did the poor man say?"

"He said that he could not be expected to do any better with the low salaries that his men received. Then his wife is ill."

"Poor man. We should try to do something for him."

"If you do, he will play blue notes all the time. He is just that kind. . . . If you are his friend he is careless with your music and if you are not too friendly he is afraid of you and then he watches himself."

"Oh, Marie. Surely it is better to be friends than to make the poor man afraid of you? It would be difficult to be otherwise."

"That's because you are young and too soft. Everyone knows it and they all take advantage of you. Even the Russian assistant-electrician got money out of you last week."

"How do you know?"

"Lottie told me."

"Lottie should stay in the wardrobe where she belongs and not mix in."

"But the Russian got a hundred francs out of you all for nothing. A piece of wood that he painted."

"No. It was a glove-box."

"Glove-box on the ear. That's what he should have! Just a plain cigar-box painted with Russian whiskers. That's what it is. Then you gave it to the call-boy."

"Yes. I didn't want it."

"Then why did you buy it?"

"Just because."

"Because he wanted money?"

"I suppose so."

"You begin that kind of business and you will have the whole Russian colony on your neck. And the Polish, too, and all the ex-Dukes and expired title grafters and the Roumanians and everybody. Wait and see. They all want to be supported. Next week they will sell you the same box over again."

"You should not speak like that, Marie, because we have a friend who is Russian."

"And because of that you must give money to all the refugees?"

"Not all, Marie. Only the electrician's assistant. He is very poor and works very hard."

"He should have stayed in his own country."

"I think he would have liked to stay at home if he could."

"Who asked him to come here? He could have gone to Africa or America where they have gold all over the place. Certainly. Don't you give him any more money or he will tell everyone and they will laugh at you."

"I don't mind being laughed at for helping someone. Hurry, Marie, or I will be late. Open the door quick! Is that my music?"

Marie opened the door and listened. "No, no, dear. It's the Windmill act. Don't be nervous—they will call you in time."

"But the boy has been known to forget."

"Yes, but why should you care. They cannot play the act without you, can they? All right. Then let them wait. You are too conscientious. Remember when you cried because you thought you danced badly."

"Oh, that was when I was young."

"Last year. That's all it was, last year. And now you are old? Yes. You cried and for a time nobody could find out what was the matter with you. And remember I told you at the time that even if it was bad, nobody noticed it, so there was no use to cry."

"It will be bad to-night, Marie. You will see if it won't."

"Oh, yes, I will see."

"It is certain to be bad because we only had one full rehearsal and I want especially—Oh, I so want it to be good!"

"Don't worry!"

Just then the call-boy announced the act.

Charlotte quickly ran the huge powder-puff across her face and up each arm and leaped through the open door. The music struck up.

The conductor kept an even pace and the assistant-electrician worked the coloured spot lights from the gallery. All was so quiet that one could have heard a pin drop. The fiddles in the orchestra had a very fretting and worrying score to follow while the woodwinds reinforced the lyrical melody and gave it all a pastoral flavour, but above it all the little organ that I had constructed blew its wild chords that seemed to crackle like sparking flames in a breeze.

Then before we realized it the flames died down and a thundering applause broke from the audience. It was more than an artistic success. There were four curtain calls. The manager came back stage and placing his monocle in his eye, kissed Charlotte's hand and was about to say something very nice when Marie's voice was heard from the open door of the dressing-room.

"Don't stand there," she cried, "you will take cold."

Charlotte skipped in and closed the door.

"Didn't I tell you not to worry?"

"Oh, I am so happy, Marie. Not alone for my sake. I am happy because . . . because of everything."

The chief comedian at the Casino complained that the fans which were used to put the silks into motion caused a draught and because of that he caught cold while waiting in the wings. He walked about with a large Turkish towel wound about his neck and worried the stage-hands. He even went out into the long passage-way and sat with the old bearded door-keeper, whom the girls

called "Santa Claus." But all these antics meant only that the Fire Dance was getting too much applause and this made it awkward for his act which came on later.

There were all kinds of little troubles, but nothing stopped the Fire Dance, not even the priests of Saint John. At first they wrote a letter to the director to say that the act should be withdrawn, but the management knew little about the situation and replied that the act was one of the most refined and artistic successes that the Casino had ever had. As the number contained no nude figures they expressed great surprise at the request. But about a week later a committee came down to the Casino office and in a vague and limp manner tried to explain something that never was. They were treated most politely by the management who promised to look into the matter. Of course, as soon as they were gone the director, who is always head over heels in work, forgot all about them.

## SONG IN A GARDEN

BY GEORGE H. DILLON

Whatever I love I shall forget:  
Even the dove, and the violet,

Even the clover blossoming  
In whirlpools in the grass in spring . . .  
Music, even—everything.

Is there anything I can keep?  
In sleep more silent than a dream  
Of swans upon a silver stream  
When the wind is low, and the sun has set.

What I know I shall forget.



SATURDAY AFTERNOON ON HAMFSTEAD HEATH. BY ADOLF DEHN







Adolf Dehn 1926.

NORDICS IN LEICESTER SQUARE. BY ADOLF DEHN



## THE NOVEL AS WORK OF ART

BY CONRAD AIKEN

**A**MONG contemporary writers of fiction, Mrs Woolf is a curious and anomalous figure. In some respects, she is as "modern," as radical, as Mr Joyce or Miss Richardson or M Jules Romains; she is a highly self-conscious examiner of consciousness, a bold and original experimenter with the technique of novel-writing; but she is also, and just as strikingly, in other respects "old-fashioned." This anomaly does not defy analysis. The aroma of "old-fashionedness" that rises from these highly original and modern novels—from the pages of *Jacob's Room*, *Mrs Dalloway*, and now again from those of *To the Lighthouse*—is a quality of attitude; a quality, to use a word which is itself nowadays old-fashioned, but none the less fragrant, of spirit. For in this regard, Mrs Woolf is no more modern than Jane Austen: she breathes the same air of gentility, of sequestration, of tradition; of life and people and things all brought, by the slow polish of centuries of tradition and use, to a pervasive refinement in which discrimination, on every conceivable plane, has become as instinctive and easy as the beat of a wing. Her people are "gentle" people; her houses are the houses of gentlefolk; and the consciousness that informs both is a consciousness of well-being and culture, of the richness and lustre and dignity of tradition; a disciplined consciousness, in which emotions and feelings find their appropriate attitudes as easily and naturally—as *habitually*, one is tempted to say—as a skilled writer finds words.

It is this tightly circumscribed choice of scene—to use "scene" in a social sense—that gives to Mrs Woolf's novels, despite her modernity of technique and insight, their odd and delicious air of parochialism, as of some small village-world, as bright and vivid and perfect in its tininess as a miniature: a small complete world which time has somehow missed. Going into these houses, one

NOTE: *To the Lighthouse*. By Virginia Woolf. 12mo. 310 pages. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$2.50.

would almost expect to find antimacassars on the chair-backs and daguerreotype albums on the tables. For these people—these Clarissa Dalloways and Mrs Ramsays and Lily Briscoes—are all vibrantly and saturatedly conscious of background. And they all have the curious innocence that accompanies that sort of awareness. They are the creatures of seclusion, the creatures of shelter; they are exquisite beings, so perfectly and elaborately adapted to their environment that they have taken on something of the roundness and perfection of works of art. Their life, in a sense, is a sea-pool life: unruffled and secret: almost, if we can share the cool illusion of the sea-pool's occupants, inviolable. They hear rumours of the sea itself, that vast and terrifying force that lies somewhere beyond them, or around them, but they cherish a sublime faith that it will not disturb them; and if it does, at last, break in upon them with cataclysmic force, a chaos of disorder and undisciplined violence, they can find no language for the disaster: they are simply bewildered.

But if, choosing such people, and such a *mise en scène*, for her material, Mrs Woolf inevitably makes her readers think of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Mansfield Park*, she compels us just as sharply, by her method of evoking them, to think of *Pilgrimage* and *Ulysses* and *The Death of a Nobody*. Mrs Woolf is an excellent critic, an extremely conscious and brilliant craftsman in prose; she is intensely interested in the technique of fiction; and one has at times wondered, so vividly from her prose has arisen a kind of *self-consciousness* of adroitness, whether she might not lose her way and give us a mere series of virtuositities or *tours de force*. It is easy to understand why Katherine Mansfield distrusted "Mr Bennett and Mrs Brown." She felt a kind of sterility in this dexterous holding of the raw stuff of life at arm's length, this playing with it as if it were a toy. Why not be more immediate—why not surrender to it? And one did indeed feel a rather baffling aloofness in this attitude: it was as if Mrs Woolf were a little afraid to come to grips with anything so coarse, preferred to see it through a safe thickness of plate-glass. It was as if she could not be quite at ease with life until she had stilled it, reduced it to the mobile immobility of art—reduced it, even, to such comfortable proportions and orderliness as would not disturb the drawing-room. In Jacob's

Room, however, and Mrs Dalloway, Mrs Woolf began to make it clear that this tendency to sterile dexterity, though pronounced, might not be fatal; and now, in her new novel, *To the Lighthouse*, she relieves one's doubts, on this score, almost entirely.

For, if one still feels, during the first part of this novel almost depressingly, and intermittently thereafter, Mrs Woolf's irritating air as of carrying an enormous technical burden: her air of saying "See how easily I do this!" or "This is incomparably complex and difficult, but I have the brains for it": nevertheless, one's irritation is soon lost in the growing sense that Mrs Woolf has at last found a complexity and force of theme which is commensurate with the elaborateness and self-consciousness of her technical "pattern." By degrees, one forgets the manner in the matter. One resists the manner, petulantly objects to it, in vain: the moment comes when at last one ceases to be aware of something persistently artificial in this highly feminine style, and finds oneself simply immersed in the vividness and actuality of this world of Mrs Woolf's—believing in it, in fact, with the utmost intensity, and feeling it with that completeness of surrender with which one feels the most moving of poetry. It is not easy to say whether this abdication of "distance" on the reader's part indicates that Mrs Woolf has now achieved a depth of poetic understanding, a vitality, which was somehow just lacking in the earlier novels, or whether it merely indicates a final triumph of technique. Can one profitably try to make a distinction between work that is manufactured, bitterly and strenuously, by sheer *will* to imagination, and work that is born of imagination all complete—assuming that the former is, in the upshot, just as convincing as the latter? Certainly one feels everywhere in Mrs Woolf's work this will to imagine, this canvassing of possibilities by a restless and searching and brilliant mind: one feels this mind at work, matching and selecting, rejecting this colour and accepting that, saying, "It is this that the heroine would say, it is this that she would think"; and nevertheless Mrs Woolf's step is so sure, her choice is so nearly invariably right, and her imagination, even if deliberately willed, is so imaginative, that in the end she makes a beautiful success of it. She makes her Mrs Ramsay—by giving us her stream of consciousness—amazingly alive; and she supplements this just sufficiently, from *outside*, as it

were, by giving us also, intermittently, the streams of consciousness of her husband, of her friend Lily Briscoe, of her children: so that we are documented, as to Mrs Ramsay, from every quarter and arrive at a solid vision of her by a process of triangulation. The richness and copiousness and ease, with which this is done, are a delight. These people are astoundingly real: they belong to a special "class," as Mrs Woolf's characters nearly always do, and exhale a Jane-Austenish aroma of smallness and lostness and incompleteness: but they are magnificently real. We live in that delicious house with them—we feel the minute textures of their lives with their own vivid senses—we imagine with their extraordinary imaginations, are self-conscious with their self-consciousness—and ultimately we know them as well, as terribly, as we know ourselves.

Thus, curiously, Mrs Woolf has rounded the circle. Apparently, at the outset of her work, avoiding any attempt to present life "immediately," as Chekhov and Katherine Mansfield preferred to do; and choosing instead a medium more sophisticated and conscious, as if she never for a moment wished us to forget the *frame* of the picture, and the fact that the picture *was* a picture; she has finally brought this method to such perfection, or so perfectly allowed it to flower of itself, that the artificial has become natural, the mediate has become immediate. The technical brilliance glows, melts, falls away; and there remains a poetic apprehension of life of extraordinary loveliness. Nothing happens, in this houseful of odd nice people, and yet all of life happens. The tragic futility, the absurdity, the pathetic beauty, of life—we experience all of this in our sharing of seven hours of Mrs Ramsay's wasted or not wasted existence. We have seen, through her, the world.



*Courtesy of Alfred Flechtheim, Berlin*

**CIRCUS.** BY MARIE LAURENCIN







LA PETITE DANSEUSE. BY MARIE LAURENCIN



## OLD PEOPLE

BY S. BERT COOKSLEY

Old people—I  
know one of them  
who looks into the sky—  
still as a church steeple—  
one without yearning,  
or passion, or desire  
for tasting sweets.  
Old people—I have watched them,  
seen them tire,  
seek garden seats  
in a cool shade.  
The things they say  
would frighten you, make you afraid—  
send you away.

But I? I would be there  
close to them—  
to the ladies with white hair—  
to the old men.  
One night— One night I heard a sound  
of earth—earth meeting spade.  
I saw an old man digging  
in a glade.  
“What are you digging? Why do you pile  
the earth so high?” I said.  
“Making my bed,” he said, and smiled at me,  
“I’m going to bed.”

## NIGHTFALL

BY DANIEL CORKERY

**H**IS name was Reen, but they called him the Colonial: their way of pronouncing the word could not easily be set down here, however. They had never used it, scarcely ever heard it until the newspapers during the Great War had dinned it into their ears. In New Zealand he had lived his many years. There he had landed in his young manhood, toiled upwards, found himself a wife, built his household, in course of years married off his three sons and his two daughters, all to the wrong people, it seemed; there at last had buried his wife, upon which he had thrown in his hand, sold off everything, and made straight back to the rocks and fields of his boyhood. Without warning one summer afternoon he drove into his sister's house in west Cork, a man still hardy, if grey-haired, erect enough, bright-eyed, and with the firm voice and free ways of one who, though he had never confessed himself beaten, had not won through without sweat and bitterness.

It was the quiet end of the farmer's year, a day in early October. The Renahans since morning had been building what they called the home rick. In the close beyond the cow sheds was its place from time out of mind. More than two months earlier, in August, before the corn was fit for cutting they had built their main rick, also in its traditional place—the widest of the ledges which lay along the pathway winding up the side of the cummer towards the hill top.

It was a gully for the north-west wind, this close of theirs, and they had been glad to put a crown on the day's work and get within to the warmth and merriment, the fire and the card-playing. They were a large family on whom the scatter for America had not yet fallen. Even without the others who had been assisting in the work, Phil Cronin, the labouring boy, Pat Lehane, a neighbour of theirs, Kitty Mahony, a neighbour's daughter, and one of the Lynch boys, the Renahans of themselves were numerous enough to fill the flag-paved, lamp-lit kitchen with bright and noisy life.

They were in their characteristically careless working clothes, patched and repatched and unpatched, stained with mire or sulphate of copper, many-coloured, loose-fitting, and one could not but notice all this because of this Colonial relative of theirs sitting on the settle between Kitty Mahony and the blaze of the fire. How different he was from the others! This ingathering he had foreseen, perhaps had foreseen Kitty Mahony's visit, and had made himself ready for it—had shaved himself, had put on his newest clothes—he had many suits of them—had chosen his heaviest watch-chain, his best linen; his boots he had polished; and his thinnish hair, after drenching it with odorous oils, he had carefully brushed and creased. The others, all of them, had contented themselves with bending their long backs and washing their hands in the current of water that ran from between two rocks swiftly across the close. It was their way mostly to keep their tattered everyday caps on their heads, indoors or out; and their hair was anyhow. Kitty Mahony was the only one who had taken any care with herself before coming across the fields from her father's house; she however always looked clean and tidy. Everybody knew that she was to marry the eldest son of the house, Mat Renahan.

Phil Cronin and Pat Renahan, the second son, were trying to recapture a way of dancing the "Blackbird" they had seen at Dunmanway *feis* the Sunday before, three days ago. Again and again they had tried it. They would break down, begin to argue, resume the clatter, and break down once more. The musician—the youngest of all the boys, Tim—as soon as the rhythm of their feet went into confusion, would at once take the fife from his lips, lean down over his knees, and without a word, again begin his teasing of the sheep-dog that, with stiffened limbs, lay stretched between his feet on the flags.

The old Colonial gave his head a critical shake: "No," he said, "that's not it; that's not a bit like it," and he turned and put his lips almost against Kitty Mahony's shapely ear: "They're clumsy, see? They're clumsy, you know."

"Isn't their own way just as good?" she answered him, carelessly, without turning her head. In the dance she was taking but little interest. She was eager for her lover to return from Dunmanway: she had had no thought that he would not be in his own house before her that evening. Her eyes were firm on the open

doorway, on the chilly luminous space that lay behind the firelit figures moving and dancing on the flags. Yet even these few words the old man was glad to hear: "Yes, but they're clumsy all the time. They couldn't put any finish on it even if they had the steps, not what you'd call finish."

But the dancers had resumed.

Every now and then the father, John Renahan, without a word, would plod bulkily, heavy-footed, across the room, disappearing into the dairy for something or other. Massive, silent, heavy-featured, he thought but little of disturbing the laughing group in the middle of the space. He would hulk through them in a straight line like a surly bull through a herd of milkers. Without breaking the rhythm they would draw aside, holding up their chests. They were so used to his ways that they took no anger from them. Once again he entered from the close and passed through them without a word, without a sign. As he did so, the girl's thoughts took on sudden and passionate life. All those about her, the dancers, the others, were nothing to her either. They were there in that kitchen and he she would have there was elsewhere. "I wish he'd come, oh, I wish he'd come," her passion spoke within her, so earnestly that she feared she had said the words aloud. She looked from one to another, turning her eyes only, and when she caught the annoying voice again in her ear she was relieved: "There's a great change in everything, in everything. They're awkward."

She nodded twice, and he was encouraged. He raised his voice this time, speaking to the whole room: "You may give it up, give it up. You can't master it. You're that awkward."

The dancers slackened off, and Pat Lehane, an onlooker leaning against the wall, took the pipe from his mouth: "Of course we're awkward, and as you'd say, damn awkward too. And 'tisn't for want of instruction we're awkward. Our little priest, down from the Altar itself he's at us; and I'm afraid 'tis little improvement he's making in us. And the master, he says our equals for awkwardness isn't in Munster. And the returned Yanks, they that do nothing themselves only saunter around, they're the worst of all. The awkward squad, that's what we are. The awkward squad that can't learn nothing."

He was big, bony, high-coloured, with large flashing eyes, like an excited horse's, and a drooping moustache of strong hairs with dew

drops adhering to the tips of them, and when speaking he threw up his head as if to give the voice free passage from the strong gristly throat. In gurgles and splashes it poured from him; and his heart warmed both eye and tongue. "The awkward squad that can't learn nothing," and he threw his hand carelessly in the air as if there never could be question of remedy.

They were puzzled how to take him, but Tim, the musician, pointed his fife straight out at the dancers: "The awkward squad," he said and throwing back his head, went into uncontrollable laughter. It took hold of them all; and the dancers began to look around for corners of seats to sink upon. The whole floor space in the centre of the room then lay vacant, the light falling on it.

Phil Cronin had already risen to get down the pack of cards when, whatever madness had seized him, the old Colonial rose up and stepped deliberately into the gaping space. "Play it up, sonny," he said to the boy, with such a motion of his hand as he might have used to call a porter in a railway station.

The boy gave him a swift glance, tightened his fife with one firm twist, blew in the hole of it, and started the tune, his eyes looking straight out under his brows at the waiting figure. Very erect he stood, silent in the glow of the fire, his arms stiffly downwards, his head raised, and an inward expression on his features: he was listening, listening—delaying to let the music take full possession of him. As silently they all stared at him. Then he sprang out. With a lightness, even daintiness, with a restraint unknown to them he was tapping out the rhythm as he had learned it more than sixty years ago before decay had come upon the local traditions. But the onlookers were not impressed. They soon knew how limited his steps were; and to them who had often seen prize dancers from Cork city or Limerick, where the dancing is better, his style seemed old-fashioned and slow. And of course after a few minutes there was but little life left in the aged limbs. They sagged at the knees. Noticing this they took to encouraging him, whispering wondering remarks on his skill and time. The old fool danced and danced, would dance until he dropped, it seemed, although by now his performance was little better than a sort of dull floundering.

Pat Lehane then took to letting yells of delight out of him as if he could not help it: "Whew!" "Whew!" he cried; and soon

the others were joining in. In the midst of the bedlam John Renahan, the father, entered in his silent way, made across the room, brushing almost against the floundering figure whom perhaps the touch of a finger would now overturn. Silence fell upon them all. The fife sang out, but not so certain of itself. The dancer floundered more helplessly than before. The tapping had become a sort of scraping and sliding.

As the father reached the door of the dairy-room he looked along those ranged against the wall and without raising his voice said: "'Tis a shame for ye."

Their eyes followed his rounded back going from them; then they looked at one another shyly. But the dancer held on. Somebody began to clap gently. They all took it up, and Pat Lehane reached his hand to the falling figure and led him back to the settle.

The creature was trembling violently—one noticed it as he wiped his blood-red face. His chest was heaving.

They heard the son of the house turning his horse and cart into the yard. Soon afterwards he entered, a bag of bran dragging heavily from his right arm.

As he sat eating his supper, he was given, surreptitiously, a glowing account of the Colonial's skill as a step-dancer. The Colonial himself, now in the centre of a little circle who, at the other side of the room, were shuffling and dealing the cards, let on not to hear what was being told to the young man. Yet they knew he was taking in every word of it. For all that whenever he played a card he raised his lips to Kitty's ear, telling her that he was winning because she was there beside him.

When she saw that her lover had finished his meal she stood up from beside the Colonial. She could not further restrain herself. Her eyes were hot and flashing, her colour heightened. But the Colonial also stood up. He said with some huskiness in his voice, with some difficulty in making it carry: "Maybe Mat is tired after his journey?"

Mat had been through three or four years of guerilla warfare, captaining his district. There were but few places in Munster that he had not been in. He moreover had been in prison and following that in an internment camp. He had learnt to shift for himself. From the colour in Kitty's cheeks, her angry eyes, her eager, parted lips, he caught that the old man had been pestering



her. He too took fire; yet he held himself in. He looked at him silently, and a smile broadened across his face like cold sunshine across a tract of bare countryside on a March day: "Do I look tired?" he said.

Old Reen was confused: "But if I went along with you, along with you, some of the way?"

The lover had put a cigarette between his lips. He leant across the table, stretching out his head until he had the tip of the cigarette above the chimney of the lamp that hung on the whitened wall. Kitty was standing uneasily in the middle of the floor. They heard the Colonial's voice again: "My hat is upstairs."

The cigarette had reddened: taking it from his lips Mat said nonchalantly: "Up with you then."

Stumbling in his eagerness he made up the stairs for the hat. He glowed to think what a surprising lot of things about dancing he would say to the two of them, things they could never have heard before. When he had disappeared, the lover impulsively flung open the door, held it open for the girl, put his arm about her shoulders passionately, and turned to those within: "Give us half a mile start on that champion dancer of yours, half a mile—that's all we ask."

They were gone, their spirits leaping within them.

When the Colonial came down with his new black hat in his hand, the roomful were very intent on their cards. He made straight out, pulling the door to behind him. Then the card-playing ceased and there was a blank silence.

The father broke it saying: "I wish to God that old idiot would go back to where he came from. And I don't like what that pair is after doing either. I don't like it at all."

His words took the merriment out of the gathering. Soon afterwards all except the sons and daughters of the family, made out, but it was through the back door they went out. Their heavy boots were heard clamping up the rocky passage that led to the *bohereen*. That way they would not come on a poor flustered creature groping in the darkness, making onward in sudden and reckless starts or standing still to listen for any little stir that might let him know whether the lovers had gone east or west. Only in a dull way those neighbours felt that they should not care to come upon an old man so bothered in his thoughts. What a fool he was!—sixty-

## SHADOWS

nine years of age and yet letting it slip from his memory that his life had been lived out, that his hair was grey, and that his arms would be empty for ever more. They gave no thought at all to the lovers. Yet, and for no reason it seemed, the spirits of the two of them began to leap within them with so astonishing an energy that their limbs for trembling could hardly keep the ground as they made onwards. Swiftly they made on, even fiercely; laughter had died within them.

## SHADOWS

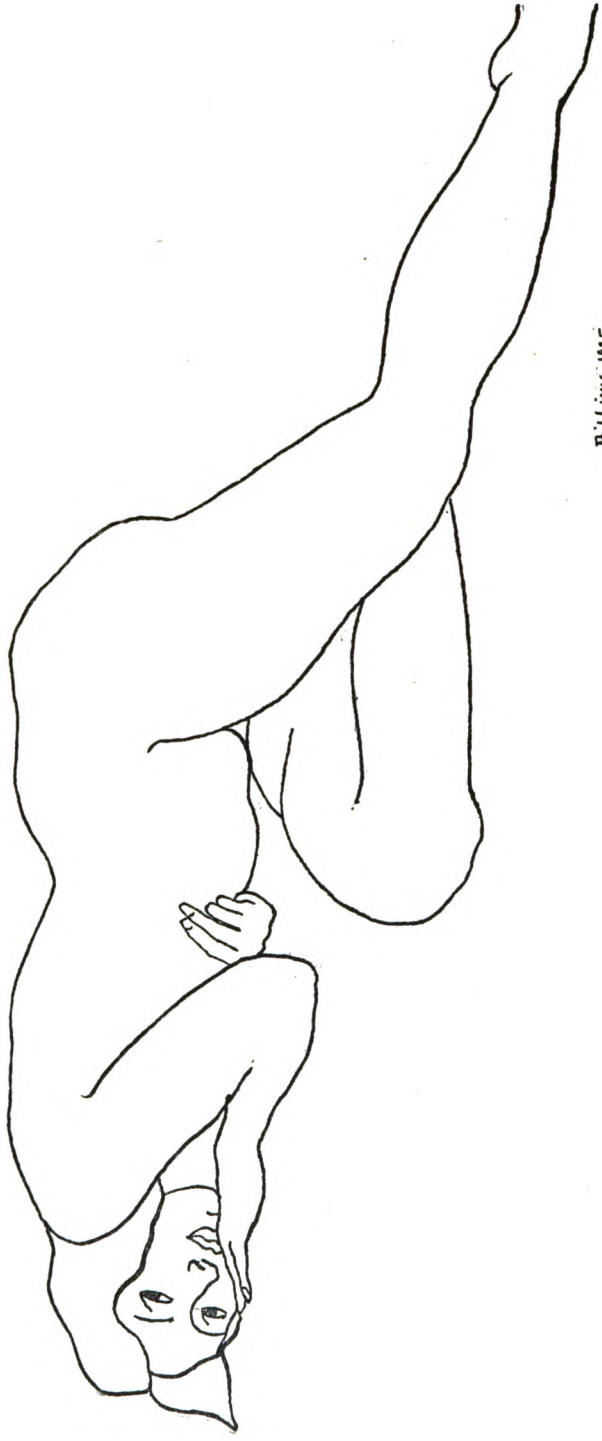
BY GLADYS CAMPBELL

You love firm shapes of earth and sky.  
You understand when sea birds cry  
Their unequivocal distress.

Integrity of beaten brass,  
The timely blooming of a tree,  
Your steady soul is quick to see.

But I have seen your swift hate turn  
Upon one serving that same stern  
Law's predetermined round.

O do not think of me as bound  
To any shape of love or hate,  
But use me as a swinging gate  
Into a pleasant field where lie  
Soft shadows from a changing sky.



Billings, Mrs.

A DRAWING. BY HENRY BILLINGS



## GERMAN LETTER

*June, 1927*

**A**FTER one is fifty, it is my experience that one has at times, as much as ever, an intense desire to write; as for reading, unfortunately, matters are far other than they were. One cannot recall the literary appetite of youth and think of all that he devoured for pleasure or nourishment, without being dissatisfied with fastidious old age. The more we are permitted or forced to read, the more exacting we become. It is seldom that a book can fascinate us—and the fact would be sadder than it is if our more rarely experienced enjoyment did not entail a correspondingly enlarged gratitude for what does occasionally seem to revive enthusiasm. A few things of recent years occur to me which have had this delightful effect upon me. The books of Franz Kafka for instance, both the short stories and the long phantasies, *Der Prozess* and *Das Schloss*. These works, which are highly original, were written with an almost sublime carefulness. They are ominous, grotesque, and morbid, undeniably masterpieces, and provide the most penetrating entertainment that one can imagine. The public has not yet come to realize its debt to the Bohemian poet, Max Brod, who wrested them from his shrinking friend and scrupulously arranged them and edited them after the author's early death. Brod has himself produced among other things, two important historical novels, Tycho Brahe's *Weg zu Gott* and *Reubeni*, and a spirited critical work, *Heidentum, Christentum, Judentum*, which is rich in striking generalizations; but he has also shown himself capable of a self-effacing devotion to a mentality alien to his own. . . . I am strongly conscious too of someone I must speak of, in the thought of whose name similarly, I "count myself lucky."

Regrettably, it is that of another writer who has died—Marcel Schwob, the Alsatian, whose work, originally written in French, has been translated into a smooth and expert German by Hegener in Hellerau. These classical miniatures, *Imaginary Lives*<sup>1</sup> and *The*

<sup>1</sup> *Imaginary Lives*. By Marcel Schwob. Translated into English by Lorimer Hammond. 12mo. 256 pages. Boni & Liveright. \$2.50.

Children's Crusade,<sup>1</sup> are charming conceptions, and have a delicacy and nobility of form which is without parallel in modern literature. They are "art," if you will—that is, if we of Central and Eastern Europe with our social and moral preoccupations, may call art what is exquisitely elaborated, devoid of practical purpose, art for art's sake. . . . At which point it might be valid to digress long enough to characterize the situation in general.

The "artistic," at one time antonym of the bourgeois, is now thoroughly bourgeois and conservative. The intellectual conscience is against it, and for the time being there is scarcely any moral vitality left to it. It would be a mistake to be content with economic explanations and to stop with the assertion that Flaubert's art-idealism, which is looked upon to-day as thoroughly romantic, is unthinkable now that it is no longer supported by "income." In the first place, there are sections of the continent where the idea of art seems to have resisted a lack of income: I am thinking particularly of France, which might pass in this respect for the most "backward" country of Europe—where a concept of "art" still persists with astounding hardihood, scarcely affected by those adverse circumstances which France shares with the rest of Europe. In the second place, however, that art-idealism was but one particular manifestation of idealism in general, reflecting a faith, a *Weltanschauung*, now past and encompassing still other ideas as insipid and inflated as the idea of art—the idea of freedom, for example. And as such it will be consigned to the realm of the superannuated by our—how shall I say it?—fascist era, perhaps with some impatience, perhaps with an exaggerated air of finality. It is very probable that the fascist anti-idealism will determine the characteristic aspect of 1930. But we may be permitted to think as far ahead as 1950 and suspect that after being repeatedly buried as "liberal," ideas and tendencies which Europe cannot radically deny itself for long without going to the dogs, may possibly experience a surprising renaissance. And finally this assumption and this expectation are to-day bringing Germany and France together, both being countries in which the concepts of humanity and freedom can find comparative refuge, and may perhaps survive a lean season. In

<sup>1</sup> The Children's Crusade. By Marcel Schwob. Translated into English by Henry Copley Greene. Brochure. 67 pages. Thomas Mosher. \$1.50.

keeping with this fact, the Germans, who are disturbed by an old-fashioned attachment to the idea of art, to-day find some support in a mute appeal to France. I hate false and confusing alternatives whose supporters and advocates cannot see one jot beyond the fashion of the moment, and where either attitude is at best but a corrective to the opposite excess. Rationalism, intellectualism, bourgeois liberalism—or thought-denying madness which parades itself to-day in brutal intoxication as “life” and “the new”: there would seem to be nothing else open to the kind of youth that thinks it has dispensed with the concept of humanity for good and all and has sewn the swastika of exultant brutality on its banner. Such feeble-mindedness in the country of Goethe and Nietzsche I cannot but feel to be a disgrace, and I am manifestly not alone in my unformulated impression. As it was recently expressed by one writer<sup>1</sup> who seems to be equally annoyed by the manner in which a genuine insight into human potentialities is now being so generally degraded, “The subject which laid the greatest claim upon Nietzsche’s emotions was European humanity as Goethe last represented it. . . . We could develop all of Nietzsche’s thought around this idea as a centre and should attain thereby the unity of a vast human philosophy.” And, sympathetically, he catalogues the elements of this philosophy: a kinship with the classical era, as genuine as Hölderlin’s, the idea of self-development, the study of personality, the conception of the good European and of the free spirit, of intellectual honesty, profound attention to the question of human distinction, affirmation of the immediate world, the psychology of superiority, an unrivalled mastery of speech, which taken together comprise Nietzsche’s real humanism, and over against which all his romantic idiosyncrasies, such as the “blond beast” and the glorification of power, have but faint force to-day. Yes, everything in Nietzsche which the European anti-idealism *à la mode* goes so far as to cite as precedent has the insipid effect of an artist’s lapse—and what is left is the solicitous, educative vision of a humanity whose tragic poise and intellectual beauty far transcend immediate vicissitude, or any lung-cramped retrogression.

But I have wandered far, I admit. The chief danger of the situation seems to reside in the continual temptation to orientate

<sup>1</sup> Fritz Landsberger in the *Europäische Revue*.

it. It was the present status of art which set my thoughts in motion, and the question as to whether art can exist under contemporary conditions, a question which is very closely related to the problem of freedom and can only be answered in relation to it. The belief that art is justified even when no social value can be placed upon it involves an idealistic way of thinking which may at present be looked upon as both old-fashioned and frivolous; but the decisive word cannot be spoken until things of the mind have been definitely assigned their place, and that time is still far distant. Thus: no over-hastiness. And no false alternatives. For there are works written under the aesthetic of idealism which are so imbued with the social experiences of the times that art and conscience are reconciled at a stroke, and this is the phase of contemporary literature, one must admit, which is richest and soundest. It is out of gratitude for two such works that I prolong this letter: gratitude for two books—one Russian and the other German—which recently revived in me my passion for reading.

The one in Russian is by Ivan Shmelyov and is called in German *Der Kellner*.<sup>1</sup> Its German version is by Käte Rosenberg, who is the most cautious and sensitive of all our contemporary translators from the Russian. It was Shmelyov, the *émigré*, who wrote *Die Sonne der Toten*, a humiliating document of revolutionary distress, a hideous portrayal of bloodshed for conscience' sake and of a deeply tragic social disillusionment. *Der Kellner* was written earlier, in the Czar's time, and one cannot help feeling that the author's subsequent disillusionment in no sense belies the revolutionary pathos which, however ambiguously expressed, informs this book and pulsates in it. Written with a highly poetic simplicity, and with a rich vein of humour, *Der Kellner* is strikingly reminiscent of Hamsun—not that one need infer that it was influenced by Hamsun, for admittedly the great Norwegian is himself much indebted to Russian literature. It purports to be the life story of a waiter in a Petersburg restaurant, the typically simple father of a family who, while earning his livelihood by serving under an unjust capitalistic system, quietly observes at close range the by-play of the rich. He is no revolutionary, he knows nothing of politics, he is content to wait upon these gentlemen for what money there is in it

<sup>1</sup> Published by S. Fischer Verlag, Berlin.



—and since he is efficient and his work is appreciated, he is able to respect himself precisely by reason of his industriousness, saving his own soul at the same time, and trying to come through the mire with dignity. But his son Kolyushka, proud, direct, and excitable, is drawn by radical subtenants into the machinations of a certain outlawed and persecuted faction. This fine-souled, incorruptible youth, the typical social idealist, rebel, and conspirator of czarist Russia, is the most attractive figure in the book. And similarly, the most beautiful and deeply poetic situation in this imagined biographic portrait centres in the relationship between father and son: between the gaunt, implacable boy—whose reserved, filial love is perpetually at war with resentment in seeing his father lackey to a degenerate society—and the work-ridden, vigilantly compliant bread-winner, who grieves over the apparent disrespect of his offspring, despairs at the deliberate unruliness with which the boy spoils his career at school, all the while so revering and loving Kolya's scrupulousness that with him in mind, he is impelled to give back a large sum of money he had found under the table after a party. He is so pious as to connect this moral action with the narrow and almost mystical rescue of Kolyushka from political spies, which furthermore is a service to the reader. He is beset with misfortune. Fate half makes it up to him, only to strike him anew. In the end he takes charge of the child of his betrayed daughter Natashka. "After all it was my grandchild. . . . It was called Yulka. . . . I arranged an old clothes-basket for it. It was like a sunbeam in my room." How strange! A new life, a sunbeam. Why? It had been brought into the world under wretched circumstances, and there was no reason to expect that it would be happier than any of the other creatures portrayed in the bitter and simple pages of this book. A sunbeam none the less. It asks to be accepted with confidence and with emotion. The bantling of his dishonoured and ruined child is the sunbeam by which fate lights up the declining years of this tired, unfairly treated old man.

In the German book, the hero is always addressed as Herr Graf, *Graf* being the German word for Count, yet he is neither a count nor an imposter, but Graf is his name, Oskar Maria Graf, and he is the author. His reminiscences, entitled *Wir Sind Gefangen*, constitute a characteristically unwieldy volume which, while almost

seven hundred fifty pages in length, can be read through as though they were a hundred and the reader were twenty. Yes, I insist that not for a long while has any book so captivated, astounded, and occupied me as these sketches written by a man of thirty-three. Not that they are absorbing as "polite literature," for they are not "polite," and they really would not have much to do with literature, even supposing one did not take too literally the sansculottic author's independence of received ideas, and though the writing of a good book quite definitely requires a fund of reading, culture, and comparative experience—in short what we term education. Education? The bourgeois world lags far behind, with its morals and aesthetics, and its concern for the "poetic." Here is a new world, a proletarian world, a life such as we have all been experiencing for the last ten years—concerned with other things than art and taste. In this scheme of living it must seem absurd and antediluvian that the artistic and the poetic should be cherished as ends in themselves; and these things come to be looked upon as spontaneous functionings, as accidents of man and mind—nor should they have ever ceased to be such, if they actually ever were anything else. Poetry never dies out of the world, not even the most uneducated world—and this book, which might have been no more than a crude first-hand record of war and revolution is by reason of a marvellous human freshness, by the gift of emotion, suffering, and humour, an autobiographical fiction, a novel of personality, as good (really as good!) as Hamsun's *Mysteries*,<sup>1</sup> with whose cult of torment it has so much in common, although in setting and period it is so totally different.

Graf is an Upper Bavarian, and with his dialectically coloured German he is as solid as any one could wish. Yet this is no longer the solidity of Gaghofer, Ruederer, and Thoma! The bourgeois press of Munich will not commend his book, although by an inadvertence some parts of it have already appeared there. His regionalism is too thoroughly infected with international literature and international socialism for this, and his attitude towards the people is too revolutionary. Also, he is neither a peasant, a hunter, nor a yodelling mountaineer, but a city man, which in itself is suspect—originally a half-countrified baker's assistant and later also engaged as a baker. Even during an oppressive, brutal childhood

<sup>1</sup> *Mysteries*. By Knut Hamsun. Translated from the Norwegian by Arthur G. Chater. 12mo. 338 pages. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

his singular mind struggles to get free and to think for itself. Subsequently he becomes a "writer" in Munich, Bohemian and intellectual proletarian, and he too experiments with the political organizations which attract Shmelyov's Kolyushka. Then he is driven into the war; and his adventures as a soldier under arms yet disqualified, his timid resistance, the illness which he simulates, and which finally procures him his freedom, constitute the maddest, most naïve, and most gruesomely comic story that one could ever hope to read. I also believe that his account of the Munich revolution and counter-revolution is of enduring worth as a human and historic document.

I could not say how much I was stimulated and cheered by the book's originality, which is identical with the character of its protagonist—clumsy and sensitive, impossible and appealing, and thoroughly unusual. His eyes rest on people and things, apparently with boorish bluntness, but in reality with sharpness and cunning, from behind a mask of fatuity, and they are never deceived. A proletarian Golem stumbles about with the heaviness of mud, gapes, grows excited, lays about him, and picks his way craftily and rudely through the life of his times which, though it sullies and humiliates him, is in many essential respects the sort best suited to his talents. A Golem—and with the mystic name of four letters on his tongue. He is continually struggling, grotesquely, helplessly, and nobly, to raise himself from the mud, to reach the light, mankind, and God. He bungles, and his bungling causes both laughter and head-shaking, but for this reason he wins our hearts; and if the function of art, as I incline to believe, is to make things affect one acutely which ordinarily could not, then this unwieldy book in which he redeems himself is a true work of art!

THOMAS MANN

# BOOK REVIEWS

## HADRIAN LIKED TO TRAVEL

ORIENT EXPRESS. *By John Dos Passos. With Illustrations in Color from Paintings by the Author.*  
8vo. 181 pages. Harper and Brothers. \$3.50.

IN presenting Mr Dos Passos' novel about New York the publishers hit upon the caption: Manhattan sits for her portrait. The same device can never be used to describe Orient Express, no, not by the most dithyrambic, the most divinely careless of pressmen; the Near East never a moment sits for *its* portrait, because Mr Dos Passos never gives the N. E. a chance to do anything but scream and hide its face in its veils while he rushes through like a highly powered locomotive going sixty miles an hour. The book is aptly, unerringly named. A portrait demands a certain calm not only in the model, but primarily in the painter, and of this gift of contemplation Mr Dos Passos has next to nothing. Why should he have it? Its possession might make him a more interesting, but scarcely a more exciting writer. As things are, he is the most alluring of photographers. His faculty for the observation of externals, especially where the element of colour is involved, is such as to make for the despair of those less acutely alive to the jumbled beauty of the map, the criss-cross values of almost everything in the contemporary world. As someone said of Huysmans, he is an *eye*. It is extraordinary how much he sees, how much he records at a glance in a single packed, electric sentence tingling with light and colour, and it is the more extraordinary when we consider the merciless speed with which he races through the physical and moral world, enduring the war, recording the war in a good book, recording the war's generation in a book even better; attempting to synthesize the world's last wonder in a third, capturing the new Babylon as if it were Leviathan with the hook of his prose; writing poetry, writing publicism, always writing, always tasting new dishes, meeting new people, experiencing new sights, loving everything but private property (property would tie

him down) letting all the waves and waters of existence roll over him and emerging abreast, exhilarated, a new book in his hand; in Samarkand one month and in Mexico the next. Is it any wonder that in this kaleidoscopic existence things should refuse to form patterns or assume significance, that the absolute should appear the petrified, the already dead, and that he should be content to be, as he says somewhere of the Frenchman, Blaise Cendrars, "merely a good writer, leave it at that"? Yes, leave it at that; one hasn't time to be more.

What a discouraging number of travel books there are in English by writers of reputation, and how few of them achieve that quality of intimate excitement which is the first impression disengaged from Mr Dos Passos' breathless narrative. Everyone with just enough money, just enough leisure, but not an iota of either to spare, is enabled to do the four continents and the seven seas, perhaps once every two years. We rush over. We rush back. We remain on the other side and rush from point to point with twenty minutes for refreshments. Ah, that stupid and deadly nostalgia for transcontinental trains, Orient expresses, steamships, planes, *wagon-lits*, *buffets*! Tips, teas, everlasting bells, everlasting drinks, endless faces, endless chatter. With just enough money, we repeat, just enough leisure, one can become, in a relatively short time, a seasoned man.

What is the use of it? Mr Dos Passos appears to demand in those moments toward the end of his book when he slips perceptibly from pure photography to a kind of exasperated poetry: "Does anything ever come of this constant dragging of a ruptured suitcase from dock to railway station and railway station to dock? All the sages say it's nonsense. In the countries of Islam, they know you're mad. . . ." Yes, but so is the rest of the world, and the tourist is in tune with his time. Even Islam, to some degree, has yielded to the madness of nationalism, the rights of minorities, Kemal, the Angora government, independent Hedjaz, King Feisul, our lover and our hope, let Arabia live for ever! The little madness of the tourist blends in gracefully with the great universal *Walpurgis* of a world which made the war and the peace. Property is only another mischievous futility like this insensate globe-trotting, and there is a fierce joy in the author's description of red Transcaucasia where "all the intricate paraphernalia . . . that padded the walls of existence have melted away under the wheels

of the Russians, the Germans, the British, the Turks, the Georgian Social-Democrats and the Bolsheviki." Part of the charm of the Near East since the war lies perhaps in its nudity, not very clean perhaps but certainly golden. One has the same sentiment in the presence of their mosques. No bric-à-brac here. No mean trifling little dogmas. No fuzz. . . . "So we must run across the continents, always deafened by the grind of wheels, by the roar of motors, wallow in all the seas with the smell of hot oil in our nostrils and the throb of the engines in our blood. Out of the Babel of city piled upon city, continent upon continent, the world squeezed small . . . we get what? Certainly not peace."

No, certainly not peace. This sudden nostalgia for tranquillity is a new note in Mr Dos Passos. However, there is a brief fable from antiquity which is an answer to those who adore the "too many trains, the strange names spelled out in the night, the last meals gulped at lunchcounters, the smiling lips shattered into void at the next station," but who feel constrained to curse now and then that which they adore. The Emperor Hadrian, supreme arbiter of one hundred and fifty million souls, master of the civilized world, with considerable power and inclination to mould that world nearer to his heart's desire, loved to travel. He put his cares and duties behind him, and set out on a journey which took fifteen years. In his wake trotted a mob of architects, artists, and engineers. Where a site pleased him there arose a city. In a relatively short time he was enabled to dine in Paris, partake of oysters at London, and hunt on Scottish moors. He penetrated to the ends of the earth. He saw everything. In fact he had seen too much. When he returned to Rome he became morose; he had experienced a sort of spiritual sunstroke. Sites, aqueducts, glittering cities, the green Nile, the naked shoulder of Antinous, everything was blurred and bitter. Madness lay at the end of that also as at the end of the worst excesses of his predecessors. He died just in time.

Had he been happier than the smallest monk among the despised *Chrestiani* who saw nothing but the miniature landscape through the slim columns of his cell, and beyond, eternity as through a telescope?

CUTHBERT WRIGHT

## SPEAK AS YOU MUST

THE WHITE ROOSTER. *By George O'Neil. 12mo. 85 pages. Boni & Liveright. \$2.*

ASTROLABE: *Infinitudes and Hypocrisies. By S. Foster Damon. 12mo. 80 pages. Harper and Brothers. \$1.50.*

RED FLAG. *By Lola Ridge. 12mo. 103 pages. The Viking Press. \$1.50.*

IN one of the many charming poems in his new book, *The White Rooster*, Mr O'Neil, addressing himself (or any poet) remarks: "Speak as you must, and let there be no note Ringing with sedulous felicity." And in that remark he really sums up all, or nearly all, that a critic can ever say to a poet. One can exhibit one's likes and dislikes, of course, and attempt to supplement them with some sort of reason; one can make an elaborate pretence that one has a kind of aesthetic system, which is itself a part of a larger system, and that one assigns a place in this system to each new aesthetic experience; but the fact remains that one's likes and dislikes are fundamentally naïve and unanalysable. One is no nearer to knowing, at the end of one's life, why one likes a particular poem, than one was at the beginning. One can, indeed, make a sort of psychological approach to it, analyse certain superficial effects, put one's finger on certain phrases as centres of light—but one comes very little closer to the basic "*why*."

Theoretically, therefore, one ought to refrain from giving advice to poets, and particularly to young ones: one ought simply to say to them, with Mr O'Neil "Speak as you must." One might amplify this dictum: one might also adjure the poet to *be* himself, and to *know* himself, as, perhaps, preliminaries to speaking as he must. But he knows this, or ought to know it, already; and to say anything so obvious to him will offend him. And so, willy-nilly, one is drawn into that strange form of futility known as criticism—that picking over of half a dozen grains, in the midst of

an infinitude of grains, with the omniscient air of having, at first glimpse, found the half dozen essentials. I feel, for example, about Mr O'Neil's work, that he does not sufficiently take to heart his own advice. He is a vivid colourist—he has a quite striking gift for phrase-making—he is eloquent, and achieves a great deal more subtlety and ease and variety of rhythm than either Mr Damon or Miss Ridge—he has, more obviously than either of these, the gifts of the lyric poet. Throughout his book, he maintains a very high average of excellence: there is scarcely a poem without its vivid line or image. And there are half a dozen short things of great beauty: such as *Lyric*, *No Son of Adam*, *Seal*, *The Mother*, and the title poem. But when one has put down his book, one has the feeling that one has brought away little but a confused sense of colour and richness; that Mr O'Neil has defeated his own ends by the very prodigality of his love of phrases; and that, in short, there are too many notes “ringing with sedulous felicity.” One suspects—perhaps unjustly—that Mr O'Neil might be very much better than he is if he were less decorative, less obsessed with colour for its own sake. Too seldom does he allow a poem to crystallize, hard and clean, about one idea. Instead, he gives himself to a series of what one might call sensuous distractions—many of them charming, some of them beautiful—which, while they prettify the poem, only too often rob it of integrity. He has great proficiency, both prosodically and linguistically; and this is perhaps one of his difficulties. It is so enticingly easy for him to rope in, *à propos* of a rhyme, a delightful, though interpolated, image! He does so; and the result is what one might call a very high-class padding. One also notes, in these poems, a tendency to the use of pretty words for their own sake, without sufficient reference to their appropriateness. Can a fountain be described as “clearly wondrous as a foundling star”? This is false romanticism of the kind that it is easy for the decorative-descriptive poet to slip into; and one wonders whether Mr O'Neil might not profit by a closer and deeper scrutiny of his own feelings, and an effort to present them as barely as possible, without any more decoration than is implied in arrangement.

He could learn something from Mr Damon, in this regard: for while Mr Damon is greatly inferior to him in grace and charm, as also in sensuous liveliness, he partly compensates for this by



the clearness and singleness of his aesthetic purpose. His materials are not so richly coloured—he lacks Mr O’Neil’s sensitiveness to shades of meaning and of movement—but he grasps much harder than Mr O’Neil the *idea* of his poem, and therefore brings it, when he is successful, to a much harder symmetry. Burning Bush, Moment, Bridge, Rock of Sages, are all excellent examples of this. In each of these cases, a poetic idea or apprehension is presented singly and purely, all the elements in it subdued to that end. Mr Damon’s “mind” is a more interesting one than Mr O’Neil’s: his attitude more complex, divided, intellectual: the critic is constantly interrupting the lyricist. His greatest trouble is in achieving, and keeping, that degree of intensity without which a poem does not begin to move of its own will. Whether through lack of imaginative concentration, or through lack of material, he tends at times to thinness. But he has a mind and manner of his own, and one wonders whether ultimately he might not be capable of a more complex poetic pattern than Mr O’Neil could compass, although at present less obviously gifted than he.

It is impossible to have anything but the warmest respect for the humanitarian spirit that informs Miss Ridge’s poems: one feels everywhere in them the rich kindness and magnanimity of the author: and nevertheless, these poems fail to kindle one, fail to “come alive.” It is a very curious thing. Here, obviously, is plenty of material; here is an author who is desperately in earnest about it; and yet the miracle doesn’t happen. Miss Ridge’s free verse is oddly devoid of instinctive rhythm—one hardly ever feels under the shape a reason for the shape. And when she writes in rhyme and metre, she is usually a little awkward and amateurish. One wonders, indeed, whether she is not an excellent short-story writer gone astray. When she tries to attain the intensity of poetry, she too often achieves the forced and strained: exaggerated metaphors, phrases over-violent. Might she not find a happier outlet in a medium less exactingly self-conscious? One breathes the suggestion with the greatest humility.

CONRAD AIKEN

## CHEMISTRY OR DEITY?

THE SECRET TRADITION IN ALCHEMY: Its Development and Records. *By Arthur Edward Waite. 8vo. 415 pages. Alfred A. Knopf. \$6.*

**I**N the mid-Victorian era, a clergyman's daughter, deeply read in alchemical books, and amazed at the marvels of "animal magnetism," wrote a huge book which within three weeks of publication she and her father recalled and burned. . . . About the same time, an American army-officer, to turn his mind from the Indians he was obliged to persecute, took to reading mediaeval records of hermetic experiment; he issued, first a pamphlet, then a series of volumes, explaining that there was a hidden mystery. . . . In the year 1600 a beam from a pewter plate dazzled the eyes of a German cobbler; he beheld the Glory in the Abyss of the Father, like a blossom of light springing from the heart of God. . . .

Most people believe that alchemy was an ignorant search for a means of making gold from "base metals"—or maybe for a drink that would cause one to live a century—an exploded superstition, either way. They are not aware that alchemy is the greatest puzzle in the whole history of science. We really cannot be sure what was its object; we do not know what the alchemists were trying to do. And when it comes to the question of how (and even if) they did it, the problem becomes very complicated indeed.

None other of the occult sciences is half so mysterious. We know both the purpose and the reputed means. In astrology, the stars are visible, their courses are known, and their "influences" are catalogued: one need merely calculate these respective influences at a given moment upon one particular spot of the earth's surface—a simple question of geometry. So also with palmistry: the lines and bumps and other signs have definite meanings; the only difficulty is determining their inter-reactions. Magic?—a question of observing certain hours, performing certain rites, and directing the will; then one can get (maybe) whatever one desires.

But not so with alchemy: here, both purpose and process are a deliberate mystery. Its literature is almost wholly of veils

and evasions, tangled forests of heraldic symbolisms, chemical formulae, suns and lions and invisible fires, resurrections and divine waters. The writers themselves, who range from the fifth to the eighteenth centuries, are strikingly in earnest. They assert, over and over, that there is a profound secret, too sacred for vulgarization, too remote for easy discovery, worthy a whole life's endeavour, and enriching one beyond all expectation. The writers know this from personal experience; they have often suffered imprisonment and torture; they go about hid in rags; and they confide their tales and deliberately confused formulae to laborious manuscripts which could not possibly have brought them the least reward, either in glory or gold.

To add to the confusion, there were also the books and pamphlets of the ignorant, who published chemical experiments and medical recipes, hoping that these might guide others on the path to the Great Experiment, but in reality beginning the science of chemistry. There were also innumerable charlatans, who wandered about, living on the hopes of their dupes. And all—mage, chemist, and rascal—repeat in chorus:

“Philosophers never write more deceitfully than when plainly, nor ever more truly than when obscurely.”

One can hardly name a man better fitted to pierce to the secret of alchemy than Arthur Edward Waite, dean of occultists, author, translator, and editor of numerous volumes magical and mystical, and initiate of unnumbered and unnamed secret societies. He has devoted his life to the science of the soul and its mysteries. He is, moreover, a scholar, with a sense of fact highly trained—a most necessary qualification for an occultist. His book on the Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross is by far the best bit of research on that difficult subject, and bids fair to stand for long as the authoritative book. Like Cornelius Agrippa, Mr Waite in his younger years issued volumes on magic which later (again like Agrippa) he has had the courage to renounce, not because they are wholly false, but because they are blind alleys; and Mr Waite is now wholly devoted to Christian mysticism.

Yet for all this, his Secret Tradition in Alchemy is somewhat of a disappointment. It seems that in the middle of the nineteenth century, two persons quite independently declared that the alchemical books were really nothing but records of mystical experiments; that the dragons and lights and spirits and other

symbols were all veils of the Mystic Way. Mr Waite therefore has examined the vast libraries of alchemical literature to see how far that one claim may be substantiated.

His answer is that the alchemists for centuries really and truly worked in metals, very occasionally producing results which erroneously convinced them that they had actually turned lead or quicksilver into gold. But about the end of the sixteenth century, various writers (notably Paracelsus and Khunrath) began to shadow forth another mystery, which was the great one of the soul. Then Jakob Böhme, the German cobbler and mystic, believing that spirit and matter followed the same formula, but really knowing only of the spirit, published his extraordinary volumes of vision and ecstasy. And finally the Rosicrucians in their secret conclaves developed the idea, which was then lost until Mrs Atwood and General Ethan Allen Hitchcock revived the idea and applied it indiscriminately to the interpretation of all alchemical literature from the beginning.

This thesis has the merits of being both plain and credible. It is based on years of research. And it explains the facts fairly—as set forth in Mr Waite's book.

Yet we remain unconvinced. We believe with Mr Waite that real alchemy was ultimately a delusion; we accept without reservation his conclusions concerning the later infusion of mysticism. But the puzzle of "gold-making" is not so easily solved. Other possible explanations have been published—notably Silberer's *Problems of Mysticism*—and of these Mr Waite takes absolutely no notice. We wonder why Mr Waite accepts the alchemists' statement that they were trying to make gold, when their warnings are innumerable that their "gold" is "philosophical" or "living," and not "vulgar gold," which is "dead." He is put in the position of believing them when they said they were trying to make gold, and of not believing them when they said they had done it. May this not have been a time when they were writing plainly but "deceitfully"—i. e., symbolically? And indeed, the chemical symbols appear to be but one of many sets of symbols: there were also symbols based on Genesis, on marriage, on the four elements, on the luminaries, and on the bestiaries, to mention a few. Why did the alchemists repeat so often that the essential "First Matter" was to be found in man? Mr Waite answers that the "First Matter" theoretically was to be found everywhere, so of course

it existed in man also. His position is logical enough, but does not account for the alchemists' insistence on this point.

Now Mrs Atwood and General Hitchcock naturally enough made much of this fact; and there is still more evidence of which they did not know, but which Mr Waite faithfully indicates. Mrs Atwood also believed that the alchemists knew the secret of hypnosis, and consequently were able to loose and direct the soul in the flight of the Alone to the Alone. Mr Waite, of course, does not endorse her here at all: God is found by no mechanical means. But having disentangled her thesis quite successfully from her involved book, he is not so successful with "Mr" Hitchcock. He never looked up the General's Diary, published in 1909; otherwise a certain passage therein might have made him revise his opinion of the "simplicity and primitive protestantism of Hitchcock." The passage reads:

"Nov. 12, 1866. I wish to say that I saw, a moment since, what the Philosopher's Stone signifies.

I do not omit a statement of it from any desire to make it a mystery. My relation to it is still to be determined. A great number of passages in books of alchemy seem perfectly clear now. I have nowhere told what it is or even what I think it is. It is a kind of revelation, but, when seen, has an effect something like looking at the sun. Personally I have much to fear from it, before I can look forward to its benefits. I have nothing to unsay in my books, and have but this to add: that they are studies to reach the One Thing."

Mr Waite's volume, then, is one to be studied by the student of hermetic lore, as it throws much light on the later developments of that mysterious science. But the whole explanation has not been given; the new Elias, who according to Paracelsus would come and make all mysteries clear, has not yet arrived.

S. FOSTER DAMON

## AN END AND A BEGINNING

*THE SECOND BOOK OF NEGRO SPIRITUALS. Edited with an Introduction by James Weldon Johnson. Musical Arrangements by J. Rosamond Johnson. 8vo. 189 pages. The Viking Press. \$3.50.*

*SEVENTY NEGRO SPIRITUALS. Edited by William Arms Fisher. Arrangements by the Editor and Others. 4to. 212 pages. The Musicians Library, Oliver Ditson Company. \$3.50.*

**T**HE first Book of Negro Spirituals issued by the Viking Press came as the summing-up and concentration of enthusiasms which had been growing for several years before; it prospered, to a degree, as any other fad, and other books, from other presses, shared its success. When I reviewed a number of these in *THE DIAL*<sup>1</sup> I expressed the hope that the fad would die out, hoping more strongly that when that happened the real value of the spirituals would be assessed and recognized.

It seems to me that the appearance of the two collections noted above (which I am regrettably tardy in reviewing) afford proof that my hopes have been fulfilled. The question books are the current fad, and those who go in for fads have no sense of continuity; they drop whatever went before, as if each new thing destroys all the old. At the same time the collection which is, in a way, the American standard, certainly the most familiar, for the songs of Brahms or collections of Old English or modern Russian or any other folk-songs, admits the spiritual to equality. Coleridge-Taylor has transcribed twenty-four negro melodies for the piano in another volume of *The Musicians Library*; the new volume definitely rises from the craze for spirituals and, as it were, sets a musician's seal upon them.

This is worthy of notice, but it must not be taken as a valid (or even intended) criticism of the earlier collections. One quarrels with Mr Rosamond Johnson at times as one quarrels with Mr

<sup>1</sup> See *THE DIAL*, March 1926, page 247.

Burleigh or any other arranger; but the standard of musicianship has been high. What one does not want to hear is concert-hall music: elaborate harmonizations which are not only out of keeping with text and melody, but apparently are out of the range of the original singers and shouters of this music. I have to confess that I find my taste, at times, an insufficient guide. The arrangement first heard usually seems simplest and best (although I have dissented bitterly from the musical statements of Burleigh and even under the spell of Robeson's singing have at least once felt that the Conservatory had triumphed over the spiritual). Mr Fisher, studying phonographic records, finds that harmonization among the Negroes departs in no degree from that of the conventional male quartette; another investigator finds only one really notable departure—avoidance of the leading tone in the final cadences. The novelty, to our ear, is oftener in the accent, and Mr Fisher points out that the Negro naturally sings, in the most familiar of spirituals,

*No-body* knows de trouble I see, Lord

instead of

*No-body* knows de *trouble* I see, Lord

which is what you always hear in refined concerts. It seems to me that considering the state of our musical knowledge (I mean its too great elaboration) editors would do well to mark the accents in their text; only the spirit *naturaliter* jazz will guess right, and the occurrence of conventional accents robs the spirituals of their freshness and of their character.

I think of this because, in addition to studying these two books, I have been hearing a considerable number of spirituals over the radio. No individual or quartette has given me anything like the pleasure I have had in listening to Robeson; second-rate concert sopranos and first-rate Metropolitan stars have been peculiarly ineffective in communicating the special quality of these songs, and only a few groups have succeeded in making them tolerable. The reason in the second case is that in group singing you always hear the spiritual as solo and response; it is essentially a dialogue, and one of extraordinary dramatic intensity. Note, for example, the

exaltation in *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*, when you consider these words as an invocation and the succeeding strophe, "Comin' for to carry me home," not as a description of the chariot, but as an expression of faith which holds obstinately through the song, in alternate lines, until at the end it is once repeated without the occurrence of a dividing line.

This dramatic quality which is always lost in the conventional effort to make sweet melodies of the spirituals is an essence, not an accident; I could say, in other words, that the drama is part of the religion of the Negro, and as the religion is lost by concert singers (and amateurs, Heaven knows!) so the music is lost. I indicated briefly in my last review that the text has itself a dramatic quality in the suppression of conjunctives. There is a connexion between "O gambler, git up off o' yo knees" thrice repeated and its answer, "End o' dat mornin' when de Lord said to hurry," but it is not a literary connexion, it is a religious one. Not all of the spirituals have that dramatic suddenness of expression, but there are enough to make us feel that the dramatic utterance is right, and the purely melodic, inadequate.

It comes to this: that for singing spirituals, one wants Negroes; and after that, one hopes that the music of the spirituals will be unforcedly worked into American music by whatever hands. I recommend not only the volumes here and previously considered, but the introductions to them as well. They are not exhaustive, but I think that together they indicate the scope of aesthetic interest which lies in the Negro's songs.

GILBERT SELDES



## MISS ROBERTS' FIRST NOVEL

*THE TIME OF MAN.* By *Elizabeth Madox Roberts.*  
12mo. 382 pages. *The Viking Press.* \$2.50.

**I**N the beginning Miss Roberts was a poet, and a number of years ago Mr Huebsch published for her an admirable book of rhymed verses called *Under the Tree*. It is not merely a collection but a slight cycle exquisitely arranged—one little girl speaking in the first person from beginning to end. One might almost think it primarily intended for children; in any case, it is more like a lyric *Alice in Wonderland* than like *A Child's Garden of Verses*, containing neither any sentiments of a grown person wistfully regretting his childhood nor any morally uplifting couplets. The versification, founded throughout upon the cadences of a child's voice "speaking a piece," is graceful though monotonous. Every line has its delightful rhetorical trick; every stanza has been composed with a poet's thoroughness, even in affectation. But Miss Roberts' purpose seems to have been less to put the reader under a spell or a series of spells—the poet's purpose—than to inform him about matters too spiritual to be dealt with in plainer phrases. Conceits about nature and what are called "pathetic fallacies" serve to make clear, in miniature, mystical ideas. The delicately comical people about whom the little girl protagonist in pigtails talks to us do indeed suggest, now a sabbath of a child's witches, now a ring of rural angels; but they touch our emotions only as comical people. Roughly speaking, philosophy and character are the subjects of fiction; and in *Under the Tree* the powerful novelist which Miss Roberts has now shown herself to be was scarcely concealed by the accomplished poet she was then.

The *Time of Man* is the biography of a woman from childhood until her children begin to repeat her story. Ellen Chesser is the daughter and finally the mother of one of those families in Kentucky bred for centuries for bad luck, wandering poor-whites as unpleasantly impressive as the Wandering Jew. Through the eyes of the strange girl one sees the least leaf and mist and sparkle of a countryside which is crowded with the strangest men, women,

and children, and birds and animals: "‘That’s Judge Gowan,’ she whispered. ‘And when he died there was marchen and white plumes on hats. . . . And when he was a-liven he used to ride up to town in a high buggy with a big shiny horse, a-steppen up the road and him a-sitten big, and always had a plenty to eat and a suit of clothes to wear and a nigger to shine his shoes for him of a weekday even. . . . He’s Judge Gowan in court, a-sitten big, but I’m better’n he is. I’m a-liven and he’s dead. I’m better. And bells a-ringen and banners go by and people with things in pokes to sell and apples a-rollen out on the ground and butter in buckets and lard to sell and pumpkins in a wagon, and sheep a-cryen and the calves a-cryen for their mammies and little mules a-cryen for their mammies, and a big man comes to the courthouse door and sings out the loudest of all: O yes! O yes! The honorable judge James Bartholomew Gowan (It must ’a been) is now a-sitten. . . .’" Ellen Chesser leads a life of imaginary dignity, with the heartbreaking credo of all men and women who die a little every day until the day of their death: "I’m lovely now. It’s unknowen how lovely I am. I saw some mountains standen up in a dream, a dream that went down Tennessee." A life of filth: "A quick memory of Screw, of the time he caught her behind a wagon and hugged her close. . . . Whiskey smells came out of him, and man smells, sweat and dirt, different from woman dirt." A life of exquisite craving: "In their kiss the froth of the high tide of summer arose and frayed. It was as if they sang a come-hither-come-hither to all the summer and all the countryside." There is a suicide by hanging; there is a witch; there is a lynching with whips, when Ellen stands in her night-gown in the mud and curses the men who are lashing her husband, her husband adulterous at last. A life of hard labour and fecundity. . . .

So far as I can remember, no book written in English since the war gives rise to so troubling a sense of reality, miserable and adorable reality—which is hideous without being ugly, like a fine animal that has just killed someone and will do it again, which is elegant in its unhurried moderation, which is profoundly instructive but not to be theorized about, which is adorable only because it is always victorious. It makes me think of those "triumphs" of the Caesars—not their successful battles, but the processions when they got back to Rome, in which the rulers, the resources, the

customs, the fruits, and the animals of a vanquished kingdom were displayed or represented in simulacrum. In it, reality is Caesar. Therefore, of course, it is a tragic work.

Many modern realists whimper, though their readers must have suffered as well as they, or demand justice, though there is, on earth at least, no judge. Miss Roberts reminds us that even the author who seems to undertake nothing but a report of experiences not his own should be asked to bring to his task a certain personal nobility. For all her lovely or painful material would have been spoiled by the least pusillanimity, and the least vulgarity of over-emphasis would have made a gross and nightmarish book. So much for character; the rest is art—artfulness, artistry, artifice.

By some mysterious transposition or distillation of poor-white speech, Miss Roberts has created one of the most remarkable dialects in literature—as remarkable as Synge's and as appropriate to the slowly flowing chronicle-novel as his was to the rowdy theatre—which gives a fantastic veracity to the conversations and, penetrating the body of the text, colours or perfumes or accompanies with monotonous and peculiar folk-music, the entire story. This prose is suave and supple even when very violent things are taking place. One is drawn on from page to page less by the anxiety of suspense or by variety of interest than by enchantment, by sheer sober pleasure—as if it were an idyll. Daphnis and Chloe in Kentucky, and in distress. . . . Only when one lifts one's eyes from the Kentucky of the book to the actual world full of the same pain, does one realize that there has been printed on every page a most desperate and unforgiving cry.

GLENWAY WESCOTT

## BRIEFER MENTION

**THE MINISTER'S DAUGHTER**, by Hildur Dixelius, translated from the Swedish by Anna C. Settergren (12mo, 277 pages; Dutton: \$2.50) conveys its picture of the life and heart of a woman farmer of Sweden at the beginning of the nineteenth century with few of what we are accustomed to regard as "scenes"; and those which are presented are kept to their minimum essentials with a firm though uninsistent sort of brevity and delicacy. Yet nothing is lost. The tale is in one piece, a perfect example of sustained tone, and with the kind of artistic abstinence it practises, the reader is apt to feel more than ever the depth and stature as well as the simplicity of the lives pictured.

**RHAPSODY**, by Arthur Schnitzler, translated from the German by Otto P. Schinnerer (12mo, 167 pages; Simon and Schuster: \$1.50) hovers on that borderland of melancholy and medicine which the Viennese novelist has made peculiarly his own. Fridolin—entering a costume shop—"felt as though he were walking through a gallery of hanged people who were on the point of asking each other to dance." And the "odor of silk, velvet, perfume, dust and withered flowers" which the author describes as permeating the scene, clings in a sense to the entire story. Schnitzler seems to be holding an ether cone over his characters while he deftly dissects their emotions—it is delicately and wisely done.

**THE GHOST BOOK**, edited by Cynthia Asquith (12mo, 327 pages; Scribner: \$2) contains sixteen stories of the supernatural by various modern writers such as D. H. Lawrence, Arthur Machen, Walter de la Mare, May Sinclair. The average of ingenuity is high, a desideratum, since so much in the ghost story, as in the *séance*, depends upon stage management. The radio of course makes its appearance as a source of spectrality, and there is among the sixteen concoctions at least one very entertaining mixture of humours and horrors.

**ANDY BRANDT'S ARK**, by Edna Bryner (12mo, 504 pages; Dutton: \$2.50) has the solid reality of books born of necessity. The projection of a rounded femininity, it has gotten itself down through the author's intuitive grasp of the nervature of complex group-situations, and the massive articulation of the subtly related characters. Because the protagonist comes to a realization of herself and her attitude toward life in awakening from an illusion constructed about her mother, and in recognizing the connexion between the democratic American mess and the dominance of the type of woman who manages to wind her family about her person, the work has humorously been misconceived as an attack on the great domestic institution. The novel is readily to be felt as the climax of a rejection of the parasitic, purely abdominal and digestive personality so rankly produced by American society, and the salutation of the self-determined, generous, and generative individual, integer of a state of culture.

**SUMMER STORM**, by Frank Swinnerton (12mo, 341 pages; Doran: \$2) finds its author engaged in another of his meticulous middle-class surveys—an occupation to which he seemingly returns because of an awareness of competence rather than in response to any deeper compulsion. That the novel is competently done is something which one admits without hesitation but without enthusiasm; excellence may at certain times be first cousin to tedium.

**EVENINGS ON A FARM NEAR DIKANKA**, by Nikolay Gogol, translated by Constance Garnett (12mo, 306 pages; Knopf: \$2.50) is a collection of Gogol's earliest writings, originally published in book form in 1831 in the author's twenty-second year. Although hardly more than sketches and phantasies of peasant customs and superstitions in the Ukraine, the classic grace and balance of Russia's great comic primitive are already revealed in these stories. Mrs Garnett's ability to give in the English version the early-morning freshness, the colour and verve of the original, and the swift economy of Gogol's line is altogether admirable.

**HOT SATURDAY**, by Harvey Fergusson (12mo, 261 pages; Knopf: \$2.50) has raw vigour, crisp narrative, and swift delineation; Mr Fergusson has the faculty of seizing upon the fundamental emotions of his characters and painting them in strong colours. This makes for a novel of pace and economy. Of subtlety there is very little—not enough, in fact, to enable him to bring the story to a conclusion. *Hot Saturday* ends on Sunday morning as abruptly as if he had torn a page from a calendar.

**THE BEST POEMS OF 1926**, edited by L. A. G. Strong (16mo, 234 pages; Dodd, Mead: \$2). Mr Strong has a keen eye for all that is being printed and is quick to give acknowledgement to the work of new poets. For example we notice with satisfaction that the verse of that most genuine poet, Countee Cullen, is in this collection duly represented.

**MODERN AMERICAN POETRY**, selected and with introduction by Conrad Aiken (16mo, 61 pages; The Modern Library: ninety-five cents). The poems selected to be included in this volume give an impressive idea of the achievements of modern American verse. Mr Aiken in his preface apologizes for the absence of Carl Sandburg, Ezra Pound, and Edgar Lee Masters on the ground of his own "critical perversity," and perhaps with the same plea he would justify his neglect of so beautiful a poem as *Puella Mea* by E. E. Cummings.

**SPRING NIGHT: A Review of Youth**, by Edward Steese (12mo, 71 pages; Erskine MacDonald, Ltd., London: 4s). Concerned with "immortality, the sadness of change, and the beauty of universities"—a sonnet-salutatory as it were, addressed to "imaginary hearers"—this sequence is not in the instance of every sonnet, so expertly harmonized as in "Honour the Aged"; nor so augustly projected as in "There bracken only." The book is unusual however and one wishes that it were universal, in the power that it manifests of substantiating to the reader "the inherent and potential nobility of man."

**PERO TAFUR**, *Travels and Adventures, 1435-1439*, translated from the Spanish and edited by Malcolm Letts (8vo, 261 pages; Harpers: \$5). The travels of Pero Tafur, which took place in the early fifteenth century, offer interesting reading. If they lack something of the inimitable sprightliness of those of Sir John Mandeville they at least give us illuminating pictures of Rome, of Constantinople, of Cairo, of Antwerp, and of Jerusalem during those decades of material and intellectual confusion immediately preceding the invention of printing and the discovery of the New World. The Spaniard, while in Palestine, was privileged to inspect the house of Pontius Pilate, he also took part in a procession to Mount Calvary. "The hole in which the Cross was placed is still to be seen, as well as the holes where the crosses of the thieves stood."

**MESSAGES**, by Ramon Fernandez, translated from the French by Montgomery Belgion (10mo, 304 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$2.50). In this important collection of essays the author seeks "to pick up and follow the spiritual dynamism" revealed in works of literature and to situate these works in the "human universe." Wherever his method is one of analysis rather than of construction he shows himself penetrating and profound. For the present reviewer, so deeply out of accord with Mr Fernandez' disparagement of Proust and veneration for Meredith, it is perhaps difficult to be wholly just. It seems that the author is but another one of those eloquent metaphysicians who endeavour to rear on the scaffolding of reality a false superstructure of idealism. But who has described better the style of Walter Pater?—"this suspension of the affirmation, this way of attracting and repelling judgment, as with the rhythmic and minute gestures of a holy service." And it is for such illuminations as these, and they are thick upon the pages, as well as for its seriousness toward life and literature that the book is most rewarding.

**A CALL TO ORDER**, by Jean Cocteau, translated from the French by Rollo H. Meyers (12mo, 248 pages; Holt: \$2) is a bright display of epigrammatic pin-wheels and critical sky-rockets—a shower of sparks from a mind which is constantly being ignited by Strawinsky and Picasso and Diaghilev. Reading these pages is like eavesdropping in a Paris café upon which the modernists in art and literature have bestowed their patronage—or like mingling in a school of thought only during recess. "The life of a poet who fulfils his promises is a perpetual autumn," says Cocteau. His own goal is a perpetual spring.

**FIRE UNDER THE ANDES**, by Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant (10mo, 311 pages; Knopf: \$4). Miss Sergeant has chosen for her fourteen portraits of prominent contemporary Americans those men and women whom she designates as "fighters." She herself might be included as one of these, for it is as an avowed partisan that she presents her favoured company to the reader, and her indulgence makes them seem like embodiments of their own aspirations. Yet live they do in their skilfully selected atmospheres. In spite of certain slight affectations of style the book is written with verve, discrimination, and literary acumen, and should undoubtedly be read by any one interested in American life and letters.

**NOTORIOUS LITERARY ATTACKS**, edited by and with introduction by Albert Mordell (10mo, 255 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2.50). With editorially expedient perhaps, but perhaps also aesthetically injudicious omissions of material quoted in the original papers, fifteen attacks upon the work of nineteenth-century authors from Hazlitt to Stevenson, are here presented in the belief that one-time contemporary atrabiliar criticisms are part of literary history like military dispatches written in battle—that such opinions help us to understand an author, that we may see how books once considered immoral have become required reading for high-school girls, and that authors subjected to present abusiveness may be consoled. Uncleverness is not predominant in the review of *Jane Eyre* by Elizabeth Rigby or in Henley's autobiographically pertinacious objection to the *Graham Balfour Life of Stevenson*. To say that nothing so "bairnly is to be found in the *Breviary of the Innocents*" as certain parts of Tennyson, is innocuously hackneyed and Lord Morley's dislike of Swinburne's "snakes and fire, and blood and wine and brine," is not unliterary. This book is on the whole, however, valuable as instruction rather than as writing. We perceive that there has since the time of Byron and Shelley, been a change in literary manners and are forcibly persuaded by it, of the tediously ineffective dullness of published personal invective.

**THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND MEMOIRS OF BENJAMIN ROBERT HAYDON** (1786-1846) edited by Tom Taylor, with introduction by Aldous Huxley (illus., 2 vols., 8vo, 875 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$7.50). From any angle from which it may be viewed, the life of Haydon provides a paradox. He waged furious and unrelenting war against the Royal Academy, yet, as a painter, he was a born Academician and fitted, save for a certain lack of tact in dealing with patrons, to have been the darling of that stuffy institution. He was a pious, almost ranting, Christian yet he scoffed at stiff-neckedness in others, plunged with criminal recklessness into debt, and died finally in despair by his own hand. Mr Huxley thinks it merely a case of "mistaken vocation" and certainly there is ground for the suspicion that Haydon might have met success as a writer since his memoirs contain unforgettable pen-portraits of such celebrities as Hazlitt, Wordsworth, Scott, Keats, and the Duke of Wellington.

**G. STANLEY HALL, A Biography of a Mind**, by Lorine Pruette, with an introduction by Carl Van Doren (8vo, 267 pages; Appleton: \$2.50). No racy episode, no piquant gesture, no characteristic word or expression makes the subject of this author's scrutiny breathe with any naturalness before us. It is as a "crusading knight" or a dying "playboy" that Lorine Pruette views this hero of her student days. Yet in spite of a sentimentality which arises like a suffocating scent from every page of this appreciation, one does come to like and respect the noted and intellectually vigorous old psychologist whose death in his eightieth year was so recently mourned. And perhaps after all one should exonerate the author somewhat for her leaning toward *clichés* and her lack of artistic insight since she is able to present her master's theories in so stimulating a form that one closes the book with every intention of reading immediately his most important work.

**THE HISTORY AND SOURCES OF PERCY'S MEMOIR OF GOLDSMITH**, by Katharine C. Balderston (16mo, 61 pages; Macmillan: \$1.25) traces by means of source documents recently come to light, the dilatory progress of the memoir from 1773, when Goldsmith dictated to Percy a memorandum of his life, to 1801 when the completed composition, the product of divers hands besides Percy's, was prefixed to the edition of Goldsmith's works issued by the principal booksellers of London. It seems to bear the scars of the requirements for the doctorate, but is a contribution to Goldsmithiana.

**SEX EXPRESSION IN LITERATURE**, by V. F. Calverton (10mo, 337 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2.50). Mr Calverton approaches literature from the sociological rather than from the aesthetic viewpoint. He is particularly concerned in relating to its social origin the expression of sex in literature beginning with the Elizabethan drama and ending with our own transitional age. One is gratified to have this tender subject treated in so straightforward and energetic a manner, even if its exposition displays a certain studious bias in favour of economic determinism. The book should prove especially illuminating to those people who suppose that the present-day obtrusion of sex in fiction is in any way extraordinary.

**EVOLUTION AND CREATION**, by Sir Oliver Lodge (12mo, 160 pages; Doran: \$2). Whenever a new horny fact of existence protrudes its tusks into the light of reason there usually steps forward some polished, soft-voiced interpreter of its arrival to explain that no one need be alarmed, that all is, indeed, as it was before, only better, more hopeful, more comfortable. Such a cicerone for the fearful is Sir Oliver Lodge. In the present work he employs his scientific knowledge to prove that between creation and evolution there is no essential conflict, and with genial persuasion he drives before him these two surly companions imagining that each is not ready the moment he removes his eye to break away from the other and disappear in opposite directions. For those people who like the naked realities of existence glossed over and made palatable, this author will prove an amiable ally; for those other more dour and uncompromising ones, however, he will seem but a pathetic figure in a universe inattentive to one's all too human desires.

**NOTES ON LAW AND ORDER**, by J. A. Hobson (8vo, 31 pages; Hogarth Press: 2/6). Mr Hobson has the power of interpenetrating with his tolerant, lucid intelligence the most recalcitrant problems. In the present study he analyses the part that modern psychology plays in the social sciences, and sees it as performing a most beneficial service in "turning the light of comedy on the pretence of Reason to be master." His plea that civilization, in the academic as well as in the business world, makes too little provision for a dangerous life is pertinently and convincingly presented. One wishes that these admirable "notes" might fall into the hands of certain dry officials and self-entombed scientists, but what would be the use if man is indeed the victim of his own audacious and mechanized brain?



## THE THEATRE

**I**N the theatrical sadness of the spring, there came Miss Margaret Anglin to the Metropolitan Opera House to play the **ELECTRA** of Sophocles. The success was impressive—so that it now seems likely that Miss Anglin will be encouraged by the Shuberts to produce the work again at a regular theatre and for a long run. My feelings about the production are not violent, but deep; I have been emotional about Greek drama on the stage since I saw Maurice Browne and Eileen Van Valkenburgh's **MEDEA** one memorable afternoon, years ago. So, to give this account some balance, I am going to quote from two weeklies:

“Attendance did set one thinking, however, what a trial a spinster daughter like Electra must have been to Clytemnestra during the long years before the actual violence.

‘If only Electra would stop fretting about her father,’ Clytemnestra must often have thought, ‘and adjust herself to conditions as they are! . . . Inhibitions, I suppose, though where she got them I can’t think—certainly not *my* side of the family. She creates an unpleasant atmosphere in the whole court with her father complex. . . .’

To that paragraph must be appended, ‘Apologies to John Erskine.’ I’m afraid Mr Erskine has made it impossible to take a prolonged peep through the windows of the House of Atreus without an eventual smile.”

(I may say, before proceeding to Mr Stark Young, that Mr Charles Brackett, who wrote the above in *The New Yorker*, has in three lines recorded the most damning verdict on Mr Erskine—if it is true. I shall come to that in a moment.)

“Miss Margaret Anglin’s production of *Electra* puts us so much in her debt that criticism is only ungrateful . . . these performances . . . did not kill the play, however much the harshness and immortal beauty of *Electra* may have eluded a production that was in English, inside a building, on a dry, monotonous stage, with a

young lady chorus, with unmasked faces, with bad make-ups, no beards, and without any real training in declamation, movement or formal beauty. . . . It is something to see the great progression of this play, to see this piety and exaltation of the passions, and to have the sense of the sublimity that Longinus speaks of as that Echo of Elevation of mind, 'when the mind in the height of its rapture exults and feels a sort of command, as if itself produced what it has been only hearing.' "

Longinus and John Erskine!

I have seen, apart from the *MEDEA*, a dreadful *OEDIPUS REX* and a superb *ELECTRA* (Hofmannsthal's, in Vienna, when "*die Bliebtreu war fabelhaft!*" according to lobby-comment on the leading actress) and perhaps two other Greek plays. It is my experience that no matter how they are done, they always are impressive; I can no more escape their catharsis than I can remain cold at the last act of *HAMLET*. It is a fault of sensibility; a good critic would be so offended by a bad production that his emotions would refuse. In hearing music, where "subject" is so intangible, so much less varied in its points of attraction, a bad performance has that effect; and in seeing plays of a slighter calibre than the Greek tragedies.

In the present case I am midway between Mr Brackett and Mr Young; all through the earlier scenes I was so irritated by the ill-spoken words of a translation which was constantly referring to "this my house" and by a chorus which was everything except the counsellor and friend of the principals, the commentator whose solid emotions could create the background and the framework of the tragedy, that I began to fidget. The *ELECTRA* was not absurd—I am not an abandoned reader of Erskine—but it was unimportant; it was not sublime. The production did not get any better; but the end of the play moved in its own sublimity, and moved the audience correspondingly.

I claim that a reasonably good production of *ELECTRA* would make it impossible to think of John Erskine, just as a good production of *ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA* makes it impossible to think of Bernard Shaw; just as, if the line occurred in *KING LEAR*, a good actor could say "So's your old man" with such passion that the slang connotation would never occur to the listener. I do not wish to take a high moral stand in this matter; if I did I could probably

elaborate a profound aesthetic reason to support what I feel; which is, that it is very hard to belittle what is great, and that in the effort we often succeed only in belittling what is already puny enough—ourselves. I feel, also, that the authentically great has seldom been diminished, and that those who can appreciate the sublime in the first instance can with perfect equanimity be trivial about it, without making the mistake of thinking that the triviality in any way affects what is noble. If Mr Erskine cares as deeply for poetry as I think he does, he treated the ancient legends with as little intent of belittling as mothers in Mexico have when they name their children Jesus. What his readers think is another matter.

A belated visit to NED MCCOBB'S DAUGHTER confirms the impression I had had that it is superior in most ways to Mr Howard's other play of this season, THE SILVER CORD; I rank them both below LUCKY SAM MCCARVER which, in retrospect, seems to me quite a fine play. (Without a file of THE DIAL at hand I cannot say whether I thought so at the time; it was a spoiled play, I think, but the root of the matter was there.) I am again impressed with Mr Howard's gifts of comedy and with a superior ability to compose downright funny lines. The bootlegger's remark, after reading the Bible for five minutes, that he can see already that it is a good book, is, as placed and as played, the funniest single line of the season.

In the matter of photoplays, two are now visible which invite comment, and one of them, CHANG, ought to be seen. The other, about which you may use your judgement, is THE KING OF KINGS. The difference between them is as if ready-made to fit in with theories of the movies, for CHANG which has hardly any story in the movie sense, is made throughout by the moving-picture camera, and THE KING OF KINGS which has no less a story than the Gospel narrative of the last years of Christ's ministry on earth, is virtually a series of still photographs slightly animated in the course of projection. Some of these—to the great joy of most of the critics—are pretty good reproductions of Renaissance paintings, and as H. B. Warner, who plays Jesus, is never made to suffer an actual close-up, the story is supposed to have been treated with reverence. By this process of reasoning the picture would have been positively

holy if Christ had not appeared, fulfilling, in that way, the requirements of the British censor. The opening scenes of **THE KING OF KINGS** are in colour and show a banquet in the richer Jewish set; the big scenes come after the crucifixion when a great deal of California real estate seems to have been tossed from one place to another place. The whole is dull and tasteless; and I only hope that many years from now I will be permitted to see the portions of the film which were deleted in the course of editing. They must have been good!

**CHANG** will probably be catalogued as an animal picture or a travelogue, and is something of the kind. It is a picture taken in Siam, in which wild animals are the principals. But its great claim to interest is that not only is the picture properly taken—i.e., with full exploitation of the camera—but the dramatic tension is also created by cinematic means, and each point of excitement in the events is matched with a proper technical adroitness. Fundamentally the picture will be popular because it gives the spectator a great thrill; the reason the critically minded will like it is that the thrill is legitimately accomplished. It is an admirable picture, a great lesson in what pictures can be, and I recommend it without reservation to everyone.

GILBERT SELDES

## MODERN ART

**O**CCASIONALLY in the necessary rush of journalism I sink into short-hand terms of speech that may not confuse the friends who have already adapted themselves to my peculiar argot, but which do certainly puzzle others. Hence, my objection, published elsewhere, to the work of Max Beckmann—that it was “too German”—needs to be qualified with the statement that I am by no means a member of the iron-banded group that is still actively engaged in the great war. On the contrary I have been peering across the frontiers—from the vantage-point of the Pittsburgh International Exposition—only too desirous of renewing acquaintanceships with the most likely painters. I discovered, for instance, that there is still a fine intellect guiding Max Liebermann’s outlook upon life, although it no longer controls his once dexterous brushes, that Max Slevogt is still witty, and that Ulrich Hübner, as a landscapist, is admirably and masculinely direct. That is as far as I got at Pittsburgh, but it at least shows that I have mentally hurdled the episode of the war. Apparently Mr Beckmann, recently introduced to us by The New Art Circle, hasn’t. He continues to hate. Not particularly the Americans, nor the English, but life in general. He hates heavily, thumpily, and everything. He is an unentertaining and uninstructional Schopenhauer. He lacks the salt, the yeast, or whatever it is that turns bald statements into style. He has an insensitive touch. . . . Now I cannot bar hate as a motive power in art. Hate has as much right in art as love or any other human emotion, but love has the advantage of being more lyrical. Hate is guttural and more often than not tends towards a cloaked utterance. It’s for that reason, I think, that there are so few good haters in art. Beckmann, I suspect, is not one. . . . Yet in Germany, I’m told, he has an increasing success. It must be that the heavy pessimism of the artist fits the mood of the vast army that has been put abysmally down and out in the late crisis. Sudden poverty is not particular about its spokesmen. But sudden poverty does not seem so especially dreadful to us Americans who have but so lately escaped from it and we cannot understand why Beckmann makes such a fuss about a condition that always seems

temporary. Christ himself, whose sympathy was boundless, never grew excited about the poor. It was the rich He worried over. Poverty may be nasty, uncomfortable, but should the artist himself be nasty? In such a case, is he an artist? Herr Beckmann puts his nose too close to the ground. Like the late Zola, of France, he thinks too much of the thing and not enough of the manner.

An artist who has a touch and who lately exposed in the same gallery, is Max Weber. "That man can paint," is the dictum that springs instantly to the lips, on seeing his canvases. And Weber, Herr Beckmann should note, is mournful enough, too. His art fairly reeks with woe; but remains art. His despair is probably some submerged, atavistic affair. It harks back, no doubt, to ancient practices at the Wailing Wall. I don't suppose Weber turned a hair at the recent deaths in the Chinese War, at the horrors of the Mississippi Flood, at the several fashionable murder trials of the winter. To paint is to give himself up to a regular orgy of sadness, but not sadness about anything in particular. Once or twice at his exhibition, I must confess, I found myself wishing he were particular. It seemed to me the year had not meted him out as many major experiences as it might have. His painting has all its old-time texture, but in only one picture—the Mothers and Children—did it seem to me that he rose to his full stature. But this picture, though small, is superb; one of the few really first-rate pictures to come out of America this winter. Oddly enough, when I peer closely into it, I cannot locate the source of the miasma of trouble that emanates from it. There are simply two women and two children in one of those compact compositions in which tables and chairs and legs and heads have sprung as by magic into just the right places. The two women lean their heads upon their hands and the two children are busy about nothing and that is all. Yet I swear if I stop being a hard-boiled Yankee for but a minute and simply yield myself to the Weber vibrations in the Mothers and Children, I again instantly feel that the walls of Jerusalem have fallen, that the Lord God has denied his once favoured children, and that the enemy is encamped without. It is a fine picture.

An event that attracted much less public attention than it deserved but which doubtless deeply interested many artists, was the Société Anonyme's exhibition of modern art in the Brooklyn

Museum. The artistic success of the show was unquestioned; its failure as a *cause célèbre* was merely due to insufficient publicity work. It is tiresome to have to admit it, but nothing "goes over big" in America without copious demonstrations in the daily press and, since the fact is so, it is regrettable that the really remarkable collection had to get along without this aid. The credit for the thoroughness of the exposition is Miss Katherine Dreier's. Only those who have already attempted to organize an international exhibition realize the enormity of such a task, but it may help to convey the idea to others, to state that only one in twenty succeed. Miss Dreier succeeded. The Brooklyn exhibition was assembled in twenty-two countries and was sufficiently world-wide in scope to impress the laymen by its extensiveness alone. It made its own atmosphere and certain painters who have not hitherto attracted much attention, there took on new importance. It is for that reason that a modern museum devoted to this "new thought" is imperatively needed. No one pretends, these new artists least of all, that all this output is of unquenchable vitality, but it seems likely that some of it may be accepted as permanently significant of the times that produced it, and to decide which, more than the hasty visits of critics is necessary. Indeed, critics, with their heads already burdened with the usual weekly quota of a dozen academical shows are more handicapped than most people in arriving at the salient matter in such a novel collection. The help of the light-hearted public is required and even they must be given time.

The Whitney Studio Club wound up a gay and prosperous season with an auction sale of its members' paintings that attracted all Greenwich Village to the scene. The impetuous bidding was an heartening thing to hear, and probably some among the younger fry—all the talent were there, of course, to see themselves sold—got an increased sense, upon seeing the money actually paid down, of the seriousness of art. It was such fun, in fact, that it was voted to have another auction next year.

HENRY McBRIDE

## COMMENT

A RECENT bulletin<sup>1</sup> of The University of South Carolina draws our attention to peculiarities of Gullah dialect, the term Gullah coming possibly "from the name of the Liberian group of (African) tribes known as Golas, living on the West Coast between Sierra Leone and the Ivory Coast." The one-time environment of these Negroes as rice and cotton labourers on South Carolina and Georgia plantations is brought before us in this study, as also the aspect to-day of the estates stretching "in an irregular chain along the coast, inlets, and tidal rivers, each with the gray-weathered dwelling-house in its moss-draped grove of live-oaks; the big barns and slave-quarters off to one side, consisting of a double row of one-story cabins, now in ruins, lining the 'street.'"

Over-emphasis as occasionally felt in these pages—minimizes the imperativeness of what is set forth. And one is reluctant to infer monkey-nut, a Negro term for cocoa-nut, to have arisen "probably from the resemblance of the hairy nut to a brown monkey's head." But the pamphlet is not a lazy thing and is as benefiting as it is ungreedy of thanks.

Gullah dialect is distinguished by short-cuts Mr Smith observes—short-cuts of tense, without distinctions of gender. An equivalent of *nicht wahr* or *n'est-ce pas*, *enty* may mean "isn't, aren't, didn't, doesn't, don't, you, she, it, they, we." And the instance is given of a Georgetown Negro who said in offering a conductor a ticket for his wife—"Dis one fuh him"; and a ticket for himself—"and dis one fuh we."

What is said of the historical background, of the literary background, and of the dialect of the Gullah Negroes, is followed by a discussion of their Spirituals, allusion being made to that tendency on the part of white singers to "render a Spiritual as though it were a Brahms song or to assume a Negro 'unctuousness' that is obviously false and painfully so." The Charleston Society whose admitted object is the Preservation of Negro Spirituals, is however,

<sup>1</sup> Gullah. By Reed Smith. Brochure. 8vo. 45 pages. Bulletin of the University of South Carolina. November 1, 1926.



exonerated of would-be-helpful unusefulness; and also, not by contrast but synonymously, strong effort is being made we are told, to encourage the Negroes to sing their own rather than other men's songs.

Blinded by no subjective penny of infallibility, this pamphlet affords comprehensive bibliographies of writings—good and bad—about subject-matter discussed, and quotes Mr N. G. J. Ballanta as feeling that the characteristics of certain American Negro music could be traced to an African stem.<sup>1</sup> Believing as we do in the Negro's primæval richness, we should like to suppose that they could.

**O**UR passion for the new becomes cold on occasion through finding it though new, not living; but some months ago at a presentation arranged by Paul Rosenfeld, of work by Aaron Copland, Roger Sessions, Theodore Chanler, William Grant Still, Avery Claffin, and Harold Morris, severally, at The New School for Social Research, we were enriched by novelty plus vigour. Paintings are usually not painted for the painter by somebody else, and the fortunate credulous as well as those who insist upon authenticity of interpretation were happy in the playing by composers of their own compositions, as in the assisting by them of each other; and may one say—not parenthetically—that Violinist and 'Cellist, Mr Edwin Idler and Mr Paul Gruppe were devout in their earnestness and not more earnest than accomplished.

The two movements from Mr Chanler's Violin Sonata in F minor were marked by a strange rich elegiac thoughtfulness with helpfully recurrent emphases—the ripple widening beneath sensitively formal gusts of marine wilfulness. We were ineptly tardy, so were defrauded of hearing Mr Copland's Passacaglia, but are told that structurally it would not have seemed faint to us, exaggeratedly adherent though we are to Bach and Frescobaldi. (Not so much though as because, should one say.) It is probably

<sup>1</sup> St Helena Island Spirituals. Recorded and transcribed at Penn Normal, Industrial, and Agricultural School, St Helena Island, Beaufort County, S. C., by Nicholas George Julius Ballanta of Freetown, Sierra Leone, West Africa. Introduction by George Foster Peabody. 4to. 116 pages. Press of G. Schirmer, Inc. \$1.50.

not ultimate musical felicity that an instrument's characteristic sound can be made to simulate a bird, a cricket, a human being, a bell, or a banjo; but a plucking, a rattling of skeleton leaves, a kind of orchestrated Aeolian equinox, may be music not chaos and Mr Copland's Serenade was magnificently impersonated. His polyphonic security is frightening, but his seriousness saves us.

To Mr Still's Dialect Songs one could be attentive—particularly had Winter's Approach been the starting-point of a progress. Spheroid and positive, Mr Morris's Fantasy was eloquent rather than mysterious; and Mr Claflin also perhaps was inclined to meet one more than half way. In his Four Pieces from an Unfinished Ballet he was to us, especially in the Allegro molto ben marcato, a very handsome "turn." Certain depths on the other hand can be all but too deep for one. Mr Sessions' Three Choral Preludes for Organ exacted a far from stupid faithfulness to musical intention and the punitively many who have not the ear to hear all there is in a thing are unruly beneficiaries. These preludes, however, had been written for the organ and their masonry—vital and careful—was to one through its fine logic, veritably a song of the congregation, marvellously assisting Mr Rosenfeld's little family of geniuses to seem large.



*Courtesy of the Flechtheim Gallery, Berlin*

**STILL-LIFE. BY ANDRE DERAIN**

# THE DIAL

AUGUST 1927

## AMONG SCHOOLCHILDREN

BY WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

### I

I walk through the long schoolroom questioning  
A kind old nun in a white hood replies  
The children learn to cipher and to sing  
To study reading books and history  
To cut and sew, be neat in everything  
In the best modern way—the children's eyes  
In momentary wonder stare upon  
A sixty year old smiling public man.

### II

I dream of a Ledean body, bent  
Above a sinking fire, some tale that she  
Told of a harsh reproof, or trivial event  
That changed some childish day to tragedy—  
Told, and it seemed that our two natures blent  
Into a sphere from youthful sympathy,  
Or else, to alter Plato's parabell  
Into the yolk and white of the one shell.

### III

And thinking of that fit of grief or rage  
I look upon one child or t'other there  
And wonder if she stood so at that age—  
For even daughters of the swan can share

## AMONG SCHOOLCHILDREN

Something of every paddler's heritage—  
 And had that colour upon cheek or hair  
 And thereupon my heart is driven wild:  
 She stands before me as a living child.

## IV

Her present image floats in to the mind  
 What quinto-cento finger fashioned it,  
 Hollow of cheek as though it drank the wine  
 And took a mass of shadows for its meat,  
 And I though never of Ledean kind  
 Have wrong to brood upon—enough of that,  
 Better to smile on all that smile, and show  
 There is a comfortable kind of old scarecrow.

## V

What youthful mother, a shape upon her lap  
 Honey of generation had betrayed,  
 And that must sleep, shriek, struggle to escape  
 As recollection or the drug decide,  
 Would think her son, did she but see that shape  
 With sixty or more winters on its head,  
 A compensation for the pang of his birth,  
 Or the uncertainty of his setting forth.

## VI

Plato thought nature but a spume that plays  
 Upon the ghostly images of things  
 Solider Aristotle played the taws  
 Upon the bottom of a king of kings.  
 World-famous golden thighed Pythagoras  
 Fingered upon a fiddle stick or string  
 What a star sang and careless Muses heard:  
 Old clothes upon old sticks to scare a bird.

## VII

Both nuns and mothers worship images  
But those the candles light are not as those  
That animate a mother's reveries  
But keep a marble or a bronze repose.  
And yet they too break hearts—O Presences  
That passion, piety, or affection knows,  
And that all heavenly glory symbolise  
O self-born mockers of man's enterprise.

## VIII

Labour is blossoming or dancing where  
The body is not bruised to pleasure soul  
Nor beauty born out of its own despair  
Nor blear-eyed wisdom out of midnight oil.  
O chestnut tree, great rooted blossomer,  
Are you the leaf, the blossom, or the bole?  
O body swayed to music brightening glance  
How can we know the dancer from the dance?

## MR YEATS'S AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

BY JOHN EGLINTON

**Y**EATS'S boyhood was passed in the great peace of Queen Victoria, and amid all the social and spiritual conditions prevailing throughout her realms, especially perhaps amongst the Anglo-Irish, who in addition to the universal feeling of stability, enjoyed a special sense of "possessing the earth," a sublimation of the old Ascendancy feeling—a sense in the retrospect almost one of blessedness, but soon, alas! to engender in the spirit of youth a vague restlessness. The idyll of these early years is narrated in the delightful pages of the first section of these Autobiographies. I have been told that there were something like the same social conditions in the Southern States of America before the abolition of slavery, when families, even without actual wealth, passed on from one generation to another the inheritance of privileged leisure. The Yeats family, members of a little patriarchal community in the enchanting county of Sligo, were likewise born into a natural sense of aristocracy, and the poet, though his father was an impoverished artist, acquired a strong feeling of superiority—which has not been altogether serviceable to him as a national poet—to all phases of human activity except "the arts." It has long been a commonplace with critics of Ireland that among its chief requirements is a poet to give it new heart for life and work, but in Yeats Ireland has produced a poet who is almost the perfect antithesis to Robert Burns. "Our poetry when it comes," he said in his youth, "will be distinguished and lonely." In the new Ireland, where it is said that there is no longer a leisured class, Yeats has been at the pains to some extent of recasting his character.

I suppose it is due to the fact that the span of human life has extended itself somewhat that so many of our statesmen, soldiers, poets, find time in the evening of their days to forestall their biographers. The gain to posterity should be considerable, though a cynic might wonder whether we should have known, for example,

**NOTE:** Autobiographies: Reveries over Childhood and Youth, and The Trembling of the Veil. By William Butler Yeats. 12mo. 477 pages. The Macmillan Company. \$3.50.



Shelley any better, if he had been enabled to undertake a veracious account of himself. Rousseau certainly contrived to interpose between himself and posterity an image of himself which it is difficult to get behind. But Yeats, though possibly there may be some work for future emendators of dates and historical sequences, is honest with us and with himself, and he reveals himself as no biographer could do. Apart from its gratification of our natural curiosity about the intimate life of a poet, the story he tells has much psychologic interest. It is the story, told by a man who has now achieved something of the tolerance and disillusionment of age, of a youth so firmly set in temperamental grooves as to be incapable of the ordinary adaptation to society through education; and of a soul whose earliest preoccupation appears to have been the search within itself for a nucleus of reality, and which was often made melancholy by its inability to find there more than a vague histrionic instinct. He tells us that at the age of eighteen or thereabouts he had reached this definition of truth: "the dramatically appropriate utterance of the highest man"; and to the same period belongs the verse: "Words alone are certain good." The ideal which he began more or less consciously to propose to himself, a dramatic ideal, was quite a noble and exalted one: a mind of such a temper that in no situation could it fail of conscious self-expression; and perhaps it is the presence of this ideal in the mind of Yeats, distinct at first from his ambition to excel in literature but finally using literature as his chief instrument, which has given him his peculiar personal distinction, and the wide and I think always salutary influence that has emanated from him. He tells us how he sought after self-realization, doing frequent violence unto himself (in the language of à Kempis) on the platform, in debating societies, sometimes in uncongenial society; always the same eager, sympathetic, lovable companion, whom everyone felt to be a being apart: with one mentor only in those days to whom he really deferred, his imperturbably speculative father. A kind of mundane seer, his father was, incurious about "God and immortality," but wistfully contemplative of the minds of his friends; and he pointed, not without justification, to his success with his own family in a theory of education which owed nothing to textbooks. To his father the only real poetry was dramatic poetry, and under his influence Yeats began to write his first verses. It is strange to read how bunglingly he began: "My lines but seldom

scanned, for I could not understand the prosody in the books." Few poets I should think have begun with the study of prosody; and few have been, like the whole Yeats family, entirely without ear for music. I have heard Yeats claim that this insensibility to the great art of the moderns has been an advantage to him, in helping him to preserve "antiquity of mind." Another preservative was his natural mental resistance to academic training. "Yet even if I had gone to a university, and learned all the classical foundations of English literature and English culture, all that great erudition which once accepted frees the mind from restlessness, I should have had to give up my Irish subject-matter, or attempt to found a new tradition."

Yeats's delightful gift of companionship has brought him into intimate relations with a variety of remarkable people, and of these he gives a series of vivid portraits. It is to be noted how many of them are in various ways and degrees romantic or "accentuated" characters—on their way no doubt by the road of excess to the Palace of Wisdom; and in like manner in literature, though he has a perfectly unerring sense for felicities of language and imagery, an unfailing appetite for life at the point of speech, he is for the most part indifferent to what Matthew Arnold called "high seriousness" (Matthew Arnold in fact is rather a butt with him). He is all for personality casting itself with passion into a part; where life becomes colourless, as it does for the most part with those who attain unto the white light of truth, he is not much interested. In Yeats's philosophy of the "antithetical self," man in fact is almost necessarily an actor, for in his most intense words and actions he is engaged in moulding his own "antithetical" image. We have seen that as he searched himself in youth he found within himself a vague histrionic instinct, and now in the reveries of his maturity it is as actors he sees the men he has known: Wilde, gathering his whole personal energy into Hamlet's power of epigram; Henley, "human, like one of Shakespeare's characters"; William Morris (the chief literary influence by which Yeats has been affected) in life an irascible blunderer, who wrote long romances "apparently with no other object than that his persons might show to one another through situations of poignant difficulty the most exquisite tact."

Yeats was born to be the poet of "Romantic Ireland," and perhaps the pose which he requires in a poet (he found John Davidson, for instance, "lacking in pose and gesture") was most

effective in his own case against the setting of the older Ireland, when provincialism still lay heavy upon it and nationality still belonged to the world of dream and of theory. A dislike of England, curiously combined with a preference for the society of English people, was fostered among the Anglo-Irish during the great Victorian peace, and is as evident in the life and works of Bernard Shaw as it has been in those of Yeats. Platonic hatred, one might almost call it; certainly there hardly seemed to be, for either of these writers, an actual *casus belli* between the two countries. Perhaps it was even a provincial sentiment—at least so far as the Anglo-Irish were concerned—rather more justified historically and geographically than the dislike of Yorkshire for Lancashire, or of one end of the Isle of Man for the other; at all events it flourished more vigorously under provincial conditions than it has been able to do of late in an autonomous Ireland. Yeats's nationalism, however, had from the first all the natural ardour of a congenital sentiment; and though neither in literature nor in politics does it ring altogether true to his Catholic countrymen, he remains none the less so far Heaven's answer to Ireland's demand for a national poet.

A word as to the excellencies of Yeats's prose style, one of the most exact in modern English literature. It must I should think be very nearly a torture to Yeats to read almost any current English writing, so inevitable to most of us are its pitfalls. There is always I think something of platform delivery in his tone, as though he were strung up to the consciousness of an audience, each sentence tried and tested by an inner ear; and indeed I have heard him say that public speaking is the best school of exactness for a writer. Though not altogether an orator, he is, as is well known, a most distinguished public speaker, more admired perhaps by other public speakers than by any average audience, which cannot quite reconcile itself to his pose; and this pose, which the audience is quite right in detecting, hardly lends itself to the same justification as the almost heroic pose of his writings. Both as a poet and philosopher he has created the true and legitimate outlet for that dramatic instinct which he discovered in early youth in his being's core.

## TWO POEMS

BY KWEI CHEN

### THINKING OF CHILD-TIME:

#### COMPANION WORDS

My mother and I were pacing our inner garden. At such times she would murmur, "Moonlight, bright, bright . . ."

And I would echo: "Moonlight, bright, bright . . ."

When I was older, in these same nights, in the same garden, my mother and I would sit by the small pond, she on the stone bench, roughly hewn; I on my bamboo stool, looking up at her attentively. Yonder on the other side of the pond, the light, gentle winds were through the bamboo-thicket of fine violet-hued bamboos—there in the leaves, rustling, rustling . . .

"Look, Ching-yü, my son," she would say, "look at the moon in the pond! See also our good crane, resting on the rock amid the large, decaying lotus-leaves . . ."

"Indeed, he is the very image of a Sage! White and venerable, indifferent to all fading things! I remember well what First Uncle said: The Crane is pure of heart and wise of counsel."

When I was scarcely ten, as usual my mother and I walked in the garden.

"Think," she bade me, "of a companion for the phrase, Enjoying Moonlight—such a companion as shall walk with the same step and be kinsman in meaning." After a long time I had struggled in my mind,

"Could it be Putting-On Clothes?" I asked timidly.

"Correct, but the idea is poor, no true companion for my phrase; my phrase is poetic, and yours, vulgar. Think once more."

Hard again I struggled, but with no immediate result.

"Listen," again my mother bade, "listen to the notes that come flying from Third Uncle's parlour!"

"Yes, Mother," I replied, looking at her. "I have the phrase, Listening-To Harp."

"Good, it is good, Ching-yü, but many are they, phrases of the same kind. Do you not wish to think of one more phrase?"

Long the mother waited. Then,

"Stupid boy," said she, but not provoked. "Read you not books?"

"Reading Books!" I answered briskly.

"Yes, son; and Chanting Poetry is another."

"Sipping Wine is another."

"Yes, son; better is Sipping Tea."

Then my mother rose and led me toward the house. The neighbourhood had become quiet. The moon just shone upon our heads . . .

#### MY FRIEND THE BACHELOR

My friend the bachelor,  
Having just returned from his trip around the world,  
Without regret, tells me  
That for him travel is preferable to the married life.  
I soothe him with two stories of his Chinese comrades:

A thousand years ago,  
In a hut at the edge of the West Lake  
Lived a poet who, throughout his life, married not.  
In his garden he planted a plum-tree,  
And upon a pedestal he mounted the two wings of a crane.  
The former he acclaimed as his wife; and the latter, his son.  
Every year the Bright Clearness of the Spring found him in rapture  
Under the ample foliage of the willows by the Lake, crooning;  
Early in the wintry morning, after a night of heavy snow-fall,  
He failed not to visit the blossomy plum, his wife—  
With a crooked cane and a conical hat of bamboo leaves,  
Alone he stood there.  
His poems he threw away as fast as they were written.  
He declared, laughing:  
"For fame with my contemporaries I do not care;  
Should I care for fame with posterity?"  
Poor was he, but the Emperor's call to office he refused.

Lonely he might be, yet for a score of years  
 His foot-prints had not marked the neighbouring city.  
 By the cottage where he lived,  
 He prepared himself a grave, in which he was buried  
 With a copy of his last poem in the coffin beside him.  
 At present in his garden every year are  
 Hundreds of plums, hung with snow-flakes;  
 But on the pedestal from which the crane took his flight,  
 Only an inscription is erected.

The other comrade is my own dear, poor, mad Uncle,  
 Author of the World's Unmarried Heroes,  
 Still maintaining his principle,  
 "No marriage without Platonic love"!

He lives a very simple life,  
 But he inherits a thousand volumes of the best literature,  
 A large collection of masterpieces of painting and calligraphy,  
 And urns, centuries old.

He possesses gifts as a poet, a painter, and a calligrapher.  
 Alone or with an understanding friend,  
 He spends his days and evenings  
 In reading, criticizing, reciting, and in composing poetry;  
 In painting and in cultivating the precious art of calligraphy;  
 In fishing and gardening on sunny days;  
 In walking and singing on moonlit evenings.

He is known as wise and good; obscure and mad;  
 He is revered by everyone, and helped by none!

My friend seems greatly moved in listening to these stories.

# HIM

BY E. E. CUMMINGS

## ACT I SCENE II

*A room: three visible walls and an invisible wall. Of the visible walls one, the wall to the audience's left, is solid. In the middle wall is a door and in the wall to the audience's right, a window.*

*Against the solid wall is a sofa on which lies a man's brown felt hat, much the worse for wear. Under the window in the opposite wall is a table on which reposes a large box for cigarettes; and near the table are two chairs in the less comfortable of which HIM sits, back to the audience, writing in a note-book.*

*ME (whose face appeared in the picture, preceding scene) stands facing the audience just inside the invisible fourth wall. Her open eyes (which are focused at a point only a few inches distant) and her gestures (arranging hair, smoothing eyebrows, etc.) as well as the pose of her body (which bends slightly forward from the hips) suggest to the audience that she is looking at her reflection in an invisible mirror which hangs on this invisible wall.*

ME (*To herself*): I look like the devil.

HIM (*Absently, without looking up or turning*): Wanted: death's brother.

ME (*Still primping*): No but did you ever try to go to sleep, and not be able to, and lie watching the dark and thinking about things. . . . (*She cocks her head, surveying herself anew. Satisfied, turns; goes to the table and stands, looking down at HIM.*)

HIM (*As before*): Did I which?

ME: Nothing.

HIM (*Looks up, smiles*): Impossible.

ME (*Touching his shoulder*): Look. You be nice to me—you can do *that* any time.

NOTE: Portions of a play in three acts entitled Him.

HIM: Can I? (*Pockets note-book and pencil. Gets up, faces her.*)

ME: It's true.

HIM: What's "it"?

ME: "It" is, that you really don't care about—.

HIM: I'll bite the rubber angleworm: what don't I really care about?

ME (*Sinks into the more comfortable chair*): Anything.

HIM: Whereas this is what's untrue—. (*Sits on the table*) Anything everything nothing and something were looking for eels in a tree, when along came sleep pushing a wheelbarrow full of green mice.

ME (*To herself*): I thought so . . .

HIM: I, however, thought that it was the taller of the two umbrellas who lit a match when they found themselves in the main street of Hocuspocus side by each riding elephants made out of candy.

ME: And you may find this sort of thing funny. But I don't.

HIM: May I?

ME: O—suddenly I think I'd like to die.

HIM: I think myself that there's some thinking being done around here.—But why die now? The morn's on the thorn, the snail's on the wing, the play's on the way; and who knows?

ME: I do. I know we're absolutely different. I've tried and tried not to know it, but what in the world is the use of trying? O, I'm so sick of trying—

HIM: Me too. This business of writing a play, I mean.

ME: You mean I'm no good to you and that we should have ended everything long ago; because—not being interested in all the ideas you're interested in—it's obviously silly of me to pretend.

HIM:—To pretend? (*Picking up the box, opens it and proffers cigarettes; her hand automatically takes one. Striking a match, he lights her cigarette and his. He gets off the table; walks up and down, smoking.*) What's obviously silly of you to pretend is, that we are not in love—

ME: In love!

HIM: Precisely; otherwise we couldn't fight each other so.

ME: This may be your idea of being in love: it isn't mine. (*She smokes wearily. A pause.*)



HIM (*Halts, facing the window*): What did you say . . .

ME: I said, it's not my idea of love.

HIM: No; I mean when I was sitting, and you—

ME: Who cares.

HIM: —you asked me something. I have it; you couldn't go to sleep. (*Walks to the table and stands, looking down at her. After a moment, stooping, he kisses her hand.*) I'm very sorry. (*Puts his arm around her.*)

ME: Stop please; I don't want you to be nice to me.

HIM: But I can't help being nice to you, because I'm in love with you. (*She shakes her head slowly.*) O yes I am. You may not be in love with me, but that doesn't prevent me from being in love with you.

ME: Listen. I don't know, really . . . O, I wish—

HIM (*Releases her*): What?

ME: —because with part of you I think I'm in love. What can I do?

HIM: Well now let's see . . . here's a bright idea: you can advertise in the Paris edition of the New York Herald for a new lover, thus—"By a freckled fragile petite brunette incapable of loneliness and cooking, wanted: a tall strong handsome blond capable of indigestion and death (signed) Cinderella Van Winkle."

ME (*Involuntarily*): Who's she?

HIM: Don't tell me you never in your whole life heard of Cinderella Van Winkle! The bluest blood in all Gotham my dear, directly descended from the three wise men who went to sea in a thundermug, and great-great-great-great-granddaughter (twice removed) of the original and only founder of the illustrious Van Winkle family, Neverrip Van Winkle, who married a Holeproof.

ME: Being funny doesn't help.

HIM: Neither, he inadvertently answered, does being tragic.

ME: Who's being tragic?

HIM: I give it up.

ME: You mean me? I'm not being tragic, I'm being serious; because I want to decide something. I think you might help me instead of making fun of me.

HIM (*Amorously*): There's nothing I'd rather do, my dear, than help you—

ME (*Quickly*): I don't mean—

HIM (*Cheerfully*): In that case, I have a definite hunch. (*ME starts.*) What in the world . . .

ME: Yes?

HIM: What's the matter?

ME (*Confused*): Nothing. Go on, please: I'm listening.

HIM (*Smiles*): You're also stopping and looking, which puzzles me because I don't see the engine.

ME (*Smiling*): There isn't any—go on. I was thinking.

HIM: And may I ask what you were thinking?

ME (*Hesitantly*): Yes.

HIM: Well?

ME: I was thinking, when you said that . . .

HIM: When I said?

ME: . . . about having a hunch . . .

HIM (*Sits on the arm of her chair*): Yes? (*His hand caresses her hair.*)

ME:—about . . . a hunchback. That's all.

HIM: What about a hunchback?

ME: Nothing. They're good luck. Please tell me now; that is, if you'd like to.

HIM: "Tell" you?

ME: About the play. Do you think it'll be finished soon?

HIM: On the contrary—that is, yes. I think it will be torn up.

ME: Torn up! Why?

HIM: No good.

ME (*Earnestly*): I'm sure it's good.

HIM: You haven't had the misfortune to read it.

ME: I'd like to—if you don't mind: can I?

HIM: Of course, if you wish. I tell you: it's no good.

ME: I'd like to read it, anyway. Have you got it in your hump?

HIM (*Jumps*): What?

ME:—Pocket, I meant.

HIM: My God, have I a hump? (*Rising*) Here, let me look—.  
(*Starts toward the invisible mirror.*)

ME (*Hugging him*): Please don't be angry with me: I know I'm stupid. I can't help it.

HIM (*Laughs*): I was just on the point of—

ME: Sh.

HIM: —of letting our mirror decide the question. (*Nods in the direction of the audience.*)

ME: Were you, now? I guess men are vain—but that big mirror's no good and never was any . . .

HIM: Like my play.

ME: Nonsense. If you really want to see yourself, I've got a little one in my—O no, I lost it.

HIM: A little one in your which?

ME: A little mirror, stupid; in my bag. I must have dropped it in a snowdrift.

HIM: Not the bag?

ME: No, the mirror. I can't find it anywhere.

HIM: Never mind: I've decided that it's safer to take your word for my looks.

ME: How sweet of you. Maybe you'll let me see the play, too? Please!

HIM: I haven't the play with me to-day, unfortunately.

ME: I thought you always carried notes or something around with you. (*Suspiciously*) What were you writing a moment ago?

HIM: A mere trifle, as it were.—A little embonpoint to the dearly beloved master of my old prepschool at Stoneacre Heights, regretting that the undersigned is unable for pressing reasons to be present at the annual grand ball and entertainment to be held forthwith on the thirteenth Friday of next Thursday beginning with last Saturday until further notice to be furnished by—

ME (*Mystified*): What "master"?

HIM: I doubt if you ever heard of the fellow; his name is Bates. Haha. Let us now turn to serious subjects. Assuming a zygote to result from the fusion of two gametes, the company will next attempt to visualize, through halfshut optics, a semifluid semi-transparent colourless substance consisting of oxygen hydrogen carbon and nitrogen —

ME (*Smiles*): —were looking for eels in a tree.

HIM: Precisely; when who should come along but little Mr Mendel, wheeling a numerical law full of recurring inherited characteristics all wrong side up with their eyes shut on a slackwire tight-rope. (*Vehemently*) Damn everything but the circus! (*To*

*himself*) And here am I, patiently squeezing fourdimensional ideas into a twodimensional stage, when all of me that's any one or anything is in the top of a circustent . . . (*A pause.*)

ME: I didn't imagine you were leading a double life—and right under my nose, too.

HIM: (*Unhearing, proceeds contemptuously*): The average "painter" "sculptor" "poet" "composer" "playwright" is a person who cannot leap through a hoop from the back of a galloping horse, make people laugh with a clown's mouth, orchestrate twenty lions.

ME: Indeed.

HIM (*To her*): But imagine a human being who balances three chairs, one on top of another, on a wire, eighty feet in air with no net underneath, and then climbs into the top chair, sits down, and begins to swing . . .

ME (*Shudders*): I'm glad I never saw that—makes me dizzy just to think of it.

HIM (*Quietly*): I never saw that either.

ME: Because nobody can do it.

HIM:—Because I am that. But in another way, it's all I ever see.

ME: What is?

HIM (*Pacing up and down*): This: I feel only one thing, I have only one conviction; it sits on three chairs in Heaven. Sometimes I look at it, with terror: it is such a perfect acrobat! The three chairs are three facts—it will quickly kick them out from under itself and will stand on air: and in that moment (because everyone will be disappointed) everyone will applaud. Meanwhile, some thousands of miles over everyone's head, over a billion empty faces, it rocks carefully and smilingly on three things, on three facts; on: I am an Artist, I am a Man, I am a Failure—it rocks and it swings and it smiles and it does not collapse tumble or die because it pays no attention to anything except itself. (*Passionately*) I feel, I am aware—every minute, every instant, I watch this trick, I am this trick, I sway—selfish and smiling and careful—above all the people. (*To himself*) And always I am repeating a simple and dark and little formula . . . always myself mutters and remutters a trivial colourless microscopic idiom—I breathe, and I swing; and I whisper: "An artist, a man, a failure, *must proceed.*"

ME (*Timidly, after a short pause*): This thing or person who is

you, who does not pay any attention to any one else, it will stand on air?

HIM: On air. Above the faces, lives, screams—suddenly. Easily: alone.

ME: How about the chairs?

HIM: The chairs will all fall by themselves down from the wire and be caught by anybody, by nobody; by somebody whom I don't see and who doesn't see me: perhaps by everybody.

ME: Maybe yourself—you, away up ever so high—will hear me applaud?

HIM (*Looking straight at her, smiles seriously*): I shall see your eyes. I shall hear your heart move.

ME: Because I shall not be disappointed, like the others.

HIM: Women generally prefer the theatre, however.

ME: Women can't help liking the theatre any more than women can help liking men.

HIM: I don't understand.

ME: What I mean is perfectly simple. I mean, women like to pretend.

HIM (*Laughs gaily*): Upon which words, our knockkneed flybitten hero executed a spontaneous inverted quintuple backsomersault, missing the non-existent trapeze by six and seven-eighths inches.

ME (*Looking away*): I'm sorry—you see it's no use trying to tell me things, because I don't understand. And I can't argue.

HIM (*Walking over to her, takes her hand in his; caresses it gently*): Wrong, wrong. (*Tries to look in her eyes which, drooping, evade his*) Please don't mistake him: it was meant as a compliment, he's a harmless acrobat, he was trying to show you that he feels how much finer you are than he is or has been or ever will be—you should pity him. (*Stroking*) Poor clown.

ME (*Withdraws her hand*): You shouldn't play up to me.

HIM: You should know better than to accuse me of playing up to you.

ME (*In disgust*): O, you can't know anything about men; they're so complicated.

HIM: *Men* complicated!

ME: Women don't want so many things.

HIM: Any woman?

ME: If she's really a woman.

HIM: What does the woman who's really a woman wish?

ME (*Looking at him*): That's a secret.

HIM: Really?

ME: Really a secret.

HIM: A secret is something to be guessed, isn't it?

ME (*Defiantly*): You'll never guess mine.

HIM: Perhaps, but why insult—

ME: Nobody's insulting you. I simply feel that I'm this way and there's no use in my trying to be another way.

HIM (*Smiles*):—Speaking of secrets, here's one which I've never breathed to a single soul; *sabe usted quien soy?*

ME: No. Do you?

HIM: Mr Bang, the hunter. (*His voice shrinks to a whisper: he gestures mysteriously.*) I hunt the gentle macrocosm with bullets made of microcosm and vice versa. (*Laughs. Suddenly serious, resumes*) Yessiree—and this is a positively dead secret: I very frequently tell this to absolutely no one—. (*With entire earnestness, leaning importantly toward her, enunciates distinctly and cautiously*)—My gun is made of chewinggum.

ME (*Quietly*): I wish I had a piece. (*She struts the back of one doll-like hand across her forehead. Speaks vaguely*) Where are we? I mean, who are we; what am I doing—here?

HIM: We are married.

ME: Why do you say that?

HIM: Isn't that the way married people are supposed to feel? (*Abruptly turning, walks briskly across the room; halts: half turns, looks toward the window and mutters*) It's snowing . . . (*His voice thinks to itself*) . . . showing . . . (*His whisper marvels, muses*) . . . knowing. (*He stands, lost in thought.*)

ME (*With an effort*): Promise something.

HIM (*Absently*): Yes?

ME: Promise that when the circus comes this year you'll take me.

HIM (*To her*): On one condition; that you agree to see everything.

ME: Of course.

HIM: Last year you refused to pay your respects to The Queer Folk.

ME: O. (*Quickly*)—But that's not the circus. And besides, whoever wants to see a lot of motheaten freaks?

HIM: I did. (*Smiles to himself*) . . . I seem to remember riding out of a circus once upon a time on somebody's shoulder; and hearing a throbbing noise, and then a coarse voice squirting a stream of bright words—and looking, and seeing a small tent with huge pictures of all sorts of queer things, and the barker spieling like a fiend, and people all about him gaping like fish. Whereupon, I began to tremble—

ME (*Starting, as a drum sounds faintly*): Whatever's that?

HIM: —and begged somebody to take me in; which somebody probably did, I don't remember. . . .

ME: I hear something, don't you? (*The noise nears.*) That. It's ever so near now. Must be a parade, and on such a wintry day, too. Imagine.

HIM (*Listening vainly*): What you hear and I don't must be either an exelevated-engineer in a silk stovepipe with a sprig of shamrock in his buttonhole riding a red white and blue tricycle like mad up Fifth Avenue and waving a little green flag, or Einstein receiving the keys of the city of Coral Gables in a gondola—

ME: I'm sure it's a parade!

HIM: —or a social revolution—

ME: Will you do something?

HIM: Say it with flowers. (*The noise stops.*) What?

ME (*Listening*): It seems to have stopped, very near—please run out and see: will you? (*HIM stares, mildly astonished, as ME jumps up from the more comfortable chair and hurries to the sofa.*) Here's your hat: and look, it's snowing; you'd better take—

HIM: To Hell with the umbrella. (*Takes his crumpled hat from her*) Now in just what does your most humble and very obedient servant's mission consist?

ME: You're to take a look around the corner. Because I'm almost sure there's something.

HIM: Pardon me, Your Excellency, for remarking that I think you're crazy. (*Going, he kisses her.*)

ME: You don't need to tell me: I know I am.

(*HIM exits through door in middle wall. ME walks nervously up and down—pauses: goes to the invisible mirror and stands, stares, gestures, exactly as at the beginning of the scene.*)

ACT II  
SCENE VI

*Fifth Avenue—midnight.*

A PLAINCLOTHESMAN, his entire being focused on something just offstage to the audience's left, stalks this invisible something minutely. He is played by the DOCTOR.

Enter an ENGLISHMAN in evening clothes and a silk hat, staggering under a huge trunk marked FRAGILE—his silk hat falls off. He looks at it ruefully, even hopelessly. Then an expression of tranquillity adorns his visage, as he catches sight of the PLAINCLOTHESMAN'S back—he clears his throat several times—having failed to attract the PLAINCLOTHESMAN'S attention, he exclaims "I say" and "Beg pardon" and "By the way"—finally, desperate, he wheels and gently bumps the PLAINCLOTHESMAN with the trunk. The PLAINCLOTHESMAN leaps into the air: landing with a drawn automatic, stares his innocent vis-à-vis fiercely in the eye.

ENGLISHMAN: Ah—good evening. Excuse me. Would you mind awfully—you see, my topper just fell off.

PLAINCLOTHESMAN: Yuh wut?

ENGLISHMAN: My topper, my hat—would you be so awfully kind as to hand it to me?

*(The PLAINCLOTHESMAN contemplates the ENGLISHMAN from top to toe: his jowl emits a cynical leer; pocketing his automatic, and warily stooping, he picks up the silk hat and inspects it with deep suspicion.)*

ENGLISHMAN *(Cheerfully sticking out his head)*: On my nut please, if you don't mind. *(The PLAINCLOTHESMAN scowls ominously: places the silk hat grimly on the ENGLISHMAN'S head.)* Glad to have met you—. *(He starts for the wings, right.)*  
—Cheerio!

PLAINCLOTHESMAN: HAY. *(The ENGLISHMAN starts: staggers: turns.)* Lissun. Wutchuhgut dare.

ENGLISHMAN *(Apprehensively, trying to look behind himself)*: There? Where?

PLAINCLOTHESMAN: On yuh back uv course.

ENGLISHMAN *(Relieved)*: O, you mean that?—*(He tries to nod*



*at what he carries.*)—Don't tell me you don't know what that is.

PLAINCLOTHESMAN: Sic. Dyuh tink I doughno uh trunk wen I sees it?

ENGLISHMAN (*Perplexed*): Trunk? I said nothing about a trunk.

PLAINCLOTHESMAN: Youse dough need tuh. Dyuh know wie? Becuz yuh gut one on yuh back, dat's wie.

ENGLISHMAN: Do you know I'm dreadfully sorry, old man, but I haven't the least idea what you're talking about.

PLAINCLOTHESMAN: Youse nose wut I'm talkin' about; I'm talkin' about uh trunk.

ENGLISHMAN (*Laughs nervously*): But my dear fellow, I've got no trunk—do you think I'm a jolly elephant?

PLAINCLOTHESMAN: Can dat soikus stuff. Wutchuhgut in dat—. (*He raps the trunk with his knuckles.*)

ENGLISHMAN (*A light dawning*): Ah. I see. So that's what you call my trunk—

PLAINCLOTHESMAN: I calls dat uh trunk becuz dat is uh trunk, dat's wie.

ENGLISHMAN: But my dear chap, you're quite mistaken in supposing that to be a trunk.

PLAINCLOTHESMAN (*Menacingly*): Dat ain uh trunk?

ENGLISHMAN: I should say not. Dear dear no. The very idea—ha—ha—ha.

PLAINCLOTHESMAN: Wal if dat ain uh trunk, will youse kinely tell me wut dat is?

ENGLISHMAN (*To himself*):—A trunk! That's really not half bad, you know. (*To the PLAINCLOTHESMAN*)—But since you ask me, I don't mind telling you.

PLAINCLOTHESMAN: Wal, wut is it?

ENGLISHMAN: Why, that's my unconscious.

PLAINCLOTHESMAN (*Hand at ear*): Yuh wut?

ENGLISHMAN: My unconscious, old egg. Don't pretend you haven't heard of them in America.—Why, my dear boy, I was given to understand that a large percentage of them originated in the States: if I'm not mistaken, the one I've got is made hereabouts, in Detroit or somewhere like that.

PLAINCLOTHESMAN: Nevuh mine ware it wuz made; wuts in it?

ENGLISHMAN: In it? (*He utters a profound sigh*) Ah—If I only

knew. (*The PLAINCLOTHESMAN recoils in amazement. The ENGLISHMAN, after uttering another and even more profound sigh, turns.*) Well, we can't know everything, can we. Cheerio! (*He starts out.*)

PLAINCLOTHESMAN (*Leaping in front of the ENGLISHMAN, automatic in hand*): HAY doan try dat stuff wid me. (*The ENGLISHMAN pauses.*) Drop dat.

ENGLISHMAN (*Puzzled*): Drop? What?

PLAINCLOTHESMAN: Drop wutchuhgut nmake it quick get me?

ENGLISHMAN (*Despairingly*): I'm afraid I don't in the least know what you mean—

PLAINCLOTHESMAN: I mean leggo wid boat hans one after duhudur nleave duh res tuh gravity.

ENGLISHMAN: But you don't seem to understand—it's my—don't you realize? It's a part of myself—my unconscious—which you're asking me to let go of, to drop. Could anything be more impossibly ridiculous?

PLAINCLOTHESMAN: Sie lisen I doan givuh good god dam fuh youse "Un-con-shus." Nlemme tellyuh sumpn doan gimme no more uh youse lip r'll make uh hole in youse.

ENGLISHMAN (*Agonized, wails*): But I CAN'T—. (*The PLAINCLOTHESMAN fires: there is no explosion, but the ENGLISHMAN drops the trunk. As it lands, a terrific crash of broken glass is heard. The ENGLISHMAN, blinking, begins dusting himself: speaks severely.*) There—you see what you've done.

PLAINCLOTHESMAN (*Furiously*): Wie dinchuh tell me day wuz booze in it yuh goddam fool!

(*He rushes—dropping, in his haste, the automatic—at the trunk: falling on both knees, begins tearing at the lock: presently throws back the lid—starts—rising, recoiling, covers his eyes as if from an inconceivable horror: staggers back—falls. The ENGLISHMAN continues to dust himself. A COP hurries in with a drawn revolver.*)

COP: Hansup! (*The ENGLISHMAN puts up his hands.*) Wuts dis? Uh trunk? (*He spies the PLAINCLOTHESMAN, who is lying on his face.*) Sumun croaked—. (*Pokes the prostrate figure with his foot*) Wie, it's Joe! (*Stooping, lifts the PLAINCLOTHESMAN'S left arm—releases it; the arm falls, inert.*) Here's duh gun. (*Picks up the PLAINCLOTHESMAN'S auto-*

*matic; drops it in the right outside pocket of the helpless ENGLISHMAN'S dinner jacket, and grimly faces his prey who immediately begins explaining.)*

ENGLISHMAN: Yes you see I was carrying this when my bally top-per fell off, and being quite unable to pick it up myself—the hat, that is—I asked this Joe as you call him if he'd mind awfully doing me the favour to help me.

COP: W-a-l.

ENGLISHMAN: Well he very kindly obliged me. But subsequently, owing to a perfectly ridiculous misunderstanding—more or less (I believe) as to the precise character of what I was carrying—

COP: Youse wuz carryin—wut.

ENGLISHMAN: (*Pointing at the trunk*): This.

COP: HANSUP! (*The ENGLISHMAN'S hand flies aloft*) Wut for.

ENGLISHMAN: What for—O; well you see I'd heard that in the States it's practically impossible to get into a hotel with a woman without a bag.

COP (*Puzzled*): How's dat? Say dem woids again.

ENGLISHMAN (*Raising his voice*): I say: you see it's quite commonly known that in America one simply can't get into a hotel without a woman with a bag—I mean, get into a bag—no no, get into a woman—

COP: Stop! Now yuh talkin doity.

ENGLISHMAN: I mean—it's jolly difficult to express the idea—

COP: Nevuh mine duh idear. Gowon.

ENGLISHMAN:—Well; and so, being as it happens extremely anxious to get into a hotel, I was for taking no chances—

COP: Ware's duh wummun.

ENGLISHMAN (*In astonishment*): Woman? Did you say "woman"?

COP: Y-a-s.

ENGLISHMAN: What on earth do you mean, old egg? What woman?

COP: Duh wummun youse wus takin tuh duh hotel—is she in duh trunk?

ENGLISHMAN: In the trunk?—A woman? You're spoofing, old thing—

COP (*Approaching, bores the ENGLISHMAN'S entrails with the muzzle of the revolver*): Kummon, wut youse carryin in duh trunk.

ENGLISHMAN: But—but you don't seriously suppose I'd be such a bally ass as to carry a trunk on my back with a woman inside it!—A trunk—with a woman—on my back—ha—ha—ha: that's not half bad, you know—

COP (*Disgustedly, shoving the ENGLISHMAN aside*): Get ovuh dare.

(*He steps rapidly to the trunk—peers in: starts, gasps—recoils, dropping his revolver—and falls, lifeless, beside the trunk. Darkness.*)

VOICE OF HIM: Well?

VOICE OF ME: I liked the Englishman. But where were the eels?

VOICE OF HIM: The eels were in the tree.

VOICE OF ME: But I didn't see any tree.

VOICE OF HIM: There aren't any trees on Fifth Avenue below Fifty-ninth Street.

VOICE OF ME: Then what you said wasn't true.

VOICE OF HIM: But it wasn't untrue.

VOICE OF ME: Why not?

VOICE OF HIM: I said there weren't any mice, and there weren't. That was true, wasn't it?

VOICE OF ME: O yes—I'd forgotten about the mice.

VOICE OF HIM: And about the wheelbarrow too, I dare say?—But I hadn't.

VOICE OF ME: Why should you? After all, you invented it; and the two umbrellas and the tightrope and everything else.—In fact, what's queer is, that I should have remembered those eels.

VOICE OF HIM: Allow me to remark that I consider your remembrance of those eels a great and definite compliment. Next we have . . .

### ACT III SCENE I

*The room of Act One, further revolved so that the fourth or invisible wall is the door wall. The wall to the audience's right, corresponding to the door wall of Act One Scene IV, is the solid wall. The middle wall is the mirror wall. The window wall is to the audience's left. HIM'S hat lies on the centre of the table where the automatic was lying at the end of Act One Scene IV.*

*ME and HIM are seated at opposite ends of the sofa, which is against the solid wall to the audience's right.*

*ME (Looking at him and away, speaks softly):* Now you are trying to feel things; but that doesn't work, because the nicest things happen by themselves. You can't make them happen. I can't either, but I don't want to. And when you try to make them happen, you don't really fool yourself and certainly you don't fool me. That's one thing about me. I'm not clever and I don't try to make things happen. —Well, you made a mistake about me and I know that. But the fact is, you know you made a mistake. Everybody knows it. . . . Think what is: think that you are now talking very beautifully through your hat.

*HIM (His glance travels to the table and returns to her):* You are a very remarkable person—among other reasons, because you can make me afraid.

*ME:* I'm not, and I don't want to be, remarkable. What you really think about me—and won't admit that you think—is true.

*HIM:* Don't you understand—

*ME:* I don't. I feel. That's my way and there's nothing remarkable about it: all women are like that.

*HIM:* No one is like you.

*ME:* Pooh. I don't flatter myself—not very much. I know perfectly well it's foolish of you to waste your time with me, when there are people who will understand you. And I know I can't, because things were left out of me. —What's the use of being tragic? You know you aren't sad, really. You know what you really are, and really you're always sure of yourself: whereas I'm never sure. —If anybody were going to be tragic it ought to be me. I know that perfectly well. I've never done anything and I don't believe I ever will. But you can do things. No one can make you unsure of yourself. You know you will go on, and all your life you've known.

*HIM (Trembling, looks at his hands):* May I tell you a great secret?

*ME:* A secret?

*HIM:* All my life I've wondered if I am any good. If my head and my heart are made out of something firmer or more living than what I see everywhere covering itself with hats and with linen.

—If all the capable and little and disgusting minds which, somehow, are responsible for the cities and the countries in which I exist, have not perhaps also manufactured this thing—this bundle of wishes—which I like to call “myself.” If my arms dreams hands exist with an intensity differing from or beyond the intensity of any other arms dreams hands. . . . You cannot imagine how disagreeable it is to wonder—to look about you, at the eyes and the gestures which promenaded themselves in streets and in houses, and to be afraid. To think: “Am I also one of these—an item that came out of a woman and will go into the ground, a doll, living in a doll world, doomed to be undressed, dressed, spanked, kissed, put to bed?” (*Trembling, wipes carefully with his handkerchief a sweating forehead*) You can’t imagine how disagreeable it is. Suppose that you spent your life buying a dress. Suppose that at last you found the precise and wonderful dress which you had dreamed of, and suppose that you bought it and put it on and walked in it everywhere and everywhere you saw thousands of people all of whom were wearing your dress.

ME: You mean I’m like everybody else.

HIM (*Fiercely*): I mean that you have something which I supremely envy.—That you are something which I supremely would like to discover: knowing that it exists in itself as I do not exist and as I never have existed. How do I know this? Because through you I have come to understand that whatever I may have been or may have done is mediocre. (*Bitterly*) You have made me realize that in that course of living I have created several less or more interesting people—none of whom was myself.

ME (*With a brief gesture*): O dear. Am I like that?

HIM: Like nothing.

ME: Please, don’t talk to me this way. I really don’t understand. And I think you don’t understand me, very well . . . nothing is sure.

HIM (*Rising, smiles*): Limbo, the without pain and joyless unworld, lady. In one act: or, my life is made of glass.

ME (*Rising, moves; stands beside him*): Your—what?

HIM (*Carefully looking into her helpless lifted eyes, speaks carefully*): I mean a clock ticking. Words which were never written. Cries heard through a shut window. Forgotten. Winter. Flies hanging mindless to walls and ceiling around a stove. Laughter

of angels. Eheu fugaces. Glass flowers. (*He walks to the table and picks up his hat. Turning, makes for the invisible door. ME steps in front of him quickly.*)

ME: I have no mind. I know that. I know I'm not intelligent, and that you liked me for something else. There isn't any sense in my asking—I ask merely because I want to. I know I haven't any brains and really I don't care. I've seen women with brains and they're miserable, or anyway they look so—I don't know; it might be nice to have a mind sometimes. Please don't think I'm unhappy, because I'm not, and I'm not trying to make you unhappy. I know what I'm really like and what's more I know that you know—we're not fooling ourselves. But what you're really like I don't know; and that doesn't make me unhappy either: I don't care. I know part of you and I'm glad. As a matter of fact I'm rather proud. I think I know a great deal—for instance, if I ask you something you won't mind. And if my asking hurt you, I wouldn't care—I'm like that; it's me. I'm glad everything's over: because I've loved you very much, I'm glad there'll be nothing except memories. . . . You know what I liked best about you, what I will always like and will always remember. It's your hands—you know that and I tell you. Tell me something. Because it doesn't matter and you're going, tell me one thing. Tell me (as if I was dead and you were talking to someone else with your hands on her breasts) what there was, once, about me.

HIM (*After a short pause*): I hoped that I had—perhaps—told you.

ME: Listen. (*Earnestly, staring with entire seriousness into his eyes, almost whispers*) It's snowing: think. Just think of people everywhere and houses and rivers and trees and the mountains and oceans. Then think of fingers—millions—out of somewhere quietly and quickly coming, hurrying very carefully. . . . Think of everywhere fingers touching; fingers, skilfully gently everything—O think of the snow coming down beautifully and beautifully frightening ourselves and turning dying and love and the world and me and you into five toys. . . . Touch me a little. (*Taking his right wrist, she puts its hand against her dress.*)—It will be so pleasant to dream of your hands. For a hundred years.

HIM (*Whispers*): Dreams don't live a hundred years.

ME: Don't they? (*Smiles. Lets his wrist, hand, drop.*) Perhaps mine does. (*Strolling to the table, opens the box; taking, lights a cigarette; quickly blows out the match.*) It's very late, I think.

(*His shutting face whitens—putting on his hat, he goes out through the invisible door; stands, facing the audience. ME unsteadily crosses the room to the sofa. Darkness.*)

VOICE OF ME: If I had a mind, every morning I'd jump out of bed and hurry to a sort of secret drawer, where I kept my mind because someone might steal it. Then I'd open the drawer with a key and find my mind safe. But to make sure, I'd take it out of the box where it lived—because if I had a mind I'd be very careful of it for fear it might break—and I'd go to the window with this little mind of mine; and holding it very carefully I'd look through the window out over the roofs (with smoke coming up out of all the chimneys slowly and maybe a street where people moved carefully in the sunlight, in the morning).

### ACT III SCENE V

*The room, still further revolved so that the fourth or invisible wall is the solid wall. The wall to the audience's right, corresponding to the solid wall of Scene I, is the mirror wall. The middle wall is the window wall. The door wall is to the audience's left. On the centre of the table, where HIM'S hat was lying at the beginning of Scene I, there is a vase of flowers.*

ME and HIM sit, back to (or facing the same way as) the audience, at opposite ends of the sofa which is against the invisible wall.

. . . . .

HIM (*Expressionlessly*): The nicest things happen by themselves.

—Which reminds me: I had a dream only the other day. A very queer dream: may I tell it to you? (*A pause.*)

ME: Do you want to very much?

HIM: If you don't very much mind.

ME (*Hesitantly*): If it's not too queer.

HIM: Will you promise to interrupt me if it's too queer?

ME: All right.



HIM (*Leaning forward, looks at nothing*): You were with me in a sort of room. I was standing beside you and you seemed to be telling me something. But I was only tremendously glad to feel you so near . . .

ME: Go on.

HIM: That was beautiful to me.—Then you took my left hand and you led me somewhere else in this room—and through the room-shaped dark softness I tiptoed wadingly. You paused and I stood next you; next your blood, your hair, hands, breathing. I felt that you were smiling a little. You pointed to something. And stooping carefully I could not quite see—but through this dark softness I seemed to feel—another person, lying very quietly with an entire quietness that queerly frightened me. . . . May I go on?

ME: Go on.

HIM: When I could see, this other person's eyes and my eyes were looking at each other. Hers were big and new in the darkness. They seemed to be looking at me as if we had known each other somewhere else. They were very close—so close that my breath almost touched them: so close that my mind almost touched what looked at me from them . . . I can't describe it—a shyness, more shy than you can ever imagine, a shyness inhabiting very easily and very skilfully everything which is profoundly fragile and everything which we really are and everything which we never quite live. But—just as I almost touched this shyness—it suddenly seemed to touch me; and, touching, to believe me and all from which I had come and into which I was changing with every least thought or with each carefully hurrying instant. I felt a slight inexplicable gesture—nearer than anything, nearer than my own body—an inscrutable timidity, capturing the mere present in a perfect dream or wish or Now . . . a peering frailness, perfectly curious about me; curiously and perfectly created out of my own hope and out of my own fear. . . . I did not see any more, then. (*Pauses; smiling, resumes*) Then I stooped a little lower and kissed her hair with my lips and with the trembling lips of my mind I kissed her head, herself, her silence. But as I kissed her, she seemed to me to be made out of silence by whatever is most perfectly silent; so that, to find out if she were perhaps real, I spoke to her—and her voice answered as if perhaps not speaking to me at all, or as if it felt embarrassed because

it knew that it was doing something which it should not do; and yet, I remember her voice was glad to feel, close by it, the unreal someone whom I had been.—Then the darkness seemed to open: I know what I saw then: it was a piece of myself, a child in a crib, lying very quietly with her head in the middle of a bigish pillow, with her hands out of the blankets and crossing very quietly and with a doll in the keeping fingers of each hand. . . . So you and I together went out of this opened darkness where a part of ourselves somehow seemed to be lying—where something which had happened to us lay awake and in the softness held a girl doll and a boy doll. Perhaps you closed the door, gently . . . but I remember nothing about coming into the light. (*His eyes search the face of ME and find a different nothing.*) That is my dream. (*Rises*)—Into the mirror with it, we'll throw it away! (*Strides to the mirror, makes a quick futile gesture and stands facing the mirror. A short pause. ME rises and stands facing the mirror. A short pause. ME rises and goes to HIM slowly: stands, simply, sorrowfully. Turning from the mirror to ME, HIM speaks slowly.*) Hark. That was my dream which just fell into my soul and broke.

ME (*Touches his arm pityingly, slightly*): I guess it took so long to fall because it was made of nothing. (*She returns to the sofa and sits down.*)

HIM: You have a bright idea. (*Returning to the sofa, sits opposite her. A pause.*) Shall we smoke a cigarette—or two perhaps? (*Fumbles in pockets, finds matches and a package of cigarettes: offers cigarettes to ME who does not see them.*) Then I will; unless you—

ME: I don't mind.

HIM (*Lights carefully his cigarette: pockets the matchbox. Presently remarks to himself*): But there was a dog, named something or other. (*Short silence.*)

ME: A dog.

HIM: I used to take him to bed with me. In fact we travelled everywhere together. God spelled backwards.

ME: What sort of a dog?

HIM: The name being Gipsy.—It didn't last long because it was a cloth dog. Tell me something.

ME: What?

HIM (*Quietly*): Tell me you used to have a cloth dog too.

ME: I didn't . . . at least I don't think so.

HIM: Didn't you? Not ever? There was a battleship, which wound up, with invisible wheels that made it move along the floor: it was very fragile. They called it The Renown.—Did you have dolls?

ME: I guess so, I don't remember.

HIM: I perfectly remember that I had a great many dolls, but that I only loved one—a wax doll named Bellissima who melted in front of the fire. (*Getting up, strolls to the table.*)

ME (*Half to herself*): I suppose you cried.

HIM: On the contrary, I asked for a cup of tea. (*He takes from the table an imaginary cup and saucer: drops into the imaginary cup an imaginary piece of sugar.*)—But you have given me symbols. Look: I see my life melting as what you call Winter. . . . The edges are fading: gradually, very gradually, it diminishes. (*Takes an imaginary sip*) But notice: there is a purpose in the accident, I mean there is someone beyond and outside what happens—someone who is thirsty and tired. Someone, to whom the disappearance of my being sweetens unbeing as, let us say, this dissolving cube of sugar—pardon: God would like a slice of lemon. (*Takes an imaginary slice*) Thank you. We are all of us just a trifle crazy, aren't we? Like Archimedes with his mirrors and like old Mr Benjamin F. who flew kites in a thunderstorm, which reminds me—I never told you that I was flying a kite. And it pulled and rose: wonderfully reaching out and steadily climbing; climbing over the whole world until you'd never believe anything in your life could be so awfully far and bright—until you almost thought it had found some spot where spring is all the time. . . . But suddenly my foolish hands were full of common twine string.

ME (*Looking straight before her, speaks to herself after a moment*): It's snowing.

HIM: Gay may change, but all my thoughts are in the wash and I haven't a clean thing to put on.—After all, thoughts are like anything else you wear, they must be sent to the crazy laundry once in a while and the crazy laundry wears out more crazy thoughts than ever a crazy man did. Hypnos and Thanatos, a couple of Greek boys who made a fortune overnight, the laundry of the Awake, Incorporated: having mangled our lives with memories it rinses them in nightmare. (*A drum sounds faintly.*)

*ME starts.*) I think I hear nothing. (*Puts imaginary tea carefully on table; turns, slowly walks to the middle of the room and stands, facing the audience.*) But if I ask you something, now, will you promise to answer truthfully? (*She shakes her head.*) Because you can't?—Tell me; why can't you answer me truthfully, now?

ME (*Rising*): Now you want—truth?

HIM: With all my life: yes!

ME (*Advancing toward him slowly*): You wanted beauty once.

HIM (*Brokenly*): I believed that they were the same.

ME: You don't think so any longer?

HIM: I shall never believe that again.

ME: (*Pauses, standing before him*): What will you believe?

HIM (*Bitterly*): That beauty has shut me from truth; that beauty has walls—like this room, in which we are together for the last time, whose walls shut us from everything outside.

ME: If what you are looking for is not here, why don't you go where it is? (*The drumsound heightens.*)

HIM: In all directions I cannot move. Through you I have made a discovery: you have shown me something . . . something about which I am doubtful deep in my heart. I cannot feel that everything has been a mistake—that I have inhabited an illusion with you merely to escape from reality and the knowledge of ourselves. (*To himself*) How should what is desirable shut us entirely from what is? No! That must be not quite all: I will not think that the tragedy can be so simple. There must be something else: I believe that there *is* something else: and my heart tells me that unless I discover this now I will never discover it.—Am I wrong?

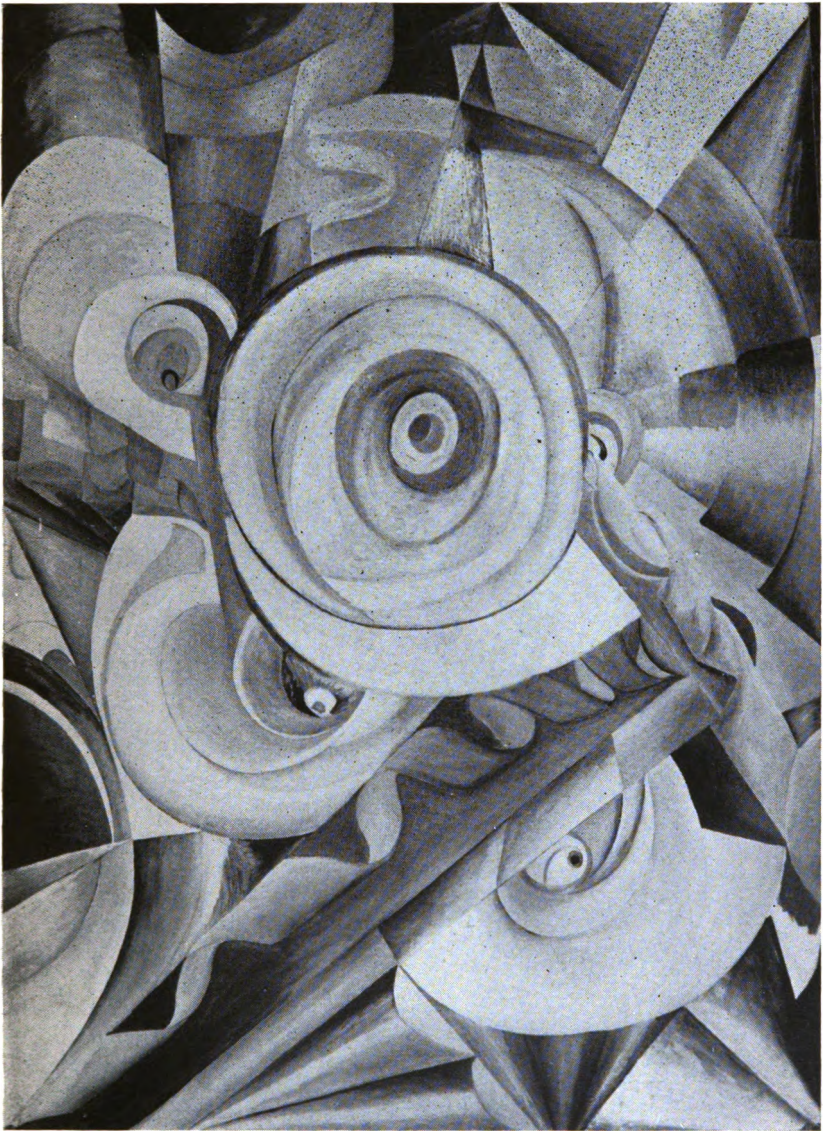
ME: You were talking about dolls. You see, I think sometimes.

HIM: Are you thinking, now?

ME: Now—yes.

*(Total darkness. The drumsound drowns in a whirling nearness of mingling voices out of which juts suddenly ONE VOICE.)*

ONE VOICE: Ladies un genlmun right dis way step dis way evrybudy tuh duh Princess Anankay tuh duh Tatood Man tuh duh Huemun Needl tud duh Missin Link tuh duh Queen uv Soipunts tuh duh Nine Foot Gian tuh duh Eighteen Inch Lady tuh duh Six Hundud Pouns uv Passionut Pullcrytood tuh duh Kink uv Borneo dut eats ee-lectrick light bulbs!



NOISE NUMBER 13. BY E. E. CUMMINGS



ACT III  
SCENE VI

*The stage has become a semi-circular piece of depth crowded with jabbering and gesticulating people, viz.: HIM (hatted), the other participants in Act Two with the exception of those characters which were played by the DOCTOR, and the three MISS WEIRDS minus their chairs and knitting. The circumference of the semi-circle is punctuated at equal intervals by nine similar platforms. The fifth platform (counting, from either extremity of the circumference, inward) supports a diminutive room or booth, whose front wall is a curtain. On each of the other eight platforms sits lolling a freak.*

*Beginning with the outermost platform to the audience's left and following the circumference of the semi-circle inward we have: NINE FOOT GIANT, QUEEN OF SERPENTS, HUMAN NEEDLE, MISSING LINK, and the fifth or inmost platform with its mysterious booth. Continuing outward, we have: TATTOOED MAN, SIX HUNDRED POUNDS OF PASSIONATE PULCHRITUDE, KING OF BORNEO and, on the outermost platform to the audience's right, EIGHTEEN INCH LADY.*

. . . . .

HUNCHBACK BARKER (*Reappearing on the platform of the EIGHTEEN INCH LADY, beckons fervently*): Dis way gents step dis way ladies—. (*The crowd swirls in his direction*) Nex we have, Madame Suzette Yvonne Hortense Jaqueline Heloise Petite duh eighteen inch Parisiun doll un uncompromisin optical inspection uv dis lidl lady will prove tuh duh satisfaction uv all consoin dut dis lidl lady is uh poifcily form pocket edition uv sheek femininity born undur duh shadow uv duh Eyefl Towur in Paris were she buys all her close spiks floounly nineteen languages excloosive uv her native tongue is toityone years old in duh course uv her adventurous career has visited each un every country uv duh civilized un uncivilize globe incloodin Soviet Russia were subsequunt tuh being arrested by duh Checkur us uh spy she was kidnapped un kep fur sevunty-two hours widout food ur drink in duh inside ovurcoat pocket uv uh membr uv duh Secret Soivice havin' escape by cuttin her way out wid uh pair uv nailscissors she fell tuh duh frozun ground in uh dead faint in which she was discover by uh faitful

moocheck who fled wid her across duh steps uv Siberia pursood by wolves un suckseeded in deliverin her tuh duh Frenchconsul ut duh Polish frun-teer receivin us uh reward fur his valur frum duh French guvnment duh crorduhgair wid two palms un frum duh Polish ortorities duh cross uv Sain Graballsky wile duh lidl lady hoiself presented her rescoor wid un autograph photo in spite uv her wellestablish Parisiun origin Madame Petite is passionutly fond uv duh home wuz in fac seven times married tuh various internationully famous specimuns uv duh uppercrust uv duh pigmy woild such us Purfessur Tom Tumb un has divorced ur outlived all her husbands us uh mewzishun Madame is equully voisitil prufurrin especiuully duh French horn trombone xylophone violin granpieannur yukuhlayly un jewsharp un wich insturmunts she has had duh honor tuh purform before duh crown heads uv five nations un tree continunts duh genrul public will be gratified tuh loin dut Madame Suzette Yvonne Hortense Jaqueline Heloise Petite has recunly completed duh only autentic story uv her life wich under duh significunt title Minyuhchoors uv Ro-mance ur Many Abelards has already sold out four editions uv one hundud tousund copies each un is ut presun in duh process uv bein tran-olated intuh twenty languages incloodin Arabic un Eskimo Madame Petite will be glad tuh answur any un all questions un give advice tuh duh best uv her ability un all un any subjecst tuh whoever cares tuh un-boidun her ur his troubles male un female step right up.

MISS LOOK WEIRD (*Suspiciously*): What was she doing among the Bolsheviki?

BARKER: I will answur dut unnecesury question Madame Petite wuz un uh mission uv moicy havin been delegated by duh French Red Cross tuh assis duh Salvation Army in its uplif woik among starvin Armeniun chilrun nooly rescod from duh Toiks in West Centrul Youkrania.

MISS LOOK WEIRD (*Satisfied*): Thank you.

*(The EIGHTEEN INCH LADY converses and offers copies of her book and photographs of herself. The BARKER disappears, only to reappear on the QUEEN OF SERPENTS' Platform.)*

BARKER (*Beckoning fervently to the crowd*): Dis way ladies ovur here gents—. (*The crowd swirls in the direction of the QUEEN OF SERPENTS, who rises.*)—Get uh knockdown tuh Herpo



chawms duh lawges specimuns uv duh reptillyun genus each un evry one alive dis way fellurs take uh good squint ut Herpo hanuls duh deadlies becaws mohs poisunous uv all snakes duh cobruh duh capello like youse boys would hanul yur bes goil ovur here everybody see duh only livin boaconstrictur in captivity lengt toitynine feet sevun un nine toitysecunds inches swollud five indigenes ten cartridgebelts six Winchestur rifles forty-two rouns uv amyounition un uh Stetsun hat ut one gulp subsequunly capchoord wile fast asleep by Capn Frank McDermot. D. S. C. etceteruh un shipped F. O. B. un twelve freightcars fur twentyone days tuh duh mowt uv duh Amazon rivur nevr woked up till fifty-four hours out tuh sea wen duh en-tire crew incloodin duh capn took toins settin un duh heavily padlocked covur uv duh forty-five foot bamboo box boun wid steel hoops in which duh monstur wuz tempurrurilly imprisoned in spite uv wich precaution he trashed about so much duh S. O. L. passengurs wuz all seasick till duh ship reached Hamburg were sevun uv em died see duh mammut rep-tile wine hisself lovinly toiteen times aroun Herpo wile she drinks un icecream soduh un smokes Virginia cigarettes dis way ladies un gents dis way. (*Steps down and disappears in the crowd. The QUEEN OF SERPENTS takes out of a box, wraps around her and puts back in the box, four ancient and decrepit snakes each larger than the other.*)

VIRGO OF ACT TWO, SCENE II (*Fascinated*): I hate snakes—ugh!  
 QUEEN OF SERPENTS (*Calmly, through her gum*): Dat's becaws youse cawn't chawm dum dearie. (*Laughter.*)

BARKER (*Reappearing on the platform of the KING OF BORNEO, who rises*): Evrybody dis way—. (*He gestures fervently. The crowd swirls toward the KING OF BORNEO.*)—Nex we comes tuh one uv duh principul kyouriosities uv dis ur any epock sometimes frivolusly allooded tuh by ignorun poisunsus Duh Hue-mun Ostrich I refois propurly speakin tuh His Impeereel Majusty Kakos Kalos duh ex-Kink uv Borneo duh lad wid duh unpunkshooruble stumick specially engaged ut ee-normous expense fur duh benefit uv duh Great Americun Public durin uh recen revolooshun in purhaps duh mohs primitive uv all semicivilize commyounities King Kakos Kalos nut only los his trone but had duh additionul misforchoon tuh be trode by his noomerous enemies intuh uh dun-john ur hole tuh use duh vulgur woid approximutly ninety-six feet in dept un twotoids full uv rainwatur frum wich he wuz

pulled aftur fourteen days un nights un forcibly fed nails tin-cans broken glass barbwire un udder dangerous objects ovur uh period uv toitysix hours ut duh end uv which time duh re-velooshunuries lef deir victim fur dead but nix kid fur tanks tuh duh kink's younique un unparllul constitution which us any uv youse is ut liburty tuh ascurtain can assimilut wid ease such hidurtoo erroneously considured indiegestubl susbstances us carpettacks knittinneedls safety razorblades pins jackknives un dynamite he live tuh tell uh tale so incredible us tuh outrivul duh imaginury experiunces uv duh Barun Munchchowsun himself but whose veracity is prove beyon duh shadow uv uh doubt by duh fac dut it bein now five tuh five ur teatime in one two tree four five minutes Kink Kakos Kalos may be seen by all presun in duh intimut act uv swallurin un ee-lectrick light bulb step right up ladies un gents Duh Heuman Ostrich is in duh tent duh Kink's waitin fur youse **KRK KRK KRK** he champ-chomps sharp un brittle chews bright prickly glass. (*Disappears in the crowd. The KING OF BORNEO holds up a huge electric light bulb, points to it, points to his mouth, and winks solemnly to the spectators.*)

FIRST FAIRY OF ACT TWO, SCENE VIII (*Soprano*): How unpleasant.

SECOND FAIRY OF DITTO (*Alto*): Positively repellent.

THIRD FAIRY OF DITTO: Perfectly disgusting.

FOURTH FAIRY OF DITTO: Makes one absolutely nauseated—ugh!

KING OF BORNEO (*Furiously*): *Sempre abasso Savoia putana madonna viva Lenine!*

(*He crams the electric light bulb far into his mouth—chews noisily. The FOURTH FAIRY faints and is carried off by the other three FAIRIES.*)

. . . . .

### ACT III SCENE VII

*The room as it first appeared (Act One, Scene II) but without HIM'S hat on the sofa and with the flowers on the table.*

ME: I am thinking.

HIM: And may I ask what you are thinking?—Anything everything nothing or something: which is it?

ME: The last.

HIM: Something?

ME: Something.

HIM (*After a pause*): Is it something about the window?

ME: No.

HIM: About the door?

ME: No.

HIM: About what's behind you?

ME: Not exactly. No.

HIM: But you're thinking something about this room, aren't you?

ME: Yes, I'm thinking something about this room.

HIM: I'm afraid that you'll have to tell me what you are thinking.

ME: Can't you guess? I'll give you time.

HIM: Time is the because with which some dolls are stuffed. No, I can't guess.

ME (*Quietly*): It has only three walls.

HIM (*Looks about him in astonishment*): Behind you—that's a wall, isn't it?

ME: That's one.

HIM: One—and what's there? (*Pointing to the door wall.*)

ME: A wall.

HIM: Two—and there? (*Pointing over his shoulder to the window wall behind him.*)

ME: Three.

HIM: Three—and what do you see there? (*Indicating the invisible wall.*)

ME: People.

HIM (*Starts*): What sort of people?

ME: Real people. And do you know what they're doing?

HIM (*Stares at her*): What are they doing?

ME (*Walking slowly upstage toward the door*): They're pretending that this room and you and I are real. (*At the door, turning, faces the audience.*)

HIM (*Standing in the middle of the room, whispers*): I wish I could believe this.

ME (*Smiles, shaking her head*): You can't.

HIM (*Staring at the invisible wall*): Why?

ME: Because this is true.

*The End*

# BIOGRAPHY

BY CHARLES K. TRUEBLOOD

**I**MMENSE and ever-growing as the literature of biography is, comparatively little of it in English would seem to have been written with the sense that biography is an art with a province, and principles, and a future of its own. Until lately, relatively little, it seems, has been written by professed practitioners, such as Plutarch was, or Carlyle, or as some of the French are. It gets, on the whole, comparatively slight critical attention, little distinction being made between biography as information and biography as art.

It appears written generally either in a manner that is accurate, but scant in colour and character, or in the bulky, baggy, familiar style, which has for its dogma the principle of mass impact. Biography in this manner is very often that mere garnering-up of sayings and doings which was so summarily reprobated by Mr Lytton Strachey in the preface to his *Eminent Victorians*. "Who," he there says, speaking of the "standard" (two- and three-volume) biographies, to which the familiar tradition has come, "who does not know their ill-digested masses of material, their slipshod style, their tone of tedious panegyric, their lamentable lack of selection, of detachment, of design." The biographer's first business, he suggested, was "to preserve a becoming brevity"; and his second "to maintain his own freedom of spirit," not "to be complimentary," but "to lay bare the facts as he sees them." These strictures are valuable in the interests of a developed art of biography in English—permitting ourselves nevertheless certain distinctions. Mr Strachey's criticisms fit indeed the more indiscriminate and ill-advised of the imitators of Boswell, but they hardly fit Boswell or the best tradition of familiar biography. It is true that Boswell found English biography a thing of "becoming brevity"—were not Johnson's *Lives* brief enough, and Walton's?—and left it a thing of beguiling, though doubtless superabundant immensity; but it is not true that he showed ill-digested masses of material. His appetite for the facts of personality was insatiable, else we should not have had the great *Life*; but it was a discriminating appetite, and it

was matched with a good digestion. We may scarcely say that any part of his book does not diligently serve an intelligible purpose. He wrote from the top of appreciation; but he hardly wrote slipshod panegyric, void of selection, detachment, or design.

One might also be somewhat reserved in criticizing the tradition which Boswell did so much to make. At its worst it may merit the reprobation Mr Strachey administers. But even at its worst can we deny it some of the potentialities of art? In this great tumble of biographic fact which it pitches down before us there are the materials of an impression, which the reader can arrive at for himself, the reader who is possessed—and who is without a modicum?—of the true Boswellian curiosity after personality. One seldom fails to find, even in the most insignificantly written of such biographies something readable and something that he reads with gusto. Perhaps it is in the worst of these leviathans that one sees best that biography will always be, so long as we are human, inherently something of an art; not dry, or dull, or methodical, but satisfying and going promptly deep. Here we may observe in ourselves a singularly vigorous application of Pater's maxim of humanism, that "nothing which has ever interested living men and women can wholly lose its vitality." Nothing, perhaps, has ever interested us quite so much as ourselves and one another.

If the worst of familiar biography has such qualities, shall not the best of it do much to justify its bulk—for the same reasons that the worst is not wholly unacceptable? "Becoming brevity" indeed, would seem a watchword to accept with reservation. Biography derives its attraction from satisfying our measureless passion of curiosity, our great craving to know, and to compare with our own, the walks and thoughts of the personality in whom the biographer and we are interested. Shall we set limits to this satisfaction, other than those appropriate to the complexity and significance of the personality to be depicted, and the variety and number of its contacts with the world? Shall a great public person, touching and affecting his time at many points, be set forth in the same space as one who lives to himself? Mr Strachey's own practice would seem to say no. It is true he speaks of a *becoming* brevity; yet he speaks of brevity; and while becoming brevity will no doubt answer for some lives, no kind will do for many whose lives we most want to know. The phrase is one, we may hope, to put

some diminishment on mere biographic garrulity; but one would not like to think of it as defining the capabilities of the proportionable art of biography, or taking the measure of its immensely various consequence.

Again, one can readily agree with Mr Strachey's implication that biography is not panegyric; yet his maintenance of "freedom of spirit" would appear to go further still. His biographies are entertainments indeed; they wear somewhat the look of entertainments at the expense of their subjects. And this possibly is what makes his undoubted influence on the art of biography difficult to estimate, and in some ways questionable. We can enjoy the fine sharp unctiousness of his rhetoric; we can value, for the comparatively rare things they are, his manifest selection and design. We can be very grateful for his dexterity in turning to dramatic account the biographic necessity of rendering his subject's world as a world of persons, showing his subject, not as a mere gesture in a vacuum, but as a quick being among quick beings. And we might unqualifiedly admire his patent zest in personality and its doings, that signal virtue of the biographer, did it not incline so markedly to be of the inverse sort which Pope describes as "the love of folly and the scorn of fools." This mature and delicate malice seems hardly a trait to be copied except by those who are themselves mature; yet it appears more generally attempted than his other more tangible contributions. One can hardly fail to discern effects generally of what he has indicated he pragmatically means by maintenance of freedom of spirit. There is not so far a cry as may appear between such freedom and the freedom manifested in a recent biography of Henry W. Longfellow in which that unfortunate person is habitually referred to as Henry; and the sophomoric patronage, the plucking of dead lions by the beard, which some biography currently assumes, is, one fears, a close relative of that freedom of spirit which Mr Strachey has in mind. We are far from panegyric.

One would think freedom of spirit actually more nearly approached in the several developments of literalist biography, sedate as they may be, than in Mr Strachey's school. Though the latter may be emancipated enough, as instanced by Mr Strachey, Mr Bonamy Dobrée, or Mr Geoffrey Scott, it impresses one at its furthest as hardly less enslaved by the fixed desire to be amusing than are



PORTRAIT OF LYTTON STRACHEY. BY EYRE DE LANUX





the worst of the panegyrists by their indurated habit of approval. To lay bare the facts, however, and to do it with eminently dispassionate thoroughness, is the single aim of the literalists. Historical, scholarly biography is an honourable example of this method; and the views of Sir Leslie Stephen as editor of the *British Dictionary of National Biography* are characteristic. He was convinced of the importance of thorough scrutiny and critical integration of the facts of biography by the light they throw on each other; and he believed in the adequate exhibition of the effect on biography of the enclosing history, and the relevance of biography to that history. Much is to be said for literalist considerations; for instance, that they are essential. Poetry not founded on a specific there and then, may be possible; but not biography. For good or ill man is a creature of context—of time and of place; that context may actually abash or thwart his impulses, but to take it from him, were such a thing possible, would be to leave him an airy nothing indeed.

It was even the view of the late Charles S. Peirce, considering among other things the numerous interesting coincidences of scientific discovery, that this context is not only a conditioning *milieu* of mental life, but a positive factor of intellectual achievement: works of origination, he believed, are less often the fruit of isolated effort, than of the sympathetic movement of numerous minds in the same direction. Biographers, then, the literalist view rightly implies, will not casually disregard a man's moral and mental environment, or ancestry, or even his moral and mental posterity. Literalists may occasionally carry the anatomy of fact and environment overfar, as when the history of the individual becomes subordinate to the consideration of his time. But the contribution of their example ought not to go unheeded when there can be instances, as there are in current practice, in which the subject of biography might be a creature of the outer void, so far as he is shown to have relations of cause or consequence with the general motions of his time.

But it is the difficulties of fact of which the literalist seems most aware, and he is therefore the exponent chiefly of systematic scholarship. Biography, in his view, is peculiarly no art of hyperbole; the actualist standpoint is imposed by the nature of the undertaking, and the biographer is a species of behaviourist who is not to under-

take the rococo mental interiors that used to be so ravishing in introspective fiction. The literalist point of view is certainly well taken and the product eminently sound in its range; yet one is obliged to note that biography of this sort does not go far in imaginative collaboration with the reader. One cannot but believe that a proper art of biography may go further, both in interpretation and realization, than the literalist ideal contemplates.

The various kinds of psychological biography promise additional enablement of the art, both in subtlety and in reach of interpretation. And while the uncommitted reader can profitably permit himself a doubt as to the biographic utility of those Freudian engrossments which would turn biography into a clinic of aberrational psychology, still, in the outlines of its chief attitude, psychological biography is certainly effectively aimed, giving, as it does, new and extended application to conceptions as old as Plutarch. That wary biographer of glory-getting governors and antique shepherds of the people had told the world, eighteen centuries before psychoanalysis, that "The most glorious exploits do not always furnish us with the clearest discoveries of virtue and vice in men; a matter of less moment, an expression or a jest informs us better of their character." Perhaps the most consistent current application of the psychological point of view to biography, an application which has been conscientious and tempered with sense, is that by Mr Gamaliel Bradford. While he has written, for the most part, not so much biography as those short prose characters making use of selected facts of biography, which he calls psychographs, his practice yet shows the profit to biography of the judiciously psychological point of view. The principles his work best illustrates are not imposing Freudianisms, but are such as would be naturally corollary to the conception of Plutarch just quoted, the conception merely, that mind and temperament and character are continuous in all sorts of sequences, hidden and evident. This is an obvious enough idea, no doubt, but it is evidently useful, and it may be found to be the chief residuum of psycho-biography when that is denuded of its mythological proliferations.

Whoever would bring psychology to the service of biography would not do ill to reconsider the practice of Sainte-Beuve, that model and master-spirit of literary enquiry into mentality. He was a critic; but as Mr Bradford has pointed out, he was a biographer too, and one of indubitable supremacy. He, too, studied and

wrote before psychoanalysis was heard of; but he made great use of that imaginative tact, that judgement of detail, that common sense applied to the study of individual mind which is the best part of literary psychoanalysis at its best. He indeed made use of every mode of approach and interpretative scholarship available in his day, including one which he appears to have invented himself, and which is not much seen since, whether among psycho-biographers, literalist biographers, or others: namely, the mode of comparing and contrasting individual minds or temperaments with those nearly related to them in the genera of mind and temperament. Such comparisons imply an intuitive classification of mind as a phenomenon, and an acquaintance with the great individual manifestations of it in history, which perhaps only Sainte-Beuve has possessed or could wield. Yet as a method of consideration it seems not without value as a counterpoise to our disposition to scrutinize the great intellectual manifestations of personality by purely asylum methods.

And while it is no doubt overmuch to ask of every biographer that he know the telling minds of history as numerously and in as much detail as Sainte-Beuve knew them, still we are probably within our rights in being disappointed in a biography such as Mr Bradford's recent life of Darwin, which shows us Darwin the citizen rather than Darwin the biological thinker, like and unlike other biological thinkers. Biography is not equivalent to criticism; nevertheless if it is to achieve full interpretation, it must be an account of mind as well as of character and temperament. Biographies such as Mr Bradford's of Darwin seem only a part of the tale.

But Sainte-Beuve, though he left no stone unturned to comprehend and characterize individuality of mind, temperament, and character, concealed his apparatus, merely giving the reader the benefit of it in his singularly clear art. And if he did all that a human being could to comprehend each mind that came before his contemplation, he did it, not out of professional pride, but because he had the biographic love of personality. He wanted to know, and to remember, and to express in his special art, the beautiful and various forms of that poetry of persons which is temperament when it is still amorphous—which is mind and spirit when it achieves expression and direction.

Sainte-Beuve had been a poet before he became a critic and

biographer; and Carlyle, another biographic virtuoso of a very different sort, was also assuredly a poet in all but prosody. It was Carlyle's poetic spirit, fanatic as it often became, that contributed the powerful emotional realization of his heroic biographies. There is much, surely, in the poet's gifts which is valuable to the biographer; for that intense meteorology of spirit which is the province of poetry is also in part a legitimate province of biography. The reader may be pardoned, then, some expectations, when he takes up biography which is written, as it is occasionally, by poets—such as the twelve hundred odd pages on Keats by the late Miss Lowell, or Mr Sandburg's one hundred sixty-eight chapters on Lincoln. It is not the great bulk of these biographies that is striking—we are used to bulk; it is their great earnestness and consciousness as biographies. They suggest a more inclusive tradition of more seriously artistic biography than we have had, a tradition in which familiar biography, literalist scholarship, literary psychology, and the poetic spirit might meet and be inter-enriched.

Few literalists could exceed Miss Lowell in zeal for authenticity; she is not equalled even by Mr Sandburg in his poetic devotion to his hoards of prairie data. Both biographers are competent literary psychologists; not—Miss Lowell emphatically not—of the psychoanalytical sort. And while Miss Lowell's character as a poet applies in a rather technically special sense to her task, her work in general still shows, as Mr Sandburg's does eminently, the value to the biographer of a poetic sensibility. The one studies Keats's growth as a poet; and the other, Lincoln's growth as a leader of the people, both writers being profoundly impressed with their subjects.

It may be because of their depth and wealth of impression, the quality in which they are most poetic, that such biographies are examples valuable to the art of biography. The art which Miss Lowell and Mr Sandburg have perhaps here prophesied should not be confined by such limitations in choice of subject as confine the "freedom of spirit" school of Mr Strachey, Mr Bonamy Dobrée, and Mr Geoffrey Scott, who, it would seem, must restrict themselves to such individualities, or such approaches to individuality as are susceptible of treatment in their finished modes of irony. This biography by poets also goes beyond the pedestrianism of the literalists. Biography, we here see, is neither an affair of bald facts merely, nor an ironic incisive narrative of character and its frailties.

Biography, in its realizations of temperament, character, and intellect can be a moderate sort of epic, a summoning back of significant dead days, a seeking to rouse again great sessions of extinguished feeling, a trial to make live in words, the thoughts that lived in flesh. Success in biographic art and truth depends as much upon breadth of accomplishment in sympathy, upon poetic histrionism, upon acts of "studious imagination," upon conscience and cultivated powers of impression, as upon breadth of research among the relics of fact. These powers and qualities must harmonize, not slight each other. If the art of biography is no more than one man's impression of another, it is no less.

May we not, in fact, well admit that biography is a serious sort of prose fiction, both in its aspect of interpretation and in its aspect of realization? It cannot, more than fiction, grasp the essence of consciousness, the inimitable I of personality. What he ate, and what he did, and whom he saw—these things do not tell the tale. The secret of a man dies with him. Biographic interpretation, like the interpretation of fiction, is neither exhaustive nor exact; it can only speak "with a near aim." The acts and facts of biography are given, not chosen, as is the case with fiction; but this is a difference in the conditions of art, not in the fundamental processes of achievement. Ingenuity in devising plot and character is not the major feature of the novelist's artistic individuality. It is his depth and wealth of impressibility that matter.

So is it with the biographer; he is born before he is made, and not all who write lives are biographers. The basis-talent is not scholarship, nor critical acumen, nor the gift of style. It is the capacity to be impressed by personality. Carlyle called this "the open loving heart"; doubtless the term used makes no great difference. Its presence, however, is the determinant of one's fitness as a biographer. Prudes and prigs would be indifferent biographers, as would the scandalously disposed, since none of them can take personality as all in all it is, but must be about their business of being shocked or shocking, or trying with vain violence to remake their subject in their own image.

If biography has some part with serious fiction in the arts of interpretation, it has still more kinship with fiction in the arts of realization. "My object," wrote Miss Lowell of her Keats, "is to make the reader feel as though he were living with Keats, subject to the same influences that surrounded him, moving in

his circle, watching the advent of poems as from day to day they sprang into being." Such words, it may be submitted, are artistically significant inscriptions for the banner of biography. They are indeed the possible watchwords of a changed and stronger tradition in the art. They imply that the biographer, when once he has arrived at his interpretation, is not to falter in making it real. He is to give us images, realizations, and not merely discussions, of his impression of personality. And though he may not omit to fortify himself with the resources of literalist scholarship, he is not to hesitate to take a reasonable interiority of view, for he is bound to remark, unless he stops in the barren record of sayings and doings, that biography is the story of circumstance *and* character. After all the literalist can turn too abruptly from interiority of standpoint. Where the acts and facts of a life are given, may we not reasonably draw some inference as to the animus? Are words and deeds a counterfeit coinage of the spirit? Certainly there is, in the multifariousness of personality, at least one singleness, the singleness of continuity, the singleness of the plentiful stream of being, which the biographer is to remount, so far as he may, to the headwaters—as these two biographers have done.

Whatever else it may fail in, biography the art cannot fail to find and keep the proper emotional tone. If it fails in this it may be correct as information, but it is inept as art. Nothing could be more characteristic of personality than the persistence of its feeling-life, its temperament. Thought is episodic, but temperament is continuous. Personality perhaps is nothing so much as continuous living feeling, and though we might not be able to state our sense of it in words, we are nevertheless pretty fully aware of it in experience.

Here, perhaps, is a chief portal of art in biography. To examine the great biographies is to observe that the ground satisfaction in them, more perhaps than anything else, is a satisfaction hard to phrase, a satisfaction of feeling. This may be the justification of the skilful amplitude of such biographies as the present ones of Keats and Lincoln. One rises "knowing the man," with a life-like sense of his temperament as the timbre of his thought and deeds. And there is perhaps as much poetry as pertinence in this central biographic fact that a man's feelings, thoughts, and acts are continuous in each other and in their sum, that life is the declaration of personality, the assertion of temperament.

## DAPAN MARQUAR

BY HAMASDEGH

*Translated From the Armenian by Leon Srabian Herald*

**H**AVE you ever seen scarecrows—those things in the fields—clumsily stuffed with straw or faggots, with the aspect of drunkards? One with its height fallen upon itself, another looking as if it is stumbling out of the ale-house, waist bent, no longer able to walk. Still another, with the eagerness of one just entering the ale-house, its feet astride, its arms pendulous, its hat tipped over a stooping shoulder. Dwarfy scarecrows, maimed scarecrows, scarecrows leaning on sticks, with sunken or puffed-out bellies, impotent feet, looking like the collapsed body of a criminal that has just been taken from the gallows.

The best looking of these scarecrows was the one near our vineyard—the gardener's. It was tall, with its wide arms spread out like Jesus of the desert, as if alone, praying. Was there a famine, or were the waters of the fields dried up? The gardener had made it—had erected cross-like, a tall pole and had dressed it in blue; in a threadbare *shalvar* (that is to say, wide pants) with a wavy sash around its waist. For its dress he had slipped on it a ragged *aba* or overcoat, made of goat's hair. For the head he had taken an empty squash, had made a nose and carved a mouth, and for teeth he had used a donkey's, from a skull he had found in the field. The eyes were made by two plums which had fallen from the tree. How fantastic! Just like a Chinese god with the nose gone, and bulging eyes.

Each fall when he had finished his work in the fields, the gardener as a last duty would throw the scarecrow over his shoulder and enter his house. Each spring when the broad-browed lambs leaped out to stamp the earth's belly with their tiny feet, the gardener would again shoulder his scarecrow and descend into the garden.

Like the immortal hermit of the story, in whose hands birds were said to have built their nests, the scarecrow was always there. One day however I saw it walking, as I scampered noisily along

the road to our vineyard, throwing stones at the birds and destroying the cobwebs under the bridge. I was scarcely eight and loved to run away from my mother as a zephyr from the woods, to waken my echo far off in a distant place.

It was at this time that I saw the scarecrow walking. My wonder was immense. I clapped my hands and cried, "Mother, mother, where is the scarecrow going?" I thought it might be going to visit the neighbours or going over to drink from the brook. My eyes did not deceive me. It was the very same scarecrow that had stood near our vineyard, but now its giant form was advancing, its broad shoulders bent and full of straw, waving like wheat, with the same *shalvar*, the same felt hat, the *aba* and the plaited baldric around it. Also, it had a spade on its shoulder.

"That is no scarecrow, it's Dapan Marquar from the village," my mother said with an amused grin. I looked and saw that she was right. The scarecrow was standing as before, near our vineyard and as the gardener worked I could see his head glisten among the glistening melons. A cautious crane just come to the ground was folding its wings among the vegetables. Near the shadow of the scarecrow the gardener's donkey stood rubbing his neck continually against a tree. The scarecrow was there. Beyond on its blue background was the gigantic portrait of Dapan Marquar with a piece of cloud under his arm.

At twilight we came back to the village like the other workers in the fields. The lowing of the cattle, the buzzing of insects, and the dust of the road mingled, as the cows hurried home with teeming udders while plough-points glittered and clinked on their shoulders. In this medley of the twilight on the Hill Road I saw lone Dapan Marquar, his back broad as a field, spade on shoulder, descending to the village. Twilight dulled the flame-like beauty which glowed on the canvas of the clouds. Dapan Marquar was still descending. The tints in the sky were fainter. Beyond the hill his back could be seen gradually sinking; his shoulders then the end of his spade disappeared as with and like the twilight he was at last indistinguishable from the village.

After that I saw him often. Once toward evening he had entered the village with his team of buffaloes and was thumping his heavy boots against a tree to knock the dirt off—tuk-tk-tuk. What



boots! so big that a rabbit could have made its nest in one of them. Another time I saw him going into the church with tassels of field grass still clinging to his *shalvar*.

The years were passing. Dapan Marquar was the same; always behind his span of buffaloes, spade on shoulder. One would think he had been born in those clothes—with just that aspect. I often wondered why birds did not sit on his spade.

Dapan Marquar's sunburned nose and cheeks were like brass—full of dents. His forehead was furrowed like a ploughed field. His arms were wide as planks. Usually silent, he spoke briefly when necessary. The villagers old and young respected him and asked him—showing their seed-grain—whether to put wheat in this field or cotton. Above all when they were to break in a wild steer they called on Dapan Marquar for he knew where to scratch the animal's neck to make it docile as a lamb.

Tamar, his wife, nearly forty, with rosy cheeks and of a comely height, was reserved before him as a new bride in the presence of her father-in-law. Never once did he laugh. Tamar saw neither day nor sunlight in her home.

“It is not my fault, sister,” Tamar would complain. “It is searing me. Would that their fire go out—the fires of whoever brought us together. He is a statue, sister, a statue; one could hope to hear something from a stone, but not from him. My white hands are like those of a scrubwoman. Ach, Lord, have mercy on me! There is my sister-in-law, the size of a pitcher, yet she is the very breath of her husband; you should see them. Their whispering to each other never ends day or night. What luck, sister, what luck!”

It was not a secret to the village women that Dapan Marquar did not love his wife and that he would not sleep on the same pillow with her. It had been so for years. Tamar that she might turn her husband's heart to her had gone to many saints and had tried many things.

“But what shall I do for you, my darling?” one of these fortune-tellers said to her looking at a cup of water. “It is thrice I am looking, but I fail to see another woman between you. It is not a woman who has taken your husband's heart away from you, my dear one, it is not a woman. Here, I see wings . . . some-

thing wide is spread out there, but my eyes cannot perceive whether it is a field or buffalo-hide. I cannot see well. . . . There is one thing to do, my innocent one—catch a bat from the churchyard, and kill it at dusk. Then take the bone of its right hind leg; break it into three parts; bury one piece in the running water of a brook; burn one if you can, in the church censer; and the last piece you should burn at midnight and when the cock has crowed three mouths have your husband inhale the smoke while asleep. If this does not succeed then nothing can help you, my dear one.”

Tamar had followed every instruction, but averred as before, “He is an obelisk, sister, an obelisk. A stone might speak, but not he.”

Dapan Marquar’s heart was not for women, but for his buffaloes, the fields, the ploughing, the irrigating. He had become a sort of moving scarecrow, a spirit of the fields. He loved his buffaloes, lived with them, spoke to them from his heart; his span of great buffaloes, each with its pair of white marks—two little pieces of the moon—on a forehead wide as its master’s breast; his buffaloes, with necks strong enough to pull a mountain after them.

Every spring, Dapan Marquar took his team to the fields. The buffaloes dilated their nostrils, drew in the vagrant breeze horn-ing the edge of the field, or ran with head high, snorting like a stream just released from the mill-wheel. What a delight, this, to Dapan Marquar! He was always there, gathering stones, breaking up the clods with his hands even, as if caressing the field while the wilful winds like sportive children made fun of him and ran whistling and chuckling to hide in the wheat. The birds dropped their ordure upon him. When, after a rain he would go to kill rats, the familiar white storks never stirred from around his feet.

Every evening by the time he had come from the fields, the other workers of the family had returned long before and were waiting for him around the prepared table; he only was belated. After supper Dapan Marquar would roll a cigarette and leaning on his pillow would rest a while. But was it rest? In him was all the restlessness of the fields: of a swelling brook about to leap from its borders in the silence of midnight, of a wind about to ruffle the calm of the wheat-field, of a yoked team of buffaloes ready to pull. He was thinking of the thousand duties of the mor-

row; of the waterways that were to be opened since it would be his turn to-morrow to irrigate his lands; the waterway of Khraj was to be deepened; the pair of home-raised heifers were to be taken to a bull; it was necessary too that he should go to town. As he was thinking of all these things a brilliant little insect on his felt hat was preening its slim legs. Then, before he had finished his cigarette he would rise laboriously from his place, assign each worker in the family the morrow's duty, and would go to his buffaloes.

One brilliant spring morning after a few kneelings in the churchyard Dapan Marquar started to the field with his span of buffaloes. What a surprise! Someone had got there ahead of him. The larks winging higher and higher, were coming down again, rivalling one another as to which should greet the sun's rays first. Stirring from a shrub was a rabbit. A hoopoo ran along the row of mulberry-trees by the road. Above its deep blue shadow on the earth a single dark cloud moved along. The sun threw its spangles on Dapan Marquar's felt hat, then on the backs of the buffaloes. The colours of the sunrise glittered brighter and brighter on the two ebony coats—lemon-colour, copper, orange, gold. The east gradually became silver white and at a distance on the hill were etched, immensely tall, the shadows of Dapan Marquar and his buffaloes.

It was not long however till twice as many clouds appeared—marshalling themselves into a huge herd of elephants. The sky rang like brass under the blows of a hammer. Big drops of rain began to fall. Workers hastened home from the fields. Caterpillars came out on the road and worms issued from the soft ground. A torrent fell, and continued to pour steadily. The clouds rang in tumultuous clangour. The lightning was a poniard gashing the firmament. There was consternation and tumult in the fields. Animals ran hither and thither with foreign and deplorable bellowings. Outlined against the sky the terrified populace was running towards home. Trees were split in two and birds that had hid themselves among the leaves, fell down. After half an hour the torrent came to a quick stop. The clouds were quiet and the sun came out. Again spring.

The villagers appeared from their hiding-places and called to one another. Word spread that on the Mulberry Road Dapan

Marquar had been struck by lightning. On the Mulberry Road his two buffaloes, overawing as the black mouth of a cave, had fallen lifeless. The horn of one had been torn away; a horn of the other was sunk deep in the ground; and just back of them lay Dapan Marquar like a capsized oak. The bolt had struck the buffaloes squarely. Dapan Marquar though badly hurt, was still breathing and was carried home on an ox-cart.

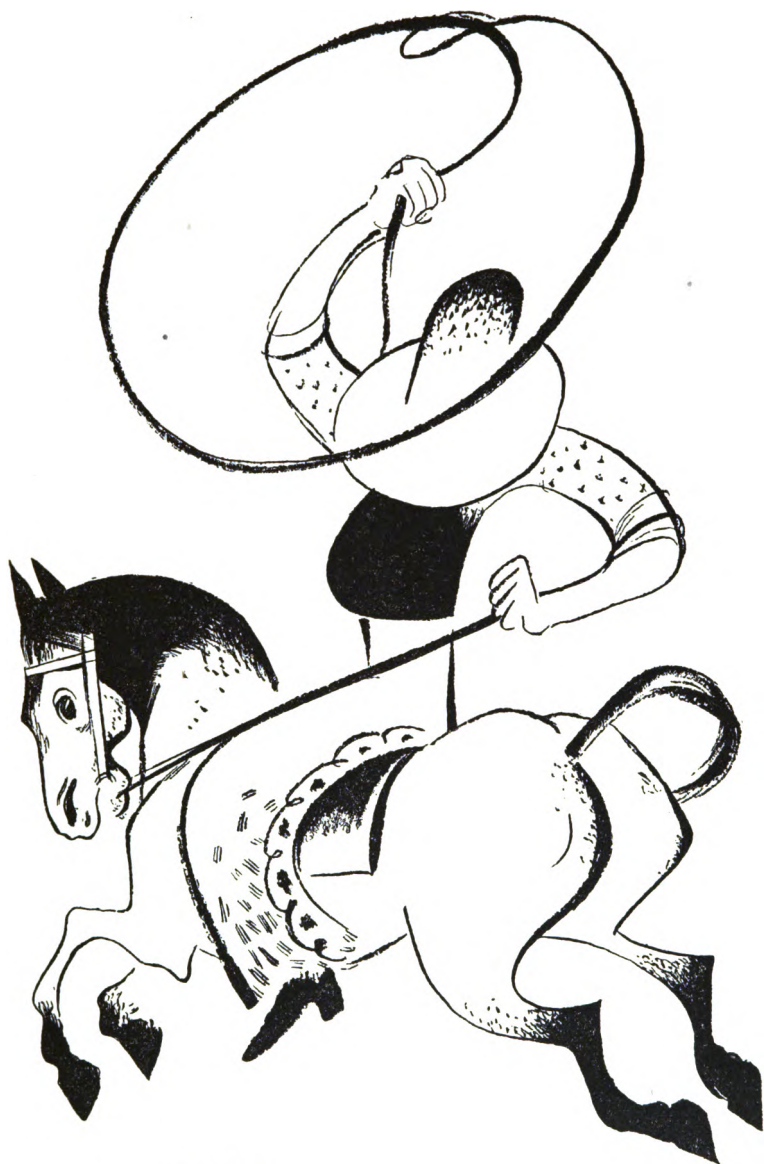
“He won’t live,” was the general opinion.

Gathering around him the neighbours saw him stir on the bed, straighten his back, and turn his scorched, disfigured face as if looking for someone. Was he looking for his wife—for Tamar, they wondered. But she was there, close by, bowed with weeping. Ach, if only he would say her name! Tamar would forgive, would forget everything, and never remember that there had been the least unhappiness. Dapan Marquar was still looking. He drew his hands from the covers, and fixed his glassy eyes apprehensively upon those gathered about him.

“Whom do you want, Marquar Apar?” asked his brother.

“The fodder is near the haymow, Mardig. You look after the buffaloes to-day. That field was half done; I will finish it to-morrow.” Dapan Marquar’s voice was tremulous, barely audible. He would not after all be able to finish the field. If only he knew what had become of his buffaloes!

The sexton brought a huge bier and placed it by the wall in Dapan Marquar’s yard that evening. The dead man was going to be taken to the church.



Groppe

WYOMING I. BY WILLIAM GROPPER





WYOMING II. BY WILLIAM GROPPER





## IF I SHOULD GO

BY FORMAN BROWN

If I should go, now that the moon is full  
    And the rain over,  
Through the white sleeping town and up the sky-tipped hill  
    Beyond the cover  
Of the last light, the last lurching ghost-gleaming wall  
    Where shadows never  
Mottle the brake and purple juniper until  
    The familiar river  
Far down was only a thin silver murmur  
    Shining here and there  
Through the dusky pines below like the glimmer  
    Through a gipsy's hair  
Of a silver chain, and the whole of a vanishing summer  
    Held captive far  
Above and around through the white still shimmer  
    Of moon and star;  
And if, from the pebbled path, pale without shadows  
    I should wander  
Into the tangled, toad-haunted high meadows  
    Tearing the tender  
Grasses, and crazily on my knees chant Druid Credos  
    Parting the slender  
Ferns, would my fingers turn, like the parched ones of Midas  
    The rain-drops under  
Not into gold, but into gems to be bought more dearly—  
Sapphire and amethyst that they are now so nearly?

# WOMEN, WOMEN!

BY ALYSE GREGORY

**M**EN'S attitudes toward women have varied little throughout the ages and may be said to fall within rather simple, easily differentiated classifications. There are those who, frustrated in love, turn the weapon of their inspired wit into an implement of spite and retaliation, thus seeking to restore their wounded pride. Friedrich Nietzsche, August Strindberg, and in our own day and to a lesser degree, Mr D. H. Lawrence, may be given as examples of this type of resentment.

Others, seeing clearly the advantage accruing to their own sex through the continued subjugation of women, advantages whereby they retain at their command a willing servant, an obedient wife, and a resourceful mistress, hold with obstinacy, an obstinacy disguised as irony, to their supremacy. Schopenhauer was one of these and Signor Mussolini has voiced recently similar sentiments to those of the crabbed German.

Most men in modern times are not so wilful. Without malice or prejudice they eagerly seek in women fearless and intellectually enlightened companions, nor can they be blamed for their disappointment when they so seldom discover this fortunate combination.

One judges life as one comes upon it in one's own experience. Only people whose insight has been sharpened by disgrace, injustice, or self-condemnation can be expected to pierce through the moment that castigates into a past that prepared such a mortification.

Perhaps rarest of all are those men whose noble magnanimity, whose passion for justice, and whose unalarmed curiosity have caused them to see in the obdurate tyranny of man a desire to retain a dominance unworthily secured, and in the stupidity and predatory fierceness of woman the results of a manacled mind, and a body given over to a round of belittling and uncreative activities. Voltaire and John Stuart Mill are in this sense eminent,

and one feels that the authors of *English Women in Life and Letters*<sup>1</sup> have in their approach to this old sorrowful subject a somewhat similar quality of understanding. Yet let it not be supposed that this book is in any way a book of propaganda or ideas. The story, pitiful and unpointed, unrolls itself chiefly through quotations selected from old letters, diaries, and novels admirably chosen to give an unbiassed and literary tone to a form of writing too often either partisan or purely sociological. And what a sense of history one gets in these pages, as if all life, so actual yet so brittle, so nothing—"a dream, a breath, a froth of fleeting joy"—yet so profoundly, so heavily, everything, were but a formalization of the instincts vibrating furtively beneath the brocades, the satin waistcoats, the frills and furbelows and jewelled stomachers of the fine ladies and gentlemen of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

What is that unregenerate impulsion in women that has led them on past each baleful prohibition, prohibitions that coerced them to starve or remain illiterate servitors to a master that eyed them with less clemency than he would regard the chestnut mare on which he rode to hounds? No wonder Cleopatra cried out so long ago:

"Ah, women, women! come; we have no friend  
But resolution, and the briefest end."

So might these women, whether among the poor or the rich, have lamented in their turn. Fanny Burney writes to a friend, "Oh, how I hate this vile custom which obliges us to make slaves of ourselves—to sell the most priceless property we boast—our time, and to sacrifice it to every prattling impertinent who chooses to command it." Her first novel she wrote in secrecy, stealing moments when "the important work of the day" had been accomplished. Nor did Charlotte Brontë at a later date fare any better, for Southey's famous reply to her tentative overtures for literary advice must have been, to say the least, disquieting: "Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life, and it ought not to be. The

<sup>1</sup> *English Women in Life and Letters*. By M. Phillips and W. S. Tomkinson. Illustrated. 10mo. 408 pages. The Oxford University Press, American Branch. \$4.

more she is engaged in her proper duties the less leisure will she have for it, even as an accomplishment and recreation."

Mrs Thrale,<sup>1</sup> celebrated both as a Blue Stocking and because of her friendship with Dr Johnson, is one of the rare women, rare individuals indeed, whose abundancy of life can never be wholly destroyed by circumstances. Married to a man, a prosperous brewer, who believed that a woman's duties should be equally divided between the drawing-room and the bed-chamber, she complains in the following manner to Dr Johnson: "For the first six years after my marriage . . . I never set foot in any theatre or place of entertainment at all." "I am perpetually bringing or losing babies, both very dreadful operations to me, and which tear mind and body both in pieces very cruelly." "The mother or mistress of a large family is in the case of a tethered nag, always treading and subsisting on the same spot." And again, "The more one lives to see softness seduced, flexibility despised, and gentleness insulted, the more contentedly one bears with a disposition so different from one's own." One wonders just how much sympathy she was able to elicit from her formidable acquaintance whose own test of a true woman was in the baking of a pudding. It is satisfactory to know that the exacting brewer ultimately died and that Mrs Thrale, in spite of the horror of her fashionable friends, married a worthy Italian musician of a gentle temper and mind. But even so she seems not to have gained exemption from marital duties, for she writes thus to Mrs Pennington: "'Tis five o'clock in the morning. I was up at *four*, shall call the men and maids at six . . . breakfast at 9 . . . have dined by 4, fret over Gillon's dispatches and Piozzi's misery all the rest of the day." One misses among her letters any that are truly revealing, and discovers the cause in a foot-note. They have, alas, been destroyed by her friend, Fanny Burney.

Lady Louisa Stuart,<sup>2</sup> born sixteen years later, though less witty, is quite as intelligent as Mrs Thrale. One gathers that the fashionable society which tossed her backwards and forwards in its voracious and ephemeral demands left her heart disaffected,

<sup>1</sup> The Letters of Mrs. Thrale. Selected with an Introduction by R. Brimley Johnson. 12mo. 218 pages. Lincoln MacVeagh, The Dial Press. \$2.50.

<sup>2</sup> The Letters of Lady Louisa Stuart. Selected with an Introduction by R. Brimley Johnson. 12mo. 274 pages. Lincoln MacVeagh, The Dial Press. \$2.50.

her real tastes constantly thwarted or outraged. Perhaps it was this very grandchild to whom Lady Mary Wortley Montagu alluded when she wrote thus to her daughter: "Caution her to conceal whatever learning she attains with as much solicitude as she would hide crookedness or lameness." The counsel was apparently not always heeded for Lady Louisa complains to a friend, "I know the evil of being daily snubbed and checked '*for all my nonsense*'; and told by my elders . . . of my self conceit and affectation of wisdom in reading books I had no sort of business with instead of minding my work as I should do," and again she speaks of "a constant apprehension of being despised by men . . . from having had it dinned into my ears that if they suspected my pursuits and inclinations they would spit in my face." "I never yet," she continues, "knew a very remarkable, a super, and extra female fool, who was not popular among them." It is sad to witness this sensitive and vigorous nature pressed down into so narrow and defeating a life, a life where good manners instead of serving as a retreat from intrusion are turned into a prison in which expires the light of unfettered consciousness. One wearies of the descriptions of startling gowns, of hours squandered without profit, and then escapes the plaintive resisting cry of a poetic spirit trapped by her sex, by the society in which she is born, and by the age in which she lives.

What a great contrast to these other two are the letters of George Eliot,<sup>1</sup> so solidly middle-class, so Victorian in the best sense of the word, so without nonsense. Yet one knows that she too was not exonerated from the destructive obligations placed upon her sex, for she complained once to a friend that her right hand was broader than her left from the amount of butter she had made in her youth, and one wonders whether, if she had been spared for study those hours when she "stood sentinel over damson cheese and a warm stove," she would not, perhaps, have developed her genius more potently and at an earlier age, and have been spared the distress she voiced at that time over the "chaos of her mind." One is conscious in her correspondence of a large, generous, tender nature and a capacious understanding, and it is restoring to one's belief in the possible beauty of human companionship to read of

<sup>1</sup> The Letters of George Eliot. Selected with an Introduction by R. Brimley Johnson. 12mo. 219 pages. Lincoln MacVeagh, The Dial Press. \$2.50.

her love for, and her appreciation of, the chosen friend of her life, of their congenial, unharassed hours together, perhaps in Weimar where they visited Goethe's old dwelling-place, or in Rome at Shelley's grave—"We went to see dear Shelley's grave, and it was like a personal consolation to me to see that simple outward sign that he is at rest where no hatred can reach him"; or back in England, each reading over and criticizing the work of the other. "It is remarkable to me that I have entirely lost my *personal* melancholy. . . . I am never in the *mood* of sadness which used to be my frequent visitant even in the midst of external happiness," she writes in 1876. A few years and her companion had died and her words then were, "I can trust to your understanding of a sorrow which has broken my life." On such a structure is built the uncertain security of men and women alike, on such a structure! A structure shadowed and transitory and full of disillusionment!

## THE FLIGHT

BY HERBERT GORMAN

Embroidered birds with beryl eyes  
 move in your skirt. You sit among  
 the twisted trees of bright green lies,  
 your empty hands like flowers flung  
 on the dark rotting heap of Time.  
 What are you saying in secret rhyme?  
 Now will you walk or stand and set  
 those woyen birds in some mad fret,  
 shaking their beryl eyes with fear  
 and stirring their threaded wings to flight  
 through the fantastic night  
 above us here?



*Courtesy of the Folkwang Verlag, Hagen*

WOMAN'S BUST. BY GEORGES MINNE







*Courtesy of the Folkwang Verlag, Hagen*

BATHING WOMAN. BY GEORGES MINNE





*Courtesy of the Folkwang Verlag, Hagen*  
WOUNDED BOY. BY GEORGES MINNE



## LAST LEAVE

BY HOWARD HAYES

**T**HE S. S. West Wave docked in Hamburg Sunday morning, and it was now Monday afternoon—the first day that had seemed unmistakably spring—bright and warm. In the cramped engineer's mess, the sunlight came through the open port-holes in solid cylinders, so that the stiff coffee stains and the grime where the red checked cloth hung over the edge of the table, showed sorely in the strong, clean light.

Manuel, the little Spanish oiler, sat at the bench-like table and twisted one of the stiff spots between his thumb and fingers. He was the only one on the ship who showed any emotion over Leiterman's death. Manuel and Leiterman were not friends even if they did sleep in upper bunks across from each other. On a ship you can live and eat with a man trip after trip, month after month, and it won't mean anything. But Leiterman had friends on board even if Manuel wasn't one of them. Nevertheless Manuel was the only one of the crew who was caught with a tear in his eye when word came the next morning that Leiterman was dead—killed.

Before him on the dirty table-cloth was a letter. The cheap note-paper looked yellow where the bright sunlight fell on it. Leiterman had started it to his mother, while at sea, and had put it aside as the ship neared Hamburg. His mother was old and lived somewhere in New Jersey. Manuel turned the letter over. The last thing written was, "As i have not been home in 2 or 3 years i think i will take a rest after this here trip and come home and see you Mother you are getting old i gess. . . ." He read it again slowly.

The door banged open and the messboy came in with a bucket of steaming water with a mop in it. The spring breeze whipped the steam off the black water as a barmaid whips the foam off the top of a stein of German beer. The thought made Manuel sick. He had been drunk himself when Leiterman was killed.

The messboy took the mop, dripping, from the bucket and threw

the heavy rags of it into a corner with a slap. He was in a hurry to clean up and get ashore. Leiterman's face at the mess-table would soon be replaced by another; he had forgotten it already. Manuel looked again at the letter before him, "Mother you are getting old i gess. . . ."

The messroom door opened and Gordon, Second Assistant, stuck his head in and said in his large, coarse voice, "Say, you're looking after Leiterman's stuff, aren't you?" Manuel said he was. "Well, bring it around when you get it together; guess he didn't leave much, eh?" Manuel mumbled something, "No he didn't leave much." "The new man'll be down from the consul's pretty quick," said Gordon with a brief nod, "look after him, will you?"

When the Second had gone Manuel's eye fell on the letter; he had forgotten to mention it. Well, he could take it up with the rest of Leiterman's stuff. Anyhow, the only thing that Gordon and the captain were thinking about were the papers to be filled out concerning Leiterman's death. Manuel had answered some of the questions on these papers. You couldn't put into them what you really felt about what happened. Duncan didn't kill Leiterman—though according to the law he did.

Duncan was a coal-passer and young. He did not take the work in the fire-room easily; was quiet and seldom said anything. Leiterman was an oiler, older, and always talking. "Aw, yer crazy," he invariably said to any one who might be speaking as he entered the messroom.

Fourteen days at sea on a United States ship means a sharp thirst for everyone. On the run up the Elbe and while the ship was being berthed, talk among the crew dealt mostly with feats of drinking, all of which the tellers hoped to surpass during their stay in Hamburg. But Leiterman was loudest in bragging of the bottomlessness of his belly when it came to downing German beer. "Aw, yer crazy," was his comment on the stories of the others, and also the signal that he was going to tell another extravagant one of his own.

Early in the afternoon all the little things had been done which prepare a ship for unloading, and as it was Sunday, the remainder of the day belonged to the men. There followed a rush of noisy

washings, bloody shaving, and then the sweaty work of getting into shore clothes.

In a body the slicked-up crew boarded the little ferry which carried them across the Elbe and deposited them at the foot of sailor-town. Playfully and noisily they pushed each other about as they climbed the ascent of the little bridge and started up the street. A handful of beachcombers, apparently from nowhere, fell in behind them and had soon worked their way into the midst of the party.

The vanguard, Leiterman among them, loudly hailed the first bar they sighted. It was situated in such a way that it could not fail to be among the first to greet the eyes of sailors just come from the dryness of the sea. The small mob turned in. Those who drew the beer from polished taps, and those who made their living in less obvious ways, were very old and very wise at their trades. With open arms they welcomed the noisy, shuffling sailors.

Above the din Leiterman's voice sounded: "Well, here we are, boys." And then to some complaining rejoinder, "Aw, yer crazy."

The barmaids brazenly routed from the tables a few leisurely afternoon customers and pushed the thirsty sailors into the places made vacant. Mingled with the deep notes of salt-roughened voices were the piercing calls and free laughter of girls and women. Happy they who hurried to bring the foaming steins, and happy the others who were already selecting and fastening upon their prey. Their preference was for the young, full-cheeked sailors.

Standing above the seated figures and wandering from table to table was Leiterman, already adrift under the warm cloak of the strong, rich beer. With a thickening voice he called encouragement to all, and laid his hands roughly on the women. "Drink yer beer, drink yer beer," he kept urging. Once or twice, with a wide fling of his arm, he ordered drinks for the house, and the scurrying barmaids lost no time in seeing that every possible drinker was supplied.

"Lemme show you how to drink yer beer," he boomed to a young, bewildered-looking coal-passer, and with a high sweep, feet wide apart, he drained a stein without taking breath. "Now you do it, lemme see you do it," and he forced a dripping glass barrel into the hands of the coal-passer. An untidy, shapeless woman in a

sickly brown dress was quickly alive to the situation and flinging herself down beside the silent youth, said, "Look, look, I teach you, my sweetheart." She reached for a stein and after passing it under his nose, raised it to her lips and drained half of it. "You drink," and she held the remainder to his lips. Silently, he gulped it down. Leiterman, satisfied, moved away.

Someone started an automatic piano and its unmusical noise poured itself into the other noises of the place. But a lull had come over many of the tables. Conversation was beginning to be subdued, and at some tables it had ceased altogether, the drinkers sitting in dreamy-eyed detachment. The head barmaid, blond and buxom, rested for a moment, her hands on her square hips, surveying the scene with satisfaction. Her girls were carrying an endless procession of foaming steins from polished bronze taps to wet table tops.

Heavy feminine arms were comfortably slung about strong sunburnt necks, and many steins went up in pairs.

Duncan, the coal-passer, listened silently to the hurried speech of the woman who had turned to him from Leiterman. Her unpowdered face and her warm breasts, pulled up tightly in the brown dress, were very close to him. He drank his beer willingly, eagerly now. The woman was pouring into his ear a torrent of English words many of which he could hardly recognize. He sat and listened while her arm crept softly around his neck. He liked it. He liked it as he had liked nothing since he had been on the ship. This warm breathing creature by his side made him feel larger, stronger. The power that he knew he had, he could feel now in every fibre of his body. On the ship, down in the rolling fire-room, he did not feel like this.

His thoughts turned to that fire-room. It was a constant battle down there where they fought, not with their fists, but with jibes and rough commands which weakened you more than work. You could not fight with your hands. A coal-passer has to take anything the firemen or the oilers want to say, and if he doesn't, they can make his life a hell. When the jibes with which they harassed him became more than he could bear, and he offered to fight, he was only laughed at and work, needless work, was heaped upon him. He was answered with, "More coal, more coal. Shut up



and git more coal." Often he brought down enough to last half way through the next watch.

Leiterman was again making the rounds of the tables when he came upon the coal-passer and his woman. They did not see him. "Hiyah, sweetheart, that guy's no good, c'mmon with me." He grabbed the woman by the wrist, but she deftly twisted away and put both arms around the coal-passer. "He's no man for you," Leiterman repeated and again reached for her wrist. But she had had enough. She took the silent coal-passer by the hand and they rose to go.

"Here, here, don't run away and leave us." But they were at the swinging doors. "Look here, I'm runnin' this here party." Leiterman grabbed the smaller man by the shoulders and swung him around. Both were swaying on their feet; their eyes focusing slowly. With curses the coal-passer pushed off his opponent and was dragged through the swinging doors by the woman, who pulled him down the steps to the street and linking arms, started away. In the door-way, holding to the jambs for support, Leiterman stood and cursed them, then lurched down the steps to the street.

Turning in time to see Leiterman tottering toward him, Duncan wrenched himself from the embrace of the woman, and faced about. "Put 'em up," he said as he waveringly jerked up his own knuckles. Feebly, Leiterman put up his hands. "Aw, yer crazy," he gurgled as he staggered forward to his death.

To Manuel, as he thought back to it, nothing came so clearly or penetrated his own blurred memory so sharply as that sickening crunch-crack when Leiterman's skull hit the paving stones. Heavily, without an attempt to break the fall, and at the first blundering tap, he had gone over backwards and lain still.

The police moved the three away from the cold eyes of the crowd; the unconscious man, the sullen coal-passer, and the woman, who was crying.

That splintering crack and the silence after it made Manuel sick. When the crowd had gone, he wandered up the street to vomit against a lamp-post. He could not shake off that sight. All night, through the drunken haze in his brain, he heard and saw Leiterman's head hit the stones with that sickening crack. Once,

in the dimness he looked over at Leiterman's bunk. In the pillow was the impress of a head, Leiterman's head, as it had lain there the night before while the ship was still at sea. His working clothes were in a wad at the foot of the bunk. Near the pillow were some neckties from which he had selected one for that first afternoon ashore.

"Move along a little, will ya?" It was the messboy with his heavy mop. Manuel moved. His thoughts returned to Leiterman. He hadn't left much, he reflected. There were the oil-soaked dungarees and a black shirt at the foot of the bunk. He would throw them overboard, along with some shoes that were on the floor.

In the cardboard suit-case were some brightly striped shirts, some soft collars, some socks, and some underwear. His mother would not want any of it probably. All that really mattered was Leiterman's pay—and this unfinished letter. He looked at it, "getting old i gess. . . ."

The door opened and Manuel looked up. As he did so a spring gust caught up the letter from the table-cloth and dropped it upon the black, greasy water of the messboy's bucket. For an instant it rested there, half of it flat, the other half turned up like a sail, white against the black water. Swish. The messboy flung up the heavy mop and dropped it into the pail. The black water foamed around it. With a burst of Spanish, Manuel flung himself first at the startled boy, then at the bucket with the mop still in it. Too late. The cheap note-paper had almost disintegrated in the hot, soapy water. Manuel went on deck with the dripping sheets in his hand. He leaned against the rail and looked at the crumpled rectangles. Leiterman's mother. His own mother. Hell . . .

"Hi, Manuel, show this man his bunk, will you?" Manuel forgot the wet paper. The Second Assistant's large, coarse voice always jarred on him. The new man fell in behind Manuel. He was a beachcomber and glad to get a good job. Said he had been on the beach in Hamburg for three months. "What're they gonna do with the guy what killed the other man?" he asked good-naturedly. Manuel did not know what they were going to do with the other man. To himself he said that he hoped they would not do anything. What was the use? They went down the alley-way.

"Which one a these bunks is mine?" asked the new man. Manuel pointed to the upper one across from his own. "Those the other fella's neckties?" Manuel scooped up the ties and dropped them into Leiterman's suit-case which lay open on the deck. It was only a quarter full. He looked around; there was nothing else. He stooped, and closed the lid, the lock snapped. As he took hold of the handle and lifted it, the stuff inside slid to the bottom.

The new oiler tossed his battered bag into the bunk. "Nice ship," he said as he pulled a pair of dungarees from his bag. He was happy to be taking hold of a job again.

Manuel looked at the bunk and tried to remember Leiterman's face. It would not come to him. What had Leiterman done that you could remember him by? There were no visible marks. What had he done on all his watches? There was nothing to show for them. All the time that he had been on the ship had he changed anything, had he done anything? No, you could see nothing now. Manuel had difficulty in believing that he had ever been there at all.

Was that his bunk, or was it just a bunk, any bunk? Was the four to eight watch his watch, or was it just a watch, anybody's watch, the new man's watch?

"Come, you help me to-day," Manuel was brisk as the new oiler finished changing his clothes. On deck as they strode forward Manuel tossed through the rail a little wad of dirty, wet paper. "Say, how's this here Second Assistant?" asked the new man. "He's a son-of-a-bitch," replied the little Spaniard.

# BOOK REVIEWS

## A SHOWMAN

SEVENTY YEARS A SHOWMAN. By 'Lord' George Sanger. With an Introduction by Kenneth Grahame. 12mo. 249 pages. E. P. Dutton and Company. \$2.

SEVENTY YEARS A SHOWMAN with its talk of the roads and of tenting-places, with its glimpses of odd characters and its memories of a stirring and by-gone life, insistently reminds us of George Borrow. Sanger's father, kidnapped by the press-gang when he was a young man, fighting at Trafalgar, returning to the country-side with a maimed hand, and then, with some tricks he had learned from a Jewish seaman and his own gift of patter, taking to the roads with a peep-show, is surely a Borrovian character. This man, we fancy, must have met Lavengro and his cronies at one of the fairs or one of the wayside places which his son has left record of. His son was born into the show business; he devoted seventy years of his life to it, and after he had left it he produced this book—it is a record of the greatest interest and it is also a comment upon Dickens and upon Borrow.

What a strange world it was, the England that existed before the accession of Victoria and the coming of the steam-engine! Think of the epidemics that left four out of every six people marked by the small-pox; think of the "resurrectionists" raiding the graveyards for corpses to sell to the medical practitioners; think of the gipsies in all their grandeurs getting into their clan-fights; think of that charnel house in London with twelve hundred bodies below the boards upon which people danced—"no lady or gentleman admitted unless wearing shoes and stockings"; think of the Lancashire fellows kicking a man to death with their heavy clogs in the same spirit in which an Irishman of the time might tap a comrade upon the head with a shillelagh! Times change, and the England of his early experience was as remote as the England of Tom Jones when 'Lord' George Sanger left his lions and his

tigers, his camels and his elephants, and sat down to set down his memories.

He does not reveal this world as a writer or a story-teller would reveal it: he is a showman after all and not a writer or a story-teller. We can indeed learn all the difference between an artist and a man with a good memory and a strong feeling for what he has participated in by reading Sanger's account of the raid on Lansdowne Fair and Showman's Lynch Law and comparing these descriptions with certain descriptions in Lavengro—the fight in the dingle, for instance, in which the Flaming Tinman figures. If we could know what it is that Borrow puts into his scene and that Sanger leaves out we would know all the difference between writing and getting something down upon paper. Sanger's description goes—

“The ruffians turned on the taps, staved in barrels, smashed up bottles, and let the liquor run to waste. Then they started to wreck the booths. Canvas was torn to shreds, platforms were smashed up and made bonfires of, wagons were battered and overturned, show-fronts that had cost some of their poor owners small fortunes were battered to fragments . . . ‘What is it to be?’ asked one of the men, as he drew his whip through his fingers and balanced it. ‘Two dozen!’ said my father, who had been addressed. ‘Make it three dozen! Make it three dozen for all my beautiful chaney ornaments they smashed, the vagabones!’ shrieked an old woman, whose caravan had been wrecked. ‘Very well, mother,’ said father, curtly, ‘three dozen it shall be; three dozen for every man jack of ’em. Lay on, boys!’ . . . ‘Carrotty Kate’ [who had incited the ruffians to wreck the fair] flung many foul words at us as she was unfastened from the wagon wheel and dragged forward, but her face was white—ay, I can see it in my mind even now, after all these years—chalky white, against the tousled mass of red hair that framed it, and she was evidently badly frightened. . . . She screamed and swore horribly, and writhed about, so that the half-dozen stout show-women who were holding her had a difficult task. But the young women flogged on till they were tired, and then the red-haired wretch was allowed to limp away, cursing us as she went in the most dreadful fashion.”

Young Sanger, cradled in the caravan, was a born showman: we know it by the costume that he dons in his young manhood and that gains him the title of "Gentleman George." He was a showman, that is to say, he delighted in parading his appearance, his wits, his possessions—he delighted in producing effects. He knew about the circus as Napoleon knew about war; he had mastered it from the patter before the tent, from the manipulation of gold-fish and canaries, to the management of the circus with three rings and two platforms. For him, lions were only larger white mice, as whales, if he had had to deal with them, would have been larger gold-fish—the complete circus-man should be able to deal with them as he should be able to put up a show-front or drive in a tent-peg.

"I entered alone, the oil lamp in one hand and an ordinary walking-stick in the other. I rambled all over the theatre, dress-circle, pit, etc., and finding no trace of the lions concluded they were still in the cellar. With the dim light I had it was difficult to find my way about, but down I went, and not seeing them in the upper cellar crossed over to descend to the lower one. As I did so a lion suddenly made a rush for the same opening, and as he came struck me with his head in the small of the back with such force as to make me turn a complete somersault. I landed on my feet, thanks to my old circus experience, but I confess for a moment I was unnerved. The lantern, however, was still in my hand, and still burning, so after collecting my thoughts I descended the steps to the lower cellar. . . . All at once I saw eyes like balls of fire in the distant darkness. 'Oh, there you are, you rascals!' I shouted, knowing that the animals would recognize my voice. Then I struck my cane on the various properties lying about, and at the same time swung the lantern to and fro. This had the effect of making the eight lions leap and bound in all directions. . . . By this time I was quite awake to the situation. I knew from experience that the beasts would make for their dens when they tired a bit. So it proved, for presently after another race round they made for the cases they had escaped from. I saw three get into one of the great boxes, and five into another, leaving two empty. Then I pushed to and blocked as well as I could the

sliding doors of the cases, and hurried up to inform my men that the danger was over, and the lions were safely housed."

We commonly confuse the showman with the vagrant, and we are apt to think of the showman, because he travels, as having affinities with the vagrant. But travelling is only incidental to the showman's life and it is the whole of the vagrant's life. It remains to be said that as regards writing it is more in the vagrant's mode than in the showman's. There was much of the showman in George Borrow, but there was more of the vagrant, and it is out of his vagrancy that Borrow's books came. Sanger's father and his father's showman-friends were solid English folk who had taken to the roads as they might have taken to boats or to pioneering—because they had been forced out of their villages and their farms. These people work hard and play fair, their wagons are tidy; they are law-abiding even although they are shown scant justice. Over against them are the vagrants, the gipsies, who—

"though we kept apart from and, indeed, rather looked down upon them, had the trick of making money, and having made it were very fond of displaying their wealth on their persons in the shape of finery and trinkets. . . . I have seen young gipsy girls—gloriously beautiful some of them were, too—literally draped from shoulders to ankles in silk handkerchiefs of the most costly description, great gold bangles on their wrists, heavy jewelled ornaments in their ears, and flashing rings on their fingers, flaunting their finery at the fair in the forest."

The English showmen had for allies the Jews. "As a matter of fact, the show business was mainly in the hands of the Jews, who, in my day, outnumbered the Gentile entertainers by two to one, and were always good friends and comrades to us."

Seventy Years a Showman should be on the cinema. But it would never do to have it on a cinema made in Hollywood. The English who are now clamouring against American movies should take up this story which has in it the English roadsides and camping-places and old-world towns. The story, of course, would have to be built up. But what charming scenes suggest themselves:

Gentleman George making his first appearance in his "Hamlet" dress, and arousing rivalry between Anne Hartley and Watercress Betty; his love for Nellie Chapman, the Queen of the Lions; the showmen turning firemen when, "amid the flying sparks, and in and about the burning buildings, could be seen clowns, knights in armour, Indian chiefs, jugglers in tights and spangles, rope-walkers in fleshings"; the sad episode of the death of Sanger's first child, and of their playing to earn enough money for his burial, and then the rise to fame and fortune. It would not require much adroitness to transfer to the cinema, the circus's successor, a story that should end brightly with the showman's benison—"Good roads, good times, and merry tenting."

PADRAIC COLUM



## JOHN KEATS

THE MIND OF JOHN KEATS. *By Clarence Dewitt Thorpe. 8vo. 209 pages. The Oxford University Press, American Branch. \$2.50.*

KEATS AND SHAKESPEARE. *By J. Middleton Murry. 8vo. 248 pages. The Oxford University Press, American Branch. \$4.75.*

THE epidemic of books on John Keats continues unabated: and I suppose (as the upshot of it must be that we shall slowly clarify and solidify our view of him) we ought to be grateful. It was certainly time that some sort of attention should be paid to the Keats of the "letters," who is in so many respects vividly unlike the Keats of the poems; and that an attempt should be made to bring the two characters into, if not a harmony, at any rate a workable relation. Until quite recently, it has been the disposition of critics to accept Keats a little too much as his contemporaries accepted him—that is, as a poet almost exclusively of the emotions and the senses. This, of course, was a manifest injustice. Keats was by no means a fool, as the most casual study of his extraordinary letters must convince any one; he was an extremely intelligent young man, and an extremely self-conscious one, his self-consciousness as often as not being directed upon the nature of the poet (as he saw it in himself) and the nature of the poet as he conceived it to be, or desired it to be, in the social order.

It is to this side of Keats, the intellectual and analytic side, that Mr Murry and Mr Thorpe, the latest champions of Keats the "philosopher," devote their studies; and it must be admitted that they make out (as was indeed inevitable) pretty good cases. Unfortunately, like all zealots, they go too far. They are both so burningly aware of the prevailing disregard of the "mind" of Keats, so intensely conscious of the fact that they are trying to *correct* an established opinion, and so naïvely delighted by the comparative wealth of their "discoveries," that they try to prove

too much. Of the two critics, Mr Thorpe is distinctly the more reliable. He works his case pretty hard, with an inordinate amount of repetition: he rubs it in, he won't let us off, his recapitulations are unsparing and exhausting, and his terminology (to make it worse) is often far from precise; but it must be said for him that he never *quite* loses sight of the fact that in all this there must, naturally, be a large element of mere speculation. He is willing to admit that Keats progressed, intellectually, not in an orderly way, nor in a straight line, but by fits and starts, and with many inconsistencies. These inconsistencies he does not try to suppress or ignore—though he does, now and then, tend to minimize them, or to force a convenient and somewhat strained interpretation upon them. In the end, he wants us to accept a Keats who had, before he died, formulated a pretty definite philosophic credo of his own, a semi-Platonic, semi-Hegelian idealism. Life on this planet was to be considered as a kind of experiment in “soul-making”: “Intelligences” were to become “souls” by being put through a course of trials and tribulations, emerging ultimately from the inferior to the superior state by virtue of an act of imagination (or intuition) which enabled them to accept both good and evil as necessary parts of a divine harmony. When Keats speaks of “beauty”—according to Mr Thorpe—he means not a sensuous but a supersensuous beauty: he means, in fact, precisely this profound acceptance of things as they are, the bad with the good, an intuitive penetration of the superficial veil of things, a mystic contemplation, a “sense of oneness with the infinite.” This, we are told, is what Keats intended by his famous “Beauty is truth.” And as a subsidiary doctrine, he held that the poet is *par excellence* the leader in this mode of apprehension, since it is primarily by imagination that this flight can be taken, and not by any orderly process of reason.

In all this, there is a good deal of talk about the soul, and even a half-hearted reference or two to the “all-soul” and the “eternal life-spirit,” which the poet (I am quoting Mr Thorpe, not Keats) captures for us, in a poem, by an act of “emotionalized intuitive perception”—stupendous and meaningless phrase. In the main, however, Mr Thorpe is content with a somewhat tedious and prolix canvassing of Keats's theories, critical and metaphysical; and it is left to Mr Murry to sound more emphatically, and more distress-

ingly, the clarion of pure mysticism. Mr Murry goes, in this regard, the whole hog. More confessedly than Mr Thorpe, he takes the revelationist view of art—art is for him a religion; it is our chief means of establishing a relationship with God; the poet is therefore a kind of priest; and Mr Murry wrings, ruthlessly wrings, from the letters of Keats a conscious and elaborate thesis of this kind, and endeavours to convince us that Keats moved to this thesis by a series of rapid and orderly stages. Keats, according to Mr Murry, identified himself, in some queer mystical fashion, with Shakespeare. Shakespeare was his presiding genius, Shakespeare gave him the clue to the doctrine (sketchily formulated in his letters) of detached and yet compassionate contemplation of the world, a sort of God's-eye-view, which was to be the ideal basis for a great poetry. Mr Murry makes far too much of this—he repeats himself *ad nauseam*, and it must be added that he has at times an extraordinarily offensive way of putting things. He has a shade too much the air of regarding himself as a sort of *vates*—he has the somewhat mawkish and narcissistic zeal of the missionary. He wants, a little too much, to be admired for his extraordinary acumen. It results from this that one pays him perhaps less attention than he deserves.

In this regard, however, both these books are failures: they renew one's heretical suspicion that in such a case as the present one (and indeed in most cases where a critical approach to an author is required) what one wants, and all one needs, is an essay, not a book. All that one can profitably say about Keats as a thinker can be said in a very few pages. To do more than that is to defeat one's aim. Certainly, it is desirable to say that Keats could think, and that he did think; but it is fundamentally impossible to make any system out of his thought, for it was entirely unsystematic, riddled with contradictions, and almost invariably presented in such metaphorical terms, or in such undefined abstractions, that interpretation is largely a matter of inspired guesswork. What right have we to assume that Keats meant "intuitions" by "sensations"? How can we be so sure that his idea of "beauty" was so wholly supersensuous? The truth is, he was as characteristically inconsistent and emotional in his thought as in his behaviour. It is clear enough that there were two strains in him—there was a romantic Keats, who was almost ridiculously idolatrous

of poetry and the poet, and there was also a Keats who was increasingly sceptical about this as about all things. There was a Keats who believed (momentarily) in the essential goodness and harmony of life, and another Keats who was just as profoundly a nay-sayer. It remains a curious fact—to which, I think, neither Mr Thorpe nor Mr Murry gives sufficient attention—that this scepticism emerges, *as concept*, practically not at all in Keats's poetry: he had not reached, before he died, a point at which he could compel his genius (or whatever) to express his whole mind, doubts and all. The doubts betray themselves in his work only indirectly—as a deep melancholy, a despairing feeling of the impermanence of the life of the senses, and a horror of death. The latent burden of despair almost invariably, even in his finest poems, outweighs the manifest burden of "acceptance": it is indeed arguable that it is precisely because of this internal conflict that the poems achieve their extraordinary beauty. Whether Keats would ever have solved this problem is doubtful. Might he have become a playwright? a critic? a philosopher? The question is metaphysical. At all events, there is much to be said for the view of Mr G. R. Elliott, in his *Real Tragedy of Keats*, quoted by Mr Thorpe, that this conflict had perhaps already ended Keats's career as a poet. He was beginning to be disillusioned, not only with the world, but with poetry.

CONRAD AIKEN

## THE ART OF REVELATION

THE GROVE EDITION OF JOHN GALSWORTHY. Beyond. Saint's Progress. The Dark Flower. The Freelands. The Island Pharisees. The Patrician. Fraternity. The Country House. 16mo. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$1.25 each volume.

THE collection of Mr Galsworthy's novels into a popular edition adds a touch of conclusiveness to the suggestion that we now have his settled vision of the world—a suggestion that arose first, perhaps, with the appearance in final form of *The Forsyte Saga*. For what was the subject of that full-flowing tale but the subject of all his earlier novels more richly meditated, more articulate, more round with entity, more alive? the subject, that is, of human relations seen as they are in the world of the British upper-class family, but set forth to produce a considerable sense of what they might be and ought to be? The reader is, indeed, continuously being visited, both in Mr Galsworthy's fiction and in his drama, by the sense of what ought to be. It might seem his principal reason for writing, the spring-head of the delicate, solicitous, and considered satire, which perhaps more than anything else, his art is. At all events the sense of what ought to be does not fail of presence in any tale of his, from *The Island Pharisees*, in which the feeling of discrepancy between what is and what ought to be forms a burden of something not unlike asperity, to *The Forsyte Saga*, in which the social criticism is somehow splendidly implicit in the creative substance of the novel. Such harmonies of criticism and depiction as obtain in the latter tale are no doubt not easy, and Mr Galsworthy seems not always to have achieved them, in spite of his apparent conviction that the most effective critical indictment is simply revelation.

At least one must suppose Mr Galsworthy to hold convictions as to the force of simple revelation, for it is to an art of gently satiric exhibition—exposure, as it were, with malice toward none—that he has seemed to bend his talents. And his talents are conspicuously adapted to the purpose, for while they are intellectual, they are so mobilely intellectual and so variedly practised that they

appear, in many of their manifestations, the talents of temperament. His intellectually artistic resources are very great, and he feels very cleverly—so cleverly that the impression is rather slow in arriving that he feels in considerable share with his mind. But it does arrive, for the occasional thinness of fictive effect in the general range of his work seems inexplicable on any other basis. Such a manner of feeling is, no doubt, well adapted to the aims of his art, for to feel with the mind cannot involve the artist beyond his intended design. The reader can scarcely observe Mr Galsworthy being moved beyond himself in any of his tales, though he has suggested that the writing of *The Country House* “ran away with him,” and in fact that novel does offer certain charming irrelevances of its own. His qualities and defects, perhaps, are the qualities and defects of extremely conscious art. Few novelists writing in English show more consistently than he that they know at all moments what they are about. One can be sure, doubtless, that he feels what he writes; but doubtless also, he knows it as much as he feels it. He is not creative, it would seem, out of such an emotionality as, for instance, possesses Thomas Hardy.

To say that the pages of Mr Galsworthy are beautiful deliberately, beautiful by the contrivances of a well cultivated, complete, and intellectually acute aesthetic sense is not, of course, to say that they are not sincerely felt pages, for sincere they evidently are, to their outmost and inmost. Sincerity and seriousness seem among the indubitable qualities of Mr Galsworthy's fiction. More than this, there is a gentleness in his satire, a qualified flagellation, even in the sharpest of his damnations of complacency, which might lead us to suppose it not quite satire, were there not ever evident the fact of its singleness about the business of exposing, exposing the blindness that caste and prejudice and self-sufficiency can bring about in character. His singleness to expose has led before now to the suggestion that he does not “see life whole.” It has led, too, to the charge of insignificance in the characters that populate his pages. Against these charges he defends himself, in his present prefaces, with great urbanity, moderation, and ability. But the fact still seems to remain that these beautiful situations, beautifully enclosed, and managed with perfect artistic economy, situations which no one knows better than he how to elaborate, are revelatory chiefly of what they are designed to reveal, that is, deficits of character and insight, rather than char-

acter in the round. "Take care of character," he has himself well said; but character is just what one cannot be very sure he has always really taken care of, by and large. Taking care of character is perhaps in the long run the only real business of the novelist. But how can the novelist take care of character when he so singly devotes his energies to devising and beautifully elaborating situations which will exhibit chiefly the caste blindness and weakness and complacency that are possible to character? It is only on such splendidly creative occasions as those of his famous old men that Mr Galsworthy transcends design, and gives us ripe and solid old beings, who walk upon legs, who are both less and more than the designed situation calls for, and upon whom no amount of "exposure" can work a real belittlement. It is not that there is any intrinsic defect of significance or reality in Mr Galsworthy's fictive *entourage*. It is that he does not regularly make as much of his persons as he evidently can, for is not Mr Soames Forsyte just such an Island Pharisee as Mr Galsworthy had been accustomed to picturing in his earlier books? And is not Mr Soames Forsyte a person of infinitely more real and tragic substance than any of those predecessor Pharisees? By and large one must feel Mr Galsworthy's imagination expended more in other directions than that of his characters.

Indeed a reader may very well wonder if Mr Galsworthy's stated vision of the world is not an example both of the force and the defect of the saying that art is a criticism of life. *His* art certainly is a criticism of life, and a very specific and sweeping one, well-taken, beautifully embodied, grave, sincere, and winning. But its excellence as criticism, together with its occasional failure to satisfy, suggests that we may be looking for something more in art, at least in the art of fiction, than a criticism of life. Perhaps we are looking for an imaginative creation of life itself. Must it not seem that the best of Mr Galsworthy's work as a novelist, in such books as the *Saga*, is that in which he overruns the beautiful business of revelation and sets willy-nilly about the creation of life?

CHARLES K. TRUEBLOOD

## ISRAFEL

ISRAFEL: The Life and Times of Edgar Allan Poe. By *Hervey Allen*. Two volumes. Illustrated. 8vo. 932 pages. George H. Doran Company. \$10.

ALMOST everybody who met Poe during his boyhood was impressed by his brilliance, his pride, his force of character. "No boy ever had a greater influence over me," one of his enemies confessed. "He was indeed a leader among his playmates." A schoolmaster described him as having "a great ambition to excel." In recommending him for West Point, Colonel Preston said, "I believe he is destined to be distinguished, since he has already gained reputation for taleants and attainments at the University of Virginia." And this military man was the first to speak of his "genius"—referring not so much to poetic genius as to genius in the abstract: that is, the ability to achieve any career, to prosecute any design, on which his mind was set.

Twenty years later, Poe was already an old man—a drunkard, thoroughly unreliable, sometimes demented, and usually eager to earn the small coin of applause by reciting *Ulalume* at literary teas. His brilliance had become theatricality; his force of character had disappeared. Only his intellectual pride remained, and this was being transformed into dreams of insane grandeur, into delusions of "a fearful conspiracy that threatened his destruction."

Inevitably we reflect on these two pictures, and decide that the contrast between them is too great to understand. We seek for the spiritual crisis which so sharply divided the last twenty years of his life from the first twenty years. We decide that invisible germs of decay must have existed in the young man of "taleants and attainments," and we try vainly to define their nature. This, in its simplest form, is the Poe mystery which has attracted so many biographers.

Most of them try to simplify the mystery, and to give a unilateral interpretation of their own. Heredity, a weak heart, a "mother fixation," opium, alcohol, sexual impotence, or general waywardness: each has been advanced, by one of his biographers, as the reason both for his literary achievements and the disintegration of



his character. In this process of simplification, truth is confused with a plausible formula; there is a strange disregard for the value of literature as such; and genius—not Poe's alone, but genius in general—is attacked by explaining it away. It is treated as a mental or physical disease. The biographer, and his readers, examine the greatest American poet with a stethoscope; they ask leading questions and apply intelligence tests; finally they raise their hands and say, "There, but for the grace of God . . ." It would not be difficult to psychoanalyse these psychoanalysts, and to define the simple motives of envy or mediocrity which determine their ideas.

These remarks apply to most of the recent Poe biographies; by contrast they show the virtue of Mr Allen's work. He admires Poe's verse for what it is, and refuses to be satisfied with "any brief, comfortably-clever, and convenient presentation of his character." Unfortunately, this virtue is largely negative, since the author wavers between the psychological attitude of Mr Krutch and the aesthetics of M Valéry, and seems generally uncertain of his own position.

His style is bespattered with errors—errors of punctuation and spelling, errors of usage, errors of case and number. The participles dangle; the infinitives are split; and the metaphors in most cases are purely verbal, and often they are mixed. He speaks of "this data," of comment "couched with an irony," of young democracy's "muling and pewking," and of a question which "precludes both the material for and the desire to discuss it"! The wish to write becomes a "lasting creative urge," and anything more than mildly interesting is "intriguing to the last degree."

This careless style and this uncertain judgement are especially deplorable in a work like *Israfel*, which will probably become the standard life of Poe. Reviewers have been quick to sing its praises; they have mentioned the grasp of character, and discussed the sense of tragedy which makes the work so powerful in spite of its faults. One need only add that the documentation, which has been criticized on some minor points, is generally to be admired. From the Ellis & Allan papers—a source hitherto unknown—Mr Allen has drawn the first clear and straightforward account of Poe's boyhood. From diaries, prints, and old magazines, he has reconstructed the Middle American scene; in most biographies of our author, this background has been neglected.

And, although he has failed to explain the Poe mystery, he has assembled all the facts which might some day aid in its solution.

There is another mystery which is hardly mentioned in Israfel. What are the reasons for our strange misapprehension of Poe's genius? Why do most of our critics disregard his work, or try to deny its importance? The answer, I suppose, is connected with the tremendous popularity of a few poems and stories, *The Raven* and *The Gold Bug* in particular. We have read them so often that we begin to resent them, and for this reason we tend to neglect the rest of his work. Many of us are unfamiliar with his earlier (and greater) poems; few have read *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*; and our knowledge of *Marginalia* and *The Rationale of Verse* is usually at second hand. *Eureka*, which he regarded as his surest claim on posterity—"I have no desire to live since I have done *Eureka*"—is almost totally forgotten. As a result, we fail to grasp the importance of his work as a whole.

And even his more popular stories have been affected, meanwhile, by a gradual change in the public taste. The nature of this change can best be explained by quoting from the announcement of a prize awarded, in 1833, to *The Ms. Found in a Bottle*. That story was distinguished, the judges said, "by a wild, vigorous, and poetical imagination, a rich style, a fertile invention, and a varied and curious learning." To win a prize in 1927, a story should possess none of these qualities; instead it must be "vivid, penetrating, true, profound in its psychology," and perhaps even "photographically exact." Imagination, learning, and invention being equally neglected, the writer is more and more reduced to a reduplicating machine.

And this popular idea of his function is supported by the many critics—some of them extremely able—who approach literature from a sociological angle. They are hunting for "significant" work—significant, that is, of something else than the author's talent for writing. Whitman was significant, since his poems were derived from strictly American sources, and can be used as a criticism of American life. Mr Sandburg is significant. But Poe . . . The critics read hastily, and are repelled by this spectacle of a "wild, vigorous, and poetical imagination" which feeds on itself, is derived, apparently, from nothing, and can be applied to nothing outside the world of letters.

And so, critics of all types—sociological, psychological, or merely popular—are equally unfriendly. Their attitude is so generally accepted that Mr Allen himself speaks with an air of apology: “Whatever may be the niche accorded to Edgar Allan Poe in the literature of English, and estimates vary, the great importance of his place in the field of American letters cannot be successfully denied.” But what of his place in French and German letters? Poe was a product of international romanticism and the precursor of a symbolism which is nearly as universal. Might it not be said that he passes the bounds of nationality?—that he belongs to the same great race which produced Byron and Coleridge, Chateaubriand, Baudelaire, and Hoffmann?

His writings impress us as the ruins of a vast unfinished monument. Thus, as we read, we try to restore the outlines of this structure which might have existed in space, had the times been more favourable, or had John Allan been less ungenerous to his ward. We decide that there would have been more poems, some of them greater, perhaps, than *The City in the Sea*. We imagine other romances like *Arthur Gordon Pym*. However, from the tendency of Poe’s later years, we come to believe that his most important work would have lain in the field of aesthetics and pure philosophy, and that, given the opportunity, he would have found answers to some of the great questions which have been troubling our minds since his day.

Even in its unfinished state, his work has helped to shape our own attitude toward the art of letters. When we try to find the origin of our problems—such problems as the relation between poetry and science, the nature of pure poetry, the attitude of the poet to his audience, the proper function of psychology in criticism—we follow a path which leads from country to country and from author to author; from M Valéry we proceed to Mallarmé, and from Mr Eliot to Laforgue; but always, at the end of a vista, we find the proud, the still mysterious figure of Edgar Allan Poe.

MALCOLM COWLEY

## BRIEFER MENTION

A **WREATH OF CLOUD**, Being the Third Part of the Tale of Genji, by Lady Murasaki, translated from the Japanese by Arthur Waley (8vo, 312 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$3.50). The fascination of the Japanese classic continues unabated into the third volume, which terminates abruptly and tantalizingly, in the middle of an episode. The charm of the novel is all the more astonishing as it weaves its slow length along, for it becomes apparent that the store of rich material at the amazing authoress's command is inexhaustible. Is there, its readers are now asking, a comparable novel of such length in any other language? It is not alone the vitality of the characters and the haunting beauty of the lives they lead, but there is such an awareness, in the book, of the fundamentals of psychology and aesthetics that the dismayed modernist is apt to conclude that later science has only embroidered upon these branches of knowledge.

By calling **THE RUIN** (12mo, 314 pages; Knopf: \$2.50) a "Gothic novel," the author, Edward Sackville West, somewhat disarms criticism. It is disproportioned, it runs into grotesque impossibilities, but after all, these are the characteristics of "Gothic" in the current interpretation of the word. It is a novel written not without benefit of Freud, but psychoanalytic terms do not crop up in the text, and it can be read without these implications. There are scenes, remarkably well handled, of considerable dramatic power and of delicacy. Those who found themselves unaccountably held and puzzled by Mary Butts' *Ashe of Rings* will repeat the experience, to a degree, in this book.

**SHOOT**, by Luigi Pirandello (12mo, 376 pages; Dutton: \$2.50) is admirably translated by C. K. Scott Moncrieff. In Walter Starkie's **LUIGI PIRANDELLO** (12mo, 276 pages; Dutton: \$3) which must be the authoritative work on the Italian analyst, we discover that the mechanization of mankind is one of the themes of *Shoot*. It is the diary of a movie camera-man who observes the actors and "despoils them of their reality" while they "insist upon torturing one another remorselessly." Dr Starkie says, further, that "there is a delightful untidiness about the Pirandellian novel," but with untidiness, as we find it in *War and Peace* there is a wind, a positive tempest, of life, which Pirandello lacks. Dr Starkie makes one believe, against all prejudice, that Pirandello is important; but he does not persuade one that Pirandello is intrinsically interesting. There is an illuminating passage relating the plays of Pirandello to the *commedia dell'arte*. It is quite true that the *commedia* split hairs (in the manner of Shakespeare's clowns who came out of it) but the *commedia* was instinctively right in accompanying the most delicate (or the most silly) lucubrations with a physical action. Pirandello makes his *commedia* all mental and lacks what the *commedia* always had, abundant vitality.

**BACKYARD**, by Gloria Goddard (12mo, 213 pages; McBride: \$2) is a veritable grasshopper of a novel in the way in which it jumps from one generation to another, and from one family to another, never remaining in one place long enough to "spit tobacco juice," in accordance with the youthful tradition. And it is murkily written. Sample paragraph: "Her silent sister gasped, eyeing the speaker with wide, shocked eyes. She turned away fidgetedly. She was two years the younger of the two. A disparity which had always made the older sister very discreet. A dull flush stained her cheek. She watched her sister from the corner of her eye." The most exciting element of the novel is its vocabulary, which includes such words as imperdibly, concinnous, cinerous, rufous, and lancinated.

**THE SUN IN SPLENDOUR**, by Thomas Burke (12mo, 329 pages; Doran: \$2.50) is as crowded as a second-class compartment in an Italian train; dialogue, incident, description, and climax have been set down in a manner so air-tight that one finds difficulty in breathing between the lines. This is not said to detract from its value as a rich and vivid picture of London life, however. Mr Burke has simply had so much material at his command that—released from the rigorous selective economy of the short story—he has neglected the wisdom of an occasional discard.

**RETURNING TO EMOTION**, by Maxwell Bodenheim (8vo, 69 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2). The poetry of Mr Bodenheim has an undeniable individuality, which at its best is charming. In the preface to his new book, he defends himself against the charge of "cerebralism," maintaining that "pure emotion in the medium of language does not exist outside of gibberish"; and intimates that in this recent work he returns to his earlier manner, in which "emotion" is allowed a little more play than in the preceding book or two. However that may be, one finds that in these poems Mr Bodenheim's "approach" is as self-conscious as ever: there is little or nothing in them of the undefinable quality we know as lyricism. The phrases, even when pleasing, have an air of having been very much calculated. Everything is conscious, everything is cool; the rhythms themselves are for the most part prose rhythms; colour and idea are applied with a hand that, whatever its varying dexterity may be, is never anything but controlled. One need not seek here for stormy or tragic irruptions from the unconscious, nor for sheer poetic exuberance. One does, nevertheless, find a distinct charm of fancy in this "conceited" free verse; and it is to Mr Bodenheim's credit that, even when unsuccessful, or pretentious, he is always himself.

**THE SELECTED POEMS OF ARTHUR DAVISON FICKE** (10mo, 241 pages; Doran: \$2). Mr Ficke's work readily lends itself to selection. At its best it undoubtedly achieves a high level; though any wide recognition of this has been retarded by the incapacity he himself has shown for rejecting what is commonplace. This admirable volume will do much to put this right. The same service has been done for him that Mr Hardy did for William Barnes, or that Matthew Arnold did for William Wordsworth.

**VERSES NEW AND OLD**, by John Galsworthy (12mo, 60 pages; Scribner: \$1.50). We feel such friendliness for Mr Galsworthy as we read these poems, for his modesty, his fine sense of honour, his love of country scenes, his philosophic temper of mind, that we hesitate, remembering the crude material of which life is made, to express what we really think. But recalling with a courage not to be out-distanced by Mr Galsworthy's own, that higher duty toward art, we force ourselves to admit that this eminent author's poetry lacks everything that the greatest poetry should have except integrity and gravity, and sometimes it lacks the latter.

**TRISTRAM**, by Edwin Arlington Robinson (12mo, 210 pages; Macmillan: \$1.75). In the loves and death of Tristram and Isolt Mr Robinson finds another narrative vehicle well adapted to the poetic conveyance of his irony and dignity, his concentrated insight, and his fine emotional force. But while there is here no lapse of dignity or irony or insight, the reader is apt to feel Tristram somewhat more drawn-out emotionally than the prior poems. It appears not to possess the continuous intensity of scene and line which one associates with Mr Robinson's earlier works. A reader may wonder if there has not been in this case a slight deficit of fire.

**TRANSLATIONS AND TOMFOOLERIES**, by Bernard Shaw (12mo, 276 pages; Brentano: \$2.25) is precisely named and is interesting chiefly for the long play, *Jitta's Atonement*, Siegfried Trebitsch's play which Shaw, reversing the order of things, translated for his own translator. In a brief preface Shaw makes no extravagant claims for this play, which is fortunate; and frankly tells us, in effect, that he has suggested a happy ending instead of the bitter one of the original. There is also the blank verse drama fashioned from Cashel Byron's *Profession*, which is very good fun. The rest of the playlets vary in quality, from an interesting tragedietta to "a disgrace to the author."

**POPE**, *The Leslie Stephen Lecture for 1925*, by Lytton Strachey (12mo, 36 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$1). Relish, be it outright, or of that inverse sort which Mr Strachey displayed in touching with the delicate sharp unction of his rhetoric the rigid earnestness of certain chosen Victorians—relish is an enrichment to the expression of any critical opinion. Possibly it is an outright relish which he now evidences in turning his consideration upon Pope, the great eighteenth-century master of malice. At all events it is not that Pope who wrote the *Rape of the Lock*; it is not the elegant translator of Homer, or the correspondent of Swift and Bolingbroke, who is set down before us here. It is the author of the *Dunciad*, the perfecter of the heroic couplet as an instrument of assault as well as of beauty; it is he who at the top of his paeans of abuse "seemed to be screaming"; "but let us not mistake," resumes the emollient voice of the critic. "It is only an appearance; actually Pope is not screaming at all; for these are strange impossible screams, unknown to the world of fact—screams endowed with immortality. He has turned his screams into poetry, with the enchantment of the heroic couplet." Yes; as an essay in relish this is surely Mr Strachey's customary masterpiece.

**THE ROAD TO XANADU**, by John Livingston Lowes (8vo, 639 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$6) is spoken of as a study in the psychology of genius, but it would be more accurately described as an essay in the anatomy of poetry. Professor Lowes disclaims psychological pretensions at the outset. And while his effort is in some sense to describe the modes of the imagination by studying the coalescence of such items of poetic impression composing *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* as he is able to disengage and trace to their sources in Coleridge's observation and reading, nevertheless both his approach and his result are more critical and appreciative than psychological. As a literary study of a specific case of the poetic process, *The Road to Xanadu* is a *tour de force*, subtle and distinguished, voluminous but engaging.

**WILD GOSLINGS**, by William Rose Benét (12mo, 356 pages; Doran: \$2.50). Even Mr Benét's most outrageous literary indecorums cannot rob us of our appreciation for his modesty, good spirits, and lack of affectation. These random essays, most of which have appeared in print before, are not, however, for the serious-minded or the literary aesthete. They are passing expressions on life and literature by an author whose more cultured and poetic utterances are to be found elsewhere.

**REVOLT IN THE DESERT**, by T. E. Lawrence (8vo, 335 pages; Doran: \$3). The astonished reader may well wonder if the items which throng this succinct tale of dynamited railways and night attacks on Turkish posts, of camels and airplanes and armoured cars in dead-hot Arabia, are really the doings of a bashful orientalist from Oxford. It may help, however, as we follow him in the excitements of the camel charge, or in the council tents with Arab *sherifs*, whom he helped to mould into a nation in arms, to recall (from the introduction) that the orientalist in question is descended from distinguished soldiers, one of them said to have been a crusader with Richard Coeur de Lion. One could make no difficulty in believing it on the basis of such super-soldierly adventures as are here recounted.

**TRUMPETS OF JUBILEE**, Henry Ward Beecher, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Lyman Beecher, Horace Greeley, P. T. Barnum, by Constance Mayfield Rourke (8vo, 445 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$5) deals with three members of the Beecher family and two other figures who attained popularity and captured the imaginations of nineteenth-century Americans: Greeley and Barnum. The opening chapters, on Lyman Beecher, connect the story with the days of Jonathan Edwards; the lives of Henry Ward Beecher and of the author of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* have as background the first half of the century; Greeley and Barnum bring the story down almost to our own time. Miss Rourke has written not biography, but social history; she has managed to give the sense of the life of the time, and also to acquaint us with the serious and with the trivial problems of the time. Except that the documentation is a little too great for cursory reading, the book has every charm, not least the charm of an interesting temperament observing outlandish and beguiling movements of the spirit in others.

**HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN**: *The True Story of My Life*, translated by Mary Howitt, with preface by Hanna Astrup Larsen (illus., 12mo, 318 pages; American Scandinavian Foundation: \$2.50). As originally written for the German edition of his works in 1846, this memoir is valuable as preserving to us the times and the aspect of many favourite persons—Goethe, Heine, the Brothers Grimm, Rachel, and others; as an account of travel “in which the most remarkable transition takes place from naked cliffs to grassy islands,” in which there are “wandering gipsies,” “wailing birds,” and “deep solitude,” with once “an Æolian harp made fast to the mast.” But chiefly it is rare as making us acquainted with one of those men—as he said of his benefactor, Collin—“who do more than they promise”; a bachelor, poor, “morbidly sensitive and good-natured to a fault,” who found that homage “scorched the roots of pride rather than nourished them”; whose being was, as he said of another, “penetrated with the great truths of religion, and the poetry which lies in the quiet circumstances of life.”

**BENJAMIN FRANKLIN**, *The First Civilized American*, by Phillips Russell (8vo, 323 pages; Brentano: \$5) is a three-hundred-twenty-three-page feature article, a narrative exhibit of the important and unimportant incidents of Franklin's existence, certain of them being “exclusive,” and piquant enough to assure continuance of Sunday morning perusal. Thus the description of Franklin and his doings is not neglected, though it is ordinary when not banal; but as for the historical intertexture of Franklin's life with the life of his time, or the depiction of his influence—these matters are unaccomplished except in the surface superlatives of the school history, or except accidentally, as they are brought out by the mere turn of events, as happens in the narrative of Franklin's residence in France.

**THE REBELLIOUS PURITAN**, *Portrait of Mr Hawthorne*, by Lloyd Morris (8vo, 362 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$4). In Nathaniel Hawthorne the author sees a Puritan who, seeking a fuller life in Europe, returns ultimately to die of an obscure spiritual blight in his native land. There are many delightful side-lights on the literary groups of the day in London and in Rome as well as in the rigorous, transcendental atmosphere of Brook Farm. Especially pleasing are those pictures of Hawthorne in Concord with Sophia, his cultured sprightly wife, where their only visitors were Emerson and Thoreau. If Mr Morris has profited by reading Van Wyck Brooks it is not to the detriment of his own integrity. He writes with detachment and insight and has spared no pains to make his work both scholarly and entertaining.

**THE GENIUS OF SHAKESPEARE**, by G. B. Harrison (16mo, 79 pages; Harpers: \$1) is an encouragingly immediate introduction to the more obvious of the authenticated facts of Shakespeare's life, stage-craft, and plays. It may or may not be a merit that the indebtedness, duly acknowledged by the author, to other of the numerous and various critics of Shakespeare is a considerable indebtedness. At all events the book well reflects the established positions of Shakespeare criticism, without wholly yielding its own point of view.



**THE BLACK DEATH**, *A Chronicle of the Plague*, compiled by Johannes Nohl from contemporary sources (illus., 8vo, 284 pages; Harpers: \$4). A comprehensive history of the plague, for centuries so fearful a menace to Europe, can hardly fail to arrest attention. The scourge originated, it is said in China, in 1333, out of a mist "that emitted a fearful stench." The documents collected by Johannes Nohl are knit together with sober commentaries from his own pen. It is not his fault if our imaginations flag at the reiterated recitals of the horrors of a pestilence we have been spared.

**A HISTORY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE**, by Max L. Margolis and Alexander Marx (8vo, 823 pages; Jewish Publication Society: \$3) is a remarkably well-organized study of a people whose very migrations make the background of its history exceptionally complicated. The method chosen is one of centres: Palestine, the eastern centre, the West-European, then Holland, Poland, Russia, and the rest, and finally the age of emancipation with its centres as far apart as America and Palestine again. The life of the Jew, moral, mental, and physical, is traced in relation to these centres, and the rise of Judaism apart from national implications is described up to the point where the Jew returned, at least in part, to his national home. Dr Margolis has recently spent a year as Professor of Hebrew in the new Hebrew University of Jerusalem and is whole-heartedly, one imagines, a Zionist. The history is not, however, partisan.

**SATURATED CIVILIZATION**, by Sigmund Mendelsohn (12mo, 180 pages; Macmillan: \$1.75) is a study, in higher economics, of the present world of civilization, in which it is maintained that the keys of the future are to be found, not in our great development of scientific and technologic materialism—that has already reached saturation—but in the social progress that has taken place, and a humanization of the masses in nearly all civilized countries, through the elevation of labour to political and economic dominance; an elevation greatly accelerated by the world war. The book suffers somewhat by the over-generalization entailed by its large subject and small compass, its considerations having somewhat the air of being only partially embodied; yet it is critical and thoughtful, and its conclusions are persuasive, if not wholly demonstrated or self-evident.

**WHY RELIGION**, by Horace M. Kallen (8vo, 316 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$3) exhibits an humanistic mobility of thought and scholarship which it certainly needs in surveying the large field implied by the double question that it sets out to answer—the question of what *rôle* religion has played in human nature and society in the past, and what *rôle* it may play in the future. The religious impulse, the author suggests, is a permanent fact of human nature, deriving its force in part from man's inherent tendency to devise himself spiritual help in times of uncertainty and calamity, and in part from his authentic if fluctuating experience of the supernatural. Religions, Dr Kallen accordingly thinks, will exist as long as men exist, but it is possible that the religions which survive in the future will be religions, like Socialism and Positivism, which are without specific gods and churches.

## COMMENT

**T**HE usefulness, companionableness, and gentleness of snakes is sometimes alluded to in print by scientists and by amateurs. Needless to say, we dissent from the serpent as deity; and enlightenment is preferable to superstition when plagues are to be combated—army-worms, locusts, a mouse army, tree or vegetable blights, diseases of cattle, earthquakes, fires, tornadoes, and floods. Destruction such as was experienced by us in western states and in Florida the past winter, from tornadoes and from the Mississippi in the spring, could not have been more portentously afflicting or more usefully admonitory had we believed ourselves to have been preyed upon by an aquatic serpent or by a wind god. A certain ritual of awe—animistic and animalistic—need not, however, be effaced from our literary consciousness. The serpent as a motive in art, as an idea, as beauty, is surely not beneath us, as we see it in the stone and the gold hamadryads of Egypt; in the turtle zoomorphs, feathered serpent columns, and coiled rattlesnakes of Yucatan; in the silver-white snakes, “chameleon lizards,” and stone dragons of Northern Siam. Guarding the temple of Cha-Heng in Nan, the hundred yard long pair of blue-green-yellow painted monsters<sup>1</sup>—with reared head and flowing, skin-like rise of body—are, one infers from Reginald le May’s description and partial photograph, majestic worms. Nor does the mythologic war between serpent and elephant seem disproportionate when one examines a stone dragon<sup>2</sup> which guards rice fields in Northern Siam from raiding herds of elephants. As Edward Topsall has said in his *Historie of Serpents*, “Among all the kinds of serpents there is none comparable to the Dragon,” and the fact of variants seemed to Aldrovanus, no detraction. “Dragons there are in Ethiopia ten fathoms long” and there are

<sup>1</sup> An Asian Arcady. By, and with a preface by, Reginald le May. Illustrated. 8vo. 274 pages. W. Heffer & Sons, Ltd., Cambridge. 21s.

<sup>2</sup> Photographed by Mr Ernest B. Shoedsack of the Paramount Famous Lasky Corporation Expedition to Northern Siam under the leadership of Mr Shoedsack and Major Merian C. Cooper. Reproduction in the photograph section of *The New York Times*, April 21st, 1927.

little ones. In an old letter to the public we read: "Thirtie miles from London, this present month of August, 1614"—and the news is attested by two men and by a Widow Woman dwelling near Faygate—there lives a serpent "or dragon as some call it," "reputed to be nine feet, or rather more, in length. It is likewise discovered to have large feet, but the eye may be there deceived" and "two great bunches" "as some think will in time grow to wings; but God, I hope, will defend the poor people in the neighborhood, that he shall be destroyed before he grow so fledged. Farewell. By A. R. He that would send better news, if he had it."

The death of our own two carnivorous dragons—brought last year from the Island of Komodo—was an evil of the opposite sort: punitive possibly; in any case a victory, making emphatic to us our irrelevance to such creatures as these, and compulsorily our mere right to snakes in stone and story.

**A**NTHONY TROLLOPE remarked in his Autobiography, "I do not think it probable that my name will remain among those who in the next century will be known as the writers of English prose fiction." The Oxford Press, however, sees fit to include various of his novels<sup>1</sup>—also the Autobiography—in its series of World's Classics; and by other publishers, as was brought to one's attention during the war, the complete novels were issued with a view to augmenting the number of valuable books available for those at the front. One had not looked upon Trollope's work in the light of an overture to battle; his novels bring within the reader's experience, nevertheless, a titanically courageous sense of justice and, as Mr Michael Sadleir has said, a period of English life in which it was as though society said to the individual, "you will help and not hinder; and you will help by denying to yourself the indulgences that no one withholds from you. Because such denial will be made of your own volition, you will yourself become the more free and as a servant of the community the more profitable."

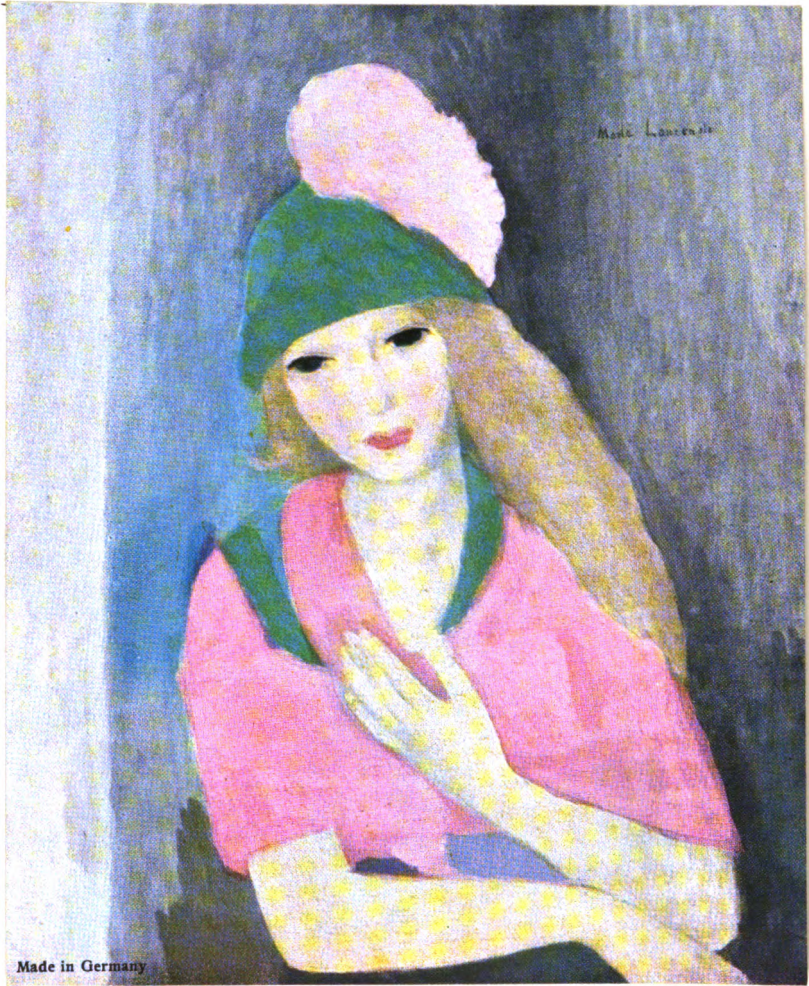
"I think," says Trollope, "the highest merit which a novel can have consists in perfect delineation of character." He invariably

<sup>1</sup> Framley Parsonage. Barchester Towers. *Et alii*. 18mo. The World's Classics, The Oxford University Press, American Branch. 80 cents.

secures to the tale which he tells—and conspicuously we see this in his outlines of prospective novels—that “central tie-beam” or “omnipresence of subject” to which Mr Saintsbury refers in his essay, *Some Great Biographies*. And also, looked at as characterization, the work though never about himself, is himself. A craftsman whose “spare-times were more than odd-times,” a man not grasping, but thrifty and generously helpful for thrift makes opportunity for generosity, Trollope is still able to give us something. Tolerant of frailty as Mr Sadleir points out, but aggressive toward the strong, “he learnt, when the limits of his tolerance were overstepped, to choose the moment for a blow and the best way of giving it.” Determined “neither to accept nor to solicit literary favour,” he has had to accept help now and again—and recently from Mr Sadleir, a most perfected kind of help. In *Anthony Trollope: A Commentary*<sup>1</sup> “experienced selecting,” “careful mixing” of evidence, and unegotistic emphasizing of others’ work compel thanks. Detail is impressive because properly subordinated as in the comment upon the brilliance of Trollope’s “black eyes, which, behind the strong lenses of his spectacles, shone . . . ‘with a certain genial fury of inspection’”; and his “family group”—especially the characterization of Mrs Trollope, the novelist’s mother—is real portraiture. Admiring the strength of the biography, one is troubled now and again by what seems an ungentleness of literary demeanour—a lesser thing to be sure—as not in character with Trollope, but it is perhaps not legitimate to suggest that biographers be literary chameleons; and Mr Sadleir is far from requiring that a subject be chameleon to his biographer. Ambitious that mid-Victorianism emerge as it was—as something quite other than “portentousness,” “rococo ornament,” and “dowdy morality”—he makes Trollope seem and permits him to let himself seem “the articulate perfection of its normal quality.”

<sup>1</sup> *Anthony Trollope: A Commentary*. By Michael Sadleir. Introduction by A. Edward Newton. Illustrated. 8vo. 432 pages. Houghton Mifflin Company. \$5.





YOUNG GIRL. BY MARIE LAURENCIN

# THE DIAL

SEPTEMBER 1927

## THINGS THAT HAVE MOULDED ME

BY BERTRAND RUSSELL

**T**O write about one's own works is no easy task. If I might be permitted an Irish bull, I should say that it would be much easier if I were dead. Until then, it is impossible to see oneself as a whole, or to distinguish between a phase and a permanent change. However, I will do what I can to narrate the causes which have made my present style of writing different from that of earlier years.

From the age of eleven, when I began the study of Euclid, I had a passionate interest in mathematics, combined with a belief that science must be the source of all human progress. Youthful ambition made me wish to be a benefactor of mankind, the more so as I lived in an atmosphere in which public spirit was taken for granted. I hoped to pass from mathematics to science, and lived a solitary life amid day-dreams such as may have inspired Galileo or Descartes in adolescence. But it turned out that, while not without aptitude for pure mathematics, I was completely destitute of the concrete kinds of skill which are necessary in science. Moreover, within mathematics it was the most abstract parts which I understood best: I had no difficulty with elliptic functions, but could never succeed in mastering optics. Science was therefore closed to me as a career.

At the same time, I found myself increasingly attracted to philosophy, not, as is often the case, by the hope of ethical or theological comfort, but by the wish to discover whether we possess anything that can be called knowledge. At the age of fifteen, I re-

**NOTE:** To Selected Papers of Bertrand Russell which will shortly be issued by The Modern Library, this essay will form the introduction.

corded in my diary that no fact seemed indubitable except consciousness. (Now, I no longer make this exception.) Mathematics, I thought, had a better chance of being true than anything else that passed as general knowledge. But when, at the age of eighteen, I read Mill's *Logic*, I was horrified by his credulity: the arguments which he advanced for believing in arithmetic and geometry were such as to confirm my doubts. I therefore decided that, before doing anything else, I would find out whether any grounds were ascertainable for regarding mathematics as true.

This task turned out to be considerable; it occupied me, with a few intervals, until the year 1910. In that year Dr Whitehead and I completed the MS of *Principia Mathematica*, which contained all that I could hope to contribute towards the solution of the problem which had begun to trouble me more than twenty years earlier. The main question remained, of course, unanswered; but incidentally we had been led to the invention of a new method in philosophy and a new branch of mathematics.

After the completion of *Principia Mathematica*, I felt that it was no longer necessary to concentrate so narrowly as hitherto upon one kind of work. I cannot remember an age when I was not interested in politics; I was taught English constitutional history almost before I could read. My first book, published in 1896, was a study of German Social Democracy. From 1907 onwards, I took an active part in the campaign for women's suffrage. In 1902 I wrote *The Free Man's Worship*, and two other essays (one on mathematics and one on history) expressing a similar outlook. But it is probable that I should have remained mainly academic and abstract but for the war. I had watched with growing anxiety the policies of all the European Great Powers in the years before 1914, and was quite unable to accept the superficial melodramatic explanations of the catastrophe which were promulgated by all the belligerent governments. The attitude of ordinary men and women during the first months amazed me, particularly the fact that they found a kind of pleasure in the excitement, as well as their readiness to believe all kinds of myths. It became obvious that I had lived in a fool's paradise. Human nature, even among those who had thought themselves civilized, had dark depths that I had not suspected. Civilization, which I had thought secure, showed itself capable of generating destructive forces which threatened a disaster comparable to the



fall of Rome. Everything that I had valued was jeopardized, and only an infinitesimal minority seemed to mind.

While the war lasted, abstract pursuits were impossible to me. As much as any soldier who enlisted, I felt the necessity of "doing my bit," but I could not feel that the victory of either side would solve any problem. During 1915, I wrote *Principles of Social Reconstruction* (or *Why Men Fight*, as it is called in America) in the hope that, as men grew weary of fighting, they would become interested in the problem of building a pacific society. It was obvious that this would require changes in the impulses and unconscious desires of ordinary human beings; but modern psychology shows that such changes can be brought about without great difficulty. It was obvious also that nothing could be achieved by writings addressed exclusively to specialists. Thus throughout the years of the war I was endeavouring, however unsuccessfully, to write so as to be read by the general public. When the war was over, I found it impossible to return to a purely academic life, although the opportunity was open to me. The problems which interest me are no longer those with which I was concerned before 1914, and I find it impossible now to shut the world out of my thoughts when I enter my study. I do not pretend that this is an improvement; I merely record it as a fact.

The effect which the war had upon me was intensified by travels after the war was over. Western Europe and America were familiar to me, but I had never come across any non-occidental culture. In 1920 I spent five weeks in Soviet Russia; I had interviews with many leading Bolsheviks, including an hour's conversation with Lenin; I stayed in Leningrad and Moscow, and travelled down the Volga from Nijni-Novgorod to Astrakhan, visiting all the towns and many of the villages on the way. The Bolshevik philosophy appeared to me profoundly unsatisfactory, not because of its communism, but because of the elements which it shares with the philosophy of Western financial magnates. While the problems raised by the spectacle of Russia were still unsolved in my mind, I went to China, where I spent nearly a year. In that country I found a way of life less energetically destructive than that of the West, and possessing a beauty which the West can only extirpate. There appeared no hope that the traditional merits of non-industrial civilizations could survive; the problem was to combine industrial-

ism with a humane way of life, more especially with art and with individual liberty. No Western nation has yet begun to solve this problem; but one may hope that it will be solved first in those countries which have assimilated industrialism most completely, since it can only be solved by a community which uses machines without being enthusiastic about them.

Everything in which the modern world differs from that of the Renaissance, whether for good or evil, is traceable ultimately to the influence of science. The scientific nations are the strongest in war, in commerce, and in prestige. Nothing that goes against science has any chance of lasting success in the modern world. Consequently certain things which we inherit from the Middle Ages are rapidly disappearing. Religion has already been profoundly modified by its reluctant concessions to science, and will doubtless be modified still further. The hereditary principle is rapidly disappearing in politics and will probably disappear in economics. The ideal of contemplation, which the monks took over from the neo-platonists, and modern men of learning from the monks, is being hustled and hustled out of existence by those who urge that everything should be "dynamic." In Asia, the revolutionary effect of science, and its offspring industrialism, is beginning to be even more pronounced than in Europe; for in Europe science grew spontaneously out of the Renaissance, whereas in Asia there was nothing indigenous to prepare the way for it. Throughout the world, therefore, science and industrialism must be accepted as irresistible, and our hopes for mankind must all be within this framework.

At the same time, when I examine my own conception of human excellence, I find that, doubtless owing to early environment, it contains many elements which have hitherto been associated with aristocracy, such as fearlessness, independence of judgement, emancipation from the herd, and leisurely culture. Is it possible to preserve these qualities, and even make them widespread, in an industrial community? And is it possible to dissociate them from the typical aristocratic vices: limitation of sympathy, haughtiness, and cruelty to those outside a charmed circle? These bad qualities could not exist in a community in which the aristocratic virtues were universal. But that could only be achieved through economic security and leisure, which are the two sources of what is good in aristocracies. It has at last become technically possible, through the progress of machinery and the consequent increased

productivity of labour, to create a society in which every man and woman has economic security and sufficient leisure—for complete leisure is neither necessary nor desirable. But although the technical possibility exists, there are formidable political and psychological obstacles. It would be necessary to the creation of such a society to secure three conditions: first, a more even distribution of the produce of labour; second, security against large-scale wars; and third, a population which is stationary or very nearly so. Until these conditions are secured, industrialism will continue to be used feverishly, to increase the wealth of the richest individuals, the territory of the greatest empires, and the population of the most populous nations, no one of which is of the slightest benefit to mankind. These three considerations have inspired what I have written and said on political and social questions since the outbreak of the war, and more particularly since my visits to Russia and China.

At bottom, the obstacles to a better utilization of our new power over nature are all psychological, for the political obstacles have psychological sources. It is evident that, in a world where there was leisure and economic security for all, the happiness of all would be greater than that of ninety-nine per cent of the present inhabitants of the planet. Why, then, do the ninety-nine per cent not combine to overcome the resistance of the privileged one per cent? Partly from inertia; partly because they can be swayed by appeals to hatred, fear, and envy. Instead of combining to produce collective happiness, men compete to produce collective misery. Since this competition among subject populations is useful to the holders of power, they encourage it, under the name of "patriotism," in the schools and the press. Consequently the worst elements in human nature are artificially strengthened, and everything possible is done to prevent the realization that co-operation, not competition, is the road to happiness.

A radical reform of education is, therefore, an essential preliminary to the creation of a better world. Without this preliminary, a happy world, if it could be created, would speedily make itself miserable, because each nation would find the happiness of other nations intolerable. In schools for the sons of the well-to-do, there is a practical compulsion to acquire military training, while everything possible is done to secure an artificial ignorance on matters of sex. That is to say, everything concerned with the creation of life is thought to be abominable, while everything concerned

with taking life is exalted as noble. This is the morality of suicide. It springs from the fact that we attach value to power, rather than to fulness of life: we think a man a fine fellow when he can cause others to be miserable rather than when he can achieve happiness for himself. All that is needed is to give men a just conception of what constitutes their own happiness. Traditional moralists have made a mistake in preaching self-sacrifice, for several reasons. In the first place, very few men will follow such preaching. In the second place, it leads to hypocrisy and self-deception: persuade yourself that you desire A, when in fact you desire B, and you will think you are practising self-sacrifice in renouncing A. In the third place, the few who do genuinely make sacrifices become self-righteous and envious, and feel that those who will not sacrifice voluntarily deserve to be forced into unhappiness. Morality, therefore, should not be based upon self-sacrifice, but upon correct psychology. There is less pleasure to be derived from keeping a beggar hungry than from filling your own stomach. This may not sound a very exalted maxim, but if it were acted upon war and oppression would cease throughout the world; for war and oppression, as a rule, diminish the happiness of victors and oppressors, not only of the vanquished and oppressed. Generally they do so by actual impoverishment; but in any case they produce the fear of revenge.

But although a rational pursuit of personal happiness, if it were common, would suffice to regenerate the world, it is not probable that so reasonable a motive will alone prove sufficiently powerful. Emotions of expansive affection, generosity, and pleasure in creation also have their part to play. There is no one key: politics, economics, psychology, education, all act and react, and no one of them can make any great or stable advance without the help of the others. Narrow specialization, therefore, cannot produce a philosophy which shall be of service to our age. It is necessary to embrace all life and all science—Europe, Asia, and America, physics, biology, and psychology. The task is almost superhuman. All that I can hope to do is to make some men conscious of the problem, and of the kind of directions in which solutions are to be sought.

# MAN

BY MARK VAN DOREN

Brown as the glade he moves in—  
Entering out of the sun, the slayer of eyes—  
He walks; and the blind shadows,  
Hearing his soundless feet, awake and arise,

Bending with him and parting  
The pale hair of ferns, pretending to see;  
But while he looks they leave him,  
Becoming the portion of earth himself would be.

He still can forget his fingers,  
Softly he says—and a toad is there on the moss.  
He stoops; and the greyling stays,  
Panting, with only half of the rock to cross.

Patiently settling earthward,  
One of his hands, unfolded, touches stone—  
Rests, and cannot remember  
If arms are there or if it is leaf, alone.

Cold are the rock and the lichen,  
Cold are the quieted eyes, and the palm, and the wrist.  
Around is a thick stillness. . . .  
Save for his suddenly hearing, out of mist,

Waves of an old awareness:  
Blood in his hand come back, and bone returning.  
Wisdom is underground—  
So to the sun again, and the fever of learning.

## TWO STORIES

BY MAXIM GORKI

*Translated From the Russian by Marie Budberg*

### THE GUIDE

**W**E were beginning to get tired, Dr Polkanoff and I, tramping for two days upon the hot sands along the banks of the lazy Oka, past the unflourishing riazan fields, under the sun of the last days of May; rather too strenuous that year, it threatened with drought. We had already elucidated yesterday all the most intricate problems of civilization and culture, establishing that man's inquisitive reason will disentangle all the knots and loops of the social imbroglio, solve all the riddles of life, and freeing mankind from the chaos of misery, from the dark abyss of doubts, make it godlike.

But, after we had emptied the wallets of our knowledge, scattering our wisdom in front of each other in the flowers of words that we exchanged on the way, our journey became more irksome and tedious. At noon we came across a shepherd, a small, dry little man with coarse reddish hairs growing on the bones of his face. He had chased his herd to the river and advised us:

"Why don't you pass through the woods; it's cooler that way; the forest is an ancient one, called the Murom forest. If you cross it aslant it will bring you straight out to Murom."

The wood rose in an impenetrable, bluish wall some three versts away from the river. Thanking the shepherd, we followed a small landmark, leading across a field of rye; the shepherd, clicking his whip, cried out to us:

"Look out you don't get lost in the wood. Better go to the village and fetch old Peter; he'll show you the way for a few pennies."

We went to the village consisting of some fifteen houses pressing close to each other on the slope of the valley, over a toy river that

hurriedly, almost fearfully, flowed out from the forest. Dignified, grey-bearded Peter, with a cheerless expression in his grey eyes, was mending a barrel, fixing a new bottom to it; he listened in silence to our offer, whereas the stout peasant who smoked his pipe as he watched him working, said to us:

“He’ll take you there all right. He’s the very best guide we have in the District; knows the forest as well as his own beard.”

Peter’s beard was not very long, not thick and his whole appearance neat, unlike a peasant’s, very steady and quiet. A fine, soft, and humble face.

“We-ll?” he uttered, pushing the barrel aside with his long foot, in a bast shoe. “All right. I’m game. With God’s help, let’s go. What will you give me? Fifty copecks?”

The stout peasant seemed exceedingly pleased about something and began talking with animation.

“Fifty copecks is a small sum. Take me, for instance, I would not go for that price. And this is a knowing man. He’ll get you right to Murom by night. You’ll take the foot-path?”

“The foot-path,” Peter said with a sigh.

We started. Peter, tall and straight, a long crook in his hand, walked in front and never uttered a word—as though he were absent altogether. He answered the doctor’s questions without turning round, shortly and quietly.

“Not so bad. We’re used to it. What shall I say? Rather a drudge, of course.”

When he said: “Even an ant gets used to life,” Dr Polkanoff almost clapped his hands in admiration; he remembered Wood, Lubbock, Brehm, and spoke for a long time with appreciation of the mysterious life of ants, of the unobtrusive wisdom of the Russian people and the eloquent precision of their language.

Entering the forest, Peter tore off his cap, made the sign of the cross, and announced to us:

“Here it begins, the forest.”

At first we followed the road. Running between the trunks of sturdy fir-trees, their roots intersecting the deep sand, trampled by many cart-wheels, it lay in ingenious curves, that looked like grey, dead serpents. After half a mile’s walk, our guide stopped, glanced at the sky, struck his stick against a tree, and, always in silence,

sharply swerved on to a path almost indiscernible under the needles and leading among dwarf pine-growths; dry fir-cones crackled under the feet, breaking the solemn silence—the latter was very much like the impressive calm of an ancient church in which no one has officiated for a long time, but the air of which is still pungent with the smell of incense and wax. In the greenish dusk, here and there pierced by sharp sun-rays, the bronze pillars of the fir-trees, covered with the greenish acid of lichen and lumps of grey moss, seemed arrayed in golden ribbons. Between their shaggy paws the velvet of the sky glimmered in blue designs.

Later on, when we had penetrated deeper inside the forest, it appeared to me that the latter suddenly awoke to life in a marvelous way. Instead of the nightingale, whistled the thrushes; numerous purple cross-bills laboriously peeled the pine-cones with their hooked noses, the elusive linnet hurried along the tree-trunks like a grey mouse, the woodpecker measuredly pecked the bark, the anxious titmouses chirruped, the fawn-coloured squirrels soared in the air from one tree-top to the other, their tails outspread.

And in spite of all that, everything was so still that even Dr Polkanoff realized: in a silence like that the cleverest words would have been out of place.

“A hare,” said our guide and sighed.

I had not noticed it. The path, if there was such a thing, surprised me by its whimsical nature. Sometimes there, where it should have run straight it drew a circular line round a separate group of trees; on the other hand, there, where the trees lay in front of it in a compact wall with shrubs of blackberries growing at their roots, it precipitated itself at them with an uprightness that seemed superfluous to me and, invisible, plunged into the jungle.

“We’re coming to the ravine,” Peter warned us in a low voice.

Two miles further on I asked him:

“And the ravine, where is it?”

“Must have passed us sideways,” said the old man and glancing up at the sky, he added:

“It’s that hare.”

Dr Polkanoff informed himself:

“Have we gone astray?”

“Why should we?” asked the guide.



But when dusk began to fall and we felt sufficiently weary, it became obvious to us that we had gone astray. The doctor suggested it again politely to the old man and received a peremptory answer:

"Why, I've done this bit of road before forty times at least. Another mile's time and we'll get to the opening, come out on to the waste-ground, pass it sideways, and get back into the forest. From there Murom is already seen to the eye."

He quietly went on measuring off the *sajens* with his crook as he spoke and walked on without stopping, retreating before obstacles unseen to me and not paying much heed to the ones "seen to the eye." The "mile's time" which he had appointed to us, stretched out to an hour's walk, the opening and the waste-ground had obviously also "passed us sideways," undesirous to be seen by us. At last we came out on to a small meadow, a silvery moon hung above it, lighting up a heap of carbonized logs and among these the black, broken chimney of a demolished stove; it all resembled the meticulous and zealous work of an unskilled landscape-painter.

"I have been here before," the guide declared to us, looking round. "It is a watchman's hut; a forest-guard used to live here. A great drunkard."

The doctor said firmly and not too cheerfully:

"We have lost our way."

"Looks a bit like it," the old man half acquiesced, cautiously taking off his cap and looking at the moon. "It's the hare that crossed our path," he complained. "We turned too sharply to the left. It's difficult to find one's way by day—at night the star shows you where you've got to go—but by day the sky is empty."

And poking the log under his feet with his stick he added with a sigh:

"Upon a bald head, even a louse doesn't thrive."

This peculiar supplement seemed unnecessary to me. We decided to rest and eat something, and settled ourselves upon the logs polished by many showers. The provident doctor pulled some bread, some sausage and eggs out of his wallet, unscrewed a glass from his thermos-flask, trimmed in leather, poured some brandy into it, and offered it:

"To our guide."

The old man with a sign of the cross to the moon, drank it down, saying with amazement:

“A strong drink! Is it infused with incense, or what?”

Then for a long time he went on chewing sausage, eating eggs and after the third glass told us:

“I will not hide from you, my kind gentlemen, that we’ve gone astray and I cannot for the life of me make out which road we should now follow. You see for yourselves what a dreary forest, pines and again pines and no difference between them at all. I’ll tell you straight. I don’t care for this forest. And as to the fame that I’m the best expert upon it—that’s a silly joke that shameless people have spread out of sheer devilry. False accusation, I should call it, and ’twas a monkey that started it all. You see, there once lived a widowed woman from Moscow down here, by Elatma. She lived with her monkey, and this cursed little animal ran away from her. See for yourselves; a beast of the forest catching sight of trees naturally said to itself: ‘Good gracious, they’ve brought me back to Austria, have they?’ and dashed out of the window into the woods, leaving the woman to weep and lament the loss of the beast, promising ten roubles to whoever would find it. This was all a long time ago, some thirty years back. At that time ten roubles meant a cow, not only a mere monkey. I, among others, offered to catch it, and for four days wandered about hunting for the wretch. I was stubborn and my poverty, too, stimulated me. I must have wandered round more than one hundred versts in this forest at the time. That bitch of a monkey I soon caught sight of and kept following her and calling ‘Ks! ks! ks! Come on, Mary!’ But she had a temper of her own, dashed from one tree to the other, made faces at me, teased me, and squeaked like a gosling. The birds, too, seemed to excite the mean creature; she chased them about, but of course in vain, for how should a monkey catch a Russian bird? Notwithstanding all my stubbornness I got rather sick of it and hungry too, for there’s no good in feeding upon berries, and I had pursued her for a whole day, a whole night—no joke, that! I prayed: ‘Dear God—send death upon her.’ Well, at last, she, too, seemed to grow weary. I caught the filthy thing unawares sitting on a low branch and hurled a stick at her; she dropped down, crawled upon the ground a while—but I was afraid to take her up in my arms and threw another stick at her; she just ‘miawled,’

and it was all up with her. 'Well,' I said to myself, 'curse it, nothing left for me but carry it away.' Nothing came of the business with her mistress—she gave me seven pennies instead of ten roubles—"I don't need her dead body," she said. And then began the torture of my life. If the church is plundered, straight to me they come, grabbing me by the scruff of the neck: "Petrukha, go ahead and look for the robbers, you know the woods." A runaway appears in the neighbourhood, or a horse-thief; again I'm sent out to look for 'em. If people come here a-hunting, I've got to accompany them. And so, summer and winter, I'm doomed to roam about. Yes. And my own house and land remain neglected. The police inspector, the policemen, all call me to witness. "Why, you know the forest, you fool!" It's gone so far that I, myself, have submitted to the delusion and believe that I know it. I start out bravely, but as soon as I get inside, I see: "No, I know nothing of it." But I couldn't admit it to the others. I'd be too ashamed. There's no counting the people I've brought here. There came once a learned man from Moscow. I was told to show him about. To me this man appeared to be like the monkey, although he was a grave man with a beard. He wandered and wandered about and there was no finding out what it was he wanted. He sniffed at the grass and muttered to himself. After a good deal of trouble I brought him to the village of Karacharovo where Ilja Murometz was born; but we rambled for at least three days and three nights. He swore at me. As for me, beg your pardon, I had a longing to bang him on the head with my stick, so fed up with him had I become. No, no, I am not fond of this forest; great miseries grow in it for me."

Looking with unfriendliness at the black circle of trees, inside which we sat as at the bottom of an abyss, our guide added this to his anecdotal tale:

"Besides, I am short-sighted from my birth. Afar—I can see all right, but everything is covered with a mist when I look close at it. Shame pushes me to put all the blame on the hares, saying that it's them who lead me astray."

A little the worse for drink, he smiled serenely at us with his grey eyes and peeling an egg, shook his head, saying:

"I plead guilty before the hares."

## THE ENBLEMA

An autumn wind strips the barren bushes. The twigs, although to all appearance brittle, covered as they are with a rusty dust which gives them an iron-like aspect, bend silently, not with the rattling sound one might expect as they clash against each other. A leaden fog has shrouded everything around the small station of the steppe. By the side of the almost indiscernible water-pump an engine hisses and sighs. The wheel-guards jangle under the strokes of the hammer; every sound is deadened by the autumnal gloom. The flat hand of the semaphore hangs ghost-like above my head. A drenched, scraggy goat, very much like a phantom, too, stands half-concealed in the bushes and wearily watches five railway officials who are trying to push a long, heavy case through the door of the luggage van.

A little, old man in an oilskin coat directs the loading. Under the warm hood his round face with long whiskers trembles, pink from the frost; the whiskers and the hawk nose of the old man remind one of the picture of an Ukrainian hetman.

“What is it you are loading?”

“The Enblema.”

Politely raising his small, childish hand to the hood, the old man answers sonorously—not after the usual way of the old—and merrily, not after the usual way in autumn.

“The Enblema,” he explains, “is a statue of marble, of Italian origin; it represents the idol of rectitude—a woman with a sword in her hand; the other hand—she used to hold a pair of scales in it—has been shot away by mistake. In ancient time the Romans considered this woman to be a goddess, named Enblema.”

The word obviously appeals to the little man; he repeats it with relish, with enjoyment.

Having loaded the case, awaiting the passenger-train, he sits in the grim waiting-room of the station and smoking a German ceramic pipe, courteously converses.

“The grandfathers of the present owners brought it from abroad and it stood in the middle of the flower-bed before the house for no less than a hundred years, maybe. It is a very beautiful piece of work, of the best possible material, so beautiful that for the winter one used to wrap it up in felt and put it inside a wooden case. So

it would have stood for no end of time if it had not been for Mr Bashkiroff—have you heard the name before? The celebrated factory merchant? Yes, indeed! The same one. Four years ago, for the peace of his soul and on account of his old age, he bought the estate from my masters and got it into his head that Enblema was threatening him. 'Tis true that there was something at the back of his idea, for the statue is the work of a great artist and in moon-lit nights acquired an animated aspect, one might almost say it moved in the air, in spite of being a mere stone. Besides, the foundation under it had sunk from its own weight and inclined it a bit forward so that it seemed as though it were going to jump down from its height.

“Mr Bashkiroff instantly took a dislike to it, and began to complain, ‘I get insomnia from it,’ he said. ‘Whenever I glance out of the window at night, behold, in the air over there is that hospital nurse, or the deuce alone knows who she is, staring at me. And just what do these scales in her hand mean? Was she a saleswoman, or what?’

“Mr Bashkiroff was, in spite of his richness, a poorly educated man and even, I should say, a savage in a way. I explained to him, of course, that it was a Roman idol of justice. Later on he got more information from the priest and from somebody in town, concerning its designation, but after that he began to hate Enblema still more violently and even threatened her with his cane—going to the park for a stroll he would go up to her and shake his cane at her. And one day he imagined that she was crawling into his window. It was then that he fired his revolver at her, shot off her arm, and disfigured the stomach.

“Then he said to me: ‘’Tis in the cemetery that this fool of a woman should be, Pokrovsky, not here.’ He had a good deal of consideration for me and was fond of listening to the story of my life. You see, although I am the son of a church deacon I did not get infected with the ambition to follow an ecclesiastical career and became a teacher, but soon discovered that it was not the right job for my soul. To train children one must have a natural tendency for the task and the necessary sternness, whereas my nature proved to be too soft and I was of no use as a tamer of childish dispositions. I don’t care for childish pranks—they are meaningless. When a grown-up person behaves giddily there is always a

meaning to it, whereas children—that's why I have lived my life as a bachelor. Yes, to return to Mr Bashkiroff, he had from nature a bee in his bonnet. I did not care much for him. He might well have been a respected person—but of dark character and, as one is wont to say, with a legend about him."

Carefully cleaning out the ashes from his pipe with a spoon, the old man explained:

"A legend, of course, is not always truth, but nevertheless it is kindred to it. It was rumoured that Mr Bashkiroff had had affairs of violent character with women, until justice interfered. Altogether—not a clean-minded man and suspicious of soul. He drank, of course—to the detriment of his health.

"I did not get along with him. I have been a gardener for twenty-three years, a horticulturist; my tastes are different. Although he was fond of flowers, I must admit. He admired them from afar; would stand looking at them and chewing at his beard—his was a luxurious beard. After having had a look at the flowers he would shake his cane at Enblema and direct his steps to the summer-house where some lemonade and brandy would be waiting for him. Yes, he was fond of flowers. 'Grow more of the blue ones, Pokrovsky,' he would say to me. He offered to augment my salary, but at the same time contradicted himself: 'What do you need the money for—you are a lonely man. I, too, am a lonely man. Money, Pokrovsky, does not help in a case like that—you won't buy a friend for a penny.'"

A bell rang out the signal for the passenger-train.

"Did he die?"

"He did. A sudden death. He would not undergo any treatment; just went on drinking brandy with his doctor."

"Where are you sending the statue?"

Getting something from the pocket of his trousers, Pokrovsky answered:

"To the mad-house."

And apparently noting my amazement, kindly explained:

"Mr Bashkiroff presented it as a gift to the doctor for the amusement of the patients. The doctor wants to put up that Enblema in the park—there is a fine park around the asylum."

With the swinging, ponderous gait of a peacock, Gardener

Pokrovsky walked off to the ticket-office, politely throwing to me:  
"Fare you well."

## POSTSCRIPT

The longer I live the more do human beings appear to me fascinating and full of interest.

It is sad that I will not have enough time left at my disposal to write a book which would contain a detailed description of the lives of ten thousand Russians. I am convinced that a book like that would be of far greater importance than the *Anabasis*, for my ten thousand would retreat in two directions at the least: the smaller part—from everything that is suggested to a man by his physical nature; the rest—from everything that is prompted to him by the logic of the history of culture, composed by the first part.

Ten thousand sharply outlined personalities and each striving to be an impediment in one way or other to as great a number as possible of the fellow-creatures that surround it. In this task they reveal characteristic prodigies of dexterity and meanness, slyness and fanaticism, and even passion.

Every man has his own manner of speech—his own habitual expressions; everyone is endowed with this or that amount of conceit—which makes everyone foolish in his own way; everyone has chiselled for himself with great art a small reason, at times a deadly sharp one, to protect him from the great zoological stupidity which belongs to him; everyone is gifted in one manner or another.

I have always been convinced that all people are gifted, Russians particularly so. Yes, yes—Russians particularly so and maybe this conceals the reason of their inability to live.

In an endless file dozens, hundreds of men, queer up to being anecdotal, rise before me, people that I have met on my sinuous path to oblivion, oblivion of them and of myself.

Foolish and clever, mean and almost saintly, diversely unhappy—they are all dear to my heart; it seems to me that I do not properly understand them and my soul is filled with an inextinguishable interest in them. Many of them whom I knew are dead, I am afraid that except me there is no one who will tell their story as I

would like to do and dare not; it will seem as though such men had never existed on earth at all.

And I cannot do it any more, ten thousand men like these are not easy to invent. It needs a thousand years of fantastically uncharitable history; and personally for me—another fifty years of life.

When I said “invent,” it was not a slip of the tongue, for all these people are indeed invented and not wholly so by me. We all, after all, invent one another. No, they have invented themselves in order to make their lives more interesting, even if more complicated and irksome.

I firmly believe that the ambition of all people as a rule is that there should not exist a single man of whom it would be utterly impossible to say something of some importance or other—something amusing, denigrating, if necessary! It is probably on that account that people so eagerly and willingly calumniate and slander each other.

The people I am most fond of are those who are not quite achieved; who are not very wise, a little mad, “possessed.” “The people of a sound mind” have little interest for me. The achieved man, the one perfect like an umbrella, does not appeal to me. I am called and doomed, you see, to describe—and what could I say of an umbrella but that it is of no worth on a sunny day?

A man, slightly possessed, is not only more agreeable to me; he is altogether more plausible, more in harmony with the general tune of life, a phenomenon unfathomed yet, and fantastic, which makes it at the same time so confoundedly interesting.



# LEANDER

BY MALCOLM COWLEY

*Un noyé pensif parfois descend.*

Arthur Rimbaud

Between the waves, out of the sight of land  
at night toward an unseen beacon swimming  
the sea flung her arms about his arms  
in foam, mingled her hair with his  
and clung against his breast  
against his lips the salt pulse of the sea

—Leander, I will show you all my treasures  
caverns of pearl, Leander, constellations  
of incandescent fish. Leviathan  
my servant shall attend you, and my sharks  
surround you in the armies of their splendour  
and octopi shall build a wall of arms  
surrender O surrender to the sea

The waves that lapped his shoulders cried: surrender  
and dead men's bones a thousand fathoms under  
called in their sterner voices: O Leander  
surrender

He lingered to the rhythm of the waves  
a last time felt the rain against his cheek  
then slowly filled his lungs with water, sank  
through immense halls of darkness, infinite  
chambers of dream, a white thing that drifts  
with the current southward, a cold body  
whittled by the waves

And Hero  
waiting in her desolate chamber, Hero  
be comforted

## LEANDER

For they have taken the dead whose flesh you loved  
and dressed him in the plunder of the sea  
his hair is wreathed with algae, his eyes gleam  
luminous with jellyfishes, coral  
blooms on his thigh, his arms are braceleted  
with pearl, and marks of kisses on his breast

Regal and tired O corpse that mapped the countries  
of Ocean, saw pelagic meadow where  
the sea-cow grazes, traveller who skirts  
the unicellular gardens of the foam

Southward you drift where archipelagoes  
of stars deflect the current, and waters boil  
with lava, through indefinite Marquesas  
spinning in the typhoon, and off Cape Stiff  
in easterly gales your eyes commemorate  
still tropical the wax and wane of moons  
time is a secret frozen in your smile



PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST. BY CLEMENT WILENCHICK





PORTRAIT OF TESS. BY CLEMENT WILENCHICK



# REALITY

BY LEO STEIN

**K**NOWLEDGE can make more knowledge, and it can make man equal in effectiveness to the extent of the potentialities of the knowledge, but it can make him great only in that respect. It does not give him new faculties, but only higher potencies of the old. The antinomies remain incomprehensible, for they arise in practice which is saltatory, which permits as much skipping from one thing to another as is consistent with *practicable* continuity. But science and aesthetics are not satisfied with this loose sort of continuity. Each wants its kind of continuity as perfect as possible, and every breach is a defect. Science must assimilate discovery, the introduction of novelties, as well as it can. Aesthetics has to put up with the fact that it must use materials to get its unities. Each type of knowledge converts the hoppety-skippety facts of practice according to its needs, and in so doing ignores an important part of what practice offers. Philosophy is a pseudo-knowledge which attempts to add a dimension to human capacity. It operates in this way because man would like to know things, even if he sees no real way of doing it. Philosophy is science without verification, mixed up with aesthetics that purports to go beyond fact and assert truth. Therefore it always involves a little prestidigitation, or some white magic.

Twenty-five years ago, when I tried to find out rather resolutely what "identity" meant, I discovered, or thought that I did, that it meant nothing more than the possibility of substitution in a given context. For example, if a man is very hungry, any kind of food is the same for him as any other. He makes no distinction except its capacity to satisfy hunger. If he is only moderately hungry he will eat one thing with relish and another thing indifferently. The identity in the context of a famishing state, does not hold for a condition of lessened desire. The same sort of thing can be applied to propositions or situations of all degrees of abstractness.

After I had thought of this, I wondered whether my pre-existing

inability to read philosophy had not been due to the fact that all the philosophers who solved the great problems did, at some point or other, cross the abyss between science and aesthetics by means of the bridge which in some oriental religions is named OM. This word expresses an ineffable fact. To pronounce it is productive of great results, provided one has the faith to perceive them. In reading philosophy I had been so often held up by factors which worked so remarkably like the great word OM, that it seemed to me worth while trying on them this particular interpretation of the word. It worked beautifully. Bradley and Royce, on whom I first tried it, and of whose works I had never been able to understand anything, became quite simple when one noted that they used the law of the context or ignored it according to their convenience. When they wanted to show that experience was fallible, they pointed to the contextual dependence. But when they wanted a solution for the troubled state, they moved on to a universe which had no constraining contexts, and therefore, as it seemed to me, no meaning. Before this time I could not read philosophy because I tried to understand it. Since then I can read it with great pleasure, but I leave the understanding of it to the authors who made it. OM is an essential link in every complete philosophical chain, and since no chain is stronger than its weakest link, this link deprives philosophy of every claim to be truly a kind of knowledge.

If to philosophy is denied any real adequacy, and if aesthetics as I believe is not the knowledge of any peculiar *real*, we must be content to know what we can by using our intelligence as fully as possible, within the limitations of science and aesthetics. It is always possible to go wrong, and often it is easy. It often seems preferable, and it is only by an extension of the field that must be counted in, that apparently preferable error is proved to be undesirable. We have come to know that disinterested scientific work is alone capable of giving the range of view that enables science to become the basis for far-reaching and important changes in our ways, but we have not yet come to see that aesthetics is of any particular importance. Its only character that has been taken seriously, its capacity for producing emotional stimulation, is adapted specially to a self that is trivial like the aesthetic self, or



to one that is sick and needs either a stimulus to make it well, or a toy to make it forget its troubles.

Emotional response, in so far as it becomes a cause of satisfaction, is practical. There is no evidence that one kind is intrinsically better than another. None the less the superior person belabours the inferior one for indulging the wrong emotion, or the right emotion on the wrong occasion. He has, of course, no evidence that his emotion is rightly indulged, except the assurance of his superiority. He says that he is right, and that the other man is wrong, and as he makes more or less a business of this sort of thing, his claim is allowed by the plain man who, unless he is a collector or is shocked by something that he considers indecent, doesn't really care very much.

Let us suppose however that pure aesthetic experience exists, and that we become really interested in the world of aspects; that we become habituated to beauty as much, at least, as we have become habituated to cleanliness, that we dislike ugliness and incoherence as we dislike bad smells. The conditions to be taken into account are obviously much more varied and complex than they are for cleanliness. They will depend on a much greater variety of knowing. To take one instance only—speech. Flatness, smartness—except as a sauce—imprecision, rubber-stamps, inflated verbiage, and a hundred other horrors, would become objectionable. People who use words with precision need accuracy of knowledge. The aesthetic symbol would get a new lease of life because it would be subjected to a criticism from our experience generally, and would be sensitively related to truth. For a trifling example take what Livingstone said of lions—that they were not brave but cowardly. If this were true and generally known, it would turn the phrase lion-hearted into a mere verbal symbol, or lead to its disuse. This is the sort of thing that does happen in good poetry. The language is kept fresh by being related to such knowledge as the poet possesses. It is a direction that offers a large range either for romantic exuberance or classic restraint. It is a way of making and keeping language civilized.

I give this instance of language because it is an obviously relevant one. Of course the same kind of thing applies almost everywhere. It would have very little meaning for one whose notion of

aesthetic interest is the occasional reading of a book or looking at a picture. But its meaning might be very different for one who found our present civilization to be something appalling with its fragmentary strenuousness, its discouraging successes, and its disheartening failures. To such a one there might be a gain if there could be an interest in a world, a society, which was really presentable, which one would care to keep wholly in view. This picture could not of itself be evidence of validity. Aesthetics gives us fact, not truth. But fact to be interesting to adults in the long run, must be true. Only science and practice can judge validity beyond the mere aspect. The world as it is scientifically known is not a whole world, but the nature of that world is such that it can find in science a partial reflection that is true enough to work. Our aesthetic perception of the world must not contradict this knowledge. It need include no more than is relevant, but the persistent attempt to make fact and truth concordant is the basis of an aesthetic interest that can go beyond "aestheticism," without becoming applied aesthetics.

The competent spectator would under those circumstances not be a person who is conversant with masterpieces and the lore of museums, but a man whose interest was wide, whose self was unified, and whose mind and body were active. No result for such a man would be final except as it went into the making of a social picture that he would like to contemplate. I do not mean to imply anything so foolish as that he would be always thinking of this end, or explicitly aiming at it. I refer to something like the service of God among the truly pious. There is a larger end of interest, which is also partly revealed in pictures of detail. A world which one can both believe in—the world of science, and look at—the world of aesthetics, is the end to be desired.

There is no profit for such an end in believing what one knows is not true. To the simple-minded person this statement might seem foolishly unnecessary, since it would seem to him obvious that one cannot believe a thing which one knows is not true. If this were really impossible there would be no neurotics, there would be no good party-men except morons, there would be no hundred-percenters of any kind. All these people, and all others to some extent, keep different and incompatible books of their beliefs. So

long as society is not co-operative but is competitive, and consequently we have to fight for our *self*-preservation, we shall have to keep these double and triple series of books, one for the things as they affect *us* (which of course includes those in whom we are interested), one for the things as they affect those who oppose us, and another for the things that we can see without being distorted either by self-defence or attack. A genuine inability to believe the things that one knows are not true, would bring about the greatest revolution that society has ever known. That change will mark the dawn of civilization.

It remains now only to show the relation of pure science and pure aesthetics to practice in the largest sense. Science and aesthetics are incidents in the comprehensive practical world. Practice means change. Only that which is not practical can endure. What thus endures is knowledge which man projects in the course of his practical living. But this knowledge, which is given in successive stages as just what it is, returns into the life of the men that make it to help in their transformation. Knowledge which is really assimilated means a change in the knower. Most of our knowledge, however, which is not a knowledge of manufacturing processes in one sense or another, is so conventional, so merely schematic, so confused, and so little assimilated or else assimilated with so little of clear direction, that it leaves us almost as we were, or sends us off at random tangents. People have commonly noted and often with dismay, how little they learn from experience. They repeat the same blunders, commit the same offences, tumble into the same holes over and over again, although they know it all so well. Popular expressions abound to illustrate this. Hell's pavement of good intentions, and New Year's resolutions are instances in point. My own redirection in life came when I posed to myself the definite question—How can one learn by experience? The way of conceiving aesthetics in itself and in its relations to other things, followed on the finding of an answer.

I said that most of our knowledge leaves us just as we were. To some extent this is reasonable when we have been concerned with science, since in science the relation of the self is reduced to low terms of particularity. The self for science is the self that can perceive external relations, and keeps its other individualities in

the background. The application of science to the individual is indirectly made through the invention of instruments. This apart from the influence of the attitude of truth-seeking which might, but does not always, directly affect his nature. But in aesthetics the knower's feeling self, with its rich inner relations and its wide range of outer approaches to things, is implicated. Every such experience which is freshly had may have the effect of modifying that feeling self, thereby modifying the pictorial interest, and the quality of the man that makes it. The real goal would be attained if in science a man was ready to perceive all truth impartially, and if in aesthetics a man's acceptance of a "picture" and his enjoyment, became identical.

. . . . .

To the serious artist, enjoyment is the same as the realization of a creative interest. He enjoys a picture when he has made it, just as he enjoys food when he is hungry. He does, in fact, hunger for that completed achievement as the virtuously inclined hunger after righteousness. Other enjoyments he may have, but they are either little things like his satisfaction in his satisfactions, or else they are the satisfactions of his self-feelings, which are related to the pure aesthetic ones as the saint's self-satisfaction in getting to heaven is related to the contemplation of the radiant godhead.

If aesthetics could be recognized as the important thing that it would be in a world that was resolutely intelligent, that refused to subordinate almost everything to a possessive interest whose magnificent consequence is conspicuous expenditure—if pure aesthetics could find a place, there would be little or no difference between knowing and enjoying. The essential attitudes would be those of making, and of accepting or rejecting. All fresh seeing is creative, and that is acceptable which fulfils a need. The interest in objects, taken objectively and not possessively, intensifies the need and cultivates it. Experience would become more commonly creative because the interests of the self would supplement and not destroy the authentic character of objects. At present it is more important that a thing should be *mine* than that it should *be*. The property interest in beautiful things begins to be most active when

the creative interest is ended. The field of this interest is conventionally limited, whereas the essential value of it would depend upon its unrestricted use and extension. This extension of range depends upon the right relation of possession and use. The tendency of anything that could in a eulogistic sense be called civilization, is to stimulate creativeness which is profoundly and vitally different from, and opposed to, possessiveness. Creation is the perfect condition of use, but all the things that I have spoken of as applied aesthetics are minor legitimate forms. Many of them are over-developed in a society which is pathological, because of its infantile fixations. It is a commonplace that our moral culture has not kept pace with our science. Which is another way of saying the same thing. It means that our moral and social attitudes are primitive and barbarous, and that they have not assimilated our science.

The crux of the matter lies in the self. Unless we can get to the point of seeing that selves are not *we* but only *us*, that we defend the past at the expense of the future, that we defend our possessions at the expense of creative effort, and that we defend our mistakes at the cost of corrected replacements—unless we can take all knowledge to be freely our province, progress will be only the pendulum swing from one excess to another. True balance can be found only in a freedom which permits of knowing all and taking the consequence. To repeat, civilization is the character of a social state where the individual is free to think, speak, act, as truly as he likes without suffering harm thereby. In that way only can we reach out beyond brutality or sentimentalism to a world where ideals are the self-projections of progressing knowledge, and not the attempts of pathological visionaries to offer remedies for what they do not understand.

## DIRGE

EDWARD SAPIR

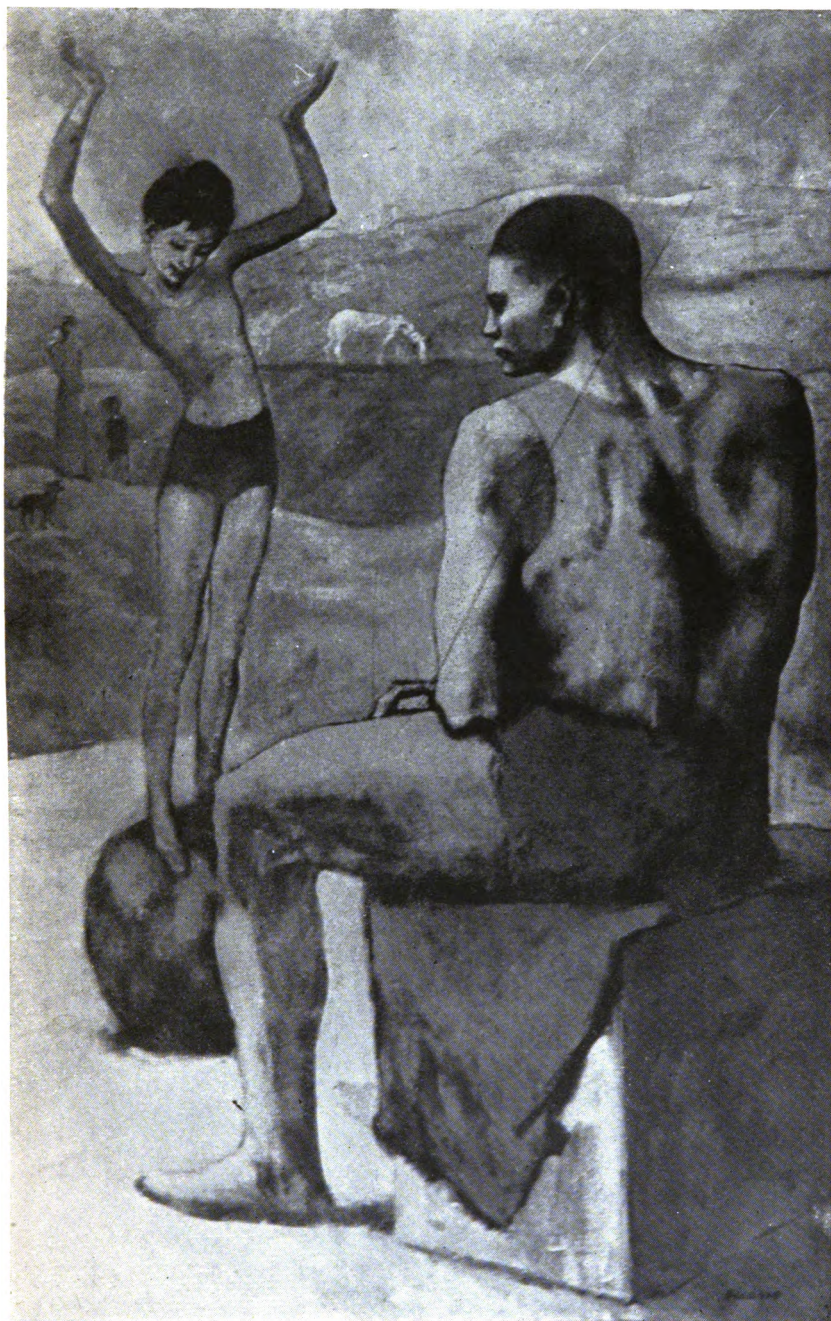
Living, flesh beat on flesh,  
Vain heart on the blind heart bled;  
Now dead, what spirit swayed  
Is known, what spirit fled.

It was an air that cut  
Most keen, yet in its wake  
Was golden quietude,  
Hovered on mountain lake.

Oh where is love more love,  
More true-forgiving arms  
Than tightened passionate  
After the heedless storms?

There is not mightier  
Nor more compassionate  
Sweet spirit breathed than blew  
Out the embers of hate.

Living, flesh beat on flesh,  
Living, the vain heart bled.  
Not keener cuts the knife  
Than knowing the spirit's life  
When long is the spirit fled.

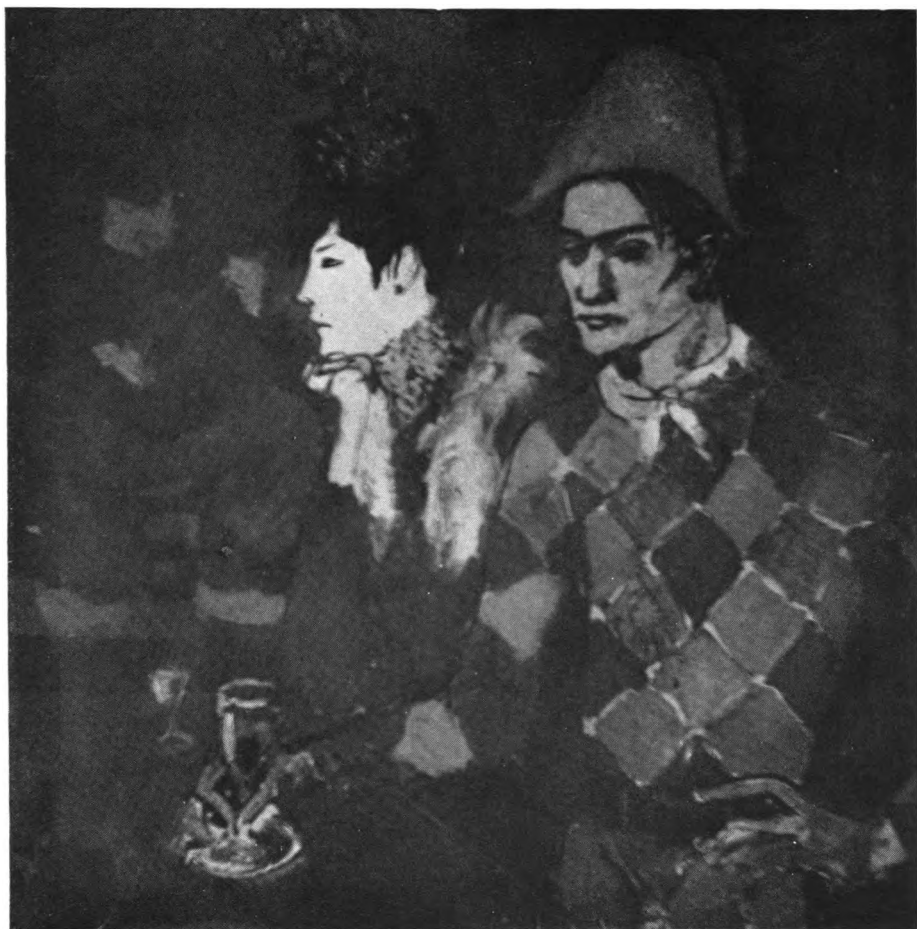


*Courtesy Galerie Simon, Paris*

LA JEUNE FILLE SUR LA BOULE. BY PABLO PICASSO



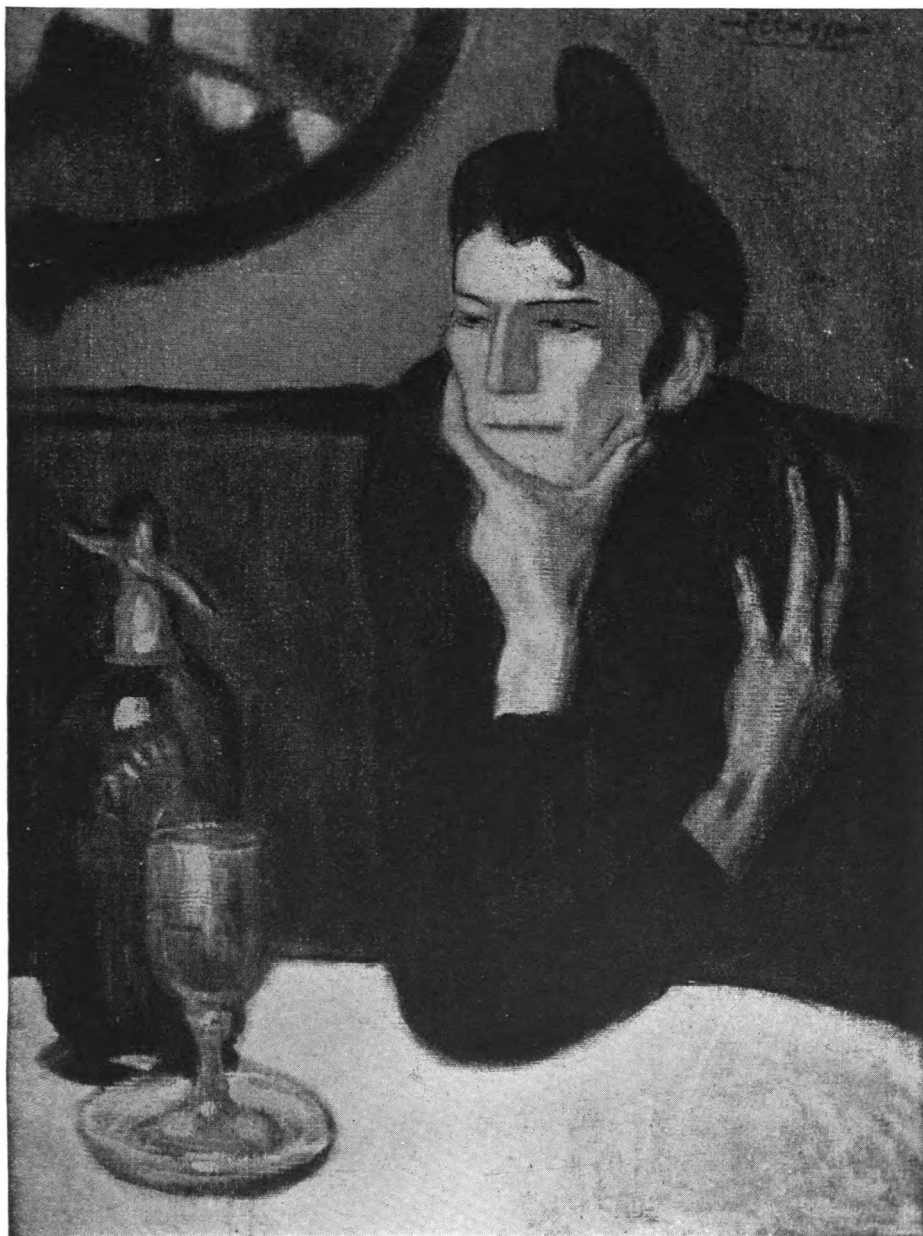




*Courtesy Galerie Simon, Paris*

AU LAPIN AGILE. BY PABLO PICASSO





*Courtesy Galerie Simon, Paris*

**AU CAFE. BY PABLO PICASSO**



## BLUE STEEL'S EVA

BY ROARK BRADFORD

**E**VA PAUL was Blue Steel's woman. They called her Blue Steel's Eva on Saratoga Street, and on Saratoga Street they name their people with startling accuracy. There, a name more than merely distinguishes one person from another. They did not, for instance, call Bess Rucker who lived with Wingfoot Williams, "Wingfoot's Bess." They called her "Boom," which was evolved after the manner of Saratoga Street, from the basic "baboon."

Bess Rucker did not look like a baboon, exactly, but there was a certain resemblance. "Boom" expressed it. It sounded enough like baboon to suggest the idea, and yet it was enough unlike baboon to give the thing that easy generality that described Bess Rucker. You looked at Boom dancing around Mink Eye's cabaret and you thought of a baboon moving lazily through a dense jungle, grabbing with long arms and legs for limbs of trees and constantly producing startling effects of motion; not quite graceful, but a sort of gliding, sure-footed rhythm. It was not like that—didn't go into so much detail; you merely were reminded of a baboon. And there was a suggestion of gawky awkwardness about her stupid face and loose-jointed, big-boned body that made her look overgrown and fierce, with a forceless massiveness. "Boon" would have been too—too—well, "Boom" said it exactly.

Blue Steel's Eva was different. She had, so she confided when she had got the right amount of cheap gin, "passed for white" in Greek Charlie's cabaret in Chicago until she sat at a table with a white man from the South. The man was drunk. If he had been sober probably he would not have discovered it. But he kept watching Eva while she talked. Then suddenly he leaped to his feet and shouted, "You're a nigger! Get away from me, you black wench!" When the man got out of the hospital, he told the judge that he could tell by the way she laughed and the purplish tint of her finger-nails and the shape of her mouth. The judge noticed it too, since his attention had been directed to it.

"Yeh, 'at's right," Eva confessed to Greek Charlie. "My old

lady was part dinge. Not much, though. And I guess my old man was all white—whoever the hell he was.” She drew her lips tightly across her cheeks and continued falteringly, “So I guess it’s back to Smoke-town for little Eva—and I don’t know that I give a damn, at that.”

Greek Charlie measured Eva with a critical eye. He noted her gracefully turned, slim legs, her small hips, her lithe, supple body that any white girl would be proud to possess.

“If it’s coloured blood that makes you look like that, kid,” he said, “well, I’m for more of it, see? You can pitch your shoes under my bunk any old time you want to, kid, see?”

Eva never tried to analyse the impulse that drove her southward. She merely knew that she was “damned sick and tired of Greek Charlie,” so she sold her fur coat, two diamond rings, and a diamond pin that he had given her, and bought a ticket for New Orleans.

On the train coming down, when the conductor announced that “all persons of coloured blood are required by law to move into the car provided for that purpose,” Eva got up with three or four others and went to the “Jim Crow” car. She had rather hoped that the conductor would express surprise. But he did not. “Yeah. I’m a shine, all right. It sticks out all over me,” she said.

After Chicago, the slow-moving New Orleans was easy for Eva, and it was not long before she had obtained a place as “entertainer” in Mink Eye’s honky-tonk on Saratoga Street. Nor was the word long in travelling among the negroes of the neighbourhood that “Mink Eye’s got a new woman f’m Chicago. And purty? Man kind! You jest orter see dat yaller gal th’ow herself around de floo’.”

There was not much difference between Greek Charlie’s place on the North Side, and Mink Eye’s on Saratoga Street. Dirty, drunken white men came to Greek Charlie’s. Dirty, drunken negroes came to Mink Eye’s. Greek Charlie’s was larger and had more tinsel, and the dirt did not show so much. But Mink Eye’s had tinsel, too. It was early June when Eva got there, and the Christmas decorations—or what of them that had not rotted and fallen—still were hanging in festoons from the ceiling. The men who came to Greek Charlie’s always tried to get something for nothing

and when they did not get it they cursed and called the girls a gang of gold diggers. The men who came to Mink Eye's wanted something for nothing, too. But they were better mannered about it. If they did not get it—which they never did from Eva—they laughed about it and passed it off as a friendly joke.

There was that runty, long-legged boy they called "Pants." He was one of Eva's first and most persistent "free will" suitors. "What you needs, Good Lookin'," he used to tell her, "is a natchal man to trot you round. And I sho' wants de job." There was a free, easy spirit of *camaraderie* about the way he said it. It amused Eva and she replied in the same friendly spirit. Pants accepted her refusal with a grin and a good-natured retort.

That was the way it was at Mink Eye's. Everybody was friendly. The waiters, the musicians, the patrons, and the entertainers, all mingled easily and joked freely. Life there was not irksome or strained.

Then, on hot, steamy nights, when the little hall was crowded with negroes half drunk on Mink Eye's gin, and the orchestra was hammering away dolefully, and the people were dancing and singing and sweating, Eva Paul subconsciously would sense a curious happiness of living. She did not actually experience the happiness; yet the whole thing stirred up something inside her and made her know there was a happiness to be got somewhere, somehow. She watched the others. They seemed happy sometimes, and sometimes they merely laughed as if they were trying to be happy, but were restrained by some strange, compelling force. Eva laughed that way, too, sometimes. She did not understand it. She really never knew whether it was a laugh or a sob. But it never worried her for long. Her brain was not made to analyse such things. She merely felt them and forgot them.

Abandoning herself to the free life at Mink Eye's, Eva easily fell into the ways of the others. Her harsh, whirling r's softened to a purr, her words took on the flat, easy drawl, and her thoughts followed the thoughts of the others. Eva was "turning black" again, easily, gracefully, and without effort, as the chameleon changes.

Then one night Blue Steel walked over to her and said, "What's on yo' mind, Sister? You don't look happy." That was all he said, this huge black man. It was the first time apparently that he

had ever noticed Eva. Blue Steel was not the kind of man that runs after women. He was the kind of man that women run after and fight for.

Eva laughed that strange, crying laugh. "Go on and beat yo' drum, boy," she said. "Dat's you' job."

Blue Steel strutted about the floor during the rest of the intermission, laughing and joking with the other entertainers and patrons, and swaggering so his "box" coat, his square-creased trousers, and his bright yellow shoes would not pass unnoticed. Eva watched him intently. It was her business to attract men, not to be attracted by them. Yet she kept her eyes riveted upon Blue Steel as he strutted. Greek Charlie used to strut about his place, too, and Eva used to laugh at him for it. Greek Charlie was good to her; bought her fine clothes and called her pretty names that pleased her. And when he strutted among his patrons it tickled Eva and she laughed.

But here was this black drummer, huge—so black that his skin glistened—who strutted like a peacock and who had nothing to strut for. Well, Eva laughed at that too, but she did not think it was funny.

When the music started again, Eva steered her unsuspecting partner close to the orchestra and managed to catch Blue Steel's eye as she danced past. She looked straight at him just for a brief instant, and danced away. When the dance ended, Blue Steel swaggered confidently to her and said, "I'll be around to-night." That was all. Eva did not reply. She just sat there until the place was closed for the night; and Blue Steel came.

Late the next afternoon, when Eva was walking along Saratoga Street to the grocery store, the men she passed tipped their hats and greeted her with unaccustomed politeness. Their words were friendly and in their tones were none of the innuendoes of which recently she had been aware. She did not grasp it at first, but when Pants asked her if Blue Steel was "gonter be round soon," she gathered that they knew her alliance with the trap drummer was something more than a temporary one.

"He ain't woke up yit," Eva answered with an effort to conceal her pride. "I'm gittin' some groceries to feed him on when he wakes up."

Pants detected the pride in her voice and laughed. Then he turned his covetous eye upon her slim, trim neatness. "Buyin' him



groceries, is you, gal?" he chuckled. "Well, you better set right down and watch him eat 'em. Cause ef'n you don't he liable to tote 'em off and give 'em to one er his yuther womens."

Eva stiffened and her eyes blazed. "What you say?" she demanded.

Pants laughed again. That gal was crazy about Blue Steel; he could tell that by the way her eyes sparked. "Say 'soap and water,' Sister, 'soap and water.'"

"When he totes my groceries off," Eva said, more to give vent to her anger than for the information of Pants, "and I catches him"—she paused for a mental picture of Blue Steel giving her groceries to another woman—"I'll chop his heart out." That did not seem to be enough to do to him so she added, "and slice it into hamburgers and eat it for my breakfus."

That did tickle Pants and he laughed and laughed. "Yaah," he said between spasms of mirth, "Yaah! You's bad, ain't you, gal? I been yarin' 'bout how bad dese light yaller gals is. Dey tells me you passed for fou'teen karat in Chicago. Is dat right?"

Eva ignored the reference to "fourteen karat," which is Saratoga Street's term for a person with negro blood in his veins that poses as white, and she walked on. When she came back, Pants was still there.

"When you gits tired of eatin' hamburgers for breakfus," he said, "come round and buy me some groceries, baby." Eva flipped her head in contempt.

Blue Steel stuck to Eva. The ecstasy of those first days when each was discovering a new charm in the other did not last. But everybody called her Blue Steel's Eva, and she was. She was easily the most attractive woman on the street. She was a good money-getter, too, and she took pride in the way she fed and dressed Blue Steel. She liked to see him dressed up that way. And Blue Steel liked to dress, and he liked to know his woman was the prettiest and most sought after woman on the street, too. He loved to hear them call her "Blue Steel's Eva."

But while neither of them attempted to go beneath the surface of the thing, they knew that these superficial attractions were not what held them together. There was "something about him" that drew and held this almost-white woman to this full-blooded negro man. And there was "something about her" that held Blue Steel to Eva. It was "something" and they let it go at that.

Sometimes—maybe it was when the white blood in her got the upper hand, or maybe it was merely a characteristic of her sex—Eva would be hateful and mean, and torment Blue Steel. They would fight and Blue Steel would beat her with his big, knotty fists, and throw her about the room in which they lived. Sometimes while he was beating her Eva would want to kill him, and would fight back with more viciousness than one could imagine her small body capable of. And sometimes she would fight back and curse and cry and threaten to kill him merely to try to give expression to a wild, unreasonable ecstasy that stirred her soul. But always when he stopped beating her she would come to him and put her arms around his neck, mingling kisses and seductive whimpers with unworded pleadings that Blue Steel understood better than if they had been conventional words.

There was nothing unusual about their relationship. That is, it was not unusual on Saratoga Street. Possibly they lived more intensely together than did others who lived in similar relationship. But there was in it no question of morals or fidelity. Eva was constantly around with other men. Sometimes she would stay away three or four days, but she usually brought back something to show for it, money or clothes or jewellery. Even if she brought back nothing, Blue Steel understood. Other men made it a point to beat their women when they did not bring back money or other valuables. But when they chided Blue Steel for letting Eva “cheat” as they termed it, Blue Steel made up a song and sang it to them:

“Papa like his whisky.  
 Mama like her gin;  
 Papa like his outside women;  
 Mama like her outside men.”

Eva could sing that song too, sometimes. Every woman on Saratoga Street understood the song about “A man gits tired of de same thing all de time.” But when their men spent money on other women, they drew the line. Some of them fought their men for it. Some of them killed their men, too, and some of them got killed. But Eva did not mind the money.

“Don’t you go be no cheap skate,” she told Blue Steel. “When dat money is gone, well, hit’ll be some mo’. Jest git out and circu-

late some." She knew Blue Steel would come back to her, just as he knew Eva would come back to him. Neither of them feared losing the other. They knew each belonged to the other.

The relationship between Blue Steel and Eva may have amounted to what people call love—a fierce, savage, unmoral, compelling love. Certainly it amounted to a complete understanding, an understanding that neither tried to understand. It was more than instinctive physical attraction of one animal to another; there was something deeper, something immaterial about it. They fought and cursed each other frequently and bitterly. Sometimes, it seemed without provocation. But such outbursts were trivial, touching not even the surface of their fierce, savage, pitiful, painful, ecstatic happiness.

Then, without warning, a change came over Blue Steel's Eva. Just what it was, or what caused it, or when or how it started, neither knew. It just came. It might have been that the sensual fibres of her body were becoming satiated; or it might have been that Eva, like any emotional artist, had "painted her picture" and found that it expressed the emotions with which she had been struggling since she grew into womanhood. Or it may have been that the cold, sluggish Caucasian blood in her veins had rebelled at last against the surging, heated passions of her negro corpuscles. "Feed me on apples for I am sick of love," a wise man said.

Whatever it was, it started from Eva, and Blue Steel felt it. They were walking casually down Saratoga Street that evening on their way to Mink Eye's, just as they had been doing all summer. Nothing had happened outside the daily routine. Eva gave signs of the approach of one of her "mean spells"; that was why it took Blue Steel so long to feel the change. She sulked and argued and disagreed about everything. She always acted like that when she was "gittin' mean."

"I bet I'm gonter whup her ha'f to death when us gits home," Blue Steel promised himself. And having mapped out his campaign he put the matter out of his head until the time for action.

But walking along the street that evening, Eva's nostrils filled with strange odours. Although it was late fall and they had walked that way every evening through the hot, sweltering summer, she never before had been aware of the steamy, sultry dampness that emanated from the open gutters. Nauseating odours of decaying

garbage; of fish heads rotting among knee-high jimson weeds that lined the side-walks; of decomposed banana peelings in the stagnant water in the mudholes of the unpaved street; of filth and dirt that drifted from the tightly shuttered "shotgun" houses that lined the side-walk; of cheap, stinking perfume that saturated hers and Blue Steel's clothing. Eva gagged.

"Sick to yo' stummick, baby?" asked Blue Steel.

Eva was "sick to her stummick." She was sick to her very soul. But she did not answer Blue Steel's question. "Wonder is it snowin' in Chicago?" she asked herself. "Wonder what ole Greek Charlie's doin'?" They walked a full block in silence. Eva's mind was picturing scenes in Chicago and Blue Steel was struggling with himself for something to do or say. Frequently they had been together for hours without either's saying a word. But Eva's silence now, was different. Blue Steel felt it.

"You hyared me, gal," he said, gruffly.

"Yeah, I hyared you," Eva agreed, absently.

"Well, whyn't you say somethin'?" Blue Steel's attempt to be commanding emphasized his apprehension.

Eva walked a few steps, stopped, half turned, and looked squarely at Blue Steel. Her mouth twitched and drew down slightly at one corner. Her eyes narrowed to tiny slits. Then, without moving a muscle in her face, she laughed. It sounded soft and gurgling. But it sounded harsh and shrill too, like broken glass clinking on an empty ball-room floor.

They walked on to Mink Eye's in silence. Blue Steel was recalling his promise to beat her that night and was searching his mind for an adequate manner in which to do it just as he wanted it done. As for Eva—"I wonder is Greek Charlie got another woman now?" Of course he had; two or three of them, scattered about town, maybe. But that was easy. "I know how to handle Greek Charlie. I can make him give me his last dime."

It was just one of those dull, hot nights at Mink Eye's, that night. There were few patrons and they were more interested in the seven-up and dice games going on in the back room than they were in gin and women. Occasionally the orchestra would dawdle haphazard through some music—without enthusiasm. Most of the women were lolling about, talking to sleepy-eyed waiters. Three or four sprawled face downward, across rickety tables. In this group

was Wingfoot Williams' woman, Boom. Boom could sleep anywhere. She always looked as though she were ready to doze off. Occasionally a dapper patron would come in, size up the crowd, and walk on out. Mink Eye got desperate.

"Git things goin'!" he commanded. "Git somethin' started. Settin' round yar asleep. Git off'n dat table, Boom, and shake yo'se'f awake. Make out like you's happy! What y'all niggers think I got you yar for? Lawd, Lawd. I oughter be a undertaker. I'd git richer buryin' de dead round dis place whar I am tryin' to keep hit lively. Start dat music goin'. Limber up! Git hot!"

The orchestra started a moderately lively dance piece, but after half a dozen bars, it deteriorated into a listless, lifeless rattle. The entertainers paired off with the waiters and hangers-on, and began a listless, lifeless dance. Eva drew Wingfoot for a partner, and before they danced half way around the floor, she nearly went to sleep. As they approached the orchestra, Eva backed off from Wingfoot and sallied in a tripping half-circle, flirting her skirts and twisting her body in quick graceful rhythms. "Step on dat drum, Blue Steel," she called. "I'm asleep and I want to wake up. Make some noise so I kin twist my joints a little."

The tempo immediately was increased and the melody took on life. Eva easily fell into the swing of it and danced all about and around her shuffling partner. Wingfoot finally gave up the struggle and started to trail her round the floor, clapping his hands, brushing imaginary obstacles from her path, and making comments of astounded admiration as she twisted and spun about.

"Wawk it, Sister, wawk it!" he exclaimed. "Wawk dat salty dog!"

The applause spurred Eva on and she wiggled devilishly.

"Unh—unhn-n-!" Wingfoot grunted. "Look at her Sally!—Right befo' me!"

Most of the other dancers had stopped and were gathering about the spinning, whirling Eva, cheering with Wingfoot. Old Boom, however, stuck doggedly to her partner. When the music got too fast for her she merely skipped every other beat and timed her steps to the new tempo which was in a cadence that she understood, and she kept stumbling and staggering about, resting her heavy arms on the stupid waiter's shoulder and utterly ignoring the show that was being given by Eva.

Eva was an actress at heart, and to be the centre of attraction spurred her to greater efforts. She tried the fancy step that used to make such a hit at Greek Charlie's.

"Greek Charlie's!" The thought vibrated through her blood. White covered tables, and highly polished floor upon which silver dollars clattered when she danced that step! Greek Charlie would come around for her and buy her something pretty for that dance!

Blue Steel was hammering away at his drums to the rapid swing of the music. Occasionally he would reach out and tap a tin can or ring a bell or blow a horn, or do fancy tricks with his sticks. It was part of his work and he was doing it mechanically, without enthusiasm. He watched Eva's dance a few minutes with decreasing interest and then caught sight of Boom. Grunting, sweating, stumbling old Boom, staggering about the floor with her partner, struggling with that gliding motion that looked awkward and graceful at the same time. He watched her long, skinny legs sail about in slow circles and halt unexpectedly in such a manner that it seemed certain she would lose her balance and go sprawling to the floor. But some way or other, when one foot came down the other was starting on a similar swing, and she never quite fell.

It was not the case of Blue Steel's consciously comparing the two women and choosing between them. It merely was a case of Blue Steel's watching Eva dance and, finding nothing there that interested him, putting her out of his mind as he would put out of his mind anything else that did not interest him. Then, quite independent of Eva and her dance, he saw Boom and was interested. Eva became as any other of the millions of people in the world that did not interest him. The fact that until a moment before she had held him in inescapable meshes was nothing. Blue Steel quietly laid his drum sticks aside, and while the rest of the orchestra kept up the jazzy whirl, he walked to Boom's side, pushed her stupid partner away, and took up with her the slow, swiny steps.

The man playing the clarinet first noticed what had happened and he dropped his instrument for the sticks abandoned by Blue Steel. Then the leader at the piano saw and, with graceful timing, brought the music back to a slow, dragging cadence. One by one the other musicians softened their notes and gradually faded from the melody. Soon there was only the stop-skip chords of the piano and the hollow, slow rattle of the drums.

During the change, Eva struggled to time her steps to the

cadence. Her muscles and nerves were keyed up to the fast, jagged rush of the music, and the change in tempo worried her. She slowed her steps and the music became even slower. It was as though her dance had been rushing pell-mell to a climax and then, without any reason, had stopped just before it got there. She halted and looked. There were Blue Steel and Boom, dancing in slow, sensual savagery in the centre of the floor, and all the others were standing stupidly by, watching. She tossed her head contemptuously.

"Dam' ign'ant niggers," she snorted. "Don't know good dancin' when they see it." She watched the stupid group a minute. "I'll wire Greek Charlie to-night," she said, "and I'll leave this dump to-morrow."

She looked again at the ridiculous burlesque. Big, gawky, double-jointed Boom, stumbling about the floor, with Blue Steel, tall, straight, top-heavy, apparently as stiff as a poker, jerking around her! It was funny and Eva laughed.

"Say, if I could pull 'at step at Greek Charlie's!" she said to herself and laughed again at the idea. "Say, that'll be a scream!" She held her sides and giggled. "Break in on my fast cross-step—all of a sudden—and then come back to that double whirl. Gawd! Won't they roar!" She closed her eyes so her mind could better hear the roar of silver dollars clattering about Greek Charlie's polished floor. "I'll put that on about the second night. Let me see, now."

She watched Boom's step in professional study. It seemed to be all in the way Boom swung her legs. Eva swung her nimble foot in a swift circle. "I'm gonter put some pep into it," she decided. But the foot came around without creating any of the effect that Boom was getting.

"I'll try it slow, at first." She studied the dragging cadence of the drum, nodding her head with it until she had caught the time in her mind. She moved her foot out again, slowly, this time. It wasn't that, either. She tried the other foot. "A little more dip of the knees." That helped some. But it was not right yet. She studied Boom again and noted a slight bend at the waist—or rather a sharp, shifting twitch of the hips. She added that and it helped immensely.

"I got to loosen up," she decided, and beginning anew with muscles relaxed, she swung one foot out in a lazy, sweeping circle.

The drum beat just as the circle was completed and the other foot started round. She forgot to twist her hips, but changing her weight from one foot to the other did that, anyway, and sent a slow, rolling wave surging lazily upward through her body that ended with a snap of her head, just as the drum beat again.

"That's it," she said to herself.

The easy, soft, swiny sensation of the motion made her feel—well, she decided it made her feel good all over. What she wouldn't do to that dance at Greek Charlie's!

She launched upon it in an effort to speed it up. But her steps became mixed and she lost the swing of it and had to start back in the tempo of the drums again.

"When I get to Greek—" Wham! The drum beat again and threw her head back sharply, interrupting her thought. "I'll make 'em—" Wham! The drum interrupted again, and she went into the next step automatically, feeling the motion roll up through her body and snap at her neck muscles—not painfully, but just sharp enough to—"Wham!" She snapped her fingers with the drum that time, too. The rolling motion had translated itself to her arms and they were moving in unstudied gesture with the rest of her body. "Next time—" Wham! She was just dancing now. "Oh, baby—" Wham! It was all through her muscles and brain. "Poor little Eva—" Wham! There was nothing about Greek Charlie in her mind now. "Mama's comin'—" Wham! Old Africa rumbled in her veins. "Huntin' for papa." Wham!

She danced and danced, her steps leading her closer and closer to Blue Steel and Boom in the centre of the floor. "Yar come Eva—" Wham! She did not see Boom. "Come and git me—" Wham! "Wants my Blue Steel—" Wham!

Eva was coming closer and closer to Blue Steel, entirely oblivious at the moment of Boom's existence. But Blue Steel did not notice her. He was standing there, stiff and rigid, and when the drum would strike with that deadening, hollow boom, his muscles would contract suddenly and his whole body would jerk. He was looking at the floor—looking and jerking.

Eva kept dancing and calling, but Blue Steel would not hear. She wondered why. She could see him standing there, looking at the floor and jerking. Why wouldn't he come to her? She followed the direction of his gaze and saw old Boom's feet swinging and gliding. She raised her eye. There was Boom. Dancing—



dancing that crazy dance. Her big, bony body was twisting and her long arms were fanning the air as if in heavy labour. Just dancing away. Her mouth was open and her tongue hanging out. God, but she was ugly!

Old ugly Boom, just dancing away. She was funny. But Blue Steel was not laughing. No. And Boom was dancing straight to him!

Horror and fear seized Eva. She felt something like a chill shiver through her body and catch at her throat. She did not know what it was. It was as though Boom was wrapping those long fingers round Eva's neck, choking her, smothering her, blinding her, killing her so she could take Blue Steel!—that was it! Old Boom was killing her to get Blue Steel. She understood, now. And she went wild—crazy. With a scream she sprang at this big thing in front of her and sank her teeth and fingers in it.

The force of the spring staggered Boom and she stepped back, but did not fall. After a brief minute of juggling for her balance, she put the palm of her hand against the face buried in her chest, and pushed it away. Then, with a swing of her right hand, she slapped Eva sprawling to the floor.

The music stopped. Every man and woman in the place stood tense as if suddenly petrified. Blue Steel stopped in his tracks and looked on stupidly like the rest.

Eva rose to a half sitting posture and blinked. She saw that thing standing over her, sent a sharp staccato-like string of curses at it, and sprang again. Boom stood flat-footed, swung her arm, and Eva went back to the floor.

It was purely Boom's and Eva's fight. What it was about or how or when it would terminate, nobody cared. Blue Steel might have known what they were fighting about, had he thought. But he did not take the trouble. Let them fight. Women always were fighting, anyway.

To those watching Eva as she lay on the floor, limp and bleeding, it seemed as if she were trying to cry from suffering, and lacked strength to—as if she might even be struggling in the grip of death. They saw her throat pulsate in little, quick, nervous vibrations, and heard soft, whimpering trills and whinneys. Not loud, nor bitter—just little, pitiful, nervous sounds such as a child makes when it has cried itself to sleep.

It was unintelligible to them, but it meant something to Blue

Steel. One step forward, and his big, knotty fist reached out with the swing of his body. There was a smashing, sodden crash and old Boom went sailing backward. She landed, head first, ten feet away, and lay limp.

"Dat's my woman you hittin', you black bitch!" Blue Steel growled as though it had just dawned on him. Then, while the waiters were trying to revive the unconscious Boom with ice water and gin, Blue Steel picked up Eva and walked out. Still whimpering and crying, she rubbed her swollen, bleeding face against Blue Steel's cheek, and dragged a weary, heavy arm to his shoulder.

"Yeah, I knows, baby," Blue Steel told her. "I knows."

## "THIS SWAN"

BY RICHARD ELY MORSE

This swan, upon the icy waters of my heart,  
sails night and day;  
reflected amid the drift of tarnished wood-leaves,  
desolate and gray.

Bending his plumèd, silver-shining neck he seeks  
in baffled love  
that shadowed apparition always vanishing  
from him above.

And now he moves his head in spectral bitterness,  
to assuage his pain  
darting it beneath the calm of silver which shatters,  
and forms again.

There is no escape, only the mocking image  
of the mirrored swan  
beneath him sails, under a moon long turned to stone,  
for ever on.



RIDING SCHOOL. BY FRANZ MARC



## ON RE-READING PATER

BY LOGAN PEARSALL SMITH

**I**N noting the effect of Ronsard's poetry upon the hero of his unfinished novel, Gaston de Latour, Pater has described in a famous passage the enthusiasm of the enthusiastic youth of every age in their discovery of a delightful modernity, of a new-invented art which can transmute the life of their day into a literature full of expressiveness and beauty. Pater's own work had something of this effect upon a few at least of his own more youthful contemporaries. There they also saw the day as they knew it transmuted into a kind of golden tissue—the tissue of those essays which they would find now and then new-printed in the bookshops, and would purchase and take home and open with a joy that was all the greater from their knowledge that these writings were regarded by most readers and many moralists with grave disapproval and dislike.

Any one who might now for the first time read Pater's sincere and scholarly volumes would find it difficult to understand the indignation they aroused on their first publication; it would seem to him as incomprehensible as the scandal which was caused at about the same time by the exhibition of Whistler's pictures, with their quiet beauty. But if the thrill of outraged moral feeling which is so often awakened in the greater number by any sincere novelty in art is hard to recapture when that novelty has worn away, almost as incapable of revival is the ecstasy with which the chosen few welcome these innovations and new dawns. Even those who were fired in their youth by an ardent admiration for Pater's writings may almost shrink from opening again those comely volumes, in their dark green bindings, which were so precious to them once. Their delight in them had been so excessive that they may think it wiser to preserve untarnished the bright memory of this infatuation; to keep these illuminated missals closed, for fear of finding that their poetry and religion have vanished with the years. For it was much more than a mere literary pleasure which they had found there; it was above all what the generous youth of every age welcomes with a graver enthusiasm—the discovery of a new gospel, of a new way of living.

What Pater had given them was an inner standard of distinction, selection, refusal; he had imposed upon them almost a religious attitude, teaching them to sift from the crudity of their young experience all that seemed beautiful and significant and strange, and to treasure above all things these savings of fine gold. Through the vision thus presented to them they had seen the familiar world with an unwonted light upon it, a world in which the beautiful had become strange, and there might be beauty in all strangeness. To have their eyes unsealed in this surprising manner had been a kind of revelation, a kind of mystical initiation; it had endowed them with a sense of fastidious aloofness, of being chosen among the elect, of worshipping, as in white garments, the soul of visible beauty in a hidden sanctuary, inaccessible to the vulgar world.

Such a fanaticism of appreciation middle-aged or elderly readers cannot hope to experience again. But it is an error of judgement, and a wrong done, as it were, to our past, to neglect the books which were sacred to our youth because they can no longer give us what once they gave. The memory, even though an ironic memory, of an early enthusiasm has after all its charm and pathos; and it is quite possible, moreover, that we shall find that this enthusiasm was not misplaced; that what once so uncritically delighted us is capable of providing a more reasoned pleasure, and even that we can discover there qualities and excellences which we had not been able to appreciate before.

An experience of this kind will await those early admirers of Pater's works who return to them after a long neglect. They will be reassured to find how well his writing has stood the test of time, how indeed, like a vintage of the finer sort, it has matured and grown choicer with the years. It often happens that the memory of something we have read acquires little by little an added beauty; we rewrite it for ourselves, and the original, if we return to it, seems curiously flat and disappointing. But Pater's books provide no such disillusion; the remembered passages will be found more choicely worded than our recollection of them, the little vignettes and pictures more delicately painted. Even the mannerisms and affectations which aroused the disgust of those who did not like his style, and caused misgivings sometimes in those who did, will seem of little importance now. They are there, if we care to look for them, but we notice them now as little more than not unpleasing idiosyn-

crasies, or at the worst as defects incidental to the almost over-scrupulous attention which he gave to every sentence he wrote. Pater was confessedly a euphuist; he had set out to do what no one in England had ever done so deliberately before, to follow Flaubert's example and create for himself his own prose style, a style which should aim at conscious effects of beauty and be composed with infinite and fastidious care. The dangers of a euphuism of this kind are many, and Pater's imitators have made them obvious to us all. If his own "fine writing" has almost entirely escaped these dangers, if indeed it has seemed to become finer with the years, this is because his style was created and adapted to express, with the most scholarly exactness, thought of the rarest quality, and to render with punctilious sincerity a beautiful and intense vision which was very personal to himself. It was the value of this thought and the beauty of this vision which rendered legitimate the elaborate style in which alone they could find expression; while the style itself, with its enduring qualities, has preserved, as only style can preserve, that meaning and beauty fresh and untouched by time.

If then it was, for certain readers, an ecstasy to read the Renaissance for the first time, and Marius the Epicurean, and the Imaginary Portraits, their reperusal in maturer years will provide a more assured and enduring pleasure. And if, with the discrimination of maturer years, we ask ourselves what is the precise quality of that pleasure, what it is that Pater gives us and that we cannot find elsewhere; if we seek for a definition and elucidation of his essence, for the "formula," to use his own expression, which will help us to understand the dominating character of his work, we may do well to borrow a phrase which he himself used of Plato, when he said that Plato had "a sort of sensuous love of the unseen." For Pater too was a lover of the unseen; the high abstractions of philosophy, the ideals of ethics and religion were his constant study, but being by nature an artist and richly endowed with that impressibility to objects of sense which distinguishes the artist from the thinker, his love for ideas was a sensuous love; it was in their plastic and visible embodiments that they revealed what seemed to him their true significance. Those portions of his work which most perfectly render his vision consist therefore in the presentation of ideas, of certain phases of thought, perceived not in the abstract, but in their concrete manifestations in the past—the Dorian ethical ideal, for

instance, as moulding in every detail the grave old town of Sparta, the ancient piety of Numa as expressed in archaic forms of Latin ritual, the spirit of early Christianity as it had transformed the house near Rome of a noble convert, the mediaeval conception of life as embodied in the architecture of a French cathedral.

But what awakened his most passionate attention was the vision of an idea incorporated, as it were, in a living person, some metaphysical principle, "itself without hands or feet," taking possession of, and becoming dominant in, a man of unusual gifts, moulding his lineaments, and finding expression in his discourse, his manners, and every particularity of his way of life. Pater was therefore, like Sainte-Beuve, above all a portrait painter; and it is the attempt to portray some ideal and expressive personality of the past which most arouses his imagination and gives the finest brilliance to his style. The greater number of these portraits—as his love for philosophy would lead us to expect—are portraits of the masters or the disciples of abstract thought: Plato, and the Italian Platonist Pico della Mirandola, Aristippus, and his imagined disciple, the young and tragic Flavian, the Stoic emperor Marcus Aurelius, Montaigne the Pyrrhonist, and that most perfectly achieved of all his masterpieces, Sebastian van Storck, the follower, the victim, of Spinoza's sublime doctrine. Beings of religious import, the gods as embodiments of religious conceptions, make their appearance also in his pages: Demeter or Dionysus in the full significance of what was their essential meaning to the Greeks, or Greek divinities imaginatively transported to other times and northern regions: Apollo in Picardy, or Dionysus causing a strange unrest in a town of mediæval France. Modes of appreciation and phases of taste he also depicts in representative figures: the dawn of the age of Goethe in Duke Carl of Rosenmold, the new feeling for antiquity in the German critic Winckelmann, fresh modes of artistic apprehension in Apuleius, Ronsard, Leonardo, Giorgione, Watteau.

Although Pater was, like Sainte-Beuve, a portrait painter, his method was very different from that of the French writer, and his portraits are masterpieces of quite another school. Sainte-Beuve's principal object was the truth, the truth apart from his private tastes and preferences; he tried to make every shade of appreciation his own, to compass all modes of being; he interested himself not



only in men of letters, but in men of action and affairs, in soldiers, statesmen, and great prelates. Pater's vision was narrower and more intense; he was jealous and fastidious about the nutriment of his spirit, and rejected everything that possessed for him no imaginative appeal. The title *Imaginary Portraits*, which he adopted for the most personal of his books, is full of significance, for his portraits, even of persons who have really existed, and who have their place in history, are all in a sense imaginative creations, and of all their aspects he depicts those alone which are of interest to him. Most of them are figures of a special type, meditative beings, abstracted from life even when in the midst of it, dwelling apart in a kind of speculative aloofness, and silvered over, as he sees them, with the pale cast of thought. Even men of more active and commanding character he seizes as they stand motionless in some pause of reverie or meditation, in the suspense of some silent questioning, demur, or disbelief. His representations of these grave, speculative figures, these almost dream-like apparitions, are made vivid by touch after touch of delicately-coloured phrases, the mood, the dominating thought, glimmering with a central light upon the expressive lineaments, and diffusing itself in fainter illuminations over every detail of the visionary landscape of time and place.

It is almost impossible to write of Pater's literary art without the use of terms borrowed from the art of painting. He seems to have looked at everything with a painter's eye, and even his descriptions of natural beauty are presented as a painter might depict them. All the arts are sisters; each works in its own material and with its own methods at their common task of enriching man's life with beauty. If they are sometimes accused of misleading one another or of trespassing on each other's domains, and if literature in especial is charged with leading painting and music astray, she at least has derived from her association with her simpler-minded and more sensuous companions nothing but an added beauty of musical expression, a greater choiceness and perfection of form and colour. How great can be the value to a writer of this enrichment from another art, what he can borrow, for instance, from the painter's eye and palette, is beautifully apparent in the work of Pater, who is, perhaps, of all authors, the one who has most completely appropriated and made his own the painter's vision and his special and

peculiar technique. The enduring lustre of his work, what remains after the glow of its novelty has faded, and shines out with a finer radiance on its reperusal, is largely, therefore, its pictorial quality: the quiet tones of the atmosphere, the cool greys and blues of the colouring, which give his canvases, like those of Vermeer of Delft, such a rare and almost unbelievable distinction.

If Pater's ideal figures derive also much of their beauty, as well as their intellectual significance, from the unseen thought within which has moulded and made expressive every feature, the painter himself of these portraits was formed and dominated by a philosophy, an ethical ideal, which, though he afterwards partially abandoned it, yet deeply tinged his modes of apprehension, and gave a special character to his life and work. This Epicurean, or rather this Cyrenaic philosophy, taught him to live as much as possible in the present moment, the "Ideal Now," and, above all, in those moments of experience in which the beauty and meaning of life seem to be mystically revealed, those flashes of inner illumination, or of delight in the visible world around us, those "kindlings like the morning," which Wordsworth, otherwise no follower of Aristippus, regarded as being of inestimable value and almost religious importance. The faith in the significance of these momentary revelations, which inspired Wordsworth in his contemplation of Nature, was extended by Pater, who was deeply Wordsworthian in spirit, to the world of human beings and human achievements. Marius the Epicurean—and Marius is in many ways a portrait of himself—was visited now and then, Pater writes, by "visions, almost 'beatific,' of ideal personalities in life and art"; and this illuminating phrase well describes what was plainly his own experience. To him the unseen revealed itself most vividly, not in perceptions of the beauty of inanimate Nature, but in visions of ideal persons, as he saw them in their lives, or in the works of art in which their spirit had found its complete expression. His best writing is in its essence the record of the visions in which he perceived certain figures and certain works of art which were of intense significance to him. It is a record, as we have said, of deliberately personal and what we call subjective impressions; and, above all, when he describes a work of art—the *Mona Lisa* is the most famous example—he cares to give us only what was his own experience as, in some choice moment of aroused attention, he mused upon its beauty.

His art-criticism is therefore not in the least technical in character, and his appreciation of paintings is what is now called "literary" appreciation; he regards them as pictorial images of the mind and soul of man, as the representation of what is most impassioned and ideal in human thoughts and moods and ways of feeling. To writers on art of the most modern school, preoccupied as they are with the problems of pure form, this way of looking at pictures is very much out of fashion. Whether it will remain so always, whether the poetic effects and spiritual values, which are undoubtedly to be found in pictures, and which their painters undoubtedly attempted to embody in them, will always be regarded as an extraneous element, of no aesthetic importance or interest, is a question which the future must decide. It is difficult, however, to believe that Pater's best writings on art, his essays, say, on Botticelli and on the School of Giorgione, will ever lose, for lovers of Italian pictures, their exquisite interpretative value, or be superseded by arid dissertations on the geometry of form. One element at least of his art-criticism is almost certain to live on as a permanent contribution to our imaginative life. His sense of the importance, in any achieved culture, of the appreciation of beauty, as one of the deepest and most sacred of human experiences, was so intensely felt and so exquisitely and sincerely expressed that it can never become out of date and be forgotten. No one has ever rendered, and no one will perhaps ever render with a more potent magic, that "thrill of exaltation," as Mr Santayana has described it, "that suggestion of an ideal world, which we feel in the presence of any true beauty."

To Pater in his later years the Cyrenaic philosophy which he had so boldly expressed in his famous Epilogue, and which, with the serious and profound sensuousness of his teaching, had so shocked his Victorian contemporaries—this philosophy of youth, as he called it, this exclusive attention to impressions received in moments of impassioned vision, came to seem too narrow, too cramping, too costly as a way of life. But with him, as with Wordsworth, the artist found in these revelations the material which gives an enduring value to his work. And the emphasis which he laid upon the deep significance of these moments, the habit he taught of devout attention to them, was the secret of the spell which he cast upon those who in their youth yielded themselves so enthusiastically to

## I HAVE HEARD

his influence: this was the doctrine, the discipline they so religiously accepted. And if Pater's former disciples have also come to feel in maturer years, like their master, that this cult of exquisite impressions, and the maintenance of this ecstasy, is inadequate as a definition of success in life, yet they cannot look back upon that shrine of their former worship without a sort of piety, nor re-read those sacred books and not be touched by some regret for the beautiful, impracticable religion of their youth. And it may perhaps be said that all of them, however much they may have been battered and beaten upon in their subsequent careers, still retain in spirit an ineffaceable mark of their initiation—some fine glaze of the soul from the contact of that flame, some traces of delicate gilding not quite rubbed away.

## I HAVE HEARD

BY MELVILLE CANE

I have heard  
 The arrested cadences of bells,  
 When bells no longer sway.  
 I have found  
 The sound that swells from silence,  
 That dwells and drifts in silence following sound.  
 I have known  
 The inner melody  
 That dies in throats of birds.  
 And now, at last, I hear  
 The call you never voiced, I never answered;  
 Now you have ceased to call.

## A LONG GAY BOOK

BY GERTRUDE STEIN

**W**HEN they are very little, just only a baby you can never tell which one is to be a lady.

There are some when they feel it inside them that it has been with them that there was once so very little of them, that they were a baby, helpless and no conscious feeling in them, that they knew nothing then when they were kissed and dandled and fixed by others who knew them when they could know nothing inside them or around them, some get from all this that once surely happened to them to that which was then every bit that was then them, there are some when they feel it later inside them that they were such once and that was all that there was then of them, there are some who have from such a knowing an uncertain curious kind of feeling in them that their having been so little once and knowing nothing makes it all a broken world for them that they have inside them, kills for them the everlasting feeling; and they spend their life in many ways, and always they are trying to make for themselves a new everlasting feeling.

One way perhaps of winning is to make a little one to come through them, little like the baby that once was all them and lost them their everlasting feeling. Some can win from just the feeling, the little one need not come, to give it to them.

And so always there is beginning and to some then a losing of the everlasting feeling. Then they make a baby to make for themselves a new beginning and so win for themselves a new everlasting feeling.

It is never very much to be a baby, to be such a very little thing and knowing nothing. It certainly is a very little thing and almost nothing to be a baby and without a conscious feeling. It is nothing, to be, without anything to know inside them or around them, just a baby and that was all there was once of them and so it is a broken world around them when they think of this beginning and then they lose their everlasting feeling.

Then they make a baby or they have the feeling and so they win what once a baby lost them.

It is not very much to be a baby. It certainly is nothing just to be one, to be without a conscious feeling. It is something to have a baby come into the world by way of them but it certainly is not very much to have been the little thing that was once all them.

It is something to have a baby come into the world through them. It is nothing just to be one.

In this book there will be discussion of pairs of people and their relation, short sketches of innumerable ones, Ollie, Paul; Paul, Fernande; Larr and me, Jane and me, Hattie and Ollie, Margaret and Phillip, Claudel and Mrs Claudel, Claudel and Martin, Maurice and Jane, Helen and John, everybody I know, Murdock and Elise, Larr and Elise, Larr and Marie, Jenny Fox and me. Sadie and Julia, everybody I can think of ever, narrative after narrative of pairs of people, Martin and Mrs Herford, Bremer and Hattie, Jane and Nellie, Henrietta and Jane and some one and another one, everybody Michael and us and Victor Herbert Farmert and us, Bessie Hessel and men.

Someone if they dreamed that their mother was dead when they woke up would not put on mourning. Some if they believed in dreams as much as the one who dreamed that their mother was dead and did not put on mourning would if they had dreamed that their mother was dead would put on mourning. Hattie if she dreamed that her mother was dead would not put on mourning. Mrs Claudel if she believed in dreams as much as Hattie and had dreamed that her mother was dead would put on mourning.

Some would be surprised that some could dream that their mother was dead and then not put on mourning. Some would be surprised that any one having dreamed that their mother was dead could think about then putting on mourning.

Some people know other ones. This is being a history of kinds of men and women, when they were babies and then children and then grown men and women and then old ones and the one and the ones they were in relation with at any time, at some time.

This is a general leading up to a description of Olive who is an exception in being one being living. Then there can be a description of the Pauline group and of the Pauline quality in Ollie and then there can be a complete description of the Pauline group and there can be a description of ones who could be ones who are not at

all married ones a whole group of them of hundreds of them, and they grade from Eugenia to Mabel Arbor who is not like them in being one who could have been one not being a married one. Then once more one can begin with the Pauline group and Sophie among them, and then one can go through whole groups of women to Jane Sands and her relation to men and so to a group of men and ending up with Paul. Then one can take a fresh start and begin with Fanny and Helen and run through servants and adolescents to Lucy and so again to women and to men and how they love, how women love and how they do not love, how men do not love, how men do love, how women and men do and do not love and so on to men and women in detail and so on to Simon as a type of man.

Then going completely into the flavour question how persons have the flavour they do there can be given short sketches of Farmert, Alden, of Henderson and any other man one can get having very much flavour and describing the complications in them one can branch off into women, Myrtle, Constance, Nine Beckworth, and others to Ollie and then say of them that it is hard to combine their flavour with other feelings in them but it has been done and is being done and then describe Pauline and from Pauline go on to all kinds of women that come out of her, and then go on to Jane, and her group and then come back to describe Mabel Arbor and her group, then Eugenia's group always coming back to flavour idea and Pauline type, then go on to adolescents, mixing and mingling and contrasting. Then start afresh with Grace's group, practical, pseudo-masculine. Then start afresh with Fanny and Helen and business women, earthy type, and kind of intellect. Enlarge on this and then go back to flavour, to pseudo-flavour Mildred's group, and then to the concentrated groups.

From then on complicate and complete giving all kinds of pictures and start in again with the men. Here begin with Victor Herbert group and ramify from that. Simon is bottom of Alden and Bremer and the rest. Go on then to how one would love and be loved as a man or as a woman by each kind that could or would love any one.

Any one being started in doing something is going on completely doing that thing, a little doing that thing, doing something that is that thing. Any one not knowing anything of any one being one starting that one in doing that thing is one doing

that thing completely doing that thing and being then one living in some such thing.

Some are ones being certain that any one doing a thing and having been started in doing that thing are ones not having been taught to do that thing, are ones who have come to do that thing. Some are certain that not any one has been taught to do a thing if that one is doing a thing and not any one is remembering that that thing is something that has just been done.

Doing something is interesting to some if not any one is remembering that that thing has just been done. Doing something is interesting to some if not any one is remembering that any one was one beginning doing some such thing. Doing something is interesting to some when those are remembering that every one has been doing that thing in having been shown that thing. Doing something is interesting to some when they are certain that all having been doing that thing have been completely dead and have not been forgotten. Doing something is interesting to some when they are certain that very many being dead were ones completely doing that thing. Doing things are interesting to some when some one is beginning to be finishing having done that thing. Doing something is interesting to some when they are remembering that every one could be doing that thing. Doing something is interesting to some when they are certain that everyone should do that thing.

When some are very little ones they very completely do some thing. Some are certain that every one when they are very little ones are ones who could very completely do some thing. Some when they are very little ones very completely then do something. Some then find in this thing that beginning and ending is not at all something being existing. Some find in this thing that beginning and ending is not at all interesting. Some are finding in this thing that nothing is satisfying. Some are finding in this thing that some other thing is interesting. Some are finding in this thing that any one is being one being living. Some are finding in this thing that every one is one being existing. Some are finding in this thing that very many are being existing and are not completing then anything.

Some are certain that when any one is a very little one they are not then beginning anything. Some are finding in this thing that beginning and ending is being existing. Some are finding in this thing that beginning and ending are not being existing. Some



are not finding anything in this thing. Some are finding in this thing that any one is being existing. Some are finding in this thing that some are being existing. Some are finding in this thing not any one is being existing.

Any one being one being a little one is being then one having some, having someone knowing something of that thing. Some being a little one are asking then how some other one could have been one being a little one. Some being a little one are one then not needing anything or asking anything. Some being a little one are forgetting then having been asking anything. Some being a very little one are not then needing being one being existing.

Some are not needing that any one being a little one is then being existing. Some are not needing any one being a little one. Some are not needing any one having been a little one. Some are not needing that any one has been one being existing. Some are needing that everyone is being one being existing.

Being a little one is what any one being existing is being one knowing is existing. Being a little one is then existing enough for every one to be knowing something of some such thing.

Any one loving any one is being one in some way loving someone. There can be complete lists of ones loving. There can be complete lists of ones loving again and again.

If there is a thin thing and some one is seeing through that thing if there is a thin thing, very many are telling about seeing through that thing. If there is a thin thing some are saying that it is like some other thing. If there is a thin thing some are denying that it is a thin thing. If there is a thin thing some are not hearing what someone has been saying who has been saying that the thin thing is a thin thing.

There are thin things and some of them are hanging in front of something. There are thin things and they are nicely thin things, things nicely being thin enough and letting then all the light in. If there are thin things they are thin enough to hang and let light in. If there are thin things it is certain that they are like some other things. There are thin things and any one not having seen them is not completely certain that they are thin things. They are thin things the things that are thin things and some have seen them and have said then that those things are thin things.

A man in his living has many things inside him. He has in him his being certain that he is being one seeing what he is look-

ing at just then, he has in him the kind of certain feeling of seeing what he is looking at just then that makes a kind of them of which a list will be made in making out a list of everyone. This feeling of being certain of seeing what he is looking at just then comes from the being in him that is being then in him, comes from the mixing in him of being then one being living and being one then being certain of that thing.

In all of the men being living some are more certain than other ones who are very much like them are more certain of seeing the thing at which they are looking.

In all men in their daily living, in every moment they are living, in all of them, in all the time they are being living, in the times they are doing, in the times they are not doing something, in all of them there is always something in them of being certain of seeing the thing at which they are looking. In all of them in all the millions of men being living there is some feeling of being certain of seeing the thing at which they are looking. Some of the many millions of men being living have stronger the feeling of being certain of seeing the thing at which they are looking than others of them.

There are many millions of men being living and many millions are very certain that they are seeing the thing at which they are looking. In many men there is a mixture in them of being strongly certain of seeing the thing at which they are looking and just being certain that they are seeing the thing at which they are looking. In some men there is a mixture in them of being certain of being strongly certain of not being strongly certain, of being quite certain, of being uncertain that they are seeing the thing at which they are all looking. In all the men who are being living there is something of being certain of seeing the thing at which they are looking. In all the men who are being living there is a kind of feeling about being certain of seeing that at which they are looking.

Loving is loving and being a baby is something. Loving is loving. Being a baby is something. Having been a baby is something. Not having been a baby is something that comes not to be anything and that is a thing that is beginning. Having been a baby is something having been going on being existing. Not having been a baby is something not being existing. Loving is loving. Not having been a baby could be everything. Having been a baby is something. Being a baby is something. Loving is something. Loving is loving. Not being a baby is something.

## LETTER IN SOLITUDE

GENEVIEVE TAGGARD

Here are autumn certainties:  
I will love you and the trees  
Go on yellowing and the sun  
Stand and pour its radiance down.

Count the seasonal certainties:  
I will love you and the trees  
Colour like a carnival,  
Colour and refuse to fall,  
To show a new aspect of trees  
More nearly like themselves than these.

I will love you as I have said:  
After all the leaves are shed,  
And the sky is fastened down,  
And the valley depth is brown,  
And the ruts begin to freeze,  
There are other certainties.

Surely love you, but with none  
Of that radiant tint of sun;  
As if a cloud had curled across  
The sun, and clung like lichen moss;

Love you surely, but in a prone  
Dogged way, more like a stone;  
As if a stone's touch gave a cue  
To a clearer love of you.

However absently the eyes  
Thinking their inner thoughts may stare  
They match within, the sharpened size  
Of hillshapes in the cutting air.

## LETTER IN SOLITUDE

And so, by seeing uncovered ground  
And outlines gaunter all the time  
I see love also winter-bound  
And think more simply into rhyme.

And since love gets its tempered sense  
From the large fact of altering earth,  
I love the winter, stubborn, dense,  
And love the storm my love is worth.



THE PARTY. BY VANESSA BELL



## LONDON LETTER

*August, 1927*

**S**INCE my last letter to *THE DIAL* I have made a journey, not indeed to Lhasa or Easter Island, but to the most inaccessible of the historic countries of the world, Persia. I have seen Karnak and Baalbek, Palmyra and Persepolis, the Kremlin and the deserted palaces on the banks of the Neva, already falling into Piranesi ruin; I have lost a few illusions, and gained a few new ones; and I have returned to find London still enjoying a Conservative Government and Rose Marie. The solidity of London strikes me with new force as impregnable. Coal Strikes and Surréalisme, the Butcher of Hanover and the Queen of Roumania, are equally impotent to disturb the solemn gait of its imagination. Our interests are so widely dispersed that no incident seems of more than local importance. The British Empire resembles one of those organisms so primitive that the amputation of a limb does not affect the lethargic beating of its heart.

And I, who was born in London, probably show a similar stubbornness in my reactions. Even the spectacle of an Oriental country governing itself could not convert me to Imperialism. I am not a nationalist, I would rather be governed by a foreigner who interfered little with my life than be tyrannized over by a compatriot; security of life and personal liberty seem to me more important than self-determination; I suspect that foreign rule may on the whole be often beneficial to the governed, but I know that it is poison to the governors. If I were an Indian, I might be in favour of the British Raj: being an Englishman, I deplore it. Similarly the spectacle of Bolshevism and Fascism in action only increases my prejudice in favour of more old-fashioned forms of government, and the analogous reaction against common sense which has swept a whole generation of the more intelligent Frenchmen off their feet leaves me acutely curious, indeed, but in no way infected with this revived romanticism. I wonder, however, whether this English imperviousness may not have a deadening effect upon creative artists. Art, like love, may be thought of as a disease, or at least a hypertrophy, of the imagination. For proconsuls it is essential to keep calm, for artists it is essential

not to. The two writers whom I increasingly incline to consider the most important in contemporary England, Virginia Woolf and Sacheverell Sitwell, both let the solid, factual earth fall from beneath them with the suddenness and decision of aeroplanes. They retain only just enough control—and that not all the time—to prevent themselves soaring beyond where it is possible for the passengers of their imagination to breathe.

“How good do you think the Sitwells are?” is an imbecile question that one is often asked, as if there were a firm “Edith, Osbert, and Sacheverell Sitwell, Ltd.” all of whose products were of the same sort. Actually each of the three is very different from the others. Edith Sitwell’s talent is intensely, deliberately, feminine. Her poems are delicate, scrupulously worked, embroideries; they gain, rather than lose, by being set to music, and bear rather the same relation to Sacheverell’s poems that applied art has to painting. Osbert Sitwell possesses an acuity of observation which often conceals from his critics the power of his imagination. His novel, *Before the Bombardment*,<sup>1</sup> suffers, I think, from its realistic and imaginative qualities being insufficiently fused. The verisimilitude of the old ladies astounds me, the satirical comments entertain me, but it is the *bravura* passages of imaginative description that I most seriously admire. I doubt if the novel is his most appropriate medium, but Sacheverell Sitwell, both in prose and verse, seems to have discovered exactly how to exploit his genius. In childhood his sensibility to his surroundings must have been dangerously intense, and in *All Summer in a Day*<sup>2</sup> he reveals to those who know the country the influence of the English North where he was brought up. It is a rolling wooded country, the summits picturesquely crowned by antique mansions, the valleys scattered with coal-dumps like pyramids and blasting furnaces of colossal size. Near historic Hardwicke and the unfinished pile of Bolsover, above a vast artificial lake, the long façade of Renishaw hides among enormous trees, a Jacobean house to which a Georgian architect has added two unconvincingly castellated wings. It was through the ghostly corridors of this Castle of Otranto, and under the smoke-darkened umbrage of its park that the child promenaded his feverish imagination, and

<sup>1</sup> Reviewed in *THE DIAL*, April 1927, page 338.

<sup>2</sup> Reviewed in *THE DIAL*, January 1927, page 66.



beauty revealed itself, perilous as a goddess, among the yew hedges and fountains of the garden, where statues exiled from Italy emerge lamenting from the morning mists. The night echoed with the dim thunder of titanic hammers, and reddened with remote infernal fires. Generations of sporting squires grew up unscathed in this unlikely atmosphere, until three children who were already poets took here their solemn walks. And they remain distracted, almost aghast, and burdened with visions which they must reveal.

Another house which has shaped the imagination of the children who have played along its corridors is Knole. Here is nothing exotic or sinister, no furnaces or Italian gardens, but a vast park where deer have lived since it was unenclosed forest; gentle ferny glades, scattered oaks, cauliflowery elms, and an unregimented English garden from the Age of Sentiment, adorned only with meandering paths, smooth turf, gay flower-beds, and an occasional urn. The house, with its four towers, seven courtyards, and unnumbered rooms, belongs to the age when palaces were still fortified. The greater part was built during the sixteenth century, and like our slowly built Gothic cathedrals it sometimes appears organic rather than organized, a growth of nature rather than a work of art. There is nothing in it of artifice or affectation, but suites of rooms with their original tapestries, tall plume-crowned beds, chairs sumptuous with Genoa velvets, tables and mirrors of carved silver. No ghosts walk here: these Lely beauties in their oyster-coloured silks, these Van Dyck cavaliers, these Gainsborough *cognoscenti* and smiling Hoppner children, are untroubled in the grave, one feels, as they were in life. The Eighteenth-Century Duke gave his Garter, most splendid of English Orders, to be worn in the hair of his Italian dancer, and engraved his arms, with an equal contempt for convention, upon the shield of a lead Discobolus. An artificial Gothic ruin which he constructed in his park was concession enough to the fashions of his age. Here another family lives with literary talent. Gorboduc, which has claims to be the first English tragedy, was by a Lord Sackville, the Earl of Dorset who wrote *To All You Ladies Now On Land* was his descendant, and the present Lord Sackville's daughter, Miss V. Sackville-West and her cousin, Mr Edward Sackville West continue the tradition. Miss Sackville-West made a reputation with *The Dragon in Shallow Waters*, *The Heir*, and *Grey Wethers*, and it seemed her destiny to turn out a succession of

romantic novels, written with alarming facility, each more popular and less distinguished than its predecessor. Suddenly she wrote a short novel, *Seducers in Ecuador*, which had something of the clumsiness and much of the promise which one finds in the first works of a writer who is going to be worth his salt. Then there was a silence, and last autumn she published a long poem called *The Land*, and a book of travel, *Passenger to Teheran*, which seem to me to place her among the English writers worth serious discussion. She remains a romantic in her sensibility, but she no longer seeks to satisfy her appetite for adventure with flounderings among highly coloured and sonorous words. She has given the binoculars a twist, and the objects of her vision are now focused and clear-cut instead of being washed in a hazy indistinctness. *The Land* is a Georgic more akin in inspiration to the work of Cobbett than of Virgil or Thomson. Though traditional in manner, it is constructed on a new system of often distant rhymes which knits the poem together very effectively. It is steady in tempo, though interspersed with lyrics, and makes itself felt, as a long poem should, not by isolated splendours, but by a cumulation of even tones.

Edward Sackville West is too young to be judged. He has written two novels, *Piano Quintet* and *The Ruin*,<sup>1</sup> the latter of which was written, though not published, before the first. His writing betrays the same facility and love of trappings which were found in his cousin's earlier books, besides a strong influence of D. H. Lawrence. But he has a remarkable gift for informing a scene with significance and stamping it upon the reader's memory. His characters are inadequately distinct from one another, but in describing their relations Mr Sackville West shows a remarkable fineness of apprehension. His work is clearly the fruit of hyperaesthesia, and he is at his best when concerned with exacerbated nerves. These, I think, are a subject for comedy rather than for tragedy; and I believe that if Mr Sackville West would for a while surrender his dark pomps, the Comic Spirit might discover in him a delicate interpreter.

RAYMOND MORTIMER

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<sup>1</sup> Reviewed in *THE DIAL*, August 1927, page 172.

# BOOK REVIEWS

## A TRAGIC COMEDIAN

BLUE VOYAGE. By *Conrad Aiken*. 12mo. 318 pages. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.50.

**W**ILLIAM DEMAREST of Yonkers—"this sad facetious Demarest," whose mind is the theatre of Mr Aiken's many-coloured dramatization of our modern sort of consciousness—Demarest believes himself of slight account. An author he admits he is, but an author without authority, an author with little to give beyond "aid and comfort to a few verbal lunatics like himself." His self-severity may or may not be too severe, but it is a sign of the sophistication which makes him so good a mirror in which to observe our doubtful, flippant, contemporary selves. He may indulge his rooted scepticism in inner ironies at the thought that one can really know oneself; nevertheless he indicates a certain accomplishment in what we must think is that feat. At least his agile appraisals traverse most, perhaps all, of the angles of self-scrutiny, and he is aware of himself with certainty, aware of himself as it is not given all to be. Further, his immitigable zeal to pillory his ego in self-analysis is eminently justified in the pictured significance which, apparently unaided, he makes of the business, though behind his extremity of consciousness there is of course the extremer consciousness of his creator.

And however ironically he may nurse the "neurosis" that makes him a spinner of words, he does not escape its magic; nor do we. Indeed that neurosis, that poeticism, makes possible the brilliant being, semi-symbolic but pictorially real, which the odd waggish world of his mind achieves before our eyes. This, his tenth voyage to England might seem routine enough in the taking, though romantically intended. Yet from the moment we step with him up the second cabin gangway and down to the stateroom with "the red carpet and the usual smell," we are in a far from routine sphere

of effect. True, the routine things of shipboard all are here, seen, smelled, and felt with sardonic actualism by Demarest—"bugles blowing in sour corridors," "waves crashing against black portholes at midnight," "shuffling stewards" with faces "like cauliflowers," the second cabin smoking-room with its endman's jokes and alley tales, the daily banalities, the "plural" morals. But they are mysteriously modified passing into the exceedingly various picture of his consciousness; amid the multi-toned lights of his thought they compose with precision in the persuasive and disturbing modes of art. His ship-companions—Hay-Lawrence "refined without taste, intelligent without originality," Mrs Faubion and Miss Dacey, those shady casuals, poisonous Peggy Davis, Smith of New Orleans, with his Indian-summer amorousness, granite Silberstein—all indubitable, all here, their sins hot in their hearts; but in the mind of Mr Demarest, with its curious double lights of irony and poetry, what puppets of thought they become, and yet what far figures!

And what of Cynthia, whom he was travelling to England to see, unexpectedly here, too, in the distance of the first cabin, Cynthia, looking into whose eyes on a previous voyage he had felt the walls of himself dissolved, felt admitted to the intimacy of spirit in which words are a superfluity, profoundly felt "for the first time since he had been a child" that he was "looking into the eyes of God"? What of Cynthia, now and here, "loosing a gay arrow, explanatory but not apologetic, in the quick, laughing announcement '*I'm going to be married!*' . . . As if she had said '*I liked you—but how much better I like *him!*' "*

Cynthia secure in a multiplying distance, Cynthia shaking down the four corners of his cosmos? She lives in the same double light as the other companions of his voyage. Outwardly she is the beautiful young person of supreme though difficult charm. But this Cynthia does not detain us; it is the Cynthia of the mind of Mr Demarest who signifies. She is a figure of the strophe, as the various ladies of his not uninteresting past are figures in the antistrophe, of the frivolously and mournfully complex chorus of his thoughts.

She is the key to the long distinction he is drawing between the love of the spirit and the loves of the flesh, a distinction which could hardly be more elaborate with less appearance of elaboration. No doubt in our subsiding day it merits the best draughts-

manship. At all events Mr Demarest appears not unqualified for the best, for as to his powers of expression there could not be the least shade of doubt, and as to the loves of the flesh it is evident that his ample roving had been neither indiscriminate nor quite Hesperidean; while as to the love of the spirit there was the authority of his vision, which if momentary was unmistakable. It was more than the happiness of his conversations with Cynthia; the mystic effect of it stayed after these had come to their term. It was a sense of kingdom in the unity of human spirits. It had substance in the absoluteness with which on a particular night he could specifically see and share the shining intercourse of the five of his thoughts—Cynthia, Smith, Faubion, Silberstein, himself—intercourse which was unity of the diverse made intelligible, intercourse in which language was used playfully, or out of necessary courtesy to the reader, since those who used it did not need it.

But this fine and utter vision collapses in unwinding discords, for the author is too confirmed an actualist to mar his symbol of our interior being as it is. The subtle trammels of scepticism and the grosser trammels of the flesh once more entangle his figure of frustration; thus the sad frivolity, the facetious tragedy concludes its circle.

CHARLES K. TRUEBLOOD

## IRREPRESSIBLE BENVENUTO

**THE LIFE OF BENVENUTO CELLINI.** *Translated by Anne Mac Donnell. Illustrated. 10mo. 368 pages. E. P. Dutton & Company. \$3.*

**BENVENUTO CELLINI, Memoirs by Himself.** *Thomas Roscoe's translation revised. 18mo. 535 pages. The World's Classics. The Oxford University Press, American Branch. 80 cents.*

**THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF BENVENUTO CELLINI.** *Translated by John Addington Symonds. 16mo. 485 pages. The Modern Library. 95 cents.*

**B**ENVENUTO'S is the supreme instance of temperament in art. Some of him appears in every artist, but he includes in his own character everything that has ever been associated with artists since art began. Greatness in temperament is not quite the same as greatness in art. He was, it is to be feared, rather mediocre as an artist, and his masterpiece, the Perseus, which is still admired, appears to have been an extraordinary fluke in a career given over to the manufacture of over-ornamented silverware.

The fame, however, which is probably more wide-spread than that of Praxiteles, depends entirely upon these memoirs, the liveliest, the most vivid, the most amusing of those that have survived from the renaissance. They explain perfectly why the renaissance had great artists. There was so much credence given to endeavour in that direction. Every artist had the benefit of the doubt. Untutored "rough guys," like Benvenuto, saw in art an easy chance to hob-nob with the great upon even terms. It was work, too, in those days, when sculptors cast their own pieces and really "did" their own work, that not only appealed to "he-men" but required a certain he-ness in its followers.

The translation by John Addington Symonds has long been accepted as the best and probably will continue in demand. It

has a frankness of speech that is astonishing when the Victorian prudery of its period is considered.

In fact the earlier translation by Thomas Roscoe has now had all its originally expurgated passages restored, especially for the contemporary *jeunes filles* who wish to know everything. Miss Mac Donnell's version, like the early Thomas Roscoe's, is also good; apparently it would be impossible to fail in translating Benvenuto; and in addition, she has been given a "library" edition, with illustrations, erudite notes, and an introduction by Henry Wilson.

HENRY McBRIDE

## CRITICISM IN AMERICA

AMERICAN CRITICISM 1926. *Edited by William A. Drake. 10mo. 368 pages. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$2.50.*

**M**R DRAKE has done a substantial service to American letters by bringing to the attention of public and critics alike the general tone and standard of our present-day critical evaluations. On the whole he has used tact and discrimination in his selection. That this selection betrays the sterility and provincialism as well as the potential vigour and culture of our productions in this field is, I take it, not too greatly Mr Drake's concern. The book is, with certain omissions, representative of American criticism to-day, which in itself would seem justification enough for its appearance.

Perhaps what gradually designs itself as most apparent in studying these twenty-nine essays is the fact that the major number of them fall within rather easily definable classifications. In Dr Canby, for instance, we discover an example of what is perhaps most meagre and discouraging, a circumstance especially to be regretted since Dr Canby, as one of a group of men and women who decide for forty thousand innocent citizens "the best book of the month," has it so eminently within his power to aid in elevating the taste of the public. But do we find anywhere in Dr Canby's essay, and we have no reason to believe that this particular piece is not representative of his most considered views and diction, do we find anywhere here signs of that reverence for life, that scholarly respect for literature, or that revolt against "the stupidity which is dead to the substance, and the vulgarity which is dead to form," which we have a right to demand from the arbiters of our intellectual appreciations? Surely a critic in order to be listened to with gravity must first of all prove himself vulnerable to life in all its manifestations; himself an awful reservoir of life's strange and vital secrets, he must be without fear or prejudice in unburdening for his own philosophic comprehensions those stores of elicited insights, of hopes thwarted, of malice avowed and expelled, of



resignation transformed into a noble and forbearing clemency. He must have vigour, intensity, passion, seriousness, call it what you will, that fierce, uncompromising, uncontaminated sobriety of nature which is undeceived by triviality and unabashed by truth. His perceptions, educated by experience and reinforced by knowledge, must aid him to differentiate what is commonplace, affected, and false from what is sincere, original, and of lasting worth. Let me quote now certain typical sentences of Dr Canby's; the italics are mine.

"The tiny minority that can digest thoroughgoing criticism is interested chiefly in its own quarrels . . . and *the generally cultivated are impatient of so unsiced a dish*. . . . Even University professors with a record of Arnold-like dignity *loosen-up* when they come to town and *begin to pat young authors on the head and tell what happened to their complexes* when they first read James Joyce." And again: "If the popular emotions are exploited by the vulgar and the cynical, nevertheless the jolly fellows who *scatter vitamins where they go and put rouge on the pallid cheeks of routine existence* are blessing their generation."

Dr Canby's closing words are, "*Ego should take some reducing exercises* before we weary of his grossness." Where do we find in this sort of writing any vibrancy, any single reverberation descended to us from that signal company of the past whose superb rectitude still remains our present inspiration? Does Dr Canby really care about literature? Has he any true appreciation of the use of words, those salvaged remnants, moulded and coloured by subtle, multitudinous associations, sent on their flight by a heat maintained in the human heart, and given their direction by a light undimmed in the human mind? And yet we know that Dr Canby is capable of dignified and considered composition, that with his academic training and his proven interest in English literature he could, did he care to, give us less paltry instruction than this, less obvious obeisance to the surface vulgarity of life which he, with us, might be the first to deplore.

In Mr Sinclair Lewis we have an example of another type of offence, and although I have always had a respect for Mr Lewis'

honesty and for his sense of life, I can find no excuse for this especial sort of braggadocio, for the aggressive incursions of the pugilist into the halls of literature, halls where good manners have for so long prevailed over raised voices and advancing fists. I agree with Mr Arnold Whitridge in his admirable essay entitled *Can Critics Be Gentlemen?* and I wish that Mr Lewis could take to heart the words of this laudable descendant of an illustrious grandfather. Lacking the patience and subtlety to disentangle what is genuine from what is pretentious and pedantic Mr Lewis tumbles them all together, labelling everything which has not upon it the stamp of his own personal quality of breezy commonplaceness, as silly or priggish. A few quotations will suffice to show Mr Lewis' general attitude as well as his manner of expressing it: "a real he-guy and not one of these knitting champions"; "the skinny lady gone out for vice"; "your characters wriggle through a void."

Miss Agnes Repplier I might select to typify a certain well-bred sterility of mind, a mild, enervating, acquiescent approach to the most seemly aspects of life and of literature, an approach everywhere current in our popularly accredited intellectual monthlies, and one which is to me, perhaps, even more discouraging than are Mr Lewis' bad manners. Miss Repplier evokes the past with no real awareness of the present, and therefore with no communicable fervour for those approved classics which she finds so restoring to her spirits. She attacks Mr Osbert Sitwell for himself attacking some of the ostensible insincerities of our day, but her attack has not even edge enough to arouse either our support or our antagonism.

It is a relief to turn from the confined style of this decorous lady to the judicial estimates of Mr Waldo Frank and Mr Edmund Wilson, and I should like to add Mary M. Colum were Mrs Colum one of our own compatriots. But even in Mr Frank do I not discover in the interests of his contention an almost captious injustice to a writer who, in her time, has shown herself as estranged, as roused, by hypocrisy and turpitude, as has ever Mr Frank himself? One whose irony, whose depth of nature, and whose artistic scrupulosity, no matter how diluted in these latter days, have been amply enough demonstrated to gain for her a permanent place in literature. I refer to Mrs Wharton. And

likewise, in Mr Wilson's summing-up of our literary destitution, a summing-up with which I am so largely in accord, I seem to discern a certain leniency toward his own favourites somewhat out of keeping with his sober and sagacious temper of mind. And need one with Mr Wilson's stringency of literary requirement, permit the dignity of his style to be marred by so offensively slipshod an expression as "poetic motors" getting "stalled"?

In the writings of Mr Logan Pearsall Smith and Mr Charles K. Trueblood I find no lapses of this sort. Here, if not the most trenchant, is the most polished, the most aesthetically pleasing, criticism of our day. Mr Pearsall Smith through the refinement of his diction, the mobility of his perceptions, the culture of his style, renders it possible for us to share with him the very quality of his own lingering and courtly response to those perished scenes, those deciduous emotions, so graciously re-evoked for our delight. And Mr Trueblood, a direct descendant of Walter Pater, has his master's intellectual chastity, his capacity for fine measurements, for making over with the imagination the particular piece contemplated, for demanding from his readers a sensible degree of heightened consciousness, and for arriving without strain or apparent artifice at "those finer accommodations of speech to the vision within" which is the especial prerogative and reward of poets. I have but one fault to find with Mr Trueblood; the quotations he inserts to point his argument instead of bearing out his scrupulously specified assumptions turn me in exactly the opposite direction, for I do not at all like God referred to as a "noted clergyman," nor do I care for the expression "Vesuvius at home," nor very much for "admiring bogs" and "stiles of pearl," nor have I ever discovered in the poetry of Emily Dickinson convincing proof of that matchless intensity of being, that deep natural simplicity, which Mr Trueblood assures me were hers. Rather have I found a restricted imagination sometimes authentically moved and striving, but too often compressed into artfully contrived verse, and a *simpleesse* devoid of the true penetrating expressiveness of a living soul seeking for understanding and reassurance in a universe singular and obdurate; so this leads me to believe, either that Mr Trueblood responds in excess of the stimulus confronted, or that he and I, in spite of my appreciation for his own accomplished craft, have

different conceptions of what is meant by life, and by really great poetry.

It has been instructive to note how certain types of writing appear in certain magazines; thus the names of Miss Reppier and Zona Gale, both authors who view life without serious misgiving or incautious curiosity, are to be found in *The Yale Review*, those of Dr Canby, Sinclair Lewis, and Mr Duffus, brisk, unabashed, and jocular, in *The American Mercury*, while *The New Republic* may claim the honour of Mr Frank and Mr Wilson. In all justice to Dr Canby perhaps I should add that Mrs Colum's admirable essay on Stuart P. Sherman was published in *The Saturday Review*.

What is to become of criticism in America? This is the question which presents itself as one lays aside this challenging book. From what quarter are our young and exceptional writers to look for guidance, encouragement, understanding? On the one hand we frequently find that the interpreters of the newer forms in literature are too prone to be wilfully partisan, fanciful, or inept in lucid explanation; they mistake the otiose for the inventive, the bizarre or lawless for the original, and have no deep, integrated, personal taste to instruct them when to take offence and when to extend praise. The more discriminating, on the other hand, those whose feeling for style, for the flexible and fastidious handling of words in the interests of intensity, are often deficient in ideas and energy; they merely reflect their own momentary sensations as they read appreciatively or with disapproval. It is unnecessary to state that the rank and file of our reviewers, those who publish their headlong opinions in the daily press, opinions which are read with such credulity by thousands of naïve readers are for the most part as unfitted for the task of education as would be a group of alert young advertisers of up-to-date commodities. They merely transcribe their own commonplace reactions in a commonplace way. And yet with the desperate insistence of an inexpugnable, un-succored necessity the voices of our unrecognized poets and prose writers rise up from this "waste land" crying out to be heard, to be judged fairly, to be chastised if necessary, but to be chastised with penetration and direction. May one perhaps draw solace from the reflection that while crassness and stupidity and lack of imaginative sympathy may blight and shrivel what is shy and

authentically exquisite, yet they cannot drive down and keep permanently imprisoned what has within it the true flight and fertility of genius. And perhaps even those others, those sensitive and rare intelligences who sink too quickly under censure or neglect, may discover in "that virile apprehension of the true nature of things" which is the resultant enlightenment of such misuse, compensation enough for belonging to that small group of the elect whose evasive values have, indeed, never in any age found favour with more than a few people.

ALYSE GREGORY

## CAMPS AND MUSEUMS

HERODOTUS. Volume IV. *Translated by A. D. Godley. Edited by E. Capps, T. E. Page, and W. H. D. Rouse.* PAUSANIAS. Description of Greece. Volume II. *Translated by W. H. S. Jones and H. A. Ormerod. Edited by E. Capps, T. E. Page, and W. H. D. Rouse. 16mo. The Loeb Classical Library. London: William Heinemann; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. \$2.50 each volume.*

TO turn from Herodotus to Pausanias in these two recent volumes of the Loeb Library is to be made realize how long Greece has been "Greece, but living Greece no more." The Greek of the time of Marcus Aurelius writes of his country as it was the fashion in the eighteenth century to write of Italy: he describes shrines, monuments, extant works of art; he tells the histories and the traditions of particular people he has come amongst. Greece has been finished for a long time—for three hundred years, let us say, when he comes to describe the country. Herodotus describes camps, Pausanias, towns that seem not to have an inhabitant; Herodotus tells of victories, Pausanias tells of trophies; Herodotus describes men, Pausanias, statues.

This second volume of Pausanias contains his books 3, 4, and 5, with their descriptions of Laconia, Messenia, and Elis; probably they are the least interesting parts of his Description of Greece. The fourth volume of Herodotus, containing books 8 and 9, makes the climax to his great and heroic history. Without Pausanias, as Fraser has said, the antiquities of Greece, for a modern student, would be a labyrinth without a clue, a riddle without an answer. But Herodotus is one of the men who has made it worth while to explore the labyrinth and to get an answer to the riddle.

Pausanias was born to write a Baedeker: he describes honestly and thoroughly; he examines things; he makes his records conscientiously. Much of what he writes has the matter and is in the style of the guide-book of all ages. Hardly ever does the strangeness which must have been in the old sanctuaries that he was

so much interested in, come through his descriptiveness. Only once in the present volume do we get such a passage:

“The Lydians surnamed Persian have sanctuaries in the city named Hierocaesareia and at Hypaepa. In each sanctuary is a chamber, and in the chamber are ashes upon an altar. But the colour of these ashes is not the usual colour of ashes. Entering the chamber a magician piles dry wood upon the altar; he first places a tiara upon his head and then sings to some god or other an invocation in a foreign tongue unintelligible to Greeks, reciting the invocation from a book. So it is without fire that the wood must catch, and bright flames dart from it.”

Now and again there is romantic suggestion in a phrase he uses, as, “So it is no wonder that the white poplar grew first by the Acheron and the wild olive by the Alpheius, and that the dark poplar is a nursling of the Celtic land of the Celtic Eridanus.” Once only does he permit his fancy to break through his literalness: “I have seen the dolphin at Poroselene that rewards the boy for saving his life. It had been damaged by a fisherman and he cured it. I saw this dolphin obeying his call and carrying him whenever he wanted to ride on it.” How prosaic he can be is shown by his treatment of a tradition he had come upon in his tour of Laconia. Imagine how a man of letters of to-day would write of a new story about Helen, and then read how Pausanias does it:

“They say that when Menelaus was dead, and Orestes still a wanderer, Helen was driven out by Nicostratus and Megapenthes and came to Rhodes, where she had a friend in Polyxo, the wife of Tlepolemus. For Polyxo, they say, was an Argive by descent, and when she was already married to Tlepolemus, shared his flight to Rhodes. At the time she was queen of the island, having been left with an orphan boy. They say that this Polyxo desired to avenge the death of Tlepolemus on Helen, now that she had her in her power. So she sent against her, when she was bathing, handmaidens dressed up as Furies, who seized Helen and hanged her on a tree, and for this reason the Rhodians have a sanctuary of Helen of the Tree.”

Naturally when he comes to Elis he is at home: he describes the Temple with the great Olympian Zeus in gold and ivory, the workshop where Pheidias wrought this statue "piece by piece," the various other statues of Zeus, the Temple of Hera, and that strange image of a mare that was called "What maddens horses."

But, compensating for all this literalness, we have, in the description of Messenia, his account of the Messenian resistance to the Lacedaemonians, a spirited re-telling of an heroic history of a national resistance.

It is a memorable story: we have the young Aristomenes restoring their spirit to his beaten people; we have him inflicting defeat upon the Lacedaemonians; we have his project for a daring attack upon Sparta by night from which he is warned by the appearance of the guardians of Sparta, Helen and the Dioscuri; we have his capture of the maidens of Sparta, and his saving them from the young men of his own band—"When Aristomenes attempted to deter them from an action contrary to Greek usage, they paid no attention, so that he was compelled to kill the most disorderly"; we have the capture of Aristomenes by the women who were keeping festival in the place he attacked. "Most of the Messenians were wounded with the knives with which the women sacrificed the victims and the spits on which they pierced and roasted the meat. Aristomenes was struck with the torches and taken alive. Nevertheless he escaped to Messenia during the same night. Archidameia, the priestess of Demeter, was charged with having released him, not for a bribe, but because she had been in love with him before; but she maintained that Aristomenes had escaped by burning through his bonds." We have other captures and escapes: the destruction of the Messenian army through the treachery of the Arcadians who had come to help them; the eleven years' siege of the Messenian stronghold with Aristomenes carrying on guerilla warfare; his capture alive; his being cast into the chasm out of which he escapes by taking hold of the fox that had come to devour the dead; his return; his capture again, and the scene in the house where the woman makes his captors drunk, cuts his bonds, and gives him the sword with which he slays his captors; then the oracle that tells them that the Messenians will be able to hold out until a he-goat drinks of the streams of Nada, and the discovery



that the fig-tree that dips into the stream is known as "the goat," and the resolve by Aristomenes not to let his people know the meaning of the oracle; the Messenian woman who receives a herdsman while her husband is on guard in the citadel; the husband's return, and his telling his wife in the hearing of the herdsman that no guard can be kept upon the unsheltered wall while the dense rain is falling; the herdsman's informing the Lacedaemonians of the state of affairs, and the attack at night in the darkness and the rain, the revelation of the meaning of the oracle; the abandonment of the fortress; then Aristomenes' desperate project for an attack upon Sparta while the Lacedaemonians are plundering his own country; the defeat of that project by the treachery of the Arcadian general, and, at last, the abandonment by Aristomenes of all his designs. "The Arcadians themselves stoned Aristocrates and urged the Messenians to join them. They looked to Aristomenes. But he was weeping, with his eyes fixed on the ground." We can see in the tradition that Pausanias relates so well, not a legend, but an authentic piece of national history—something like the history of Bruce: Aristomenes is a hero of flesh and blood. No doubt, during the century-long Messenian exile his exploits were celebrated in ballads—the story, even as Pausanias relates it, has the stir, the spectacle of good balladry in it: the epic which Pausanias read was perhaps a working-up of such ballads. He gets as many episodes into the twenty-five pages in which he gives the career of Aristomenes as there are in the whole of the Bruce.

What can a reviewer at this hour of the day say of Herodotus—the Herodotus who has described the assembling of the ships at Artemisium, the abandonment of Attica by the Athenians, the battles of Salamis, Plataea, and Mycale? A great story-teller, for once, has been close enough to a series of great actions to render them with the directness and the certitude of one taking part in them. These books should be made compulsory reading for those who think of Greek paganism as freedom from constraint and absorption in some delightful exercises in art and philosophy. Herodotus shows us men who have simplicity and gravity, who are devoted to their state and to their religion; who have given long military service to their country, and who have taken on the responsibilities of command. They are self-seeking; they are often

factionists, but somehow or other they are aware that they stand for a great idea. As we read these books it comes home to us that when allowances have been made for all the factors which can possibly determine the course of history, there is still the will of a people—a will that, at certain moments of history, seems to be able to draw to itself influences that steady and sustain:

“The King with half the east at heel has come from lands of  
morning;

His horses drink the rivers up, his shafts benight the air;  
And he who stands will surely fall, and home there’s no re-  
turning—

The Spartans on the sea-wet rocks sat down and combed their  
hair.”

In spite of dissensions, in spite of the sharp-practices of her chieftains, Hellas is saved, and is saved by those combinations of will and imagination which are creative when they have discipline behind them. Herodotus lets us see what that discipline really was. Hellas is saved! But for how brief a space life is left in her! Only something less than the time between Charlemagne and the discovery of America lies between the camps of Herodotus and the museums of Pausanias.

PADRAIC COLUM

## THE SILURIST

ON THE POEMS OF HENRY VAUGHAN: Characteristics and Intimations. By *Edmund Blunden*. 12mo. 64 pages. R. Cobden-Sanderson. 5s.

MR EDMUND BLUNDEN is very well known as the poet of certain parts of rural England. This little essay on Vaughan ought to interest everyone who likes Mr Blunden's poetry. For Mr Blunden feels warm sympathy towards Vaughan, and makes the reader feel that Blunden and Vaughan really have much in common. The evidence is that Mr Blunden has translated Vaughan's Latin poems with remarkable success. He has succeeded so well that the result is more than a *tour de force*; it seems very like what the poems would have been if Vaughan had written them himself in English. This is in my opinion the best part of the book; and as the poems themselves are pretty and charming, they make the book worth reading.

This is not, strictly speaking, a critical study. It is an "appreciation." Nevertheless, it has some critical value; for Vaughan is in fact more like Blunden than like some images of himself that have been projected; and wherever Vaughan is like Blunden, there Mr Blunden's view of him is right.

One of the aspects of Vaughan which Mr Blunden's study should correct, is that of Vaughan as mystic. There is apt to prevail a critical misconception about any poet who is also suspected of being a mystic. The question whether a poet is a mystic is not, for literary criticism, a question at all. The question is, how far are the poetry and the mysticism one thing? Poetry is mystical when it intends to convey, and succeeds in conveying, to the reader (at the same time that it is real poetry) the statement of a perfectly definite experience which we call the mystical experience. And if it is real poetry it will convey this experience in some degree to every reader who genuinely feels it as poetry. Instead of being obscure, it will be pellucid. I do not care to deny that good poetry can be at the same time a sort of cryptogram of a mysticism only visible to the initiate; only, in that case, the poetry and the

mysticism will be two different things. Some readers have professed to discover in Vaughan the traces of an hermetic philosophy of profound depths. It may be there; if so, it belongs not to literature but to cryptography. The mystical element in Vaughan which belongs to his poetry is there for any one to see; it is "mysticism" only by a not uncommon extension of the term. A genuine mystical *statement* is to be found in the last canto of the *Paradiso*; this is primarily great poetry. An equally genuine mysticism is expressed in the verses of St John of the Cross; this is not a statement, but a riddling expression; it belongs to great mysticism, but not to great poetry. Vaughan is neither a great mystic nor a very great poet; but he has a peculiar kind of feeling which Mr Blunden is qualified to appreciate.

Vaughan is in some ways the most modern—that is to say, the most nineteenth-century—of the so-called metaphysical poets of the seventeenth century. He has much more in common with the age to which Mr Blunden belongs than Donne, or Crashaw, or Herbert, or Benlowes. A poem to which Mr Blunden seems particularly attached is *The Retreat*, the poem of Vaughan which has become famous as the precursor of the *Ode on Intimations of Immortality* of Wordsworth. The comparison is of course (it is a tradition of criticism, not an invention of Mr Blunden's) unfair to Vaughan and to Wordsworth also. The two poems have little in common; Wordsworth's *Ode* is a superb piece of verbiage, and Vaughan's poem is a simple and sincere statement of feeling. But Mr Blunden's praise of this poem, and praise of this sort of poetry which is reminiscent of childhood and its imagined radiance, is significant of the weakness of both Vaughan and Blunden.

"Lamb's dream in prose, 'The Child Angel,' appears to have turned upon a reminiscence of Vaughan. . . . There is a general strange correspondence between the essay and the poem; yet not so strange, for what was Elia by his own confession but a man in love with his childhood?"

And so forth; but it does not occur to Mr Blunden that this love of one's own childhood, a passion which he appears to share with Lamb and Vaughan, is anything but a token of greatness. We all know the mood; and we can all, if we choose to relax to that

extent, indulge in the luxury of reminiscence of childhood; but if we are at all mature and conscious, we refuse to indulge this weakness to the point of writing and poetizing about it; we know that it is something to be buried and done with, though the corpse will from time to time find its way up to the surface. About Charles Lamb I know little, and care less; but this reminiscent humour of Vaughan, upon which Mr Blunden has pounced so delightedly, has always seemed to me one of the reasons for his inferiority to the best of his contemporaries. It is not a common weakness at that time; it is rather prophetic; and it can be recognized and diagnosed by any one who has read Rousseau's *Confessions*. "The very word *young*," Mr Blunden tells us complacently, "is henceforward charged with a yearning pathos in his mind"; and that yearning pathos, we might add, is exactly the material out of which poetry is not made. Vaughan's apparent love of the country and country life, presently connected by Mr Blunden with his yearning pathos of childhood, comes also to assume a neurasthenic complexion; and the fact that Vaughan was a stout Royalist, with some experience of civil scuffling, and a stout Anglican, does not atone for it. Even Vaughan's religion is a little suspect; Mr Blunden apologizes for such severity as Vaughan displays in the matter of feasts and revels; and Vaughan's Anglicanism is far from the cheerfulness and democracy of Laud, and rather near to a sombre Welsh non-conformity.

Vaughan is usually considered as the poet of occasional fine lines, and of no perfect poem. Mr Blunden would like to take more of him than that, and make him out a complete nature poet like himself. "The Vaughan landscape," he says, "is inimitable. Its clouds are so fleecy, its winds so eager to address and arouse man, its sunbeams so vital, its pasturing life so unalarmed and unalterable, that it needs no signature." And more in the same strain. The effect is to obliterate our memory of such lines as

"I saw Eternity the other Night . . ."

and leave only a mild pastoral poet—that is to say, a poet who, enjoying fresh air and green hillsides, occupies himself in plastering nature with his own fancies.

But this marks the limitation of criticism such as Mr Blunden's.

Instead of projecting himself into the seventeenth century, and endeavouring to understand its quite peculiar modes of thought and feeling, he tears a figure out of the seventeenth century and assimilates it to himself. To some extent this unhistorical method is informative—exactly to the extent to which Mr Blunden is himself interesting or typical of his own time—and no further. This is a certain resemblance between Vaughan and Blunden, and Vaughan is in some ways more nineteenth century than most of his contemporaries. On the other hand, Vaughan does belong to his own time. He employs the *conceit*, though with a difference, and the conceit is not merely a negligible affectation of seventeenth-century poets; it represents a particular way of thinking and feeling: Vaughan is related to poets who have little in common with Mr Blunden. And it is impossible to understand or place or value any poet of this time without saturating oneself in all of the poets of this time. Thus Mr Blunden appears to understand Vaughan so long as he confines himself to Vaughan; but the one comparison that he draws is by no means fortunate. He admits, what is certain, that Vaughan owed much to the work of George Herbert; but he considers that Herbert is inferior to Vaughan.

“Herbert seems to be usually concerned with putting things quaintly; his piety is running an obstacle race; no doubt God is the prize, but our attention is too much occupied with the feats and acrobatics on the course.”

This, after a number of quotations in which Vaughan appears particularly conceited and a child of his age, is infelicitous. No poet, of all that age, ever brought his quaintness more exactly to the verge of pure simplicity than George Herbert; and no poet of that passionately religious time wrote such fine devotional verse. Mr Blunden says that Herbert aimed at “God according to vestry arrangements,” and compares his religious feeling unfavourably with Vaughan’s “solar, personal, flower-whispering, rainbow-browed, ubiquitous, magnetic Love.” I am unable to attach any meaning to this incoherent chain of adjectives. To appreciate Herbert’s sensibility we have to penetrate the thought and emotion

of the time; we should know Andrewes and Hooker. In short, the emotion of Herbert is clear, definite, mature, and sustained; whereas the emotion of Vaughan is vague, adolescent, fitful, and retrogressive. This judgement is excessively harsh; but it is only as much as to say that Mr Blunden, like some persons of vague thinking and mild feeling, yearns towards a swooning ecstasy of pantheistic confusion. Vaughan is a true poet; and he wrote fine lines that no one else has written; but his best qualities are those which he shares with other and greater poets of his time, rather than those which he shares with Mr Blunden.

T. S. ELIOT

## BRIEFER MENTION

**DECADENCE**, by Maxim Gorky, translated from the Russian by Veronica Dewey (10mo, 357 pages; McBride: \$2.50). In this story of the gradual degeneration of a peasant family through success in industry, Maxim Gorky has pictured the decline of old Russia and the ensuing emptiness of life where "boiled in a huge stone cauldron" men pass their time in a chaos profitless and enchained. It is difficult to think of any one writing to-day in any country who is able to gather into his profuse troubled pages so much of human experience in its more helpless aspects. To read the book of this sad, ill man is to become initiated afresh into the peculiar problems of modern Russia as well as into the eternal human conflicts of the spiritually dejected.

**THE MARIONETTE**, by Edwin Muir (16mo, 181 pages; Viking Press: \$1.75). Within the somewhat restricted scope of his intention Mr Muir's novel—the story of the inner life of an idiot boy, and his father's attempt to win him to sanity by encouraging in him an interest in marionettes—is successful. How pure, poetic, selfless is this smoothly flowing, restrained prose! Through the delicate, affrighted, or fiery distortions of the boy's mind we see the little German town, the marionette theatre with curtains opening "like two butterfly wings," the marionettes' faces "fixed in a changeless resolution." What next may we anticipate from this modest, uncorrupted artist, this accomplished critic?

**THE FINANCIER**, New and Revised Edition, by Theodore Dreiser (12mo, 503 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$3). **CHAINS**, Lesser Novels and Stories, by Theodore Dreiser (12mo, 425 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2.50). Mr Dreiser's reshaping of what is perhaps one of his second-best novels has produced fiction more contained and ordered than he had originally written, but even so the reader is still something very like overwhelmed by the spreading, and in this case, rather inert mass of recorded detail. This is, of course, less true of the fifteen short stories included in *Chains*, for here he has little room for the mystic botanizing about life that he so desiderates, or for his equivalently immense passion that what he tells shall be told to the last fraction of an inch. But even here his profound sense of men and his tremendous agnostic temperament are sufficiently in evidence.

**IRONICAL TALES**, by Laurence Housman (12mo, 266 pages; Doran: \$2.50). "Semolina was the eldest of a very large and a very poor family. It was poor because of its size—its numbers, that is to say, having far too many mouths for the food to go round into." This introduction to the fifteenth of Mr Housman's fables is representative of the manner of all. They are somewhat too artfully simple—and somewhat too abysmally allegorical—to be winning.



THE PYRAMID, by Sherard Vines, with Prefatory Verses by Edmund Blunden and Yone Noguchi (12mo, 61 pages; Richard Cobden-Sanderson: 5s). Mr Vines is able, experimental, self-conscious, and is not without adroitness in the manipulation of phrase. His mode is a curious, and not wholly happy, blending of Sitwellian fantasy and the hard conceptualism of Mr Eliot; and it is a little difficult to find, in this compound, any note which might clearly be recognized as his own. The fantasy is always a little forced, the conceptualism not very vigorous nor very sharp. One feels that this is the work of a goodish mind, assisted by a goodish sensibility, but without that *sine qua non* of poetry, the gusto of individuality.

The complex simplicity of 7 P. M. AND OTHER POEMS, by Mark Van Doren (10mo, 89 pages; A. & C. Boni: \$1.75) suggests a mode of reaching beauty by the intensification of consciousness like that in which Edwin Arlington Robinson is adept. Such a suggestion does not arise in this case, as it obviously does not in the other, merely from the brief beauty of single poems, or their singleness on a spacious page, but rather from the pre-meditated felicity of line and phrase—as if each were separately the product of emotion deliberately and severely focused. This is poetry of a very conscious cast.

SAND AND FOAM, A Book of Aphorisms, by Kahlil Gibran, with seven illustrations reproduced from original drawings by the author (10mo, 85 pages; Knopf: \$2) contains sentences which possess the predominantly intellectual tang of the aphorism: "A disagreement may be the shortest cut between two minds"; but for the greater part it offers us expressions of feeling that are not always inevitable. One cannot but feel a certain gratitude, however, to the poet or sage, whichever he may be, for the honesty of his idealism.

FORTY IMMORTALS, by Benjamin DeCasseres (8vo, 371 pages; Joseph Lawren: \$3.50) is a collection of impressionistic studies ranging in subject from Spinoza to Marinetti, from Stendhal to Edgar Saltus, and from Blake to Lord Dunsany. In view of the din and clatter of Mr DeCasseres' vociferous periods, "the roaring forties" might be suggested as a sub-title for his present volume. Where Nietzsche is a "mad incendiary," Shelley a "divine interstellar *flâneur*," Flaubert a "Knight of the Absolute," Verlaine a "lascivious pietist," and Laforgue "an immigrant from the moon," one would think the function of criticism a coining of epithets; its purpose, mere verbal excitement; its method, an orgy of bombast.

THE COLBY ESSAYS, by Frank Moore Colby (2 vols., 10mo, 320 pages; Harpers: \$7.50). Dippersful of criticism like water from a cold spring, clear as crystal in thought and with the sparkle of good humour in their depths. Mr Colby fashioned these papers in the intervals of encyclopaedia editing, but they resemble that vocation solely in their orderly and concise thinking. The author delighted in catching hold of the tail of an idea and twisting its tail—just once, and he understood how to interpret the resultant surprise with precisely the right ironic inflection.

**RIVER THAMES, From Source To Mouth**, by F. V. Morley, illustrated by Laurence Irving (8vo, 255 pages; Harpers: \$6). A glorified form of travel book. The author has good taste, erudition, and sufficient enthusiasm over his exploit to start a number of other people off upon similar excursions upon the Thames. At the same time the work cannot pretend to a permanent place upon the book-shelves beside the *Travels With a Donkey and the Bible in Spain*. It quotes abundantly from delectable authors, such as Thomas Love Peacock and Shelley, but does not itself produce anything quotable.

**THE HOMELAND OF ENGLISH AUTHORS**, by Ernest H. Rann (12mo, 248 pages; Dutton: \$2.50). Unharmful by what seems an equal friendliness to greatness and to greater greatness; despite the intrusion also, of such phrases as "another proposition" and "relics galore," one delights in the natural, living presence of characters real and imaginary as one encounters them in this book. Self-effacingly helpful, specific in reference, and expertly selective, Mr Rann has contrived that those of whom he speaks, should speak to us themselves—Dickens, of Gad's Hill; George Eliot, of Griff House; Hardy, of Boscastle and Maumbury Ring; Fitzgerald, of "a Maid servant who as she curtsies of a morning, lets fall the tea-pot, etc." It would be folly not to be at the trouble to undertake a pilgrimage so rewarding.

**IN CHINA**, by Abel Bonnard, translated from the French by Veronica Lucas (8vo, 361 pages; Dutton: \$3.50). The jacket and format of the new edition of this volume might lead one to suppose it just another sentimental travel-book about China. It is, on the contrary, a work of singular literary distinction, full of sophisticated insight, Gallic observations, and fresh similes. Of old China, rapidly vanishing, M Bonnard writes, "this old, polished, impenetrable China, gorged full of itself, where the foreigner was like a water-drop slipping down a varnished surface."

**THE STORY OF A WONDER MAN**, Being the Autobiography of Ring Lardner (12mo, 151 pages; Scribner: \$1.75) is an excursion in pure nonsense—a picnic on the summit of absurdity somewhat marred by the poison-ivy of unnecessary puns. The cream of the jest is uniformly Lardnerian, however, a blend of the gay and the nimble and the unexpected, with overtones of satire.

**EVERYMAN'S ENGLISH DICTIONARY**, with introduction by Ernest Rhys (16mo, 591 pages; Everyman's Library, Dutton: 80 cents). Excellent reading for a rainy afternoon. It is rich with information. For instance, did you know—just to take the P's—that poietic is creative? that paramatta is a dress fabric? that pappous is downy? that panlethnicon is a van for removing furniture? that Plimsoll's Mark is the compulsory load-line on ships? Well, they are, of course, since this dictionary says so. And in addition there are lots of long words that impress editors, such as polycotyledonous, potwalloper, and prosopopoeia. A little study of this work might advance any author.

**NAPOLEON, The Man of Destiny**, by Emil Ludwig, translated from the German by Eden and Cedar Paul (8vo, 707 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$5). This biography is recommended by its sponsors as "reading like a romance." Consequently, students of Napoleon are not too surprised, on taking up the book, to find that Josephine and the Countess Walewska are played up mightily and that the red lights flare constantly upon the villain of the piece, Talleyrand. The great battles have to occur as best they may. One suspects at times that the hero embarked upon some of his campaigns merely to pique Josephine by his absence. Nevertheless, Napoleon emerges unmistakably from these pages not only as the man but as the Great Man. The effect is achieved, in large part, by the copious and clever use of Napoleon's letters which are always amazingly wise, frank, and courageous. They alone justify the volume.

**HENRY JAMES: Man and Author**, by Pelham Edgar (8vo, 351 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$5). Mr Edgar is one of those discreet, dignified, gentlemanly writers who bring to their researches the devotion of a disciple combined with the tactful address of a university professor speaking before a group of exceptionally intelligent students. It is perhaps harsh to say that he throws no new light on James's life or on his work since he is so affluent in discriminations and so generous in discourse. We may, indeed, have been spoiled by Mr Van Wyck Brooks's superb and wilful study of that incalculable master. However, any one who is capable of referring to the "muffled magnificence" of James's style must receive our grateful acknowledgement.

**THE LETTERS OF WILLIAM COWPER**, selected and arranged by William Hadley, M.A. (16mo, 387 pages; Everyman's Library, Dutton: 80 cents). Lovers of letters who do not know those of Cowper should hasten to make acquaintance with this volume. He is as precious as Walpole and infinitely sweeter, as witty as Fitzgerald and less complicated, and while only on occasion mordant as Swift, is always, like that master, astonishingly up-to-date in style. The manner is so miraculously fresh, in fact, that it is only the rare references to periwigs and satin waistcoats that induce you to conclude that these letters were not written yesterday.

**FATALISM IN FREEDOM**, by C. Judson Herrick (16mo, 96 pages; W. W. Norton: \$1). How anxiously, how craftily through the generations has this age-old discussion been pursued, even the most flighty person seeking for an answer. Dr Herrick who is primarily a biologist is persuasive. We are both free and not free. Our freedom consists in our power to control in some measure our behaviour by forces which come to expression through our own internal organization. Though like the beasts, in that we respond to our environment in ways determined by racial and personal experience, we supersede them in our ability to use language and by our prevision of future contingencies. He ends his excellent little book with the quotation, *Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.* Alas, is there not treachery in these ancient words? For is not truth too often but a flashing perception of a predicament which has no solution?

**A SHORT HISTORY OF ART**, by André S. Blum, edited and enlarged by R. R. Tatlock (illus., 8vo, 291 pages, Scribner: \$7.50). It chronicles neatly and succinctly the outstanding achievements in art from the remote palaeolithic periods on down to those of the present day. It makes a handy and useful reference book and is most handy, it is perhaps needless to say, in its summaries of classic art. The work concludes with fair-minded accounts of the work of such modernists as Cézanne, Matisse, Picasso, Duchamp, et cetera. Americans will be flattered to see their own painters amiably included in the lists but would have been still more flattered had Mr Tatlock been a shade more accurate. Who, for instance, are Max Rueline, George LaFarge, Louis St Gaudens, and C. Dennett? Mr Tatlock thinks them "outstanding Americans."

**A HISTORY OF RUSSIAN LITERATURE**, by Prince D. S. Mirsky (10mo, 388 pages; Knopf: \$5) is a sound survey of Russian literature from the *Chronicles of Kiev* of the eleventh century to the period of Tolstoy's conversion, the latter event affording the beginning of the author's supplementary volume, previously published, on contemporary Russian literature. While wishing that Prince Mirsky's English were more sensitive, one is grateful for the impression received from his book, of the author's own language, and for his masterly summaries of the work of Pushkin, Gogol, and Dostoevsky. The bibliography, particularizing the best English translations of Russian authors and critical studies of their work, with occasional brief estimates of the value of such studies, is especially valuable to the student.

**MICHAEL COLLINS AND THE MAKING OF A NEW IRELAND**, by Piaras Béaslaí (2 vols., 8vo, 942 pages; Harpers: \$10). One can turn over a third of the pages of these two volumes without coming on any direct reference to Michael Collins or his work. Piaras Béaslaí's book is much more a history of seven fateful years of Irish history than it is the life of a man whose boundless energy and power of attack made him the foremost of the makers of the new Ireland. And as such a history the length of the book is not unjustifiable. It is a book, however, to be read with a great deal of patience: it puts before us no vivid figures, it makes no memorable comment. But we get a good deal by going over these heavy pages. Some historian—Lecky, very likely—declared that Irish history showed more clearly than any other history, mainly because it was so circumscribed, the effects of things done. And much more clearly than the history of any other revolution this book written by one of the actors in the Irish struggle shows that revolution is possible only with the collaboration of the government which is being revolted against. Over and over again the British government in Ireland creates the situation which gives the few revolutionaries the morale, the support which was necessary to their cause. The figures best rendered in *Michael Collins and the Making of a New Ireland* are Eamon de Valera and Cathal Brugha, men who were once the colleagues and afterwards the opponents of Michael Collins. Which shows that Piaras Béaslaí as a writer is stirred by his hostility more than by his devotion.

## COMMENT

**M**ONTHS ago—quite beyond the memory of those who have to hustle to read a weekly—The New Republic observed in an editorial that **THE DIAL** has not encouraged a single interesting new American writer since 1920. There was the conclusion to be drawn that new writers whom **THE DIAL** had published were not interesting, and the inference that interesting new writers had been encouraged by other people and that we had missed them.

What is an interesting new writer?

1. A writer who is interesting for some reason other than his writing. Thus the most interesting writer is often oneself and after that one's friend. But we shall not undertake to argue the matter on this plane.

2. A writer who has lately written something interesting. We naturally feel that our contributors are interesting in that way.

3. A writer who will later make a considerable name for himself in an appropriate quarter. In practice an argument between stubborn people about a new writer can be settled only, if at all, at a time when the writer is anything but new.

What writers, then, have been new during the past seven years and are of such reputation that both **THE DIAL** and The New Republic must agree that they were also interesting? First in importance come the writers we never heard of and shall not hear of until The American Caravan turns them up in October. Then come the writers who make you jealous. I do not see, however, that we need precisely knock our heads together for not having encouraged Miss Loos or Mr Erskine. Could we, if we had tried? Does any one recall to our advantage or to his that we published when he was a new writer stories by Michael Arlen? But I do not suppose The New Republic meant us to try to encourage writers who were out of our class. I have great admiration for the healthy talent of Gordon Young whose melodramas in the Adventure magazine have been improving steadily for some years. And what could **THE DIAL** do for him?

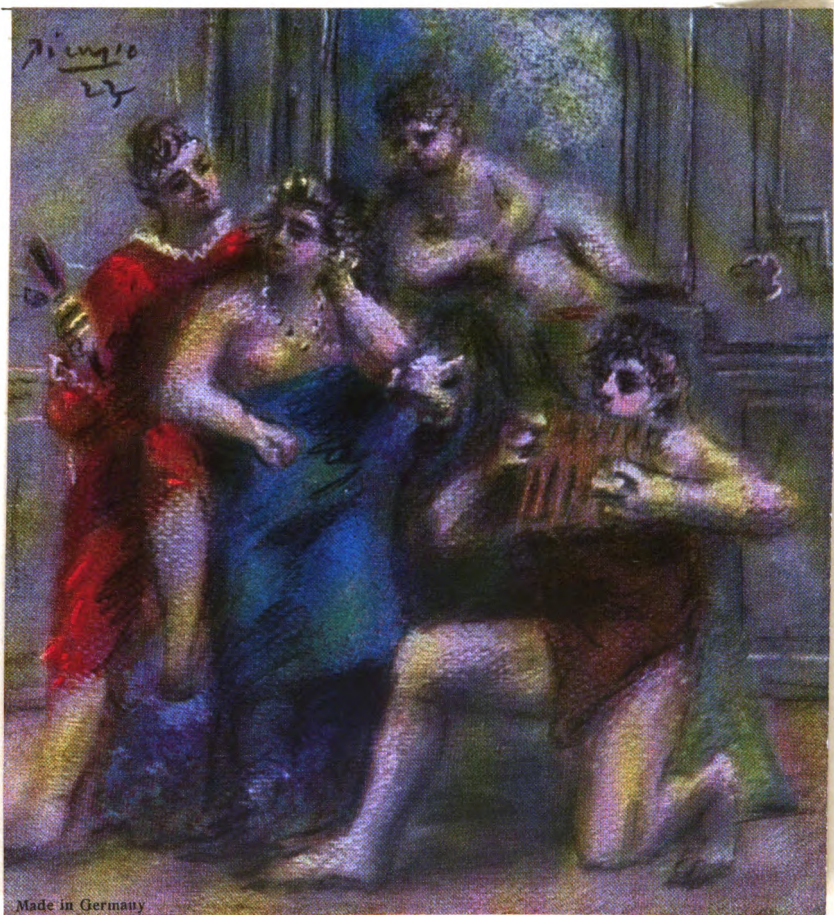
Ernest Hemingway is another matter. His book, *The Sun Also Rises*, has more warmth in it than one is accustomed to find in a dozen American successes all together. Fortunately he has reached a level from which he can kick encouragement downstairs.

It remains inconceivable that *The New Republic* should not have thought a single new contributor of ours interesting. Perhaps it is with our "encouragement" that fault is found and not with our contributors at all. Whatever character *THE DIAL* may have is the result of a selection not so much of writers as of writing. This is the usual way of running a magazine which pretends to general interest—a way which is apt to prove more encouraging to the reader than to the writer, since it aims first of all at ensuring that the magazine contain things which are interesting to read. Things which were interesting to write sometimes come to be rejected. The writer feels that he is being encouraged to try to become a hack. He grows irascible and wastes useful energy. Or, fortunately, he begins to write books—fortunately because the book publishers have rarely been more willing to risk a thousand or so on a good thing than they are at present.

On the other hand, magazines which are edited by their contributors can and must give their contributors the run of the place, and to be given the run of any place can be, for a time, a great encouragement to a writer. Magazines of this type are often more immediately encouraging to interesting new writers, not to mention movements, than magazines like *THE DIAL*. But in the long run the reader too is important. Many writers will continue to appear first in small "group magazines." Our business is to furnish a not too scattered public for what they write well, as others will see that they have a larger public whenever they choose to be tiresome.

In closing let us remember that it is impossible in the world of letters to act or to refuse to act without stirring up a hurricane of catcalls, of which *The New Republic's* are not always the merriest. Lists of interesting new American writers of the past seven years will be gratefully received.





BACCHANALE. BY PABLO PICASSO



# THE DIAL

OCTOBER 1927

## MY REMINISCENCES OF TOLSTOY

BY IVAN BUNIN

*Translated From the Russian by Alexander Kaun*

**P**RACTICALLY all my life I have loved him passionately, and I regard it as my great good fortune to have seen him several times.

Chekhov once said to me (in his usual way: quite unexpectedly): "Mark my word: with Tolstoy's death everything will go to the devil."

"Literature?"

"Literature too," he answered.

This was in the Crimea. Chekhov had driven that day to Gaspra, to visit Tolstoy who was convalescing from typhus. Again and again he said while getting ready for the trip:

"I am terribly nervous; I don't know that I want to see him. There is no one I feel afraid of, but he makes me tremble! Just think: it was he who wrote that Anna saw how her own eyes shone in the dark!"

It took him about an hour to decide what trousers to wear. In the excitement of dressing he became youthful, dropped his *pince-nez*, and in his accustomed manner of mixing earnestness with jocularly emerged from the dressing-room now in one pair of trousers, now in another.

"No, these are indecently narrow," he said. "He will think I am a fop, a Chekhonte."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Translator's note: The pen-name under which Chekhov wrote his early humorous trifles.

Back he went to put on a different pair, and came out laughing: "No! These are as wide as the Black Sea. He will think I am impertinently at ease."

He returned from Gaspra still more excited. Choking from laughter he related:

"A wonderful, an amazing old man! I sat by his bed for a long time listening to his talk of this and that—and me among other things. Presently I rose to take leave. He kept hold of my hand, and said unexpectedly: 'Embrace me'; then kissed me, and moving his lips to my ear of a sudden, rattled off in a rapid old-mannish voice: 'And yet—I cannot stand your plays! Shakespeare was a rotten playwright, but you are even worse!'"

That same evening he said, gloomily and gravely:

"Mark my word, with Tolstoy's death everything will go to the devil. . . . You know him more than I—be sure to write down your impressions. Just think how we envy those who saw Pushkin in person!"

When did I learn of Tolstoy's existence? In any event, quite early. As a child even I had a certain conception of him, not through reading his books, but from conversations about him that I had overheard at home. Incidentally, I recall my father's humorous accounts of how some of the landlords in our vicinity read *War and Peace*: one would read only *War* and another only *Peace*, that is, one would leave out everything which concerned the war, another—just the reverse. Even then my feeling about Tolstoy was not simple or uniform. Father had many passions and failings—he neglected the estate, was extravagant, drank, gambled, hunted for weeks at a time. Once in a while he justified his conduct by referring to Pushkin or to Turgenev:

"God alone is without sin. Now Pushkin could not make himself write a line without a bottle of champagne, and was altogether a terrible *bon vivant*, a gambler, a duellist—quick-tempered as gunpowder. In a word, he and I are birds of a feather."

Or:

"And what kind of landlord was Turgenev? For months at a stretch he would go hunting, then flit from one Paris to another. I am at least expert at managing an estate, and he couldn't tell A from B in that line."

He would talk too, about Tolstoy:

"I knew him slightly," he would say carelessly. "We met during the Crimean War, at Sebastopol. Another fine bird for you! He couldn't see a deck of cards without getting excited!"

I remember that I looked at my father with envy and respect: he had seen Tolstoy in person!

Why did I have such feelings about a man of whose work I had not read a single line? The fact that he was a writer was sufficient for me. From my very childhood I regarded writers as beings apart; and involuntarily, unconsciously I felt for them a peculiar adoration, a kind of ecstatic admiration, an inexpressible emotion which to this day I am unable to understand or adequately define; just as I cannot say how, when, or why I became a writer myself. And I find it as impossible to answer this as to explain the fact of my own existence. When it was decided (as it somehow was of its own accord) that I should be a writer, life in a world inhabited by poets, by creative minds, became a second nature to me. But, indeed, I do not recall precisely when I began to read Tolstoy, and how it came about that I placed him apart from all others. One suddenly discovers sometimes with amazement some fine and precious thing. This did not happen in my relation to Tolstoy: I recall no such moment. Generally speaking, I do not think that any of the fine things I encountered during my childhood, boyhood, and youth, ever came as a surprise to me; on the contrary, I felt as though I had known of them for a long time, and it remained for me only to rejoice in meeting them. Such, for example, were my first encounters with the mountains, and with the sea. I recall how from the window of the train at Sebastopol, at the first glimpse of the bay so superbly blue in the early morning mists, I was profoundly moved and began trembling in true exaltation. But there was not the least amazement in my pleasure for it was I repeat merely the joy of coming upon something loved and long familiar—an integral part of my own existence. It was in this sense that I came to the writings of Tolstoy at my first reading.

Then for many years I was genuinely in love with him, in love with nearly every line of him, and with the man himself, with that image of him which I had created for myself, and which gave rise in me to the tormenting dream of actually seeing him. The dream was constant, persistent, and painful, yet how fulfil it? Go to

Yasnaya Polyana? To ask Tolstoy to let me look at him at least just that once? But on what ground, with what eyes could I present myself there, an unknown, timid boy? One day I was not able to contain myself any longer: on a beautiful, truly a perfect summer day I suddenly saddled my "Kirghiz," and went galloping off across grain fields and over country roads to the town of Efremov in the direction of Yasnaya Polyana, which lay about one hundred miles from our place. Arrived in Efremov I lost courage and decided to lodge there and think the matter over more carefully. All night I was kept awake by my excitement and by constant indecision as to whether I should go on. I wandered through the town till I was so tired that when I found myself at sunrise in the municipal park I fell fast asleep on the first bench. On waking I was more sober; and after pondering a while I went sadly to the inn for my Kirghiz and started home again at a slow trot.

On the estate the moujiks bantered me:

"Eh, young master, young master, how did you manage to belabour Kirghiz so badly in twenty-four hours? Whom were you chasing? What did you fall in love with? After all, ten to one you didn't gain a thing."

No, I had not gained anything; for several years I vainly awaited my meeting with Tolstoy.

Somewhat later, lured by youthful dreams of a pure, healthy, and good life amid natural surroundings, a life of personal toil, in light and simple clothes, in brotherly friendship not only with all the poor and the oppressed, but also with the whole vegetable and animal kingdoms, yet again chiefly because of my infatuation with Tolstoy as an artist—I became a Tolstoyan. To be sure I was not innocent of a secret selfish hope that my conversion might at least give me some good reason for seeing him and perhaps even for becoming one of the group near him. Thus began my trial, my test, my Tolstoyan novitiate.

I was living in Poltava, where there were as it happened a number of Tolstoyans and I soon became intimately acquainted with them. On the whole, they were a repellent lot; but I tried to endure. The first man I learned to know was a certain Klopsky, a person quite notorious in some circles, the hero of Karonin's novel,

The Teacher of Life, which was creating a furore at the time. He was a tall, thin man in high boots and a blouse, with a narrow drab face and dark blue eyes. A sly and impertinent rascal, an indefatigable chatterer, he was perpetually advising, haranguing, and overwhelming people with his unexpected sallies, his impudent retorts, and the general manner of conduct and conversation which he had developed in the course of his rather carefree and jolly wanderings from town to town. One of the Poltava Tolstoyans was Dr Alexander Alexandrovitch Volkenstein, by birth and nature an aristocrat (a typically Tolstoyan character with no small resemblance to Stiva Oblonsky<sup>1</sup>). On his arrival at Poltava, Klopsy called first of all on Volkenstein, and through him gained access to the local salons. Volkenstein introduced him there both for pious reasons, as a preacher, and also in the interests of sport, as a curiosity. Klopsy would deliver himself, for example, of such orations as this:

“Yes, yes, I see how you are living here: you lie, glut, and do reverence to your ikons in churches which should before now have been blown to bits by dynamite! Who can put an end to all the nonsense and abominations in which the world is submerged? Take the following case. When I was on my way here from Harkov, in the train, a man comes up to me who is for some reason called a ‘conductor,’ and says to me: ‘Your ticket!’ I ask: ‘What do you mean? What kind of a ticket?’ To which he answers: ‘Why, the ticket on which you are travelling.’ Then I say, quite reasonably, to my mind: ‘I beg your pardon, I am travelling on the railroad, not on a ticket.’ ‘Do you mean, then,’ he says, ‘that you have no ticket?’ ‘Of course not.’ ‘In that case I’ll have to put you off at the next station!’ ‘Very well,’ I say, ‘that’s your business, but my business is to travel.’ True enough, at the next station they come and tell me to get off. ‘But why,’ say I, ‘should I get off, when I feel comfortable here?’ ‘You don’t wish to get off then?’ ‘Certainly not.’ ‘In that case we’ll have to put you off.’ ‘You will? I am not going.’ ‘In that case we’ll have to drag you or carry you.’ ‘Well, carry me then, that’s your business.’ And what do you think? They really did drag me and carry me in their arms,

<sup>1</sup> Translator’s note: The lazy, morally loose, and withal charming aristocrat in *Anna Karenina*.

a fine sight for the respectable public, two stalwart fellows, two peasants who might have better employed themselves tilling the soil."

Such was the notorious Klopsky. The others were not so famous, but also great folks. There were the brothers D., unusually dull, stupid, and conceited, though outwardly very humble, who had settled on the land near Poltava. There was a certain Leontyev, a small skinny young man of a rare, morbid beauty, a former imperial page, who also tormented himself with peasant toil and deceived himself and others by asserting that this toil made him happy. Then there was an enormous Jew, in appearance a genuine Russian moujik, who later became known under the name of Teneromo.<sup>1</sup> He treated plain mortals with extraordinary condescension and self-importance, and was an intolerable rhetorician and a sophist. By trade he was a cooper. It was under his tutelage that I came there. He was my chief instructor both in the "doctrine" and in the method of living by the labour of one's hands; as his apprentice I learned to hammer hoops on barrels. Why did those barrels concern me? Again, purely because they somehow linked me with Tolstoy, gave me a secret hope that eventually I might see him, become known to him, come close to him. Indeed, to my great happiness, this hope was soon quite unexpectedly realized. When the whole brotherhood began to regard me as one of them, Volkenstein invited me (this was at the very end of 1893) to join him on a trip, first to visit the "brothers" in the province of Harkov, the peasants of the Hilkovo village, and then to Moscow, to Tolstoy.

It was a hard journey! We travelled third class, with much changing of trains, always trying to get into the most "common" carriages. We ate only "non-killed" food, that is, sheer rubbish. At times Volkenstein lost patience, and when the train stopped he would suddenly run to the buffet and with terrific greed drain two or three glasses of vodka in succession, stuff his mouth with scalding meat-pies, and address me thus, with extreme gravity:

<sup>1</sup> Translator's note: Feinerman, who lived for a considerable time in Yasnaya Polyana, and published pamphlets and articles on Tolstoy, among them alleged thoughts and sayings of Tolstoy's.

"I have given vent to my lust again, and am suffering deeply as a result. Nevertheless I am still battling with myself, and still know that the pies do not master me, but that I master them. I am not their slave; I eat them when I want them and I don't eat them when I don't want them."

The hardest part of the journey for me was my eagerness to get to Moscow with the greatest possible speed; yet we chose the worst, most "democratic" trains, and we had besides to spend some time with the Hilkovo "brothers," to commune with them in person, and thereby to "fortify" ourselves. We stayed with them three or four days and during that time I acquired a most cordial hatred for those well-to-do peasants of pious, saintly mien, for our sleeping accommodation in their huts, for their potato-pies, their psalm-singing, their accounts of fierce unending battles with "priests and chiefs," and their hair-splitting pedantic discussions of the Scriptures. At last, on January first we resumed our journey. I remember waking that morning with such joy in my heart that I forgot myself completely and burst out: "Happy New Year, Alexander Alexandrovitch!" Whereupon Alexander Alexandrovitch Volkenstein gave me a most severe scolding: New Year, what was that? Did I realize what superannuated nonsense I was repeating? But I did not care. I listened to his reprimands, and thought: "Very well, very well, this may all be sheer nonsense, but to-morrow evening we are going to be in Moscow, and the day after to-morrow I shall see Tolstoy . . ." So, indeed, it happened.

Volkenstein offended me mortally: he went to Tolstoy the minute we had arrived at our inn and refused to take me along. "Impossible," he said, "impossible. Lev Nikolayevitch must be warned first. I shall prepare him." He hurried off, and returned that night very late. He gave no account of his visit, only remarking hurriedly: "I feel as though I had drunk my fill of living water." By the odour which emanated from him I could be pretty certain that on the top of the living water he had drunk some Chambertin, probably in order to prove that Chambertin could not master him and he could master Chambertin. He did one good thing, however, in that he actually prepared Tolstoy for my visit. I had had little hope that he would do even so much: he was quite charming, but terribly flighty, that dark, handsome, slightly femi-

nine man, who was beginning to grow stout. But he did warn Tolstoy, so at last—the next evening—I ran panting to the Hamovniki manor.

How can I describe all that took place when I got there?

It was a frosty moonlit evening. I ran up to the place, and stopped to catch my breath. Everything was muffled and silent in the empty little street. Before me was a gate, an open wicket, a snow-covered court. Far back to the left I saw an old wooden house, with a reddish light in some of the windows. Farther to the left, beyond the house, stretched a large orchard, and above it quietly shimmered in fairylike beauty the vari-coloured beams of the winter stars. Indeed, everything was like a fairy-tale. What a peculiar orchard, what an unusual house, how meaningful and mysterious those lighted windows, behind which He was—He! And what a stillness! I could hear my heart thumping—from happiness, of course, and also from the awful suspicion had I not better just peep at the house and run back? Rushing desperately into the court and across the porch, I rang the bell. The door was opened at once, and I saw a footman in a frock-coat, a brilliant hall, warm and cozy and a multitude of fur-coats on the racks, among which one sheepskin in particular caught my eye. Directly in front of me rose a steep staircase covered with a red carpet. To the right, under the stairs, I saw a closed door, behind which could be heard guitars and cheerful young voices, amazingly indifferent to the fact that they were being heard in this extraordinary house.

“What name shall I give?”

“Bunin.”

“I beg pardon, sir?”

“Bunin.”

“Yes, sir.”

The footman went up the stairs, and immediately to my great surprise came running back, skipping steps and catching hold of the balustrade:

“Please to wait up in the parlour, sir.”

Up in the parlour I was even more surprised: I had scarcely entered, when a little door opened at the rear, to the left, and through it dove with awkward agility—across two or three steps leading from the corridor—a large, grey-bearded, slightly bandy-legged old man



in a spacious home-made blouse of grey flannel, in trousers of the same material that looked more like pantaloons, and in broad-toed shoes. Swift, light, terrible, with piercing eyes and overhanging eyebrows. He came straight to me (still I managed to observe in his gait and in his whole build a strong resemblance to my father). Swiftly, and bowing slightly, he approached me, and stretching or rather flinging out a large hand, palm upward, he seized my whole hand within it, pressed it softly, and unexpectedly smiled a most enchanting smile, kindly and at the same time sorrowful, even somewhat compassionate. I then saw that those small eyes were not at all terrible or piercing, but merely keen like an animal's, though in them too there was something sorrowful and compassionate. The light, sparse remnants of his grey hair, slightly curling at the ends, were parted in the middle, peasant fashion; his ears were set unusually high, the protruding arches of his brows overhung the eyes, his beard was dry, light, and uneven, and so transparent that one could see through it to his somewhat protruding lower jaw.

“Bunin? Was it not your father whom I met in the Crimea? Then you are related to the Grotes? Well, have you come to Moscow for a long stay? For what purpose? To see me? A young writer? Go on, write, if you feel a great desire to do so, only remember that under no circumstances can that be the aim of life. . . . Please, sit down and tell me about yourself.”

He began to talk as briskly as he had entered, pretending with his customary good breeding, not to notice my utter embarrassment, and hastening to get me out of it, to distract me. What else did he say? He chiefly asked questions—he was fond of doing that, as I subsequently learned.

“A bachelor? Married? With a woman one must live only as with wife, and one must never leave her. Do you wish to live a simple life of toil? That's good, only do not force yourself, do not make a strait jacket out of that life. One can be a good man in any life.”

We sat by a small table. A rather tall faience lamp burned softly under a rose-coloured shade. His face was hidden by the lamp, in a faint shadow. I could see only the soft grey stuff of his blouse, and his large hand, to which I felt like pressing my lips in ecstatic, genuinely filial tenderness. I listened to his aged,

slightly high-pitched voice with the timbre characteristic of a protruding jaw. Suddenly I heard the rustle of silk. I looked up, started, arose: In a magnificent black dress, a tall woman with an exquisite *coiffure* and vivacious, wholly dark eyes, was gracefully advancing towards us from the drawing-room.

“*Léon*,” she said gently yet firmly, “you have forgotten that they are waiting for you.”

He also got up, and raising his eyebrows with an apologetic, almost guilty smile, looked straight into my face with his small eyes in which I could still see a certain dark animal sadness, and once more seized my hand in his:

“Well, good-bye, good-bye, God bless you, come to see me when you are in Moscow again. Do not expect much of life; you will never have a better time than now. There is no happiness in life, there are only its heat lightnings—cherish them, live by them.”

I went out, ran out, completely distraught. I spent a crazy night, seeing him over and over in my dreams, with such striking distinctness and in such wild confusion that to this day I recall it with dread. I would awake and catch myself muttering things in delirium.

After my return to Poltava I wrote to him and received several kindly letters in reply. In one of them he again suggested that I need not try so hard to be a Tolstoyan, but there was no holding me back: true, I stopped hammering hoops, but I began to peddle the Mediator<sup>1</sup> booklets. Without any legal permit, I tried to sell them in market-places and at country fairs, for which I was tried and sentenced to jail. To my profound chagrin I was pardoned by virtue of an imperial edict. Later I opened a bookshop, the Poltava branch of the Mediator, and muddled up the accounts to such an extent that at times I was on the point of hanging myself. In the end of course I had to abandon the shop. I went to Moscow, but even there I tried for quite some time to persuade myself that I was brother and comrade to the leaders of the Mediator and to those who constantly lounged in the bookstore instructing one another on the subject of the good life. It was there that I

<sup>1</sup> Translator's note: Tolstoy sponsored a philanthropic publishing house, the Mediator, which issued and sold cheap editions of Tolstoy's favourite authors.

saw Tolstoy a few more times. Of an evening he would walk in, or rather run in (he walked at a light and terrific pace) and without taking off his sheepskin coat would stay half an hour or an hour, surrounded by the brotherhood, who asked him occasionally such questions as: "Lev Nikolayevitch, what am I to do, if say a tiger attacks me?" In such cases he would smile in embarrassment and say:

"Tiger? What tiger? Where would a tiger come from? I for one haven't met a tiger in all my life."

I was at his home only once more. They took me through the parlor, where on the previous occasion I had sat with him by the genial rose-coloured lamp, then through that little door, up the little steps behind it, and along the narrow corridor. I knocked timidly at the door to the right.

"Come in," responded an old, high-pitched voice.

Entering, I saw a low small room submerged in twilight by reason of the metal shade over an antique candlestick with two candles; next I descried a leather couch by the table on which the candlestick stood, and finally Tolstoy himself, with a book in his hand. At my entrance he rose instantly. And awkwardly, or even in embarrassment as it seemed to me, he threw the book into a corner of the couch. My eyes were keen however and I noticed that he had been reading, that is, rereading (probably for the tenth time as all of us sinners do) his own story, *Master and Workman* which had just been published. In my enthusiasm for it I was tactless enough to utter an admiring exclamation. He blushed to the roots of his hair and waved his hands:

"Ah, don't say that! Ah, what are you saying, what are you saying! It is terrible stuff, so rotten that I'm ashamed to walk through the streets!"

His face that evening was extraordinary: thin, dark, severe, as if made of cast bronze. He was suffering greatly just then—recently his last child had died—seven-year-old Vanya. After we talked of *Master and Workman* he mentioned the boy with great animation.

"Yes, yes, he was a fine, a charming boy. Just what does it mean: he is dead? There is no death, he is not dead, as long as we love him, live by him!"

Soon we went out and walked to the Mediator. It was a black March night; a spring wind was fanning the flames of the street lamps. We were hurrying across the snow-covered Maiden Field. He leaped over ditches, I could hardly keep up with him. Again he spoke, abruptly, sternly, sharply.

“There is no death. There is no death!”

There is no death. . . . Still, alas, in those terrible days when he lay dying at Astapovo, I wept desperately as I had wept only two or three times before in my life. I kept recalling my last glimpse of him. I had been walking in the Arbat part of Moscow on a fearfully sharp penetrating evening, the lights burning bright behind glittering shop-windows, white with frost. Suddenly I collided with him as he came running straight at me, with his elastic, bouncing stride. I stopped and pulled off my cap. He also stopped, and recognized me at once:

“Ah, it’s you! Good evening, good evening! Please, put on, put on your cap. . . . Well, how and where are you, and how are things going with you?”

His aged face was so numb and dark with cold, it was distressing. On his head he wore a knit something of light-blue wool which resembled an old woman’s cap. His large hand which he had brought out of a woolen glove was sheer ice. At the end of the conversation he repeatedly pressed my hand with his icy one, firmly and tenderly, looking sorrowfully into my eyes once again and, with raised eyebrows:

“Well, Christ be with you, Christ be with you. Good-bye. . . .”

# WHEREFORE

BY SCOFIELD THAYER

Because my passion was deep and sad,  
Because no peace of the world I had,

Because the waves were clean and sound,  
Because it was good to hear them pound

And be clean inside for a clean small space  
And to spill on my heart the sun's last grace

As he closed his sermon behind the wood  
Where I knew from his bell the stag yet stood

Speaking the heart of that autumn day  
Which under horse-chestnuts gleaming lay,

Sound and ripe, and round and true,  
Like the hearts of the men in the ships I knew

Hull-down, a gleam, and close to me—  
For my heart walks quickly walking at sea

And though I stand on a desert beach  
My heart keeps a long and a certain reach

Whereby all men whose hearts are good,  
Whose hearts are stiff like their own oars' wood,

Are held against me mightily  
As I watch drear boats put out to sea

And know the sacred thole-pin's creak  
And hear stern heels on the braces squeak

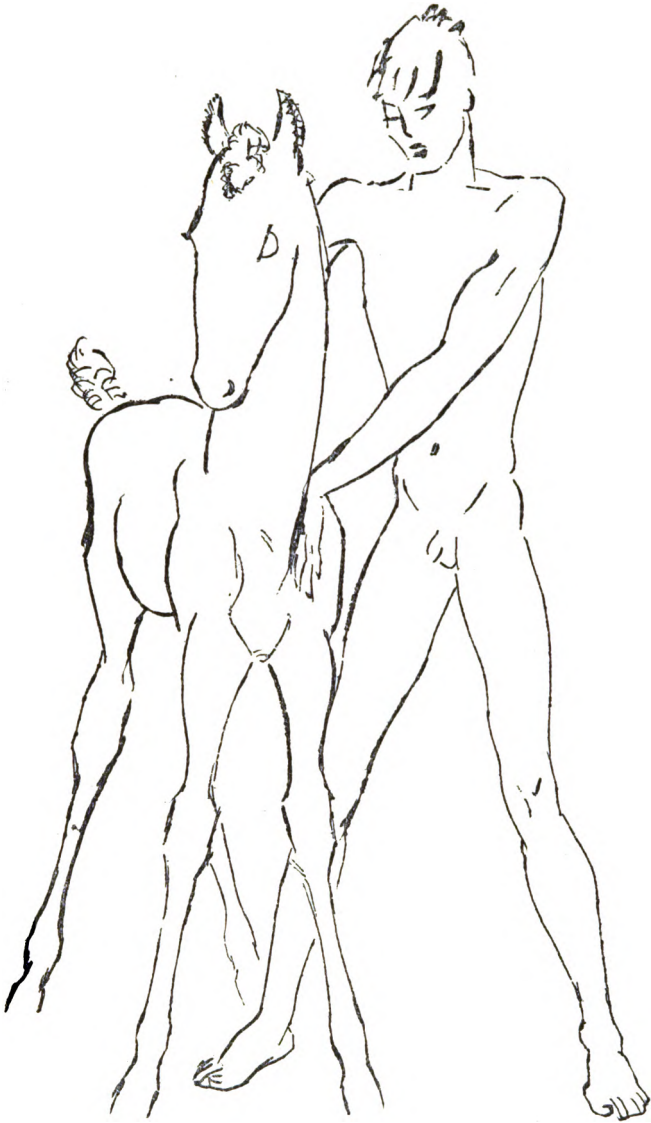
## WHEREFORE

And catch on wet blades the last knife-glint  
Of the logic of sunlight straight as print

On the straight fired page of a word from God,  
Superb and silent and sane and odd,—

Like a fisher-man rowing out toward night  
On the last waste gleam of the last waste light  
Picking up as he goes the harsh bird's flight  
And smiting stern waves with a sane, odd Might;—

Therefore I stood looking out to sea  
Till the Great Stars came and stood with me.



*Courtesy of the Flechtheim Gallery, Berlin*  
BOY WITH HORSE. BY RENEE SINTENIS





## LAND

BY KONRAD BERCOVICI

**M**ERIAN is a one-street-perched-on-a-hill village in Normandy. The conic tower of the church sits on a squat, square, grey stone building on the top of the hill and dominates the field-stone houses that wind in and out on both sides of the road, leaning one against the other. The shoemaker's shop juts out from the front of his house in the middle of the village; the thatched-roof inn, the roped-off dancing ground, and the blacksmith's shop hug the sharp curve at the bottom of the village.

Back of the houses stretch the fields, criss-crossed by numerous hedges and patches; a crazy quilt of green and golden-brown velvet that fades into shades of blue and red when harvest days arrive.

Each villager owns a dozen small patches of land, this side and the other side of the road. One piece at the top, back of the church, another piece in the line back of the smithy adjoining that of another villager, and other narrow long strips all over the apron of the mountain.

It had been so for centuries. No one had ever thought of trading parcels of land so as to have the farm in one piece. The slow-thinking Normandian French peasants repeated the life of their ancestors, but did not continue it. They lived as they worked, always ploughing the same furrows.

And then suddenly, Jean Fanchon began exchanging with his neighbours pieces of land he owned in fields far away from his home, to round his farm up into one piece of property. In fifteen years of trading and bickering he had all but succeeded, save for one narrow strip of ground which divided his property in two, and which belonged to his next-door neighbour, Père Dupont. And whenever Fanchon proposed to buy that strip, narrow-chested, long-faced Dupont made counter proposals for some of Fanchon's land on the side adjoining his property.

Whenever the cession of this strip of ground was mentioned, the older men in the village looked on, silently but disturbed at the things Jean Fanchon had started. For now many of the

younger peasants began to do likewise, exchanging and straightening out their properties. The square-headed notary and the bespectacled land surveyor were always in their midst, gathering in the ready cash and piling up reams of documents and blue surveyor's maps in the mayor's office.

Jean Fanchon was a childless widower at the age of sixty. He had buried his second wife after the harvest. His big, neckless head perched almost directly on his tremendous broad shoulders; like a cannon ball on a stone fence. His short bow-legs, a little bent at the knee, made his movements like those of a mountain set in motion. His small blue eyes under the protruding bushy brow, and his large firm mouth and pressed, clean-shaven lips completed the total impression of a figure hewn out of a mountain stone block. It was said of him that he had killed his two wives by hard work, and that an ox or a horse lived only half its life in Fanchon's stable. Every animal was put under the yoke, the cow, the ox, the horse, his wife, himself; and even the big shepherd dog was harnessed to a cart every time Jean Fanchon went to town to sell some surplus vegetables in the market of the village below Merian.

He lived for only one thing, Fanchon; his land, the enlarging and rounding up of his land holdings; and waited and hoped to acquire more land to the right and to the left, to the bottom and to the top of his farm; creeping in all directions like a worm.

But in doing so, he had stirred the antagonism and ambition of Père Dupont, who often outbid him when a woman at the death of her husband found it necessary to sell a piece of land to pay the burial expenses, or when a peasant had to part with some of his property to pay an accumulated doctor bill or to buy a horse to replace the one that died during the harvest in the middle of the field; for they were all hard workers, the people of Merian. Such reckless hard work was frequently the cause of their poverty. They killed their beasts and died themselves in the field in harness.

At the inn on Sundays, where they all assembled after the church services, the peasants said that if Fanchon and Dupont were to live long enough they would in time own all the land of Merian and leave the others nothing but the humid walls on which to grow mushrooms.

Three or four times every year for ten years Père Dupont had

made offers for Fanchon's land, the other side of the narrow strip he owned, to be met by counter proposals for his.

But after the death of Jean Fanchon's wife, Père Dupont and his neighbour came to the inn together and drank wine from the same bottle, each one protesting at the end of the two-hour session that it was his turn to pay. On Christmas eve Père Dupont invited Fanchon to dine with his family. The village looked on and wondered what was at the bottom of that friendship. They were men of about the same age, the two neighbours. And seeing them walk together leaning heavily on their knotted canes from the church to the inn and back to Père Dupont's home, through the streets, caused many a man's uneasiness. If those two should ever put their heads together . . . But most of the peasants concluded Fanchon and Dupont had designs upon each other's land and planned to outwit each other, and that their friendship was nothing but a sham and ruse, and that the two sly wolves were just as ready as before to tear each other's throats.

Père Dupont had two daughters and a son. Marietta, the eldest of the children, had at twenty-two begun to lose the roundness and softness of youth and was becoming as hard as her mother, whose brown weather-beaten skin looked like parchment drawn over angular bones. Louise, blonde, plump, blue-eyed, was two years younger than Marietta. She still danced every Sunday at the square back of the inn and seemed to have taken over, together with the discarded dresses of her older sister, also the hopes she had once had of escaping the parental yoke.

The Dupont family, however, centered their hopes on George, the eight-year-old late-born son of an old father and a tired mother, the future owner of the Dupont land and fortune. Nothing was too good for little George, nothing too expensive for him. And had Père Dupont followed his own whim, Monsieur Fernand, the doctor of the adjoining town, would have lived permanently in his house, to take care of the boy.

Whenever the slightest thing happened to the boy, he accused his daughters or his wife, and, beating his narrow chest, he would cry in a strident voice: "For whom do I work, for whom do I kill myself, if it isn't for this boy?"

There was no will but the farmer's will in that house. His

wife and his daughters were like the cattle in the stables and the land back of the house, of which he was free to dispose as he pleased.

And so one day, Père Dupont, on returning from a very long walk with Père Fanchon, announced to Marietta that she was to be married to Jean Fanchon, immediately after the harvest.

It was his first triumph over his neighbour. For weeks and weeks they had disputed, without the family knowing about their plans, whether the marriage should take place immediately that spring, or whether the marriage should take place after the harvest. Each one wanted the use of the woman during the period of heavy work. The dispute narrowed down to weeks, to days. But finally it was agreed for immediately after the harvest, before the threshing.

“He thinks he is clever. He, he, Jean Fanchon, you wait,” Dupont gloated, rubbing his hands.

The mother looked appealingly at her husband. She did not utter a single word, that glance was the only protest she had ever made. Not because Marietta had not been consulted or because of Fanchon’s age, but because he was known to be a hard task-master. Fanchon had killed his two wives by hard work. Marietta looked meekly at the two, and reflected aloud: “After the harvest”; as if it did not concern her at all, as if her will and person had nothing to do with what had been decided by her father and the other man.

“After the harvest,” the father repeated. “We have been disputing that point for the last two months, and it is as I wanted. You will help harvest our field, not his,” he added triumphantly, underscoring the victory over his neighbour.

In the village outside doors, over fences, at the inn, and at the dancing places, as well as at the church, people talked about this new move of Père Dupont’s, and wondered that so shrewd a man as Jean Fanchon should not have detected the ruse. It was evident that Dupont was marrying his daughter to the old farmer in order to grab the land for his son. Ere long, in five, in ten years, the childless widow would inherit everything that belonged to Fanchon. Fanchon’s father had died at sixty-five, his grandfather at seventy. Sixty-five, seventy, was all the life strength of a Fanchon; the peasants knew. Then it would go to little George.

No one dared to talk openly to Jean Fanchon and attract his attention to what was going to happen to his land, but people talked loud enough within his hearing. They began to look at Marietta, wondering what in her could have so attracted the old man as to make him do such an unreasonable thing. Or was it the spring? There was no fool like an old fool. Spring had seduced him.

Yet some of the older men were not certain Dupont had triumphed. They knew how Fanchon could work people, people as well as cattle, and wondered whether Dupont's daughter was strong enough to resist the task he would impose upon her. It was a contest between youth and old age, with Marietta as the pawn. She would add Fanchon's land to that of Dupont or she would die.

Docilely, without opposing and without accepting, the young girl bowed to her father's will, as everybody in her home had always done, as she had seen the oxen lower their heads when he presented the yoke to them. The short dreams of early youth were faded and dead. Marriage was another yoke, nothing else.

In that French peasant village, outwardly so picturesque and gay, no one laughed much. Those who once laughed had died somewhere far away, in the dirt and the mud; and those who still lived would never return.

The day after the harvest Jean Fanchon claimed his bride. The wedding ceremony at the little church and the cost of it seemed to him an imposition of the outside world. Why have such costly ceremonies at such a transaction? It was a waste of time and money.

Marietta, in her best dress and white veil over her brow, stumbled through the formalities in a dazed, unconscious manner. She did not realize what her marriage and what her life would be with that old man she had heard vilified ever since she was a child. She had seen him pass up and down in front of her house too frequently to be afraid of him.

She was only half aware of what had happened when the guests had gone and she had remained alone in the strange house with the old man. Yet, it was so much like her father's house, she set about cleaning the dishes from the table and putting the things away. Jean Fanchon looked at her from behind the curtain of

smoke he blew from his pipe. He watched her walk stolidly with measured gait from one place to another, and wondered who would win, he or Père Dupont. When the table was cleared and the room was put in order, he pointed to the room curtained off from the kitchen-dining-room and said:

“Go to bed. There is much work to be done to-morrow. I am threshing.”

It took Marietta a few days to get the lay of the house and the field. Fanchon let her go about and do very much as she pleased, but forbade her to go without his knowledge to the home of her parents. “You are mine, now. And don’t you ever take anything from here there . . . or, *Dieu*, if you do!”

He watched her closely, afraid that she might rob him and give his goods to the other man, his enemy. But, once convinced of her honesty, as one becomes convinced of the honesty of a servant, he never spoke of it again.

There was much work to be done. Marietta was continually at her husband’s side, doing more than her share, digging deeper furrows for the fall ploughing and coming out at the end of the field before him. Standing side by side, they threshed together and husked corn together, and at the end of the day, when Père Fanchon’s back was curved a little more than in the morning, she would still have to work to prepare the food for the two, feed the cattle, milk the cows, and feed the chickens.

Jean Fanchon never grumbled or nagged. He watched her from the corner of his eye and let her work. It was more than her father had done. Dupont never ceased talking, censuring; he was never satisfied, he grumbled always. Fanchon kept quiet, but speeded those who worked with him by working hard himself.

Marietta began to realize her position as a wife. What she did was for herself. It all belonged to her as well as to her husband. Those wide stretches of land on both sides of the road, those large corn-cribs full of heavy, hard, golden grain; the oxen and the yokes, the ploughs, the horses, the fowl—all belonged to her as well. What had Dupont to do with all this? She began to do the work with joy and love. It was all her own. She touched the things and caressed them. Her own. Her own.

Though she knew why her father had married her to the old man, she became part of her new surroundings, as she became possessed by the things about her. A vague tenderness for field and cattle and her man crept into her. It was an emotion she had never been aware of in herself or in others. She began to love the things and the cattle and the fowl about her.

At first, Fanchon was suspicious. He, too, had been working continually from early morning until late at night, driving all about him to the utmost, but there had not been any love for work in him. He did it because of what he expected from the work and not because he loved it. Why should any one love work? He could understand killing a man to possess a strip of land. But one owned land without loving it. When he saw Marietta pat the ox, he could not believe she did it because of tenderness, or love for the animal; she did it because she expected it soon to be hers, her father's. She coveted it as he did other people's land. When she dug a deeper furrow than he did, he mistrusted her. And even the tenderness with which she looked at him when she enquired whether he was not too tired at the end of the day's work, the care with which she prepared his food, the attention she gave to his socks, did not convince him of anything else but her perfidy. Oh, that woman was working for her own father. He knew why Père Dupont had given him his daughter in marriage. But Dupont would soon find out who Jean Fanchon was. That weasel-eyed neighbour of his had drilled his daughter well. But Jean Fanchon was neither blind nor dumb. True, that she set the pace of work now and not he, but Père Dupont would learn how strong Jean Fanchon really was.

Thus passed the fall and the winter. When spring came, Marietta's fowl yard had more clucking hens than any farmyard in the neighbourhood. Watching her be so tender and so loving, Fanchon, fighting with himself not to let his suspicions subside, closed up more and more within himself. She was disarming him with her sincerity and her faithfulness. He protested at the sight of so many baskets of setting hens in the house and against her devotion to the little calf she kept near the kitchen stove to protect it from the cold wind that blew in through the cracks in the barn

early in the spring. She answered his protests with a smile and cooed to the fluffy, unsteady white calf.

Tenderness, which he had never known in any human being and which had never come to the surface in him, began to win him more and more every day, and he began to return some of it. Instead of looking at the woman working beside him in the fields as at a beast of burden from whom to extract every ounce of strength by giving as much of his own strength, Jean Fanchon surprised himself thinking that Marietta was working too hard. He began to take into consideration that she had to prepare the food in the evening and do chores, and he would insist that she should go home earlier from the field.

Home was a pleasant place to return to evenings. It was so different from what it had been. She had changed its sourness and bitter sobriety. She had put bits of ribbon and coloured paper in curtains and over the fireplace. She had painted the old oak beams of the kitchen green. He looked on pleasantly when Marietta played with the dog and laughed at his pranks. That dog, who had never known anything but work and the whip of a harsh master, began to liven up and dare be playful even with him. And when Jean Fanchon had once laughed goodheartedly, joyfully, he was ill in bed for three days. He looked at Marietta. What lovely colour had come into her cheeks that spring! Her eyes, which had been an extinguished blue, had the hue of the mountain sky now. Her hair, once flat, lustreless, and cold, had taken on warmth and a fluffiness which made her look much younger than she was. Ah, no matter what people said, he was not so bad a master. He looked at himself. He was growing younger every day.

Her love embraced not only him but everything about him; the walls, the chairs, the tables, the stove, the barnyard, and even the field in which he worked, and upon which he had always looked as only a hard taskmaster.

Work was a pleasure now. How he would have scoffed had anybody ever made such a fuss as Marietta made about the poppies in the wheat and the bluebells in the hedges. How he would have railed against any wife pleating daisies in her hair. But when she had tied a bunch of field flowers to the handle of his plough and



put a buttercup in his battered hat while they were ploughing side by side, it brought tears to his eyes. No, that woman was like no other woman.

The people of the village watched and waited. There seemed to be no contest on between the two, no contest as to who was going to kill the other one at work. They were being seen leaving the field hand in hand. They were seen sitting on the porch together, talking softly, not as enemies but as the best of friends. Jean Fanchon, who used to drive the passing tradesmen from his door, now called them in and bought things for his wife as well as for himself, and treated the tradesmen to wine after paying them. He parted lightheartedly with money when he bought things for her. No, there was no fool like an old fool!

When Marietta's father heard his daughter singing one morning on the way to the fields with her husband, he let the pitchfork fall out of his hand. Rushing back into the house he muttered to his wife, "That daughter of yours has betrayed me."

Mother Dupont tried to defend her offspring. Perhaps Marietta had only entered too well into the game. Perhaps there was another contest going on underneath the one in the field, a contest in which youth was bound to win.

Dupont shrugged his hunched shoulders.

"Perhaps, perhaps."

He was not convinced.

While wheat was growing and work had slackened, Jean Fanchon took Marietta down one Sunday to dance back of the inn. She was so gay and so sprightly and was dressed so becomingly, the young men of the village asked her to dance over and over again. Jean Fanchon was looking on, happy his wife was amusing herself.

Père Dupont's face hardened and his fingers cramped themselves. It was not at all the Marietta he had known. And she never came to see him. All his plans were in jeopardy. Even if Fanchon should suddenly pass away, the Marietta he saw now would easily find another husband. Not only because she would be a wealthy woman, but because of her own looks. A young widowed peasant

who had worked for Fanchon, George Istar, never took his eyes from her while she danced. That Istar man would surely marry Marietta if Fanchon were to die now. She would bring him the fortune instead of bringing it to the Dupont house to be inherited by the son of the family and make him the wealthiest peasant not only of Merian, but of the whole countryside. All his plans had been shattered by that daughter of his. Who would ever have believed it? With what assurance she walked and talked and danced now. As if she were the master already of the Fanchon fortune. She had deceived him, betrayed him. He had pinned his hopes on a woman and she was betraying him.

While the dance was going on outside, Jean Fanchon called his father-in-law into the inn for a glass of wine.

"Here, sit down. And, innkeeper, bring some of your best."

The two men sat down, looking at each other quizzically and understandingly. When the innkeeper had brought the wine and set down the glasses, Marietta's husband filled his father-in-law's glass to the brim, and called out:

"Here is to you. It was a wonderful idea to give me your daughter in marriage. You proved to be a real friend. I am thankful to you. She is all you said she was and a lot more. I am happy with her. And I am good to her. She has made my house a place which I go to with pleasure and joy. But, tell me, why is it I had never heard her laugh while she was in your home, eh? Look at her now. Come out and look at her."

And he pulled the old man outside, holding the half-empty glass of red wine in his hand.

"Have you ever seen Marietta like this, dancing and laughing? Look at all the young men about her. Ha, Ha! What a wonderful young widow she will make! But not yet, not for a long while yet. For I, too, am growing younger every day," and Fanchon threw out his chest and straightened himself up.

Before the dance was over, Père Dupont managed to have a few words with Marietta, but she answered his reproaches with a loud laugh. She neither feared him nor took his words into consideration.

"Why don't you ever come to see us?"

"There are too many things to do in my own house to bother

with other people's homes. I see you as it is frequently enough. And when I don't see you I hear you grumbling. I have a barnyard twice the size of yours to take care of, and a husband and a home. And we have fields as large as yours. Why don't you sell us that strip of land? It would make ploughing and harvesting easier."

"You have betrayed me," old Dupont hissed at his daughter. She answered with a louder laugh, and joined her husband who had started on the way home.

That fall a new desire awoke in Jean Fanchon. If only he were to have a son by Marietta, a being of his own blood and flesh to whom everything would eventually belong.

He looked with envy at little children sleeping in home-made cribs while their parents were at work. If he should have one like those! Never would he allow his wife to quit the child. He would work for her, doing her share of the work in the field, and return home before sundown, to look into the child's eyes, to watch it squirm and turn and hear it laugh.

This new desire awakened more tenderness in the old man. When he spoke of his desires to Marietta, the words almost choked him. She threw her arms about him and kissed him. Nothing like that had ever happened to him. It was a rare fruit which he had never tasted before.

The following spring, the whole village knew that Marietta was to become a mother. And if there were ugly rumours about her and George Istar who worked for her husband and who danced with her frequently at the inn, the source of these rumours was to be found within Père Dupont's own walls.

Fanchon forbade Marietta to go to the fields. She did too much work to suit him. When she protested that the work had to be done, the old man cried out:

"Well, we can hire somebody. There are enough women in the village with nothing else to do. There are widows here glad to earn a few pennies. I am not yet poverty-stricken and the harvest looks good."

Marietta's own thrift prevented her from accepting his gener-

osity. It was waste of money to hire somebody to do work she could do. It was something she had never even thought of. It was her money. It was her house. Her home. Her fields. She had worked hard. And she was soon to have a child of her own. One could not spend money recklessly when one expected an heir. She quieted her husband. Why, she was not doing half the work she used to do.

In reality she was doing more, though she did not work in the fields. And she was happy. Somebody loved her. Everybody loved her. Her husband, Istar, the horses, the dogs, the oxen.

The relations between her and her parents were interrupted. No words were necessary. No explanation. The Fanchons were the enemies of the Duponts. Marietta was setting up her own family, and that strip of field which cleaved Fanchon's property in two now separated the two neighbours for ever.

Thus passed the spring and part of the summer. The seed having been good and the rains having come at the proper time, the wheat and the corn grew rapidly. The heavy golden beads at the top were so heavy they bent the wheat blades. Towards the end of August the swishing song in the fields told that the grain was getting ripe. The waving corn was like a huge tapestry that was continually weaving itself, forming patterns that resolved themselves into other patterns and figures. The brown tassels floating in the air were like webs of silk upon a dark green-blue background.

From the window of her home, Marietta looked upon the fields and watched the men at work alongside the yellow long-horned plodding oxen. The outdoors attracted her with an irresistible power. On the other side was the field of her father, equally as fruitful as that of her husband, but it did not seem nearly so beautiful. This one, her own, was more beautiful. She thought of her father's dogs, of her father's horses and cows and oxen in which she had never found any beauty. How beautiful her own were! She bestowed love upon them and they returned it. Her father was in his fields. Jean Fanchon was in his. She looked at them. They were both talking loudly to their oxen. Her father's voice was harsh and he was cursing the beasts to make them pull in a straight line. Jean Fanchon was talking in a

friendly tone to his. What now separated the two properties more than ever was the harshness on the one and the love and tenderness on the other. Even the blades of wheat and the corn stalks knew and felt it. And the wind sang gaily in her fields, like a lover responding to the call of his mate. She had done all this. It was her work.

When harvest time approached, Marietta could not resist the temptation to go out into the fields. Her husband objected again and again, but she assured him nothing would happen, that she felt as well and as strong as she had ever felt. She would not work as much as he or Istar, but he must allow her to do a certain amount of work. Why, she argued, time was hanging on her idle hands. She could see small clouds gathering on the horizon. The wheat had to be harvested during dry weather. They were already later than other years with the harvest because of the cold spring.

Finally Fanchon had to allow her to come out into the fields with them. He could not resist her, and it was a late year. . . . He let her do as she pleased. But she must not overwork. He would keep an eye on her, and if she would dare to do more than a little work, he would forbid her altogether to come into the fields. She promised.

During the first hours while the tall wheat reaching almost to her chin was falling about her under the large stroke of the scythe, she remained back of the two men, who worked side by side.

But soon the old ardour of work took hold of her. She forgot herself and her condition and was conscious of nothing but that the two men were ahead of her and that clouds were gathering on the horizon. Her stroke became larger, her scythe moved faster. Imperceptibly, she gained upon them. At the noon hour the three pairs of arms swung rhythmically together in one line, moved by an invisible power which drove them on farther and farther.

She felt a clawing pain in her spine that evening and a burning down her throat, which she had never known before. Things danced before her eyes. But she concealed her pains from her husband by unusual gaiety; chatting with him and Istar during the dinner

hour and telling new stories of the pranks of the dog and the newly foaled colt.

She felt a still more intense pain at the end of the following day. In the pressure of work with the weather threatening to change and ruin the harvest, Jean Fanchon forgot to warn his wife. To cut the wheat down before it was too late was uppermost in Fanchon's mind. He was a farmer. His wife was a third pair of arms cutting down wheat under a grey sky.

They worked until sundown. After they had hastily eaten a light dinner, as there was only one more small strip to be cut down, they decided to work in the moonlight, to get the thing finished before it was too late. Below on the other side of the hill people were already threshing. They could hear the rumbling of the steam engines day and night.

Marietta did not feel equal to the task. Her feet were heavy and she could move her arms upwards only with great difficulty. All her body seemed to be pressed down to the ground by a weight that crushed the back of her neck. She could only see the shadows of the men as they walked about. Still she kept her smile so well, she concealed her condition from the two men. There was a strip of wheat to be cut down. They were late. Clouds were gathering on the horizon. Elsewhere people were already threshing.

Fanchon and Istar went out after she had told them that she wanted to remain in the house to take care of things. It was Saturday night. They should be through before midnight. Tomorrow was a long day and they could sleep and rest as long as they pleased.

Furiously the two men worked in the moonlight up to their armpits in the swishing, waving light yellow of the wheat blades. Their curved backs swung low to the hissing scythes. The steel shone sharply in the dark and the harsh sound of the edge against the dry straw arose above the thud of the falling straw and the shrill cries of the disturbed crickets and field birds. The moon sailed through the gathering clouds. In the adjoining fields other men were likewise working silently, crawling along like giant ants.

Then suddenly, Fanchon grabbed Istar by the shoulder.

*"Mon Dieu! Did you hear?"*

They remained stock-still and listened.

"It must have been an owl," Istar said, ready to swing again his scythe.

Another cry rent the air. Fanchon dropped the scythe and ran at top speed towards his home. In the doorway he stumbled over the body of Marietta.

Jean Fanchon, his back so bent his hands almost reached the ground followed the white pine coffin carried on the shoulders of four men. It was as if everything he owned had suddenly been taken away from him. He looked on at the open grave for another one in which to lie down himself. He was so tired, so unwilling to live. Life was worth nothing without her. Forlorn, smothered, his body trembled on his weak knees. He listened in a dazed way to the prayers of the old priest, and to the cries and the weeping of the women while the coffin was lowered in the ground.

He raised his eyes to look at the sky. His gaze met that of Père Dupont.

In an instant, all that had happened from the day he had married Marietta to that minute was wiped out. Dupont's eyes recalled other things, another Fanchon. Straightening himself up to his full height, with the air of a warrior, he called at him over the length of the grave:

*"And you thought that she would bury me!"*

And turning his back he left the graveyard.

## TWO POEMS

BY MACKNIGHT BLACK

### CORLISS ENGINE

The hours, in a long plunge,  
Swirl unconquering  
Against this motion clear in steel.  
Body of an older birth, like rock  
That stands against a sea, this motion breaks  
Time's lesser flow. And here is raised  
A symbol of the flight in emptiness  
That bears the world and our own selves;  
Before such clarity the days fall back; the very days  
That drown our lives at last, fall spent  
Before the deeper might that builds our blood.

### FLY-WHEEL

The steel repeats,  
The steel repeats itself;  
The wheel-arc's flight,  
The curving journey,  
Has my heart's  
Persistency.  
The same, the clear  
Perfection follows close  
Upon perfection:  
Pulse and swirl,  
And stillness broken;  
Waves of steel and thrusts of blood,  
Like generations on the earth,  
Sons and fathers, fathers, sons;  
Peace of motion, like a seed  
That comes to seed again.





*Courtesy of the Galerie Simon, Paris*

LA VALLEE. BY ANDRE DERAIN





*Courtesy of the Galerie Simon, Paris*

LE PONT. BY ANDRÉ DERAÏN





*Courtesy of the Galerie Simon, Paris*

CAMIERS. BY ANDRE DERAIN



# THE EDUCATION OF WILLIAM JAMES

BY CHARLES K. TRUEBLOOD

THE letters of William James, which are now issued in a single volume,<sup>1</sup> are in themselves a biography of force and charm; and taken with the two autobiographic works of Henry James—*A Small Boy and Others*, and *Notes of a Son and Brother*—they are a clear exhibition of the fact that a man is made as well as born. The sensitive cosmopolitan intellectuality of William James, the abundant humanity of his genius, was scarcely, one is here persuaded, a spontaneous unqualified growth of nature; yet it was even less a product of the formal drilling and milling which is customarily meant by education.

He appears in his brother's pages only in a succession of glimpses; but occasional as the views are, they are full views, from which one has an indubitable impression of his native traits of mark: his *élan* of mind, his spontaneous talents of observation, his percipience, his sensibility—a sensibility powerfully but not wholly aesthetic, for it is apparent that while the independent youth here pictured may be drawn by the sights and sounds of life, he is hardly one to be engrossed in the spectacle simply as a spectacle, or given up to the songs of sentience wholly for their own sake, as a poet might be. It is not, however, merely as pictures of the early William James that his brother's chapters have their importance in his biography, but rather as invocations of the household atmosphere in which William James lived his formative years.

These pages of the younger Henry James fill full indeed the view of a remarkable family interior. He speaks at length of their considerable felicities—"those felicities," he writes, "which kept us collectively, so genially interested in almost nothing but each other. . . ." And speaking of such felicities, he necessarily comes soon to their sources, the parents of the house, the elder James and his wife. Of Mrs James the biography—in either Henry James's part of it, or in the letters themselves—has little

<sup>1</sup> *The Letters of William James*. Edited by his son, Henry James. 10mo. Two volumes in one: 348 and 384 pages. Little, Brown and Company. \$3.

enough to say; but one gathers the reason to have been that she was so inseparably essential to her husband and her family that she was paid the not slight compliment of being taken for granted; if the biography speaks of them, it inevitably speaks of her. Of her husband, the narrative speaks, and must speak, at length. "Mr James," wrote William James, not long after his father's death, "was one of that band of saints and mystics, whose rare privilege it has been, by the mere example and recital of their own bosom-experience, to prevent religion from becoming a fossil conventionalism, and to keep it forever alive."

Yet religious master and great spokesman though the elder James was, it was evident that he was born out of his intellectual place and day. His small following numbered some who were in the van of discernment of their time, but it was a small following indeed. So remote, in fact, was the *Zeitgeist* of his day from the things *he* held most high, that even upon his own children were his religious ideas of incomplete and uncertain effect. The younger Henry James describes his father's temple of belief—with "doors of fine austere bronze opening straight" into their family life; but wholly unvisited by the children, except William, who later occasionally entered, with, however, "announcements of difference." Much, it is true, has been made of the influence on William James of his father's monism, so termed; he himself credits Charles Renouvier with having freed him from the "monistic superstition" in which he "grew up." But as is pointed out in a recent study of the religious aspects of James's philosophy,<sup>1</sup> it is easy to attach too much importance to this early monism. He can hardly have held it with the clarity and activity of conviction with which he held beliefs he later evolved himself; for passages can be found in his letters to his father which declare important differences in the intellectual points of departure of the two; which show the younger James obliged to strive, and striving without marked success, merely to comprehend his father's simple and sweeping modes of conviction; which show him, indeed, from the first and ever at some remove from his father's mysticism.

It would be a delusion, however, to think that because his ideas were at a remove from his father's ideas, he could not have lived

<sup>1</sup> Religion in the Philosophy of William James. By Julius Seelye Bixler. 8vo. 225 pages. Marshall Jones and Company. \$3.



in great intimacy of spirit with his father. It certainly could not be for nothing in their hearts that the sons of the elder James, were for a considerable span the daily companions of so remarkably and richly inward a man. They might, indeed, owe him few debts of idea; but temperamentally they owed him everything. It was not merely that he transmitted that intensity of human substance which parted William James, for instance, so sharply off from the ordinary, but that he was as well the instructor of his children's ways and capacities of feeling, a shaper of their emotional life, by the force of contact and example, those seemingly simple agencies that steal so many mysterious marches.

The staple influence in the abundant life of feeling and thought in the household of the elder James was what his literary son subsequently described as "the magnificence of meaning that was attached to the word *social*." All indeed that it could hold of great implications was a cornerstone conviction of the elder James. And his affirmation of "the serene immaculate divinity of the social spirit" and "the sheer impregnable truth of human society" was not merely a belief excogitated; it was an emotion of profound, in fact, of mystic conviction, an exaltation. William James records that his father could sit for hours given over to his pan-humanism. It was not merely a mystic emotion; it was a tenet of daily living. For as he believed that heaven has its finest flower in the untrammelled, unselfish intercourse of man with man, so he held that the self and its selfishness, whether in his own heart or another's, were things above all things to be reprobated. In such hands as his this could, and usually did, prove a critical principle of infinite effect; so that his readers are apt to feel that here the world had one of its natural critics of men and things. And few men, as his acquaintances would bear witness by their scars, and their affection for him, could so successfully combine critical aspersions of extreme severity, with genuine and warm celebrations of friendliness, as the elder James; few could so apply diminishment to the victim's egoistic pretensions, and at the same time dilate so sincerely on his worth as a human brother. The elder James was quick to feel a man's humanity and ever cherished it; and he was quite as quick to discern the portentous emptiness of egoism and never wearied in puncturing it.

In so sincere and so deeply feeling a man as the elder James,

it would be reasonable to expect in his family life, in which he thoroughly lived, some reflection of his important convictions, such as that respecting the transcendent value of men as members of society, and their nullity as self-seeking individual egos. Egotism and righteousness—which latter he never tired of demonstrating to be really *self*-righteousness, that is, a form of holy snobbery—these presumably would have lean years in the James household; and the virtues of feeling for which all scope would be afforded would be generosity, sympathy, and *impersonality* of the humane sort, in fact all the essential humanity of which the individual might be capable. And this, practically, was the case.

There is no reason to suppose, in fact, that the four sons of the elder James either grew up exempt from his buffetings of the self and its vanities or that they failed to prosper in the inspiring atmosphere of his presence. The household early became a forum, we learn, and sometimes a pandemonium of opinion, where views had only such right of survival as their sponsors could force by their wits against the ingenious aggressives of humorous but vehement rivals. "It was certainly to their father's talk," says the editor of the Letters, "that both William and Henry owed their own wealth of resource in ordinary speech."

It seems evident, in good fact, in the case of William James, that this enthusiastic family forum was both a school of disputation and a school of style. It could be more accurately said of his style than of almost any other that its merits and defects are the merits and defects of felicitous forensic talk. "Sound communication between minds" was the single principle of expression, he held, and "energy of epithet" the sole by-consideration. The qualities of his writing which drew so many were its succinctness, its fecund, smiting particularity, its open-spoken declarative fire. Its very defects as a rhetoric of strict idea indicate its character as vivid talk written down; for many of his phrases, such as the "will to believe" and the "cash-value" of truth were egregiously misunderstood, since his readers, some wilfully, some perhaps because they could do no better, took him at his word when he evidently expected to be permitted such departures from literality as one readily takes in conversation, with the assistance of those worlds of expressive resource which lie in intonation, inflexion, and gesture. Had he not written so im-

mediately as he thought and spoke, had he been more given to literary premeditation, he could probably have prevented some of this misunderstanding, or at least rescued himself from some of the responsibility for it; or had he been talking *viva voce* to his readers, still using the same words he had written, they would doubtless have *felt* his meaning more truly.

But the family forum, in which the elder James was so gifted a "moderator," was, one suspects, far more than a school of speech and disputation for his sons; it was an academy of temperament and feeling, a school of heart. In William James himself, certainly, there is evidence enough of plenteous and resplendent lessons in feeling. With regard to this point the comments of John Jay Chapman in his reminiscences of William James seem notable not merely for empyrean enthusiasm but for penetration.

"I used occasionally," he says, "to write and speak to James about his specialties in a tone of fierce contempt; and never failed to elicit from him in reply the most spontaneous and celestial gayety. . . . He himself was perfected from the beginning, a self-less angel."

One can hardly escape the force of the word *self-less*; it points home to the captain jewel of William James's temperament. He *was* self-less. His personality was impersonality in its best essence; egoism had no place in the economy of his spirit; in him the puny principality of the ego was absorbed in a great natural and abundantly cultivated humanity.

Any one inclined to discount the force of this quality in William James ought first to reflect upon his relations with his countless readers. Some numbers of them—if one may judge by the smoothness to which a decade or more of quotation has worn many of his pronouncements upon our inner being—have found durable satisfactions in him; yet satisfactions that may not lie quite in the strict noon of the intellect, that possibly are of more elemental concern to men than the conscious satisfactions of the intellect, that may, in fact, support the intellect and initiate its concerns, urging it ever to fresh woods and pastures new. This multifarious quotation, acknowledged and unacknowledged, indicates the aptness to the fundamental affairs of the human spirit of many things

said in the *Principles of Psychology*, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, and *The Will to Believe*; all are books bethumbed in public libraries. There have even been symptoms among those who make Inspiration their profession, that they will appropriate William James, as long ago they took Emerson, for an uncanonized saint of the evangel. Texts from William James, indeed, are quarried freely by men of quite various party, by men, in fact, who have no use for each other, who could have no use for each other, down to the last afternoon of time. What do they all find? They find a modern Prometheus; they find, surely, a great human voice.

Considerations of temperament have prevailed in what has gone before. And to attempt to turn now to matters more strictly mental is to observe that one may not abruptly leave the things of feeling for the things of mind. Thought emerges from feeling; thought *is* feeling, is such part of feeling as becomes articulate. If, therefore, in speaking of the temperament of William James one emphasizes his humanity, so in speaking of his mind, stress ought first to be laid upon his open-mindedness; and these very words are nearly a tautology; their systems of meaning certainly overlap, and they are exchangeable in some contexts, though not in others.

Perhaps we shall do best, accordingly, to say that it was a characteristic emotional *and* intellectual satisfaction that he took in the verse of I Corinthians: "And base things of the world, and things which are despised hath God chosen, yes, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are." This temper is to be found in all of his intellectual dealings—in his support, so costly to himself, of the much derogated psychical research; in his championship in his psychology, of the indefinite and the relative, those border-marches of the mental life, so neglected in his day; in his appearance at the Boston State House in 1898 on the occasion when the medical licensing bill was under consideration, to defend the rights of "mental healers" to recognition by the law. And what could his pluralism be but a defence of the truth of "the humble particular" against the arrogance of the "apriorists"? What, if we consider it in terms of individuality, was pragmatism, that "looking away from first things, principles, 'categories,' supposed

necessities; and looking towards last things, fruits, consequences, facts," but a formula of open-mindedness?

We may call this trait intellectual or temperamental as we will. But we may hardly say that it was in its origin an intellectual acquirement, or that he had it first from Agassiz, or Chauncey Wright, or Charles Renouvier, or Shadworth Hodgson, or any others of those who are credited with a share in the forming of his mind. In the beginning and well into its growth, it was surely a matter of feeling, a gift of heart, which he had from his father and his father alone. We shall hardly see what share the elder James had in the contents of his son's mind; it was, perhaps, not a great deal. But it is surely not too much to say that he had all to do with the temperamental founding and first forming of that mind; making of it, as his other son said, "a mind incapable of the shut door in any direction."

William James, however, was prompt enough in his declarations of mental independence. His earliest comings and goings in the pages of his brother have an air, a self-possession, which though it was not in his case exactly pride of mind, was such a characteristic as the acutely percipient are apt to have in their intercourse with their less discerning fellows; and he seems, indeed, from his earliest time, a true exemplar of his own later doctrine that the mind is not a *tabula rasa* passively in receipt of experience, but an incalculable agent, acting upon events in ways of its own to make its destiny. Some suggestion has already been made of the strongly aesthetic character of his sensibility. But his sensibility might be never so aesthetic; it might draw him into art and painting, as it did for a while; it might on the one hand be a potent aid to healthy-mindedness in his approaching crises of intellect, and on the other a physical handicap, in the intensity and delicacy of nervous organization which it implied; artist and analyst might be never so closely matched in him his life long, and the artist ever qualify and enrich the *dicta* of the analyst. Nevertheless it is clear that his intellect and not his sensibility very early came into command of his mental scene.

The persuasions upon him of his intellect, and its absorption in the "natural constitution of things" were not merely great; they were overweening. In spite of his aesthetic sense, ever vivid and

voluminous, of the excellent world about, his strongest interests, as we learn from one of the earlier of his letters, lay in "the most general," that is, in metaphysical questions. He was scarcely twenty-three when he reached the conviction, never to be departed from, that the life of speculative thought was the only existence in which he could find scope for his dearest inclinations. He went on with the study of medicine after he had reached that conviction, it is true; nevertheless, from then on he was really preparing to embark, and embarking on the speculative voyages of the mind. His first ventures, one gathers, were not merely unprofitable; they were unwholesome, for they landed him on the shores of scepticism, where he contracted a formidable case of metaphysical melancholy. How formidable it was, may be inferred from the fact that it brought him, in his twenty-fifth or twenty-sixth year, as he hinted at the time to his father, and later admitted in a letter to Thomas W. Ward, well balanced and normal-hearted as he was, to the contemplation of suicide; and in his twenty-seventh or twenty-eighth year, brought him, as we learn from his disguised deposition in the *Varieties of Religious Experience*, within sight of insanity. The story of this double crisis is, surely, the central drama of his education.

Before he reached this crisis, however, his education received an accession probably of vital assistance to him then, and certainly of importance generally in view of the directions which his thought subsequently took. When he gave up painting he turned promptly to science, that is, to chemistry first and then to natural history. The influence of the famous Agassiz was then in the ascendant; and when in 1865, the Thayer expedition to South America took ship under the leadership of Agassiz, William James, twenty-three years old, was one of the journeyman-naturalists taken along. The letters he wrote home from South America are biographically among the most significant of his letters. They make clear the two vital things he learned. The first of these was that his vocation was the life of thought; the second, for which he apparently gave the whole credit to his contacts with Agassiz, is best shown in a characteristic passage of his letter to his father of September 12th, 1865: "No one," he there writes, "sees farther into a generalization than his own knowledge of details extends, and you have a greater feeling of weight and solidity about the movement

of Agassiz's mind, owing to the continual presence of this great background of special facts, than about the mind of any other man I know." He was deeply impressed, as we can perhaps infer, when we find him writing a year later to his friend Thomas W. Ward: "I feel somehow, now, as if I had no right to an opinion on any subject . . . until I know some one thing as thoroughly as it can be known."

These direct and indirect comments upon Agassiz seem, indeed, to be the first important appearance of that ideal of intellectual action, which when it grew into full being was the fountain-head of the intense pragmatic thoroughness of thinking-out which ever characterized James in his subsequent work. Such comments may, for instance, describe the origin and first conditions of the reason, when he came to make his contribution to the natural history of consciousness, the Principles of Psychology, that he was twelve years thinking, testing, writing out what he had first planned for two. He himself, in fact, expresses with emphasis his sense of the importance of this passage in his education: "The hours spent with Agassiz," he says, in the sentence from his commemorative address on Agassiz, quoted in the Letters, "so taught him the difference between all possible abstractionists and all livers in the light of the world's concrete fulness that he was never able to forget it." One may additionally gather how expressive this comment was, by setting beside it one of the *sententiae* in which Mr Santayana recorded his impressions of James: "Probably," he says, "James found no one among the philosophers whom he cared to resemble."

But important as this episode was, it seems hardly to be supposed that William James was drawn out of his orbit by it. Is not the probability indeed considerable that the impression made by Agassiz upon James was really due to the fact that the disposition to which James was thus apparently influenced was already inherent in him? His artist's sensibility and his talents for concrete observation, to say no more, were not previously inert in the presence of the actual.

The six years, 1866-1872, following William James's return from South America were perhaps outwardly the least eventful and inwardly the most momentous of his life. It was now that he completed the study of medicine, taking his degree in 1869.

Now his health failed (1867), and during the enforced retirement of his search for recovery, first in Europe, and then back in his father's house in Cambridge, he carried forward the immense reading in physiology, psychology, and philosophy, which made him later one of the most widely aware men, professionally, of his day. He was now following through the various sequences of philosophic doubt that were to prove so dangerous to his mental peace and health. Now, in fact, in the double crisis through which he was soon to pass, the outlines of his intellectual character seem to have been enduringly drawn. There might afterwards be much mental amassment and filling in, as much indeed as could come from the intense intellectual industry which filled the hours and weeks of a densely crowded life of the mind; yet when he came out of this period he appeared to possess certain central points of departure whereon he could and did base his every subsequent intellectual enterprise.

He came from his time with Agassiz with the two fundamental sides of his nature in sharper contrast than they had ever yet been. On the one hand he had been persuaded, not merely by the force of Agassiz's example, but by the force of his own temperament, of the necessity to every intellectual undertaking, of deep and wide foundations in fact, and of thorough modes of building upon such foundations; on the other, he was now aware of the gathering headway of his tendency to abstraction; he saw that it would be only when he was making formulas for the "natural constitution of things" that his theoretic inclinations would be stayed. These two tendencies, though they made his essential intellectual character when later forcibly harmonized, were far from harmonious now. There was in him now a discordance so marked that for a considerable time his mental destinies seem to have hung in the balance. The fact may indeed have been that with his opulent sensibility and his phenomenal powers of observation he felt too well the inscrutable, intractable presence of the real; universal formulas, as he later declared, are the easier made the fewer the facts they consider. At all events his theoretic tendency harmonized ill with the rest of his nature, brought him to no practicable conclusions, kept him wandering empty-handed over the barrens of scepticism. Yet it was apparently, as he said, the strongest tendency in him.



There would not be space, and there is perhaps no need to quote biographic allusions to the steps of his progress toward the choice and crisis of his career. The time finally came, however, apparently in his twenty-eighth year, when he saw that a kind of choice was possible between his theoretic tendency and the rest of his nature, and more, he may have seen that such a choice was vital to intellectual survival. In the description of it, contained in his note-book entry of April 30th, 1870, included with the Letters, one can afford to neglect no word, though the length of the passage makes abridgement imperative here:

“I think,” he writes, “that yesterday was a crisis in my life. I finished the first part of Renouvier’s second ‘Essais’ and see no reason why his definition of Free Will—‘the sustaining of a thought *because I choose to* when I might have other thoughts’—need be the definition of an illusion. At any rate I will assume for the present—until next year—that it is no illusion. My first act of free will shall be to believe in free will. For the remainder of the year, I will abstain from the mere speculation in which my nature takes most delight, and voluntarily cultivate the feeling of moral freedom. . . . Hitherto, when I have felt like taking a free initiative, like daring to act originally, without carefully waiting for contemplation of the external world to determine all for me, suicide seemed the most manly form to put my daring into; now I will go a step further with my will, not only act with it, but believe as well; believe in my individual reality and creative power . . .”

How the sound of this determination reverberates through subsequent passages of James’s most characteristic eloquence! What an accession of biographic significance it is to *The Will to Believe!* For what is that famous essay but a generalization of the “choice of risks” which he had here made, into the right of everyone to a similar choice? Such choice might have a look of artificiality in that he put aside his questions arbitrarily; and there might be and was some impugning both of his will to believe and his pragmatism on such or similar grounds. It was, in fact, a pragmatic choice he had now made, as it was a pragmatic choice he later advocated; but it was a human choice, a real choice, a choice to

survive. Who shall say that the event did not approve his pragmatism in here casting his lot with the human, particularist, fact-loving side of his nature? Did not the bulk of his subsequent Promethean achievement—his psychology, his pluralism, his pragmatism, his fine treatment of religious experience—issue really from this choice?

At all events such was his choice; he stopped his ears against the sirens of abstraction; not entirely, perhaps, but largely. How largely he did so, we may gather from the much his adverse critics have since made of the point that his philosophy was unmetaphysical. One of them says: "James does his philosophizing openly, I may say almost cynically, through his sentiments and his preferences, even through his temperament. . . ." These are steep-up words; but are they not merely a derogatory description of the consistency with which he carried out the implications of his choice? He could hardly, by that choice, have been the metaphysicians' metaphysician. Philosophy, he thus came to hold, was a personally achieved vision of "truth possible" before it was reasoned structure; the true parent of philosophies was man's inherent need of beliefs to live by; all the great philosophical books were really personal, "like so many men." This is persuasive; it is true; but other conceptions, also, are possible. Compare the astral detachment of Bertrand Russell's definition: "Philosophy is a highly refined, highly civilized pursuit; demanding for its success a certain liberation from the life of instinct, a certain aloofness from mundane hopes and fears." A certain aloofness? Any aloofness, one fears, is too much to request of so vividly human a genius as William James. He might indeed have his eye finally upon the infinite, but from the time of his choice onward he certainly held that the true mode to the infinite was by way of the actual. And if he characteristically chose, for his particular sphere of the infinite, the inner infinite, then the actual by which he would approach it would be the inner individual actual; and that, whatever else one may say of it, is seldom aloof, is seldom disjoined from mundane hopes and fears.

Thus if his philosophy was not metaphysical, it was introspective to the last limits of his great attainments. If it was not philosophy, it did have for its not negligible values those of a great realistic psychology carried to high places. Its author might

not be a system-maker, but he was by virtue of his wide acquirements, his accomplished pragmatic dialectic, and his intense introspection, a formidable critic of systems. Quite true it might be that he "did his philosophizing through his temperament"; but this is hardly the utter derogation that it may have been meant to be. Is it not, as the elder James once said, "the mere wantonness of criticism to demand of a writer what it is plainly impossible that he should have been"? We may readily concede that the gifts of logic, strict and strait, are scarcely to be found in the works of one who found the utterances of his compeer, the incisively, the brilliantly logical Charles S. Peirce, "very nearly incomprehensible"; we shall have to look further for logic—in the frosty if bracing air of more ultra-modern intellectual cathedrals. But do we not still have in James the great introspective gifts of appreciation, of discernment into humanity, the gifts of insight?

Was it not really the pragmatic education of his insight that was the fundamental aim in the much of his life that may appear irrelevant to metaphysics—in the intellectual wanderings at large of his youth; in his time at Newport, studying painting with John La Farge as his fellow; in his days with Agassiz; in his medical degree; in his teaching of anatomy and physiology and his monumental years in psychology; in his multifarious readings in biography? As prolegomena to the abstractions of strict metaphysics these mundane doings seem rather roundabout, to say no more; especially when we find their doer taking up the formalities of philosophy rather late in his day, so late that night must inevitably have come before he could even formally state his position satisfactorily to himself. But if one consider them as the preoccupations by which great gifts of discernment are prepared for, or rather are practised in—for it was inherent with him and he could no more have taken it up than he could have laid it down—the philosophy that is vision into the common inwardness of men, that is the vocation of insight, that is less a logically integrated system, than a naturally organic body of criticism, then one can see the pertinence of these many dealings with the realities of individual inward experience.

It would appear from his biography that this pragmatic education of William James was his own doing, since his thought swings in so many senses upon the axis of that early "free-will" decision,

when he appears also to have felt what he later said: "Fact makes itself somehow and our business is far more with its What than with its Whence or Why"; when, accordingly, he put from him his inclination for the extreme and utter reaches of speculation, put it from him, not as he said, "until next year," but for his life—in certain important ways, as the event showed; put it from him, although it was his strongest desire. Yet may we not question its strength? Certainly it was not strong singly to any very productive purpose, and certainly it was not stronger than the rest of his desires and feelings together, that is, his temperament. Is not this so critical choice, indeed, to be recognized as that choice by temperament which he himself meant when he said several times in after-years, though taken to task for it, that philosophies were the products of temperament? And if we come back to temperament, do we not come back to the elder Henry James? William James was without his father's mystic sources of conviction; yet he was otherwise, perhaps, too like his father, too much the Promethean, too human, not merely by native bent, but by early paternal nurture, to contemplate imperturbably, aloofly, the fate of man as he seemed to behold it from the standpoint of his early intellectualist sceptical abstraction.

## JUGGLERS

BY MANUEL KOMROFF

**A** TROUPE of Japanese jugglers were giving an exhibition in the square before the railroad station on the morning that Dundee left. The whole town was out to see the fun and nobody paid any attention to Dundee.

The train arrived and waited five minutes before it departed. From the car window he could see over the heads of the people. The youngest of the jugglers was on his back with his arms folded under his head; his legs, covered with white tights, were up in the air and with his nimble feet he kept rotating a small light barrel. He would throw it high into the air and catch it with his feet and he would also spin it around on one toe and slap the hollow sides with the flat of his other foot. In the end he used it for a drum and beat time loud and steady in a regulation military rhythm, like the song: "What the hell do we care, what the hell do we care. Hail! Hail! . . ."

It was hard to keep your feet still for it made you want to march.

Slowly the train drew away from this scene. Nobody said good-bye. Mildred Marsh was at work in the factory. The girl he loved was now left behind. And he rode away to find the world that he knew was filled with the things he wanted. He rode away to a tune beat by a juggler's foot. . . .

He had always been told that a great city is a lonely place, but this he did not find quite so, for at no time did he really feel himself alone. He was alive with plans, schemes, and methods, all directed toward one end—to the good things in the world of desire.

It was like something electrical that drew him near and made him wish with a yearning eagerness that was almost a passion. Often he dreamed how things could and might become and in all his dreams appeared the hero victorious.

He was young; he was enthusiastic and lived in a mental paradise. Everything seemed promising and cheering for he felt certain that good things were due to fall to him. Why not? He became alive and awake and followed the advice of a friend who was born of the earth and knew the world.

People in the world all seemed so eager to get on. . . . On to success! And he did as they did. He manoeuvred for position.

It was difficult for Dundee to break down a natural shyness in his nature. He was timid and apprehensive, but he knew that these traits were bad and would hold him back. The proverb about the faint heart and the fair lady often came to his mind and he did his best to fight against it. He tried to cover and disguise his real feelings and often pretended to be brazen and bold. It was as though he were trying to be a different person than himself, but he knew it was necessary because the world worshipped the Spartan and the hero never dies.

"I have already learnt my lesson," he wrote in a letter to his girl. "The world is a place where one has to put up a front, make a show, and if necessary fight for what is your due. If you give in an inch they will take a yard and if you only allow it, your friends will walk all over you and then ride. Let the preachers talk all they want about brotherhood; it's all right in heaven, but it doesn't work down here. You must fight for everything you get and if you yell loud enough you will get attention and that which is due you. If you don't you will find yourself without anything."

Were these words that he wrote really his own or were they dictated by his friend the stranger? They sounded so much like the stranger that it is hard to say. Yet perhaps the stranger would have said the same thing in a more forceful way. No doubt he would have intensified it by saying that meekness was the world's greatest crime. Yes, you can almost hear him with his slow tired voice speaking as though to nobody in particular.

"Meekness is the crime. It is watery and weak and grows upon you like the habit of opium. It makes you close your eyes to what is really around you and the ladder of your life will bring you only downward. Meekness will force you to descend rung by

rung until you have unwillingly sunk to a depth and become part of the dregs of the bottom."

In the boarding-house where Dundee lived was an old man who kept very much to his room where he had several shelves of pamphlets and catalogues and a piano. He was a retired school-master living on a little pension. A meek, quiet life. A little sad; but silent and proud.

At first there were long evenings when Dundee sat alone in his little room and listened to the old man downstairs playing the piano. Sometimes he went to his room while he was playing and would sit in a corner and listen in silence. It all sounded so far away and it gave him a strange mixed feeling of happy and sad. . . . The old man played on and on. His dark wrinkled fingers barely touched the white keys. It was almost like a sculptor working his white marble; only instead of a powdery dust that hung like a snow in the air about the statue, a network of sound was woven across the room and floated in and out as though it were suspended in a magic sea. And the treasures that it brought to your feet came from a world that was not this, not anything at all like our world.

It brought things of great colour. Things dark—entirely unknown—and things sublime. Things of great beauty.

You enjoy them all, but the moment you attempt to lift them out of the network of sound the cords seem to crumble to a powder, like cigarette ash, and once the net is broken the treasures vanish and you yourself are left standing alone among your own sordid possessions.

How poverty-stricken it all seems! How poor and mean!

"The great treasures of the world are often before you," said the old man one evening, "but you must not grab at them and you must not even touch them for they are made of a texture that is too sheer, too fine for the greedy fingers of man. Oh, how we want them! We think they could serve us well, but little realize they were serving us all the time and that we live by their presence and only die by possession. Either they vanish at our touch or we decay and perish with their possession."

Dundee could have lived in their presence so nicely . . . but he

was still young and did not know and when he did learn, it came too late. It came at a time when he was beyond living and could not use it. The great treasures of the world were lost to him for ever.

At one time he had a strange conversation with the old man who played the piano. He asked Dundee why he liked music.

"I don't know why," he answered.

"What do you think of when you hear it?"

"Nothing in particular," he said for he did not want to tell him of the big lattice-work of machinery and of his sweetheart and of the net that is cast and floats in laden with treasures from other worlds. He did not want to tell his secret thoughts. Why should he? Nobody else does. But why must we keep secret the things that really matter? He did not want to tell what his real feelings were, any more than he wanted to tell about his friend who gave him a picture of the world as he found it and advised him how to get ahead and what was the best road to follow.

Nobody told. We are brought up that way. We are instructed in the many ways and devices that can disguise our real feelings. All our senses are truthful, but our speech must lie. We must use it to conceal what we really think. The important things must not be known!

"Nothing at all," he repeated.

"Beethoven was a great master," said the old schoolmaster. "I never tire of playing him. He has a steady and logical flow of ideas. He takes a long breath, and his questioning is serious, but his replies are profound. . . . A great master."

"That is why you like to play him?"

"No. That is not the reason. The real reason I suppose is because he suffered and because of that I can understand him. I understand him because . . . because of many things."

Because of many things? What did he mean? Did he want to say that he liked to play Beethoven because the composer had suffered and recorded his sensations in such a way that they could be communicated? And "because of many things" also meant that he too had suffered. But how, he did not tell. Perhaps Dundee



appeared too flippant to the old schoolmaster or perhaps he did not desire to become intimate; at least these were the impressions that the old man seemed to convey.

Because of many things? What things? The fifty old bottles of salts he had in the bottom drawer of his dresser? The old dusty catalogues of chemical apparatus with marked pages and turned-down leaves that seemed scattered about his room? Were these the things that made him understand?

No. Certainly not. He did not want to tell because he was ashamed. Ashamed of the truth. Ashamed of himself. He had done something that was not right. He had become a failure "because of many things," and he did not want to talk about it. It was too close to the bitter core of his heart and too intimately bound up with the past.

Yes, Dundee said "nothing at all" and the old man disposed of it "because of many things." Was this the meekness that becomes a crime? Or is it modesty or pride? . . .

There are people in the world who seem to go about enveloped in a tranquil and peaceful cathedral-like feeling; as though it were something cool; constructed with a definite play, accurately ruled out, ornamented with chiselled flutings and arabesques that keep on repeating and repeating until the whole structure hangs like a dark cool stone mantle about them to comfort and bring protection from those burning metal suns of desire that send down their scorching beams to play, with teasing serpent-like flames, upon the flesh. All within the stone mantle remains orderly and nobly unified.

There are people who live constantly in its comforting shade, in a little world of peace, indifferent to the raging frenzy about them, indifferent to those rushing around in a mad tarantella and snatching at useless objects, which they take to themselves and hang about their necks like plaques of stone that in the end only chill the heart; totally indifferent to all this they remain firm, and live a small quiet life in agreement with what there is about them, in the shade of cool fluted columns and in tranquillity. A small modest life that uses the little things close at hand that nobody seems to want;—uses up that which remains.

Where is this cathedral-like mantle that can take you under its fold? More magic than the great burning lamp of Arabia; than the Irish rock of laughter. More wonderful in its power than the tooth of Buddha, greater than all the miracles of the Red Lamas of Thibet. What brings you into the quiet and shade? Who folds the mantle about you? What price do you pay or what must you do to be allowed to rest between the columns? How do you ask for this privilege? And whom do you address?

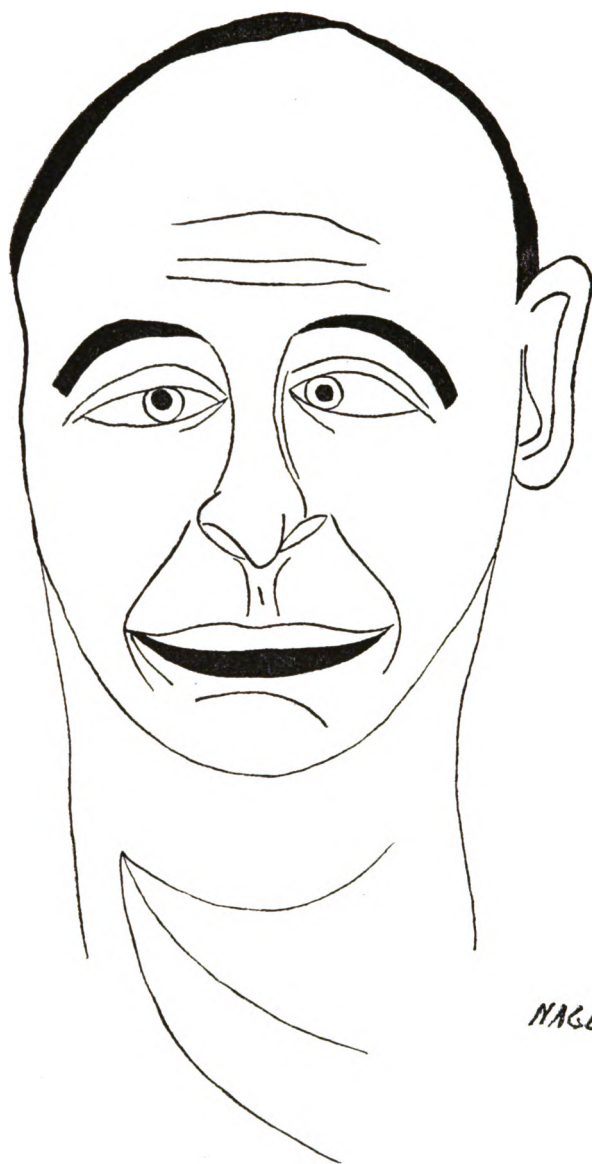
## VIENNA

BY PIERRE LOVING

AURELIUS, he murmured, have you died?  
 The city that knew your heel wears a gold comb  
 In her hair. It is autumn. There are leaves  
 And spires and domes, and it is autumntide.  
 The old leaves crack. And did you march from Rome?

Aurelius, he murmured, are you dead?  
 Spaded underfoot, you wear this belt of hills  
 Forested round. It is autumn: leaves break red  
 And gold and wound you with declension, leaves  
 Of autumn. . . .

Dusk of autumn dies  
 Over the fogblue clusters on the hills. Leaves  
 Curl up like lions, leaves, while the plum smoke drives  
 Slantingly through air. Dead bones, you whirl like a comet.  
 Wind metes you blues and golds. Do I mark your eyes,  
 Aurelius? Enigma. Or are you wise?



LEON ERROL. BY EDWARD NAGLE





ERNEST BOYD. BY EDWARD NAGLE



## THE GLASS-STAINER

BY GODFREY DE BERNIERE

WE were more like a band of strolling players, than glass-stainers. There was old Foster—the image of Edward the Seventh—still one of the finest cartoon artists and glass-painters in the stained-glass trade. Stevens himself, half crazy, yet the head of the cartoon and sketch department, Acting Manager while the Boss was ill. We were not surprised that he died. Foster was a great friend of Stevens, both of them Scotchmen, as mean as you make them. Then there was Daw, the foreman of the glass-men, with a consummate eye for colour, and for building up a symphonic window, combined with a cockney accent that twenty years in New York had not improved. Add to this a girl stenographer and an elevator man, who resembled a pirate and had been a sea-pilot in his youth, who now spent most of his time on the roof, chasing some homing pigeons which he raised instead of running the elevator. And we worked, or rather played our various rôles on the sixth floor—the loft of an old deserted building on the East River. It was a strange combination and they seemed to think that I was the strangest one of the lot. Though I told them I was an American, they insisted I was English on account of my accent. Foster in fact thought that I was on some sort of secret mission, God knows what! He would look at me in a knowing way, his beady blue eyes gleaming from under his white shaggy eyebrows. “You are not a Freemason,” he said to me one day. “Why, no!” I answered; but I doubt that he believed me. He then sidled up to me. “Young man,” he said, “you must be careful about Stevens. There is a mystery connected with him and Strong.” (That was the Boss’s name.) “It is better to say nothing and mind one’s own business. He will talk to you, and draw you out, but do not ever wait till too late for the elevator. Why, when we all have to walk down six flights of stairs, after working hours, God knows what might happen. In point of fact, I think he is trying to kill me, hounding me in this way from day to day.”

I had noticed that Foster kept a formidable array of weapons

by his box of charcoal, et cetera. His charcoal-sharpener was a huge carving-knife, and he always kept this box between Stevens and himself.

But Foster was an interesting old codger, notwithstanding. He had worked for William Morris, had known an intimate friend of "Swinny," that was Swinburne—Old Brown, the famous glass-painter of the H.B. and B. in London. Old Brown he described in his slow emphatic manner as being a very beautiful young man. "In point of fact," he would add, "he was 'alarmingly beautiful,' so that he was obliged to powder his hair, in order to look plain." "Many a quid I could have gotten out of old Swinny," Foster used to quote Old Brown as having said to him years ago, in some tedious tale of his which I never could get at the bottom of. But some of his stories were interesting. He had served at the altar twenty years before becoming an atheist; but I think he was still a Catholic at heart, else how could he do the High Church work so well, which he feigned to despise? And no one was a better authority than he on vestments, et cetera.

One of the most amusing of his stories was his account of meeting the Prince of Wales and other crowned heads, every day at lunch in a near-by Third Avenue restaurant. "But how," I asked Mr Foster, "did you know that it was the Prince of Wales?" He raised his eyebrows and looked at me. "Of course," he said, "the young man was dressed as a policeman, but I knew by his boots that he was the Prince of Wales." If one questioned the veracity or possibility of his Baron Munchausen adventures, he would flush with righteous indignation. He was indeed a character, white hair, blue roving eyes, straight as a ramrod, rather rotund, though tall; and a first-rate cartoon artist and draughtsman at the age of seventy-five, in one of the most exacting stained-glass firms in New York. Surely a fine advertisement for the English constitution. But his story of the chita, or Indian hunting leopard, and the seven kinds of cats that he found in Chicago, is perhaps the drollest of all.

Then there was Stevens, the Acting Manager, with his sadistic tendencies, his possible dealing in Black Magic, and his continued cruelty to old Foster, whose fears he played upon as a cat plays with a mouse. There was Stevens, black eyebrows, shaggy grey hair, ruddy face, cold, wide, blue, staring eyes, and a cruel, thick-



lipped mouth—like a Roman Emperor, with an intellectual forehead and the mouth of a sensualist. Stevens, a man who had a marvellous imagination and feeling for Gothic ornament and symbolism, who had been on the stage in early life, and was now playing the part of religious ascetic draughtsman, Stevens who remains a man of mystery, and of whom I am almost afraid to write.

My first experience in working for the Strong Company was a rather pleasant one. Stevens who was like a cat, could draw in his claws, and be all smiles and whiskers though he was clean shaven. He first put me to work on a Gothic canopy. When I had finished, he patted me on the back and said: "Enchantingly done," which of course gave me confidence. Then I worked on the border of the rather Byzantine window, and to my surprise he allowed me to work on the figures themselves—though he had said since I was but an apprentice, he would for the present let me do borders and canopies—in other words, learn Gothic ornament; but that later I could take a hand at the figures. He was expecting to finish them up himself, in his wild manner of drawing. Then he would get old Foster to finish them academically, after he had put in the swing and movement. Academic drawing was beyond him; hence the presence of the painstaking Foster.

Well, when Stevens told me that I could work on the figures, of course I was delighted. I first drew in the two little kneeling angels, one on either side of the Rood. The Christ figure had already been swung in by Stevens and left unfinished. The window, I had best explain, was the illustration of an old monkish hymn which speaks of Christ reigning from the Rood. The central figure was that of our Lord, suspended in front of the Cross in the manner of the Crucifix, but different. For here he was portrayed in priestly robes, cope, chasuble, alb, and crown. Underneath this central figure were the two kneeling angels, and below these—in fact as if they knelt on it—was the dragon, gnawing at the foot or root of the Cross, the short white horn in its upper jaw slanted in defiance, and its rolled eyes showing the whites, its scaly head belching forth flame. Its claws, the curve of its outspread, bat-like pinions, and all its attributes were those of a typical mediaeval dragon such as Britomart might have encountered. Meanwhile the face of Jesus shone down in glory, as it were—annulling the fury of the beast. This idea of the dragon gnawing at the foot of the Cross, and of the

nonchalant angels, was typical of Stevens, whose philosophy of life was about as ruthless and paradoxical as that of the Egyptian sorcerer, Arbaces. Be this as it may, he loved contrasts and paradoxes, and his knowledge was of a weird and wide variety, ranging from Druidic runes, cabalistic writings, British folk-lore, to all sorts of odds and ends of "information" about Chaldean religions. Especially was he up on the mysteries of the mortuary priests of Egypt, but I will tell you later of a conversation between old Foster and himself on this subject.

The days drifted by. I had almost finished the cartoon for the window of Christ in Glory, under which in Gothic letters was to be placed the well-known legend, "Thou art a Priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedech." I noticed that as my work improved Stevens grew colder and harsher towards me every day. But his rude treatment of me was nothing compared with his heartless cruelty to old Foster. When patrons or clients, such as the Camerons, would come to see one of their windows, he would be all smiles and serenity in addressing us, but as soon as they were gone, would bawl out old Foster as if he, Stevens, were the first mate of a pirate brig and Foster, the deck under his feet. Then apparently to make up, he would have long talks with him, detaining him after working hours and telling him blood-curdling tales, which scared him half to death, but which the poor old man was afraid not to listen to, lest Stevens fire him.

His continued insults at last came to a head one morning. I was two hours late for work, the elevator man leered at me and said, "Well, I guess youse just in time for the fight. Stevens and Foster are at it again. Stevens asked young Morris to throw old Foster out, but Morris wouldn't do it. Foster said he would call the cop." By this time we had reached the sixth floor. There was a dead lull, like the calm in a cyclone. Stevens was red in the face, and old Foster was flushed, though very deliberate in his actions. Foster always grew most absurdly dignified when he was angry. Stevens when roused was like an erupting volcano, or his own dragon, belching forth fire. I started to work, after a perfunctory "Good-morning," which no one answered. Suddenly old Foster marches up to Stevens, who was silent as the grave (as a rule he was hopping about on a three-rung ladder like an ungainly bird, standing on one leg, then on the other, and singing fragments from opera arias, beating the air at the same time with his charcoal as if it were a

baton). As nervous usually as an old woman, he was immobile today. (I believe he was supposed to play the 'cello.) At any rate, old Foster marches up to him and says, "Sir, I demarnd that you stop insulting me and persecuting me from day to day," to which Stevens made no reply. "And furthermore, sir, I demarnd that you stop doping." Stevens was lamblike. He had gained his wish, namely, to stir the old man up, and it was apparently all that he wanted to do. I asked Arthur Morris, "Does nothing ever come of these fights?" He said, "Oh, no, they cuss each other out, but both are cowards." "One day," the old glass-man Hal Knutt put in, "I remember old Foster marching up in a rage to a young man and suddenly bursting forth with: 'Sir, you are a whore and a policeman,' surely an extraordinary combination for one person." It seemed that these continual naggings and feuds were but safety-valves for two overcharged artistic temperaments, both craving dramatic expression. At least they were so in young Morris' opinion, and I hoped he was right. However, I decided to change my job, for how could I draw saints and angels in that atmosphere?

Life is a mystery, a subtle conundrum, a sphinx in the desert, a relentless dealer in paradoxes, a mockery of humanity. Such were my thoughts as I wandered homeward one night from "the shop," asking myself the old unanswerable questions. But suddenly I remembered that I had forgotten the small sketch that Stevens had told me to do over again. It was my first attempt in water-colour, and I felt rather disappointed at the result. If I could only handle that medium I could command a larger salary, twice or three times the paltry twenty-five I was making. So I started back to the shop with little hope of getting in, as the elevator stopped running at five o'clock and Daw the foreman always locked the shop up before he left. Even if the door on the street had been left open, I doubted that I should keep the Boss from knowing of my carelessness. The sketch was to be submitted to Mr Cameron as an idea for a case-ment window with heraldic arms and decorative martletts for his summer estate, and I dreaded Stevens' wrath if the work were not ready by the next morning. So I returned, tired though I was; but I did not like the idea of going up those six flights of stairs alone. There was an athletic club—run by the old janitor—on the fifth floor of the building and several tough-looking characters were often to be seen lurking round as night came on. So, to fortify my rather unobtrusive courage, I dropped in to Mr Foster's Third Avenue

restaurant, the haunt of royalty, patronized by the Prince of Wales. Here I might have an unsavoury yet wholesome dinner, and might smoke one or two cigarettes, and not be ashamed of my shabby clothes.

I entered. A dazzling row of electric lights on a level with the eyes, a musty smell that challenged appetite, greasy cloths on the table, thick-lipped, hook-nosed people, Russian-Jews and Polacks apparently who seemed to be taking courses in something as they all carried text-books, and several affected horn-rimmed glasses. These and a few rather good-looking Walt-Whitman, open-at-the-throat roughnecks, who disdained collars and wore coarse white cotton shirts in winter, with apparently no underclothes, were the only frequenters of this little restaurant. I failed to see any royalty. Having eaten, I lit a cigarette and mused upon my melancholy state. Would it not be better for me to go to the movies—that refuge of all the disappointed and abandoned? Old Foster had remarked to me that it was the only place where he could get any sleep nowadays; his solitary abode in a riverside rooming house was too full of melancholy thoughts. However, I decided to forgo the pleasure of drinking the Lethæan draft of the cinema. I would rally my forces, make the desperate effort to be studious at night, and really try to make something out of my life. Lonely or not, in my empty room, I could read there and I was still able to paint. But was I? It seemed impossible for me to work now, except for those by whom I was employed. So back to the shop I would go, get the sketch, return quickly to my room, and start to work. I brushed the ashes from my cigarette, took my hat and coat, and walked out through the swinging door. It had begun to rain, and I regretted my resolve to return to the shop. Lights shone in the wet pavements—amber, purple, and green. What a colour combination, I thought, for a window, with those touches here and there of ruby and Egyptian blue from the Quick Lunch electric signs over the street. At last I reached our building at the foot of East Twenty-fifth Street. To my surprise, the door to the basement was open—the elevator, of course, being locked; but I mounted the steep stairs behind it. My stumbling footsteps echoed through the building, as I felt my way up, for it was pitch dark, with no lights anywhere. I paused, out of breath, for I thought I heard steps on the landing above me; but it must have been the sound of the wind slamming a door. I started up the next flight,

and suddenly came to a standstill, for I certainly heard the sound of voices rising and falling in a curious chant that seemed to blend with the occasional accompaniment of violin or 'cello. What could it be? I started on again, leaning against the plastered wall from time to time, to get my breath.

At last as I reached the landing on the sixth floor, the sounds of chanting ceased, though I still heard faintly the timbre of a violin. Then there was silence. I mustered courage and pushed open the door. The studio was dark except at the southern end where a window had been "set up" for a customer's inspection. It was now about eight o'clock or after, and the loft was too high to catch the reflection of lights from the street. To my surprise, the window was brightly lit up—or was it the window? For Stevens' work was so mediaeval in treatment that it was sometimes hard to tell a demon from an angel. It glowed with all the colours of the rainbow, emerald green, crimson, purple, rose, magenta, lavender, and gold. But red seemed the dominant chord. At first I thought it depicted Christ reigning from the Rood, but I was horrified to see instead a brown-bodied satyr with the haunches and hoofs of a goat. The head, however, was that of a young man "alarmingly beautiful," as old Foster would have said. The eyes gleamed with a malignity which seemed intensified by the red glass in the sockets. The figures hovered in front of the cross—a kind of Byzantine cross—the olive-brown torso writhing in the fantastic contortions of a dance, though the fixity of the eyes was terrifying. I noticed two crumpled, goat-like horns emerging from the orange-gold hair which seemed actually a flame of fire; the whole figure glowed with an unearthly effulgence; it seemed alive. As my eyes grew accustomed to the dark, I saw that the shop had been arranged with benches cross-wise, as in a church, and that there must have been some twenty persons seated in the obscurity. The light, besides what came from the window, was the dull red flame of an altar lamp just below it, and I could see the tall figure of old Foster in fantastic vestments swinging an incense thorifer. To the right of the altar was a half-stooping figure clad in a Benedictine monk's black garb, the cowl drawn over the head. Plainly by the gross mouth and sharp eyes, it was none other than Stevens. But what amazed me most was not the finding here, of these eccentric creatures officiating at some kind of black mass more or less in keeping with their characters, but to see before me—stretched out on a kind

of altar—our bobbed-haired Irish stenographer. She seemed to be clad in a kind of diaphanous stuff which showed off her lithe young figure as if she were almost nude. Honoria, our practical book-keeper, who was always flirting with the old janitor, and looked upon the whole company as a bunch of nuts. What could Honoria be doing here? She seemed indeed to be doing nothing—to be passive and a medium for the performance. Again I heard the sound of music. I could now see that the cowled figure was playing on a 'cello, while old Foster genuflected and muttered to himself. Two by two members of the congregation rose from their seats, went up to the altar, genuflected, and in some mysterious way vanished. I heard the groaning voice of the old man, and the bleating of the 'cello. The sulphurous smell of incense was in my nostrils. What could it all be about, anyway? The cowled figure motioned to me to make obeisance, but I hesitated; the whole thing seemed so absurd. Apparently angry, he then waved his hand to two members of the congregation—glass-men who did the leading—and these stalwarts youths strolled up to me, seized me by the shoulder, shook me and shook me, and then I felt cold water on my face. Suddenly light seemed to dawn. I looked around; there was no one in the shop, and bending over me was the night watchman, his eyes looking solicitously into mine. He was standing beside me, resting one hand on my shoulder.

“You are all right, kid,” he said, “I found you lyin’ on the fifth landin’. The sign of the Athletic Club fell and struck you on the head. Them guys ought to had that sign mended. I brought youse up here to the sixth floor; I knew youse belonged up here. I was a-playin’ the old accordeon and singin’ to myself when I heard a bang. ‘There goes one of them spooks,’ I says to myself; I went downstairs kind of scared-like, and there was you a-lyin’ as pale as a ghost, with a cut on your forehead and the blood runnin’. But cheer up, sonny, youse was a long time comin’ to, but it ain’t such a bad cut.”

There was no mirage of old Foster in cope and mitre, or of the cowled figure of my boss. I looked to the south end of the shop. There was the window—“Christ reigning from the Rood.” Dawn over the black roofs of Manhattan was now lighting up the three figures, the triple crown and halo, and the haloes of the kneeling angels.



*Courtesy of the New Gallery*

PORTRAIT. BY RAOUL DUFY





# POWHATAN'S DAUGHTER

BY HART CRANE

The swift red flesh, a winter king—  
Who squired the glacier woman down the sky?  
She ran the neighing canyons all the spring;  
She spouted arms; she rose with maize—to die.

And in the autumn drouth, whose burnished hands  
With mineral wariness found out the stone  
Where prayers, forgotten, streamed the mesa sands?  
He holds the twilight's dim, perpetual throne.

Mythical brows we saw retiring—loth,  
Disturbed, and destined, into denser green.  
Greeting they sped us, on the arrow's oath:  
Now lie incorrigibly what years between . . .

There was a bed of leaves, and broken play;  
There was a veil upon you, Pocahontas, bride—  
O Princess whose brown lap was virgin May;  
And bridal flanks and eyes hid tawny pride.

I left the village for dogwood. By the canoe  
Tugging below the mill-race, I could see  
Your hair's keen crescent running, and the blue  
First moth of evening take wing stealthily.

What laughing chains the water wove and threw!  
I learned to catch the trout's moon whisper; I  
Drifted how many hours I never knew,  
But, watching, saw that fleet young crescent die—

And one star, swinging, take its place, alone,  
Cupped in the larches of the mountain pass—  
Until, immortally, it bled into the dawn.  
I left my sleek boat nibbling margin grass . . .

## POWHATAN'S DAUGHTER

I took the portage climb, then chose  
 A further valley-shed; I could not stop.  
 Feet nozzled the webs of upper flows;  
 One white veil gusted from the very top.

O Appalachian Spring! I gained the ledge;  
 Steep, inaccessible smile that eastward bends  
 And northward nestles in that violet wedge  
 Of Adirondacks!—wisped of azure wands,

Over how many bluffs, tarns, streams I sped!  
 —And knew myself within some boding shade:—  
 Grey tepees tufting the blue knolls ahead,  
 Smoke swirling through the yellow chestnut glade . . .

A distant cloud, a thunder-bud—it grew,  
 That blanket of the skies: the padded foot  
 Within,—I heard it; till its rhythm drew,  
 —Siphoned the black pool from the heart's hot root.

A cyclone threshes in the turbine crest,  
 Swooping in eagle feathers down your back;  
 Know, Maquokeeta, greeting; know death's best;  
 —Fall, Sachem, strictly as the tamarack!

A birch kneels. All her whistling fingers fly.  
 The oak grove circles in a crash of leaves;  
 The long moan of a dance is in the sky.  
 Dance, Maquokeeta: Pocahontas grieves . . .

And every tendon scurries toward the twangs  
 Of lightning deltaed down your sabre hair.  
 Now snaps the flint in every tooth; red fangs  
 And splay tongues thinly busy the blue air.

Dance, Maquokeeta! snake that lives before,  
 That casts his pelt, and lives beyond! Sprout, horn!  
 Spark, tooth! Medicine-man, relent, restore—  
 Lie to us—dance us back the tribal morn!

Spears and assemblies: black drums thrusting on—  
O yelling battlements—I, too, was liege  
To rainbows currying each pulsant bone:  
Surpassed the circumstance, danced out the siege!

And buzzard-circleted, screamed from the stake;  
I could not pick the arrows from my side.  
Wrapped in that fire, I saw more escorts wake—  
Flickering, sprint up the hill groins like a tide.

I heard the hush of lava wrestling your arms,  
And stag teeth foam about the raven throat;  
White cataracts of heaven in seething swarms  
Fed down your anklets to the sunset's moat.

O, like the lizard in the furious noon,  
That drops his legs and colours in the sun,  
—And laughs, pure serpent, Time itself, and moon  
Of his own fate, I saw thy change begun!

And saw thee dive to kiss that destiny  
Like one white meteor, pursuant and blent  
At last with all that's consummate and free  
There, where the first and last gods hold thy tent.

Thewed of the levin, thunder-shod and lean,  
Lo, through what infinite seasons dost thou gaze—  
Across what bivouacs of thy angered slain,  
And see'st thy bride immortal in the maize!

Totem and fire-gall, slumbering pyramid—  
Though other calendars now stack the sky,  
Thy freedom is her largesse, Prince, and hid  
On paths that knewest best to claim her by.

High unto Labrador the sun strikes free  
Her speechless dream of snow, and stirred again,  
She is the torrent and the singing tree;  
And she is virgin to the last of men . . .

## POWHATAN'S DAUGHTER

West, west and south! winds over Cumberland  
And winds across the llano grass resume  
Her hair's warm sibilance, her breasts are fanned  
O stream by slope and vineyard—into bloom!

And when the caribou slant down for salt  
Do arrows thirst and leap? Do antlers shine  
Alert, star-triggered in the listening vault  
Of dusk?—And are her perfect brows to thine?

We danced, O Brave, we danced beyond their farms,  
In cobalt desert closures made our vows . . .  
Now is the strong prayer folded in thine arms,  
The serpent with the eagle in the boughs.

## PARIS LETTER

*September, 1927*

**A**NDRE MAUROIS, I am inclined to believe, has just given us in his *Vie de Disraeli* his most prepossessing book. Although *Ariel*, his biography of Shelley, is perfect of its kind, I think it has been surpassed. The peculiar exoticism of Disraeli's personality, his moral pliancy, political audacity, and literary amateurism, and his dilettantic attitude towards life, have all conspired to give the book colour and subtlety and were sure to stimulate the pen, the imagination, and the critical intelligence of a writer like Maurois. Who, under the circumstances, would not have staked everything on Maurois and played him as the winner in the great literary biographic Derby? Humour; psychological insight; a taste for research work; a political sense; the power to paint vast historical backgrounds in keeping with the respective stages in the life of the hero (in this instance it is the period following Napoleon and contemporary with the rise of industry; early Victorian England; modern England of 1878, of the Congress of Berlin, and of the beginnings of imperialism)—what a diversity of talents must one not possess to qualify as an expert in fictional biography? Maurois has them all. He has been accused of having not sufficiently emphasized the strange and oriental aspect of Disraeli, this first Asiatic minister with the adopted name who, pallid and dark, and lost among so many blonds, dominated a Nordic race. I do not share this view. The curious thing about Disraeli to me is the figure he presents of a conservative Jew, a conformist (though he had been on the point of becoming the opposite) an Oriental gentleman, a sensualist disciplined by cant, admiring an English power then at its zenith, taking life as it came, and putting his intelligence at the service of order. Maurois, who has been able to identify himself so perfectly with Disraeli, had no cause to interpret him as a prophet of anarchy and revolt. He has kept strictly to the facts, and has at the same time succeeded in writing his vividest and most profound book.

The *Vie de Chopin* by G. de Pourtalès appears at a time when

on every hand garlands and speeches are being made ready for the hundredth anniversary of romanticism. The entrance of Chopin into the nineteenth century, his refulgence, his whole life of tumult and genius, are like an epitome of the era. His mother was Polish and his father Lorraine French, an heroic crossbreeding which frequently took place after the revolutions of '30, '48, and '63, but never with such success. Love-affairs at the Conservatoire, "pure as a tear"; love-affairs with Georges Sand, less pure, in the then fantastic setting of Venice and the Balearic Islands; and finally, without even speaking of his work, his death as grand and simple as a death in Antiquity—such episodes have been excellently rendered by Pourtalès. Though not so good as the Liszt, this *Vie de Chopin* is a very valuable addition to the series of fictional biographies which are in so many ways serving to instruct the uninformed of our century, a far from inconsiderable body, while cleverly arresting also the attention of the diffident or the distracted, who are legion. "Teach by amusing"—this slogan of the popular magazines no longer seems laughable to an era which refuses to be taught in any other manner.

In *Mon Ami Robespierre* M Henri Béraud gives us an impressive study of the French Revolution. His book, an historical novel, is rich in legend and poetry, and recalls the great lyric frescoes by Michelet which treat of the same period.

The matter of the relationship between Orient and Occident remains one of the topics of the day. Less steeped in Oriental philosophy than Central Europe and less familiar with conditions in Asia than the United States, France has been discovering these problems with evident satisfaction, only to thrust them right into the midst of our domestic political issues. So at all events the philosopher of the extreme right, theorist and critic of the *Action Française*, Henri Massis, has done in his book, *La Défense de l'Occident*. The work is an intelligent, lucid study, well documented and to the point. The "Asiatic wave," which extends all the way from a predilection for screens to an obscure brand of metaphysics with political Messianism somewhere in between the two, is coldly analysed by Massis, who refuses to be tricked by words and endeavours to accustom our eyes to this menace of the East in showing us that imperialism lurks behind it, at Berlin and Moscow. Germany the advance guard of the Orient in Europe?

M Massis succeeds at times in convincing us of this. But should he not on the contrary show us another Germany, a Germany which was, and still is, the first Occidental rampart against Slavism and Asiaticism? He makes the mistake of preserving silence on that point. But I object on more serious grounds. His solution of the problem, the panacea which he eulogizes, is a return to the Holy See of Rome, i.e., a return to Catholic order, in contrast to mass disorder and the Asiatic hordes. He seems to recommend our simply cancelling all world history since the Reformation and the French Revolution, and making a new start. Is M Massis not going a little too fast? He forgets that the Reformation gave birth to that immense moral and political entity which is named the Anglo-Saxon *bloc* and which has since become the sole rampart of the white race. How much weight would Rome have without London and New York? M Massis does not stop to consider these significant facts, which might very easily and impressively be translated into figures. . . . Could he permit himself any other solution than the one which he advocates—a kind of second Holy Roman Empire? He is much given to abstractions and when he rises to topics of a more general nature his sense of proportion and his practical knowledge of the world seem to fail him at times despite his intelligence.

I have had previous occasion to speak of the *Tentation de l'Occident* by M André Malraux, who is M Massis' junior by fifteen years. His book and that of M Massis supplement each other like the wings of a diptych, since he in turn confronts the two civilizations, the yellow and the white, but with a violent sympathy for the former and an obvious willingness to see the latter go under. It is an attitude common to the "intelligentsia." M Malraux is associated with the Super-Realist group, whose extra-literary attachment to communism is well known, and he evidently delights in these pessimistic visions of an Occidental *Götterdämmerung*, with the crash of civilizations, the firing of cities, and the collapse of the great capitalist banks. In the form of an imaginary correspondence—after the manner of the eighteenth century—between a young Frenchman and a young Chinese, he discusses the two races in a critical dialogue at times compact and at times lyrical and verbose. Europe is action, anguish; Asia is contemplation, calm. But M Malraux is too well acquainted with the situation in Asia not to

know that there is no longer in fact any but one universal colour, any but one world-wide climate: a uniformity of disquietude and of despair. He says this himself, by way of conclusion: "The deep voice of destruction is already resounding in the farthest reaches of Asia." What then? Is it really worth while to turn in our quest for perfection towards an Orient which is no better than we, or not even our equal, since it has all the shortcomings of our age of speed and machinery, with none of its advantages?

"Just where are standardization and its natural corollary, overproduction, leading us?" M André Siegfried asks himself in turn. Are we soon to see an America which, through an exaggerated concern for output, comes to forget the very purpose of living, or in the words of Lucretius, "*propter vitam vitæ perdere causas*"? Indications are that the Americans have taken the torch of civilization from the hand of England, that they have become the leaders of the white race, and that the dominions, British and others, will look to them henceforth. But is not the United States for its part jeopardizing the entire future of the white race by an excess of industrial and commercial efficiency? M Siegfried's scientific qualities, his caution, and his reputation as a sociologist and as a moderate political writer raise him far above the ordinary investigator. His recent book, *Les Etats-Unis d'Aujourd'hui*, will certainly be regarded in France as authoritative for many years, and should accordingly be received with interest on the other side of the Atlantic. His pages on America as the world's creditor, on Anglo- and Franco-American relations, and lastly on civilization in the United States, seem to me very close to the truth; and in any case they certainly express what the ablest minds in Europe are thinking of the United States.

The best novels which appeared in Paris last season are Adrienne Mesurat and Thérèse Desqueyroux. The first is by M Julien Green, the young American writing in French whose particularly fortunate *début* with *Mont-Cinère I* mentioned some months ago. This return to the Brontë sisters and particularly to *Wuthering Heights*, in the Paris of 1926, had been both a delight and a surprise. But the characters were strange; the theme—a study of avarice—was perhaps drawn entirely from childhood reminiscences; in short, we were wondering whether the author could repeat his



success and, already an interesting "case," if he was now to become a great writer. With Adrienne Mesurat, M Julien Green has unquestionably borne off the laurels which some people had still hesitated to accord him. Without sacrificing any of his previous qualities of ruggedness, sombre analysis, and penetration, without resorting to stylistic mannerism or to theatrical "gags," M Green has treated his subject—the strenuous adolescence of a girl in the French provinces—with a mastery which puts him in the very first ranks of the present generation. Fifteen years his senior, F. Mauriac, who already has a long literary past behind him, has given us in Thérèse Desqueyroux, the story of a poisoning, a very moving tale in which he reveals with absolute nakedness a set of characters, severe and intensive in virtue as in sin—placing himself, by the work, with the Balzac of the *Scènes de la Vie de Province*.

Despite a genius typically French, Honoré de Balzac was not, as we might imagine, the "Paris novelist," impervious to every foreign influence. On the contrary, in a remarkable book, *Les Orientations Etrangères Chez Balzac*, M Baldensperger shows the author of *Eugénie Grandet* to have been *au courant* with all the literary and technical researches of his times, an assiduous reader of English novels from the "terror school" to Walter Scott, a follower of the scientific discoveries of Lavater and Gall and of the psychic explorations of Swedenborg, interested in Fenimore Cooper and all the foreigners who happened to be passing through Paris, and in sympathy with Goethe. Thanks to M Baldensperger we have at last a Balzac who was genuinely European, who, under the growing influence of his friend Madame Hanska, gladly wrote towards the close of his life for a public in Central Europe and particularly in Germany which proved able frequently to show him prompt and juster appreciation than his own country.

The Museum of Decorative Arts has invited us to an Exhibition of Dutch Colonial Art (Java, Sumatra, Bali, Borneo) which, aside from a very beautiful collection of old batiks, seemed to me quite poor. In view of the importance of these exhibits of primitive art to modern decorative art (for instance, there are now on sale in Paris some very beautiful fabrics, cottons, wool flannels, and so forth, as a result of the Negro exhibits of last year) I should

think it might be worth while to give the public only selected works, or in default of that a complete photographic documentation. In this respect the exposition of the Museum of Decorative Arts is inadequate.

Nor are we reassured by the Tuileries exhibit of Monet's *Nymphéas*, a pictural suite which is to become the property of the French Government. The complaint is often heard in France that modern art is rather badly represented in our national museums. But the state in acquiring the works of contemporaries chooses them for the most part from mediocre periods. So it would be better under the circumstances to keep to the past. We owe these *Nymphéas* to M Clemenceau, who has been misled by his friendship for Monet. These melting ices, shifty as to form and vulgar in colour, are in danger of being regarded later, by a public unfamiliar with museums, as a specimen of Monet's most important work; whereas they are merely interesting but unsuccessful experiments and the later manifestations of an impressionism which is declining and disintegrating. It is a great injustice to the memory of Monet.

M Darius Milhaud, the oldest of the Six—the group which sums up the whole of modern French music—offers us a curious little book entitled *Etudes* which is a résumé of French music since the war. The case of Erik Satie, of his influence upon the young musicians of the so-called Arcueil school which succeeds the *Ecole des Six*, the influence of Fauré and of Strawinsky, of Negro jazz and of the circus, are here expounded with competence and lucidity.

PAUL MORAND

# BOOK REVIEWS

## THE GOLDEN HOUSE

LOTUS AND CHRYSANTHEMUM, an Anthology of Chinese and Japanese Poetry. *Selected by Joseph Lewis French.* 8vo. 237 pages. Boni & Liveright. \$7.50.

OF the three sections into which Mr French has divided his latest anthology, the one devoted to Chinese poetry is the first and most important. The second section consists of translations from the Japanese, and the third of Western poems inspired by China or Japan. Conceivably this last section might be of critical interest, for we know that Oriental poetry has exerted a considerable influence on our own; but this influence has been generally indirect, and difficult to anthologize. Besides, one can question Mr French's choice of poems. Their orientalism, in many cases, is of the impure sort that reminds one of sitting at an inlaid table, in a Chinese restaurant, and of eating ham and eggs with chop-sticks, from a genuine Canton bowl.

Nor are the translations from the Japanese of much greater importance. There are a few old ballads, effectively translated by Mr Arthur Waley and Mr Curtis Hidden Page; but the greater part of Japanese poetry consists of brief *tanka* or still briefer *hokku*, and of these our language cannot render the allusions, the puns, the evanescent grace. They are not the ports and madeiras which are improved by a long sea-voyage. Their bouquet is delicate, easily destroyed, and they lack the rich "body" of the Chinese poems to which Mr French has devoted rather more than half his volume.

This greater emphasis is justified, for Chinese poetry has come to occupy a special position in our own literature. During the last few years it has been translated more frequently than the verse of any Western nation, except the French. Not all its magic lies in its exoticism; indeed, it seems to reply to a homely need which our own poets have failed to answer. We are familiar with so many poems of struggle, success, frustration, that we are ready to

be impressed by a literature of quietism and acceptance. Perhaps we are weary of revolting and of reaching for vague infinities. Our emotions have been simplified by the haste of a mechanical age; in some degree they have ceased to correspond to the complexities of our literature; and, in the same degree, we admire the unqualified statements of beauty which our own poets can make no longer:

“From little, little girls, they have lived in the Golden House.  
They are lovely, lovely, in the Purple Hall.”

As we read of these Pleasures Within the Palace, or of Drinking Alone in the T'ao Pavilion, we imagine a contrast between the poets of the West and those of China. The first are always aiming for the impossible, and are great when they fall just short of it; the second are great by transcending a limited goal. The first seem to work in a fog shot through with lightnings; the second live in the perpetual sunlight of a Golden House—a place of measured beauties and intelligible joys, where even the sorrows that creep past the inner gate are the simple sorrows of longing, age, and separation:

“Blue mountains to the north of the walls,  
White river winding about them;  
Here we must make separation  
And go out through a thousand miles of dead grass.”

Now, the importance of the present anthology is that it allows us, for the first time, to develop our imagined contrast. While reading earlier volumes we had hesitated; for, there is so great a distance between the Chinese text and even the baldest sort of English verse,<sup>1</sup> that most translators have allowed their own personalities to intrude; they have been brief or wordy, bald or flowery, modern or conventional; indeed, they have differed so widely among themselves that one poem by Li T'ai Po appears three times in

<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to compare the literal translation of a fairly typical line with its rendering into English verse. The first is “Above—then—pines—wind—whistling wind—gusts of wind—a psaltery—wind in a gale.” The second, in Miss Lowell's translation, reads as follows:

“On their heights, the wind whistles awesomely in the pines; it booms in great, long gusts; it clashes like the strings of a jade-stone psaltery; it shouts on the clearness of a gale.”

the present collection, as translated by Mr Shigeyoshi Obata, Judith Gautier, and Amy Lowell, and gives the effect of being three separate poems. By comparing the three versions, we arrive at a fourth, which may be nearer the quality of the original. And, by comparing the work of all the fifteen translators from whom Mr French has made his selections, we are able to subtract the mannerisms of each, and to gain a more exact idea of the qualities which all were trying to convey.

For some qualities, of course, we should require a knowledge of the language, without which we can appreciate neither Chinese rhyme nor the effect of the complicated tone-patterns. We can read the maxims of Chinese critics, such as the famous adjuration to "Discard commonplace form—discard commonplace ideas—discard commonplace phrasing—discard commonplace words—discard commonplace rhymes"; but we have small means of judging what seems commonplace to the Chinese. Nor, can we distinguish what is original from what is derivative; Li T'ai Po and his ten thousand imitators have almost the same value in our eyes.

However, from the translations and valuable notes in the present anthology, we can discover many important characteristics of Chinese verse. We are impressed first of all by its air of calmness and resignation. "When the littleness of man came into hopeless conflict with the vastness of destiny," says Mr Cranmer-Byng, "there was but one way of escape for the poets and philosophers of China. It is called the Return to Harmony; it consists in identifying oneself with Nature." This idea is so nearly universal in Chinese poetry that it ceases to be a theme and becomes something implicit—a mood, an emotional category, a window which colours the world.

We are next impressed by the similarity between Chinese poetry and Chinese painting. Their verse also is an art of the foreground; an art of definite things, for which it finds analogies. "Mountains," says the painter Kuo Hsi, "make of water their blood, of grass and trees their hair, of mist and cloud their divine colouring. Water makes of mountains its face, of houses and fences its eyebrows and its eyes, and of fishermen its soul." In Chinese verse, by a similar process of analogy, every emotion becomes visible: a wife's loneliness is the blown flower that drifts through the inner door; her sorrow is the tears that soak her dress of coarse red silk; the lust for battle is the bending of bows, or the

shadow of bows in the moonlight; and the sorrow of battle is moonlight on the faces of the dead.

Not all emotion can be expressed in terms of concrete things; and it is possible to maintain that the imagism of Chinese poetry has limited its scope. There is, in any case, a contrast between its physical extent (fifty thousand poems have been preserved from the T'ang dynasty alone) and its poverty of emotions. The majority of the 177 Chinese poems in *Lotus and Chrysanthemum* deal with a very few themes, the praise of landscapes, friendship, wine; the sorrows of parting and of absence from home; the glories of philosophy, and the perils of war. It would be possible to make the list a little longer, but to Western readers it would still seem briefer than that of the neglected themes.

This second list would begin with the two great subjects of our lyric verse, for neither love nor death is often treated in Chinese poetry. Struggle, which is the theme of our epics, is also lacking, as are the epics themselves. Their poets express neither the sense of sin nor the sense of the infinite; neither the romantic revolt against society nor a romantic exultation in the terrors of nature; and they are ignorant, besides, of that search for the *new* which is the underlying motive of so great a part of modern poetry; I mean that desperate descent which Baudelaire describes:

*“Au fond de l’Inconnu pour trouver du nouveau.”*

The mention of Baudelaire reminds us that most of the emotions and themes which have just been mentioned are connected in one way or another with the romantic movement. If they are qualities which specially attract us; if Baudelaire is one of our favourite poets (or Rimbaud, Shelley, Byron, Coleridge, Poe)—then we are likely to encounter Chinese poetry with tempered admiration. On the other hand, if we are attracted by the classical qualities of definiteness, harmony, and restraint, we are apt to value it more highly; indeed, we may come to regard the T'ang dynasty as the true Augustan age, and to exult in the popularity of T'ang poets as evidence that the Augustan qualities are once more returning to favour.

MALCOLM COWLEY

## MR LAWRENCE'S PROSE

MORNINGS IN MEXICO. *By D. H. Lawrence. 10mo.*  
189 pages. *Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.*

MR D. H. LAWRENCE seems to be turning himself into a kind of literary Baedeker. His *Mornings in Mexico*, a loosely knit volume of descriptive essays, is one more of his attempts to rifle the soul of a landscape and its people; as in the past he has also sought to perform the same psychoanalytic office for birds, beasts, and flowers. This is a curious thing—one can call to mind no other author who has so persistently and restlessly busied himself with a desire to get under, and into, the souls of the supposedly soulless—the souls of nations, the souls of countryside, the souls, as it were, of sticks and stones. There is something charming in this attitude, something desperate, and also something decidedly childlike. Isn't Mr Lawrence exactly like the small boy who tears a dog-rose to pieces, or a fly, or an alarm-clock, in full expectation of discovering at last the secret, not only of the particular organism, but of the world, the infinite, and God? One must admit immediately that sometimes, as in *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*, this odd attempt has provided Mr Lawrence's readers with delightful portraits, full of humour and insight. One will not soon forget his tortoises, or his goats. In his *Studies in Classic American Literature*, Mr Lawrence attempted to deal in a similar manner—a sort of inquisitorial passion—with American men of letters. In this book, one first became rather distressingly aware of Mr Lawrence's *penchant* for a semi-mystic, semi-psychological jargon of his own, a jargon not altogether happy; and one also became aware of a concurrent change, if not deterioration, in the character of Mr Lawrence's prose. It was as if at last this curious passion for pillaging souls, for ravishing out the innermost secrets of things, had become his sole preoccupation; his desire to see things naked has itself become increasingly naked, not to say brutal; his passion for understanding, for exposing, has become almost synonymous with a passion for destroying. If Mr Lawrence were merely

a psychologist, and if his violent probings and dissections were at all systematic, or anywhere pointed to a *donnée* of system, one would not so much mind this. But unfortunately, one has, everywhere in this latest phase of his work, the feeling that for Mr Lawrence the *act* of dissection is everything, the idea behind it almost nil.

At all events, it is only too apparent that with the development of this obsession for "tearing apart," Mr Lawrence's prose has, *pari passu*, become less important to him. He has been increasingly willing to sacrifice everything stylistic to his passion. It is surely no exaggeration to say that in his *Studies in Classic American Literature* his literary "manners" are, to put it baldly, bad. Justly or unjustly, one feels, on reading these pages, that Mr Lawrence is extremely patronizing; he has an air of knowing, and of being sure that he knows, very much more than his reader; he can hardly be bothered to make his assertions politely; he resorts to a truculent shorthand of style, and a habit of irritated reiteration, which make it hard for his reader to admit, without grudge, the acuteness of many of his observations. Mr Lawrence wants, for example, to tell us that he finds in Hawthorne a curious mixture of psychological profundity with superficial hypocrisy and sentimentality. But is it quite necessary for him to say "Blue-eyed Nathaniel, with his little boy charm, will tell us what's what, but he'll cover it with smarm"?

In *Mornings in Mexico*, Mr Lawrence is in a somewhat serener mood, and is dealing with material which is less apt to lead him into such repellent outbursts as this; but once again one finds oneself regretting, and regretting deeply, that the author of *Sons and Lovers* and *Women in Love* and *The Captain's Doll* should be satisfied—if one can suppose he *is* satisfied—with a prose so slipshod and journalistic. One suspects that if this book did not bear his name, it would receive little attention. It is a fair enough piece of descriptive writing, moderately colouristic—it gives one flashes of picture, suggests with occasional vividness the heat and glow and torrid torpor of the Mexican scene—but the whole thing is done carelessly, repetitiously, in a structureless and graceless prose, as if the author were entirely indifferent whether he pleased his reader or not. When he does, occasionally, give him-



self more conscientiously to a passage of description, he tends merely to heap up his colour-words, one upon another, till one is blind and deaf. His instinct for rhythm seems to have deserted him; and whereas in his earlier prose he selected the one or two details which might magically imply a whole scene, drenched with scent and sound, now he is tiresomely explicit and spares us nothing. Consider this characteristic passage from the essay entitled *Corasmin and the Parrots*:

“I like to think of the world going pop! when the lizards had grown too unwieldy, and it was time they were taken down a peg or two. Then the little humming birds beginning to spark in the darkness, and a whole succession of birds shaking themselves clean of the dark matrix, flamingoes rising upon one leg like dawn commencing, parrots shrieking about at midday, *almost* able to talk, then peacocks unfolding at evening like the night with stars. And apart from these little, pure birds, a lot of unwieldy skinny-necked monsters bigger than crocodiles, barging through the mosses; till it was time to put a stop to them. When someone mysteriously touched the button, and the sun went bang, with smithereens of birds bursting in all directions.”

And then put beside it a passage from *Sons and Lovers*:

“The beauty of the night made him want to shout. A half-moon, dusky gold, was sinking behind the black sycamore at the end of the garden, making the sky dull purple with its glow. Nearer, a dim white fence of lilies went across the garden, and the air all round seemed to stir with scent, as if it were alive. He went across the bed of pinks, whose keen perfume came sharply across the rocking, heavy scent of the lilies, and stood alongside the white barrier of flowers. They flagged all loose, as if they were panting. The scent made him drunk. He went down to the field to watch the moon sink under.

“A corncrake in the hay-close called insisently. The moon slid quickly downwards, growing more flushed. Behind him the great flowers leaned as if they were calling. And then, like a shock, he caught another perfume, something raw and coarse. Hunting

round, he found the purple iris, touched their fleshy throats and their dark, grasping hands."

That is a vigorous and vivid prose; and if it is obviously more formal than the colloquial *insouciance* of the later passage, it is also, just as obviously, a great deal more intimate. If it is intimacy that Mr Lawrence aims at in this recent manner of his, then it is clear enough that he has miscalculated his means. An artist of Mr Lawrence's brilliance ought to know that intimacy is not merely an affair of shedding one's clothes and one's manners. A sweet disorder—yes, by all means; but not this *farouche* condescension, this almost exhibitionistic flaunting of the "short and simple flannels of the poor."

CONRAD AIKEN

## SOME PEOPLE

SOME PEOPLE. By Harold Nicolson. 12mo. 247 pages.  
London: Constable, 7s. 6p. New York: Houghton  
Mifflin Company, \$2.50.

**S**OME PEOPLE is the most amusing book I have read since South Wind. Incidentally it is an attempt at a new literary form. The book consists of nine portraits of more or less imaginary figures painted against a sketchy background of actual persons. The only character—apart from the author—portrayed in any detail under his own name is Lord Curzon. But “Lambert Orme” and “Professor Malone” are not really inventions. Their features can be recognized under the false noses which the author has put on them for the sake of decency or to improve the design. Artistically it is of little importance to know where imitation ends and imagination begins. A Firbank by another name smells just as sweet. In the past memoir-writers have been content to adorn their lives with imaginary adventures. After this success of Mr Nicolson’s they will add imaginary friends.

The exterior life of Mr Nicolson has been uncommonly varied and interesting. The son of Sir Arthur Nicolson, the diplomatist whom the Germans regard as a principal agent in the policy of encirclement, he was brought up in the Legation at Sofia, the Residency at Tangier, the Embassies at Constantinople and Petersburg. His earliest memory is of the station at Budapest hung with purple for the death of the Archduke Rudolph. In the intervals of riding with Bouchier in Bulgaria and watching Shereefian troops fight in Morocco, he was educated at Folkestone, Wellington, and Balliol. Entering the diplomatic service, he was *en poste* first at Madrid, then at Constantinople. He watched the Peace Conference from Mr Lloyd George’s elbow, and was in attendance on Lord Curzon at Lausanne. Proust, “looking like a Goanese bridegroom,” and D’Annunzio—“I could not have believed that anything not an egg could have looked so like an egg as d’Annunzio’s head”—are as familiar to him as Mussolini’s brown bowler, Clemenceau’s lavender cotton gloves, President Wilson’s black-buttoned boots, and Chicherin’s mezzo-soprano voice. He has

been everywhere, met everyone. "It is odd, when I come to think of it, how many of my acquaintance have been murdered, how many have been hanged." But, as the *déçagé* tone of this remark shows, it is not as a Colonel Repington or a Le Queux hero that he wishes to present himself. If we are impressed by the background of stately homes, cipher telegrams, and official chandeliers, that is very nice for us, and for his publishers. What interests him is the character of a French *bourgeoise* who trained young Englishmen for the Foreign Office examination, the behaviour of a behaviourist in whose company he crossed the Syrian desert. He throws us the best existing description of Lord Curzon, but devotes three times as much space to Lord Curzon's valet.

In the middle distance of each portrait there is a figure that alters but remains recognizably the same, the painter himself, observant, amused, impertinently intelligent. The book would be more appropriately called *Some Nicolsons*. It is a delicate business to tell the world about oneself, and Mr Nicolson, frightened, it seems, of betraying too good a conceit of himself, inclines to poke too clumsy fun at his various selves. He was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, and the book is really a record of his efforts to ungap himself. The values, honourable as they were, of the station to which it pleased God to call him, gradually fell before the examination of his increasing critical intelligence. He ends, not as a Wilfred Scawen Blunt, but as a keen public servant with a hatred for incompetence and sham. "It is people like you," he breaks out to a conventionally correct colleague in the Marlborough Club, "who make diplomacy ridiculous. You simply aren't real at all: you have got no reality: you're merely bland: that's what you are, and you're smug, you're bloody smug: absolutely bloody." Mr Nicolson may disbelieve in dressing for dinner: he believes in the Union Jack. But then *Some People* only records the first half, I hope, of his life.

After reading this book—and Mr Nicolson's biographical works—I have no doubt that his chief gift is for fiction. He possesses an uncommon power of revealing the emotion behind a word or an action, of inventing the word or action that will betray an emotion. But in his biographies he cannot fully employ this power: he is too scholarly. And that is a quality in a contemporary of Mr Guedalla for which one is thankful. I suspect that he is inclined to value

his books according to the amount of work he has put into them. He is, however, at his best when he is most fluent, most conversational. He excels at drawing a person with one stroke, Lord Curzon coming on to a platform "majestically, and as if carrying his own howdah," another diplomatist with "the sickly and unwashed appearance of an El Greco page." His book on Swinburne was very painstaking: it was also ungrammatical. The writing of *Some People* was obviously a holiday to him, and it is often very swagger. Mr Nicolson is a diplomatist who writes in his spare time. Will he not indulge himself, and us, by continuing to write for fun?

RAYMOND MORTIMER

## AESTHETIC ASTIGMATISM

THE RISE OF AMERICAN CIVILIZATION. By *Charles A. Beard and Mary Beard*. Two volumes. 8vo. 1650 pages. The Macmillan Company. \$12.50.

CHARLES AND MARY BEARD combine most of the essential qualities of the best historian. They are serious, enlightened, sensitive to injustice; they spare no pains to make their work accurate and scholarly and are temperate and judicial in their statements. Their synthesis of events is wide yet compact, and their exposition interesting. They do also what few historians have done before them, that is, include in their pages a sympathetic account of the deprivations and activities of women up to our own day. The present work differs from Professor Beard's former study of American government and his disconcerting analysis of the early history of the constitution in that it is more popular in appeal and wider in range. It accepts the economic interpretation of a country as the pivotal one on which to base any true account, and a knowledge of the methods of production as integral in the narration.

What then do we find to criticize in these impressive volumes? First, there is an almost wilful ignoring of the changing attitude toward the sex morality of girls which has gradually developed with the increasing economic emancipation of women, an attitude apparent enough in most current literature; and secondly, in that portion of their work in which they minimize America's contribution to psychology the authors have apparently overlooked the psychology of Behaviourism, which, though unpalatable to many, is nevertheless much talked of in Europe and has been included in the curriculum of some of our own Universities, a method of thought, indeed, typical of the tendencies of a mechanical age which the Beards do not fail to stress. But it is not because of these or other equally unobtrusive omissions in a book which, after all, includes so much, that we would find serious fault. The service rendered to clear and candid thinking in so tangled a field would preclude a criticism so barren.

It is, rather, toward their treatment of the subjects in which our concern is deepest, namely those of literature and the arts, that we must express our disapproval. To speak of the "vague" style of Henry James, that unrelenting master of exactitude, and to praise in contrast the "more versatile genius and more powerful improviser," Marion Crawford; to say that Stuart P. Sherman "used the language of Matthew Arnold"; and that John Singer Sargent had a "steel-like accuracy," as if such a description bore any relation to this artist's brilliant and showy canvases, is to betray an essential lack of perception which demonstrates the unfitness of these emancipated economists to enter into the more subtly imperious field of the arts. And why, since this is a history of every branch of American expression, must they turn to an English art critic for an interpretation of the newer forms when we have such excellent authorities of our own?

The Beards' own literary style may be indicated by some quotations selected at random: "the human animal as a going concern," "the ebullient and unreserved Whitman," "ordering acres of such decoration," "The Nation sputtering round in a desert," "the land of Fordismus." Here is no fine pen, no intellectual and aesthetic awareness of the difference existing between the cool, living writings of the dead English poet and essayist whose name they are so fond of bringing up in the manner of an empty slogan, and those, let us say, of Dr Canby whom they choose to mention as best exemplifying the cultured and selective literary taste of our highest criticism. And this lack of artistic insight, for one cannot say with two such unperjured patriots that it is anything else—certainly not a lack of probity—causes us to experience a certain dependency, it being once more abundantly clear that even in the circle of these two gifted authors small account is allowed for those simple values of ours, bright and clear as flame and as hard of analysis, that are best suggested by that misunderstood and difficult word "style."

ALYSE GREGORY

## BRIEFER MENTION

**THE HOUSE WITH THE GREEN SHUTTERS**, by George Douglas Brown, with introduction by George Blake (16mo, 314 pages; Modern Library: 95 cents). This grim novel of life in a small Scotch town, too little known in America, is an excellent addition to the Modern Library. Mr Blake, in his discriminating preface, suggests that it is not a "great" novel, but a "minor classic": his reservation due to his feeling that Brown's savage portraits of his fellow-countrymen were not sufficiently true to life. However one decides that point, there can be no doubt that *The House With the Green Shutters* is a powerful book, not without epic grandeur; and if the portraits verge (in the minor instances) on caricature, they are none the less effective and convincing for that. As for the central character, Gourlay, it is a masterpiece of psychological realism. It is the highest tribute to Brown's genius that he should so compel his reader to pity, and pity profoundly, the tragic career of a man so essentially detestable. And the whole bitter story is told in a prose of astonishing vigour—brilliantly sensitive, gnomic, terse, harshly poetic.

**THE HOUND-TUNER OF CALLOWAY AND OTHER STORIES**, by Raymond Weeks (12mo, 276 pages; Columbia University Press: \$2.50) contains twenty-eight narratives of the Missouri frontier, which, though not long, are quite intentionally not "short stories." Indeed the humorous author might go further. "This is not a story. It is not a history. It is a fact," he says at the beginning of one of them, for the reader to interpret how he may. And perhaps such a preface might suit them all. They are scenes from frontier lore, out of which, in spite of occasional triteness, some unpretentiously original charm is extracted.

**THE BEST CONTINENTAL SHORT STORIES OF 1925-26**, and the *Yearbook of the Continental Short Story*, edited by Richard Eaton (12mo, 336 pages; Dodd, Mead: \$2.50) does not include tales by French writers, there being a separate volume under the same editorship devoted to them. This exclusion seems to carry with it a penalty of intense gloom, for the majority of these stories sag under a burden of terror. The collection resembles a salad of bitter herbs submerged in Russian dressing. Consequently one welcomes the work of Pierre Girard, a Swiss writer, and the few others who contribute tales of lighter tone.

**ROMAN SUMMER**, by Ludwig Lewisohn (12mo, 238 pages; Harpers: \$2). There are certain books one hesitates to criticize; they are neither good enough nor bad enough, and their author, because of his unpretentiousness, disarms one's sophisticated protests. Mr Lewisohn makes his hero choose as a life companion a *proper* woman. "Louise had a deep womanliness and sanity that so-called culture and so-called refinement cannot supply, which in truth these much-vaunted things often warp and destroy."



THE BEST SHORT STORIES OF 1926 and the Yearbook of the American Short Story, edited by Edward J. O'Brien (12mo, 464 pages; Dodd, Mead: \$2.50) continues to be of undiminished merit as a yearbook, although this year it turns out to be of undistinguished merit as an anthology. Few of the stories have substance sufficient to impel one to a second reading; most of them fade from the mind with disturbing rapidity. The same indictment cannot be entered against GEORGIAN STORIES 1926 (10mo, 323 pages; Putnam: \$2.50) a wiser, wittier, and weightier collection, graced by the presence of A. E. Coppard, Liam O'Flaherty, and Somerset Maugham. Yet even such talents as theirs are overshadowed by the presence of E. M. Delafield and G. B. Stern, whose initials do not disclose their sex—but whose flashes of irony most happily do.

DOWN STREAM and Other Works, by J. K. Huysmans, translated from the French with a critical study by Samuel Putnam (12mo, 343 pages; Pascal Covici: \$2.50) contains in addition to the title-novel, and Marthe, a companion study in drift, a group of Huysmans' early Baudelairean prose poems, several critical papers including the well-known one on Félicien Rops, and the retrospective preface to A Rebours. It is the early Huysmans, the disciple of Schopenhauer, who has the pen here, for though the reader gets a glimpse of Huysmans the literary Catholic, in the A Rebours preface, the influence of the two novels tends to outweigh all else in the book. As it well might, for out of the diversity of good and evil that one expects in our sunken times, Huysmans selects with potent tact the items that make an acutely, a Parisianly modern picture of the *despond* which is the decline and end of the life of sense.

THE ALLINGHAMS, by May Sinclair (12mo, 368 pages; Macmillan: \$2.50) is the story of a family of six children with conventional parents growing up in more or less privileged circumstances. We become familiar with the distinctive characteristics of each boy and girl and follow them out in their diverse careers and marriages with a corresponding interest. The book is written with Miss Sinclair's accustomed solid workmanship: the structure is carefully thought out and the characters convincing. Were it not that the author lacks style, that mysterious concomitant of all great literature, we would place her extremely high amongst novelists. As it is, our respect remains unwarmed by enthusiasm.

A MARRIAGE WITH SPACE AND OTHER POEMS, by Mark Turbyfill (12mo, 110 pages; Pascal Covici: \$2). Especially in his title poem, but in some of his shorter things as well, Mr Turbyfill tries to shape for himself a poetry of idea. His preoccupation is with the epistemological problem, the problem of knowledge; and to some extent also with the elusive question of personal identity. He shows the influence of modern French poetry—particularly, perhaps, the strain we are familiar with in Jean de Boscère. But while he is ingenious, and tries extremely hard, and shows some grasp of essentials, his work too seldom takes on any of the proper speed and light of poetry: it acquires no rhythm and life of its own, no warmth, no radiance, and remains, as it begins, ingenious.

**DREAM TAPESTRY**, by Joseph Kling (8vo, 102 pages; Unicorn Press: \$1.75). A poetic commentary in twenty-two chapters is not easy to write and is not always easy to read. To this one, however, upon book-stores, art-galleries, architecture, politeness, dignity, ease, contours, colours, poverty, "Need," "Moneygrubbing," "beautiful lights," "black depths," and much else, one is not indifferent, for evinced in it throughout, are sincerity, shrewdness, and not a little fortitude.

**THE RADIANT TREE**, by Marguerite Wilkinson, with decorations by George R. Richards (10mo, 170 pages; Macmillan: \$2.50). This is an anthology of poems dealing with the "Passion and Resurrection of Christ," prefaced with a longish and diffuse introduction, in which Mrs Wilkinson seeks to emphasize the need, at the present moment, for more "faith." It is to be doubted whether a very good anthology could be made of this material. There is a singular paucity of poetry dealing with the life and death of Christ—partly, perhaps, because so seldom has the approach of the poet been realistic. But, also, Mrs Wilkinson has erred decidedly in the direction of the pretty and sentimental, including many modern poems which are trivial and third rate. And one can only wonder at the blindness of that principle of selection, which, in such a collection, can find no place for Milton's great Hymn, nor for anything of Francis Thompson.

**THE BEST POEMS OF 1926**, selected by Thomas Moulton (12mo, 120 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$2). How seldom, how very seldom, in modern anthologies does one come upon poems to reward the eager anticipation with which each year we open the pages of these little books! There are flowers in this particular garland which seem wonderfully fresh. From Mr A. J. Young's poem to August we derived great delight. The book contains other admirable examples of modern verse including Padraic Colum's poem, Asses, and Edna St Vincent Millay's gallant sonnet, entitled *The Pioneer*.

**THERE'S A MOON TONIGHT, A Comedy in Three Acts**, by Alfred Kreymborg (12mo, 133 pages; Samuel French: \$1.50). **PUPPET PLAYS**, by Alfred Kreymborg (12mo, 126 pages; Samuel French: \$1.50). **ROCKING CHAIRS AND OTHER COMEDIES**, by Alfred Kreymborg (12mo, 141 pages; Samuel French: \$1.50). **LIMA BEANS, A Scherzo Play in One Act**, by Alfred Kreymborg (brochure, 12mo, 21 pages; Samuel French: 50 cents). **MANIKIN AND MINIKIN, A Bisque Play in One Act**, by Alfred Kreymborg (brochure, 12mo, 20 pages; Samuel French: 50 cents). Perhaps the best comment on these plays is the author's own—that while they may be performed either by human or wooden actors, they should always be staged "with the art of the puppet theatre as a constant though miniature model." These diminutive and charmingly fantastic paraphrases of our foibles owe something of their attraction to the well-studied ways in which they capitalize the elaborate possibilities of poetic caricature contained in the mere stage presence of a puppet. The pantomimic harmonies, the minute staccato dialogue, the miniature irony and poetry of scene and situation, suggest that whatever else he may be, Mr Kreymborg is a natural master of puppet dramaturgy.

The inspiration of **THE COLLECTED SATIRES OF LORD ALFRED DOUGLAS** (4to, 61 pages; The Fortune Press: Price not given) seems to arise solely from the circumstances of the several libel actions in which the author was at various times engaged as a result of his early associations with Oscar Wilde, and the vilifications accomplished depend on matters so peculiar to each situation as to require considerable prefatory explanation and some foot-notes besides. Such considerations tend to interfere with the reader's sharing, unreservedly, Lord Douglas' candidly stated and unequivocal views as to the satiric eminence of his couplets.

**VOLTAIRE'S THE AGE OF LOUIS XIV**, translated from the French by Martyn P. Pollack (16mo, 475 pages; Everyman's Library, Dutton: 80 cents); **THE YOUNG VOLTAIRE**, by Cleveland B. Chase (10mo, 269 pages; Longmans, Green: \$3). In the reign of Louis XIV Voltaire saw one of the four most enlightened ages of history, and to depicting the social and political life of that particular epoch he devoted his unparalleled vivacity and precision. The present-day revival of interest in the eighteenth century makes especially timely this excellent little edition of the famous book. Mr Chase's biography is particularly concerned with that epoch in Voltaire's life in which he was exiled in England. On the basis that we cannot hear repeated too often this entertaining episode of the great Frenchman, it will be welcomed. It is certainly very readable, although it is one's duty to add that it lacks in a marked degree the smooth finish and literary address which so eminently distinguish Mr Richard Aldington's rendering of the same fertile subject.

**POPES AND CARDINALS IN MODERN ROME**, by Carlo Prati, with introduction by Jean Carrère (8vo, 234 pages; Lincoln MacVeagh, Dial Press: \$3.50). This book will undoubtedly be read with considerable interest by members of the Catholic Church. It belongs to those volumes professing to give intimate glimpses of the private habits of "Princes and Prelates" and is as "realistic as the sketch of the ablest reporter." From a purely imaginative point of view it has little merit and will be received by those stiff-necked people who have never fallen under the spell of the "Apostolic Palace" with indulgent amusement.

**PALMERSTON**, by Philip Guedalla (illus., 8vo, 548 pages; Putnam: \$5). A scientifically spangled Houdini-Caruso of the archives in his employment of detail operatically as accompaniment to a general progress, Mr Guedalla has demonstrated that "the Life of Palmerston was the life of England and to a large extent, of Europe in the last sixteen years of the Eighteenth and the first sixty-five years of the Nineteenth Centuries." He has endeavoured to present a Palmerston "more cosmopolitan" than "the traditional effigy"—"more assiduous in the performance of his public duties," and more "Liberal." We thank him for having read so prodigiously as he has. Vividness is not, however, invariably synonymous with good taste, and our real debt to Mr Guedalla is for an assembled wealth of particulars rather than for vividness through implication, or for authentic impersonal reverence.

In eight fragments *THE MEMOIRS OF CATHERINE THE GREAT*, translated by Katharine Anthony from the German edition of Erich Boehme (8vo, 337 pages; Knopf: \$5) set down such thoughts and facts in review of her astounding self as the great despot thought well to commit to paper. The discourses are not confessions. They are patently designed for special consumption, and the varying narratives of the same incident suggest the masterly insight of the author, admittedly no bride of heaven, into the several natures of those for whom the accounts were intended. Yet the straightforward unapologetic way in which she often discusses things not particularly advantageous to herself has an effect of excelling bluffness, if not of sincerity, even though the reader is bound to reflect that these may be the true-accounts-that-set-false-rumour-at-rest. Evidently, one would say, it was not for nothing that Great Catherine was so charmed a scholar at the feet of the magnificent Machiavelli. This laconic matter-of-fact, this shrewd uncandid candour matches Iago's own.

*WILHELM HOHENZOLLERN, The Last of the Kaisers*, by Emil Ludwig, translated by Ethel Colburn Mayne (8vo, 528 pages; Putnam: \$5). This book was written with a poison pen. One wonders why. Perhaps it was merely to make money by appealing to the thousands who still labour under the war frenzy and who love to think, for some reason, that Wilhelm did it all. Perhaps it was a wily effort to re-establish present-day Germans in the affections of their late enemies by making their king a very complete scapegoat. But it doesn't work. The author says he quotes from Wilhelm himself and Wilhelm's friends to make out his case, but he surrounds the quotations with such insidious suspicion and leads up to them so sneeringly that innocent readers readily see villainy in them. Printed elsewhere they could have different meanings. . . . The life of the last Kaiser is still to be written.

*SIR FRANCIS DRAKE*, by E. F. Benson (8vo, 315 pages; Harper: \$4). To produce biography at once "authentic and readable" is the stated aim of the series in which the present is the initial work, and a reader can agree both that this account is respectably oriented among the facts of Drake's career, and that it is—as far doubtless as one has specific right to ask—consecutively entertaining. Conspicuously, however, it goes no further. Though not ill-proportioned, it obviously would not lose by considered reductions; yet with all its words, effect is but faintly given to the paramount colour and power which belong to the mere existence of such a man as Drake. He evidently was no ordinary type, and one would think his biographer privileged and obliged to develop some degree of theory as to his character—this quite aside from the over-acclaimed and over-done business of psychoanalysis in biography. Of all such engagements, however, a very short end is here made, in the flat assertions that Drake was a genius and that he had faith. The reader is at last forced to conclude that certain elaborately humorous references, occurring near the outset of the narrative, to the vague villains of Freudianism, were really notice given that no undertakings would be undertaken in any but the most obvious sort of character depiction.

**THE PORTRAIT OF PASCAL**, by Mary Duclaux (10mo, 232 pages; Harper: \$4) impresses the reader as rather unfortunately titled. The author disclaims any attempt at "biography." "Biography," however, though much abused, is a large, comfortable, and convenient term and would seem better suited to this earnest, detailed account of the facts of Pascal's life than "portrait." "Portrait" suggests the taking of a likeness, and a strikingly eloquent likeness of the intellectual and spiritual supremacy of Pascal the present work is not.

**THE POCKET OXFORD DICTIONARY**, compiled by F. G. Fowler and H. W. Fowler, American Edition revised by George Van Santvoord (16mo, 1029 pages; Oxford University Press, American Branch: \$2) is an abridgement of *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* arranged for the use of American readers. Although precedence is given to American spelling the English spelling is included as well. For those who take particular pleasure in studying etymologies the bareness of the statements concerning the origins of the words will perhaps prove slightly disappointing. But this is of negligible importance compared to the extreme value of such a dictionary. It is small, bound more firmly than its English model, and can be kept beside one for reference on the narrowest desk or writing-table.

**NORSE MYTHOLOGY, Legends of Gods and Heroes**, by Peter Andreas Munch, in the Revision of Magnus Olsen, translated from the Norwegian by Sigurd Bernhard Hustvedt (12mo, 397 pages; American-Scandinavian Foundation: \$2.50) is a compendious account of the old Germanic mythology, as it has been handed down in Norse mythological poetry. Part I relates briefly and with brief comment the various myths of Odin, Thor, Balder, Loki, and others of Æsir, the creators of nature and men. Part II deals in the same manner with the heroic legends, such as those of the Volsungs and Nibelungs. Part III is a compact description of the temples, sacrifices, and modes of worshipping the old gods. The notes of Professor Olsen, which, together with his correlations and improved readings, bring the significant work of his predecessor up to date, have been translated and included. There is also a short bibliography of works in the field of Norse and Germanic mythology.

**THE DIALOGUES OF PLATO**, From the Third Jowett Translation, edited with an introduction by William C. Greene (8vo, 535 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$3.50) contain robust selections from eighteen of the dialogues, including the *Republic*, the *Symposium*, and that trilogy of the trial and death of Socrates—the *Apology*, the *Crito*, the *Phaedo*—which is so complete a treatise on the art of manliness. The editor has included such improvements on the Jowett readings as scholarship has devised since Jowett's day; and in his general and his eighteen special introductions, he does probably as much as can be done to make easy the way of the modern reader. That way is hard enough, for as Thoreau aptly, though somewhat bitingly remarks, "The heroic books, even if printed in the character of our mother tongue, will always be in a language dead to degenerate times."

## COMMENT

*The religion of literature is a sort of Pantheism. You never know where the presence of the Divine may show itself, though you should know where it has shown. And you must never forbid it to show itself, anyhow or anywhere.*

GEORGE SAINTSBURY

**I**F our choice in youth were the choice of age and our choice in age were that of youth our usefulness to ourselves would be doubled. We value the modern spirit of *The Manchester Guardian* as depending on the un-aging discernment of Mr C. P. Scott whose eighty-first birthday occurs this October. No work of art certainly is old which was ever new, as no one is dead who ever was alive.

It is reasonable to expect to find in the young more sap than in the old and inexperience is not always crassness. In undergraduate magazines for example, there is often more to detain one than there is in the popular product with which the news-dealer papers his cubicle. Not that youthful impetus is always admired or is always able to admire itself. An early editor of the *Oxford Undergraduate* seems to have felt aloofly distinct from what he regarded as "the Careless or greater division of non-reading men," from "the Philosophers" who "will not enter into any plan of study because they do not see the *good* of it," from "Quacks" and "Procrastinators"—indeed from most of his fellow gownsmen in each of whom he had expected to find a savant, a genius, or a wit. "My ideas of their conversation," he says, "were taken from the humour of Addison and of their customs from the rules in the Statute Book." It must be admitted that Oxford undergraduates of our own day sometimes lend their attention to specimens from America of what might be called our rag and bone fiction—not that we may easily scorn Oxford for reading what Yale or Harvard has written. We need not be seriously horrified by scholastic digressions, cultural playfulness, or intellectual wastefulness of aesthetic abundance. The unprecedented sybari-

tism at Harvard for instance, of the brother of the late President Eliot in having dared when an undergraduate to add a carpet to his room-furnishings seems not to have presaged perdition. The past has not at any time been entirely without liveliness and no period was ever without resemblance to other periods—our own age included. Gabriell Harvey's report of intellectual assumptiveness at Cambridge applies equally to our halls of residence:

“all inquisitiue after Newes, newe Bookes, newe Fashions, newe Lawes, newe Officers, and some after newe Elementes, and some after newe Heauens, and Helles to. . . . Castels builded in the Ayre: much adoe, and little helpe: Iacke would faine be a Gentlemanne: in no age so little so muche made of, euery one highly in his owne fauour, thinking no mans penny so good siluer as his own: . . . but Agent, and Patient muche alike, neither Barrell greatly better Herring. . . . Olde men and Counsailours amongst children: Children amongst Counsailours, and olde men: Not a fewe dubble faced Iani, and chaungeable Camelions: ouer-manye Clawbackes, and Pickethanks: Reeds shaken of euerie Wind: Iackes of bothe sides: Aspen leaues: painted Sheathes, and Sepulchres: Asses in Lions skins: Dunglecockes: slipperye Eles: Dormise: I blush to thinke of some, that weene themselues as fledge as the rest, being, God wot, as Kallowe as the rest:”

“The younger American writers” are accused of “a pseudo-hardness and clarity of mind which makes sharp distinctions and is really singularly inexpressive.” Certain of the most presentable specimens of modern art are called “sophisticated, modern, trivial” and the even graver charge is brought against us of being nothing and of being too much—of not being serious and of being indecent. We seem so conspicuously to have outstripped our best champion of a “natural morality”—George Moore—that he says or is quoted as saying, “Now I can't keep up with them and don't want to. They have made it all so carnal.”

Should we be tweaked by these compliments, it is still truer perhaps that we have not been quenched. The striving for “a reasoned form,” the maintaining of a toehold upon progress, our manifold ferocities and ungainly graces, are after all a corollary to momentum. It is common sense, rather than blindness to Dean Inge's spiritual significance, that sustains us under the somewhat aggres-

sively withering remark that "It is not necessary to 'make' a cubist or a free-verse writer; he has unfortunately been 'born.'" And one recalls in good part the fearless effacing of futurism and cubism by Theodore Roosevelt: "There is no reason why people should not call themselves Cubists, or Octagonists, or Parallelopedonists, or Knights of the Isosceles Triangle, or Brothers of the Cosine, if they so desire; as expressing anything serious and permanent, one term is as fatuous as another. . . . The paleolithic artist was able to portray the bison, the mammoth, the reindeer, and the horse with spirit and success, while he still stumbled painfully in the effort to portray man. This stumbling effort in his case represented progress, and he was entitled to great credit for it. Forty thousand years later, when entered into artificially and deliberately, it represents only a smirking pose of retrogression and is not praiseworthy."

Our attachment is to the art of Egypt and the Primitives rather than to the later Renaissance and to Impressionism and many of us are "not praiseworthy." Our apparently conglomerate methods and our wilfulness are, however, not so hurtful we hope as to some elegant and seemly minds they are distasteful. One has, like the inaugurator of *The Oxford Student* in 1750, a feeling for being one's self and if as is possible in the subsequent progress of art, we should never be heard of, we cannot in advance regret our eclipse nor anticipating it, spare diligence. And with this student, should it be our good fortune, at the moment or later, to have "disgusted the frivolous, abashed the vicious, and awed the virtuous," we cannot be sorry.







Property of The National Gallery, Berlin

STILL-LIFE. BY PAUL CEZANNE





# THE DIAL

NOVEMBER 1927

## DISCOURSE IN PRAISE OF ANATOLE FRANCE PRONOUNCED BY PAUL VALÉRY ON THE OCCASION OF HIS ADMISSION TO THE FRENCH ACADEMY

*Translated From the French by Lewis Galantière*

OUR young men of forty years ago were fascinated by the magical offerings of the pure and the decadent poets. They hesitated on the threshold of this disquieting literature, the follies and perils of which were announced and denounced on every side. Stirring in the air of the time was a stimulating emotion, a sense of intimacy akin to that experienced when an orchestra is essaying itself, when each instrument is seeking its pitch, sounding its particular note. A delightful tingling of the nerves, the product of this musical disorder, a primitive state which could not but be fleeting, overwhelmed them; but this lively excitation held something more universal and perhaps more philosophical than any symphony ever heard, for in this medley of sound all symphonies were comprehended, all were suggested. It was the simultaneous evocation of the future of them all; it was sound made prophecy.

Intoxicated, perturbed by all these promises, the budding poet grew tame, was subjugated by the strange phenomena of his time, and allowed himself, like Parsifal transfixed, to be conducted by a succession of enchantments within the limitless precincts of the temple of Symbolism.

Meanwhile, the wise and constant deities whose care it is that our literature shall never be suddenly and totally altered, or hibernate too long in the torpescent lassitude of perfection, had already created and honourably presented the very man who was

needed, in this confusion of tongues, to reanimate a few of the graces of our purest authors of the past. Abandoned as these graces were, they were none the less incorruptible. With pleasure, and without too great astonishment, someone was observed to be leading them back into the light, someone who took his place soon and effortlessly in the first rank of the writers of his time; someone who, while ignoring neither the charms nor the merits—and even less the weaknesses, the excesses, and the flaws—of the enterprises of the moment, distinguished himself by a sort of prudence, by a self-restraint rare and even temerarious in that day, by a nature cleverly adjusted to the consecrated media of his art. In a cloud of bunglers and inventors concerned with audacious beauties, to whom he stood in impeccable contrast, he took on gradually and unwittingly the aspect and importance of a classic.

The public felt itself infinitely grateful to my illustrious predecessor, in whom it seemed to recognize a sort of oasis. The refreshing contrast of his tempered manner with the brilliant or highly complicated styles which were being elaborated all about it came as a gentle and agreeable shock of surprise. Ease, clarity, and simplicity seemed to have appeared again in the world; and these are goddesses adored by most. The suffrage of the majority was won immediately by a style that could be savoured without too much thought, whose fascination consisted in its semblance of naturalness, and whose limpidity allowed one to perceive occasionally a hidden significance, though never a mysterious one;—rather, on the contrary, one entirely readable, if not always reassuring. There was in his books consummately the art of skimming over the most serious problems and ideas. Nothing in them arrested the glance of the mind, unless it was the very miracle of this absence of resistance. What could be more precious than that delightful illusion of clarity which inspires in us the feeling that we are growing richer without effort, are savouring pleasure gratuitously, are comprehending despite our inattention, are enjoying the spectacle without having paid to see it? Happy are the writers who thus lift the burden of thought from us and weave with agile fingers a luminous disguise to cover the complexity of things. And yet, alas, there are others—their existence is surely to be deplored!—who have struck off in the opposite direction. They have set down the travail of the mind in the path of its bliss. They have posed enigmas for our solution. Inhuman beings. . . .

Your great colleague, gentlemen, less ignorant of mankind, had not this exaggerated confidence in the virtues of his reader, in his zeal and patience. He possessed, in fact, a courtesy whose first effect was never to separate the idea one dared present from the smile which detached it from the world. It was entirely natural that his fame should not suffer by this good breeding; and you know to what prodigious height it presently grew. One soon perceived that this so gently insinuated fame had grown until it equalled the renown of the very greatest of men, and one admired the fashion in which this rather mischievous genius raised himself playfully to the stature of the colossi among European writers of the time. He was somehow able to rank and contrast with the massive and occasionally brutal works of the powerful men of his day—the Tolstoys, the Zolas, the Ibsens—his tenuous writings which claimed only to graze dangerously that which they grasped and rocked with all their strength: the social order and the edifice of our manners.

I do not flatter myself that I am portraying for you with great success so considerable a man, who lives so vividly in the memory of most of you, whereas I saw him only once, and even then scarcely for long. All the chances of error concerning his person, and even of unintelligence in the presence of his work, are incumbent upon me. And you must be aware, besides, with what awe I reflect upon so unequal a substitution of talents, and how bold I seem to myself in attempting his portrait. When I saw clearly the meaning of the charge to compose this orison of praise, I commenced—and continue—to think it highly perilous. What a magnificent subject! said people to me. What admirable reefs! I thought.

Although a eulogy must take for its materials the flower of a life, and although the truth upon which it labours must appear discreetly veiled and held in check, yet in the work of preparation a powerful and almost ceremonial sentiment of justice is unfailingly and necessarily involved. Meditating upon what I was to say concerning him to whose seat I have fallen heir, I could not escape a twinge of conscience. I should have to render my private judgement of this dead man, deliberate at length upon him, before extracting and formulating his most admirable conclusions and motives. I had at my disposal, it is true, the light that illuminates my model; but the model himself, how was I to seize him? How was I to form an exact idea of him? And upon what was I to

found an equitable judgement of a person whom I had not known? Certainly, there was no dearth of accounts, opinions, and witnessses. Everybody spoke at once. The great man was but lately dead when, like his physical being itself, the idea that we had of him was altered. The forces of his living presence were instantly missed. Death leaves the deceased without defence against what he seemed to be. Reverential fears vanish. Tongues are loosened. Remembrance (and you understand that it is not always the worthiest remembrance) comes forth from malicious memories. It pullulates, devours all that it can reach of worth, merit, and character, in the absent. A sort of abuse of truth is propagated, and nothing is more deceptive than fragments of truth. Each little bit of truth fecundates the mind and excites it to bring forth a false creature. Since truth never remains either intact or entire in men's minds, it is never pure or free of the rancour or the ingenuity of those who claim to possess it; on the contrary, it is almost always a pious infidelity or a calumniating fidelity.

We have known instances of the illustrious dead delivered up to a cloud of dangerous friends and story-telling demons who instruct us in all that was perishable about him. It is in this that the fame of these unfortunate great men renders them twice mortal: first as men, and again as great men. One would say that for certain people the important circumstance about a great man is that he was a lesser person than these people thought him. But let us, on the contrary, consider only what is important for all of us; which is—that which increases our sense of dignity of the mind and of letters. Do we not know already that a man is a man, and that if everything were completely bared we should never look upon anybody, and that by the evident equivalence of flaws and weaknesses each would sadly and silently concern himself with himself alone? Let us then allow this inevitable agitation that stirs about great men's graves to die down little by little, and let us attend to the gold that gleams and subsists in the ashes.

By the diverse perfections of his writings, by the variety and the astonishing extent of his culture, by the supreme freedom of his spirit, your colleague advanced himself from the most modest beginnings to a situation of unparalleled brilliance; and from the rather grey dawn that cast a pale glow over his early years, his works, his talent, and his destiny led him finally to a magnificent twilight.



As I turned over in my mind the happy progress of this existence, this career traversed so confidently and tranquilly, as if diverted by all that it encountered on its way, I began involuntarily to compare this so successful life with some of those fortunate lives that were possible very long ago, when almost all men of thought and even of wit were men of the Church, and when one saw persons of the simplest origin raise themselves to prodigious heights solely by the virtue of a prudent and learned intelligence. Consummate humanists, metaphysicians scarcely veiled by theology, great lovers of Plato, of Lucretius, and of Virgil, men semi-literary, semi-voluptuous, devoutly artistic, philosophically sacerdotal—such men established themselves finally in the purple, were surrounded by the most beautiful vestiges of pagan antiquity. These were the singular and seductive figures of an age that has vanished, when the Church was able to condone in such bishops excessive delicacy, and even inconceivable freedom of thought.

Our age no longer affords these opportunities of developing at leisure the most delicate gifts of the mind, sheltered from the miseries of the century in the shadow of an immense institution. There are no more prebends, no more abbeys. There is no dignified leisure. Our precise and materialistic society is perhaps most remarkable for its powerlessness to make a definite and bearable place in its coarse and gigantic economic organization, for men concerned with the things of the spirit.

This situation was perhaps even more difficult at the moment when your colleague emerged to take his place in life. His age showed itself as unable to forgo the multiplying of its men of letters as it was incapable of affording them a means of existence. What bitterness in those days! What sadness! What ruined lives! To be called to the highest culture and at the same time pledged to poverty and to unworthy employment! Any number of young men trained to know nothing except that of which almost nobody had need, and reared—poor young men!—in branches of knowledge that were the purest luxury. How severely they were made to feel that the most conscious elements of a society are also its most negligible elements. This is what the future author of *Jean Servien* was able to observe about him when he emerged from adolescence, and it was this that he might legitimately fear for himself. But he was too diversely gifted, too rich in general wisdom, and, besides, too well acquainted with the world by a sort of

instinctive familiarity with it, not to cede almost unwittingly to that which he was later to become. His philosophy, which was his very nature, preserved him, meanwhile, equally from the adoption of unalterable resolutions and from premature resignations. He never staked his future. He chained himself neither to a definitive profession nor to a school; and if once he allowed himself to be bound, it was only by the most charming of ties.

All this because he was essentially supple and diverse. In him were combined spirituality and sensuality, detachment and avidity, a great and ardent curiosity and deep distastes, as well as a certain complaisance in indolence—although his was a meditative indolence, the indolence of immense reading scarcely distinguishable from study, and lying too patently on the surface to be profoundly characteristic. So many kinds of accumulated knowledge, so many acquired ideas, could not but become somehow a source of external harm. He astounded and scandalized people who possessed none of his diversity, and this without effort. He conceived various doctrines which, to his mind, mutually refuted one another. His hesitancy dropped from him only in the presence of things he deemed beautiful or delightful, and the only certainties he retained were those of the artist. His habits, his thoughts, his opinions, and the politics he ultimately adopted, composed a complex harmony which amazed and embarrassed certain people. But what is the value of a mind whose thoughts are opposed only to other thoughts, a mind which does not place the power of thinking higher than any thought? Every man who is worth anything at all in the domain of the understanding owes his value to a treasure of contradictory sentiments, or sentiments which appear to us contradictory. Our expression of what we see in other men is so gross that they seem to us scarcely more varied and free than ourselves; instantly the words in which we attempt their description contradict themselves, and we attribute to living beings a monstrous nature evolved entirely out of our own feeble expressions.

Let us, on the contrary, admire this great capacity for contrast. Let us look with enquiring minds at this idle nature, this infinite reader engaged in the production of a vast body of work; this pleasure-loving temperament chaining itself to the tedium of a regular task; this hesitating mind, groping its way through life, raising itself by movements of indecision from initial modesty to

a great height; this stammerer transformed into the violent defender of the boldest thoughts; this man of wit, and of a wit so finely shaded, growing accustomed to simplicity in fame, and emitting the most crudely coloured opinions; this archetype of moderation and temperance taking sides with such great and astonishing vigour in the dissensions of his time; this delicate amateur taking his place as the friend of the masses, and, what is more, doing so sincerely and with all his heart.

I know what the impression has been. Many people have not hesitated to whisper—and even to articulate rather audibly—that he owed many of his active virtues, which were not part of his easy-going and careless nature, it seems, to a tender and exigent will, a presence imperiously favourable to his fame which watched long years over his work, animated it (so they say) and guarded his spirit; preserved it from dissipation in the diversions of society, and impelled it to draw forth from itself all those treasures which it might not easily have suspected itself of possessing or might have neglected from day to day in order to reduce itself with pleasure to a mere enjoyment of the beauties already existing in libraries and museums. But even if this were true, and even if it could be proved that a considerable part of his work might have remained merely potential without the gentle firmness of this affectionate discipline, only malice could draw any profit from such a view. It is the privilege of very precious talents to excite just such an instinct in their defence, just such affectionate energy, just such constant zeal in favour of the work that might come forth, whose existence, it is felt, must be solicited. Is it then nothing to be able to draw upon oneself an exact and absolute devotion, whose supreme recompense could only be the feeling of having assisted in the accomplishment of a magnificent destiny? For this reason, gentlemen, it is towards the work accomplished that we must turn our glance.

This work exists and subsists. Its merits are as clear as itself. Everybody knows and appreciates the perfection of an art refined to the point of exquisite simplicity. But what are we to say to that singular circumstance, the wide favour it has obtained? and more than that, the almost popular fame it owes to the eminent seduction of the purity of its form? The thing is almost unbelievable. It is a phenomenon without parallel in modern literature,

since we usually find that the great public reserves its welcome for those books whose substance devours their form and whose effects are independent of the delicacy of their means.

This phenomenon is doubtless to be explained by the virtues of our language, which this expert author mastered so thoroughly and wrote so nimbly. He demonstrated that it was still possible, in our language, to make patent the priceless value of a prolonged culture and to combine and sum up the heritage handed down by an uninterrupted series of admirable writers. Our great writers are not great eremites in our midst, as happens in other countries; there exists in France a sort of atmosphere for letters not to be found elsewhere, which was altogether favourable to your colleague.

He was himself impossible and scarcely conceivable elsewhere than in France, whose name he took. Under this name, so difficult to bear and requiring so much hopeful confidence before one might dare adopt it, he won the favour of the universe. He presented to it, in truth, a France displaying the specious qualities which the universe has permitted France to arrogate to itself, which contented the universe without disturbing or disquieting it. The world is not displeased that we reduce ourselves to a pure function of pleasure. It can easily bear to think of us as an ornament of the earth. It acknowledges with considerable generosity that in a time lacking in grace we represent a particular cult of exquisite things, and permits us to don the appearance of a nation of artists, of amateurs content with their fate, their sky, their land filled with beauty; as if our most recent history, all the blood we have shed, all the evidences we have given of the most sustained energy and the most unshakable and victorious will, a general readiness for sacrifice, immense means improvised at the height of the storm, did not give this nation the right to speak to the most prosperous powers in the noblest, the clearest, and even the most reasonable of tones.

But it was of a rather different France, of the gentle, absent-minded, and delicate France, of a France in appearance somewhat weary and disillusioned, that its illustrious homonym painted with distinction the true and yet deceptive picture. Of this charming France his mind was the composite image. Many acquired and dissipated traditions, many political and moral revolutions, and an accumulated reserve of contradictory experiences were necessary to the shaping of so comprehensive and hesitant a mind.

An ancient and almost failing civilization must be presupposed as giving us, at the extremity of its age, a being so free; as making it possible for this being to garner all the most beautiful things that men have created and preserved. Through long years he breathed in books the essences of our past which mingle there with the odour of death, and his substance had become bit by bit impregnated with the best that the centuries had distilled most excellently. We see him in the garden of French herbs, drawing to himself the most perfumed, the rarest, and at times the most naïve of flowers; making up his bouquets and trimming his hedges; a great lover of cultivation for whom the art of grafting and trimming holds no secrets. Thus nourished on honey, visiting buoyantly the vast treasures of history, archaeology, and literature, and yet not despising the delights, the facility, and the liberties of his time; receiving the suffrage of the public and of women; disposing in his fashion of the amusements of society, and, in the midst of so many advantages, in spite of so many delights, observing indefatigably its contradictions and seizing upon and tormenting its absurdities, he composed at ease those works in which, under a surface of perpetually pleasing beauties, there circulates a rather sinister judgment. And he lived in superior fashion.

My illustrious predecessor was not ingenuous. He did not expect humanity to differ very much in the future from what it seems to have been in the past; nor did he expect hitherto unknown marvels to be born of the fervour of men and the search for the absolute. There was in him no invincible faith in the adventures of the spirit; but he had read so much and so well that his general and intimate knowledge of everything readable in the past (and even unreadable) had rendered him immune to the present, independent of the future. He was born in books, reared in books, and ever changed by books. He knew everything about books—paper, type, format, binding; and all about printers, writers, editions, their sources, their destiny. In his life he was successively bookseller, librarian, judge of books, and author. He is the true man of books.

In truth, gentlemen, I know not how a soul can preserve its courage at the mere thought of the immense reserves of writing that accumulate in the world. One's heart grows faint at the thought of the number of these numberless works—what am I saying? at

the thought of the number of master works! The idea of writing has something in common with the idea of adding to infinity. A taste of ash comes to the lips. In this valley of Jehosaphat, in this multitude, even the rarest genius encounters its peers, melts into the crowd of its emulators, its precursors, its disciples. Each innovation is swallowed up in the totality of innovations; each illusion of originality vanishes. The soul grows sad and imagines, with a particular kind of pain in which is mingled a deep and ironic pity, these millions of beings armed with pens, these innumerable agents of the spirit, each feeling himself in his hour an independent creator, a first cause, the possessor of a certainty, a unique and incomparable source now tainted by number, lost in the ever-increasing crowd of his kind.

Your learned and subtle colleague, gentlemen, did not feel this uneasiness of number. He had not to restrict his reading in order to preserve himself from the disgust of this statistical vertigo. Far from oppressing him it excited him, and he drew from it many teachings and excellent consequences for the conduct and nourishment of his art. He has not escaped somewhat severe and naïve criticism on the ground of knowing many things and being unable to ignore what he knew. What did his critics expect? What had he done that had not always been done? There is nothing so old as the obligation to be entirely new which is imposed upon writers. In our time it is only a great and intrepid humility which can dare to be inspired by another. Too often do we observe a kind of constraint, a too sensitive instinct for priority—I know not what affectation of a virginity that is not always a delight. Shakespeare did not deprive us of acquaintance with what he had read, nor did Virgil, Racine, or Pascal. But, disdain-ing recent opinion and looking more closely, it is easy to clear up this little question, which, since it concerns vanity, is not one of aesthetics but of ethics. So much discredit has been put upon the ancient and respectable custom of combining the mine and the thine only because of a confused notion of the two ideas.

A book is an instrument of pleasure—or at least such it would be. It has pleasure for its object. The pleasure of the reader is entirely independent of the pains we take to make a book. When I am offered a very savoury dish, I do not think, as I enjoy its delicate flesh, whether he who prepared it invented the recipe. What

is its first inventor to me? It is not the effort he made that touches me. It is not his name that nourishes me or his pride that I rejoice in. I consume a perfect instant. To think otherwise implies no less than to sit in the seat of the gods, for it is to pretend to judge merit. But we human beings possess, fortunately, no more than an imperfect knowledge of merit. This notion of merit calls for a bold metaphysics: it implies our ability to conceive a power great enough to serve as a first cause, which power we presuppose and attribute to someone.

As a matter of fact, in these sublime and difficult matters we are prone to reason so lightly that we assign, with remarkable inconsequence, the highest dignity to those whom we declare inspired. We believe that such men are the pure instruments of a certain breath foreign to themselves and foreign almost to nature; we make of them singing reeds and accord to them the honours of first merit and the immense advantages, at the same time, of irresponsibility.

I, on the other hand, in spite of recent superstition, recognize a particular principle of glory in those who choose, who make no pretence of ignoring acquired beauties, who shape the means of their perfection out of their fortunate knowledge of the treasures which time has assembled. The mystery of choice is not a lesser mystery than that of invention, even if we agree that they are entirely different. And after all, we know absolutely nothing about the origin of the one or the other.

The gardener of the Jardin d'Epicure who combined this gift of choice with his prodigious reading, could not but make us apprehend at every point of his creations, a lively consciousness of the prestige of discourse and the close proximity of the most beautiful and the purest models of our art. It was the ornament of his powerful memory. All that is most musical, most volatile, most limpid in our language was intimately his. He was no less impregnated with what is most sharp, most aggressive in our literary monuments, most alert, most dangerous, and most delicately mortal. His novels—they are rather the chronicles of a world in which he never ceased to display all the contempt he so easily conceived for it—are written in the classic tone of irony that was natural to him and was his instinctive manner of expression; a manner, indeed, so constant in him that when, rarely, he refrains for a moment from smiling, he seems no longer himself; he seems no longer serious.

It must be confessed that in the society of his time, which has passed into our own, he found rich and favourable materials. He found within himself and about him a medley of the impurest circumstances and ideas, well calculated to inspire the most sceptical judgements.

I quite believe that the age of a civilization should be measured by its accumulated contradictions, by the number of incompatible customs and beliefs which meet and mutually temper one another, by the plurality of philosophies and aesthetics which so often cohabit and coexist in the same mind. Is not this our state? Are not our minds filled with tendencies and thoughts which are ignorant each of the other's existence? Do we not find on every hand families practising different religions, races joined into one nation, varied political opinions, and in a single individual a treasure of latent discord? A modern man—and it is in this that he is modern—lives familiarly with a quantity of contraries established in the penumbra of his thought.

I should like to remark here that tolerance, liberty of opinion and of belief, are always tardy things; they can be conceived and can penetrate laws and manners, only in an advanced age, when minds have been progressively enriched and weakened by the exchange of their dissimilarities.

The author of the *Histoire Contemporaine* had only to take cognizance of the state of incoherence in men and things to find reason for that scepticism which has been the subject of reproach. A sceptic is difficult to defeat. He can limit himself to pointing out to us that our own feelings about scepticism are curiously divided against themselves. We prescribe scepticism in the sciences; we demand it in affairs. But of a sudden we set limits to it and balk it at our will. We forget that each doctrine teaches us to abolish the rest. We are begged not to make comparisons and not to pursue our reasons to their conclusions; meanwhile, they develop of themselves in our minds. We do not realize that doubt grows out of things themselves. It is in its principle merely a natural phenomenon, an involuntary reaction in defence of the real and the corporeal against images which are too poignant. We can see this in what happens in sleep, when a dream is so absurd that even in the absence of reason this absurdity itself engenders a marvellous resistance, a response, a negation, a liberating action, an



awakening which sends us forth from the world of impossibility, renders us back to the realm of probable things, and furnishes us at the same time with a sort of physical and instinctive definition of absurdity. We should, therefore, not accuse so much the sceptic as the cause and the occasion of his scepticism.

A mind distinguished by its extreme avidity for all knowledge had inevitably to be sceptical and satiric. Its immense culture furnished it with abundant means for disenchantment. It rendered every social form mythical and barbarous. Our most respectable usages, our most sacred convictions, our most worthy ornaments, were invited to take their place in an ethnographic collection beside the taboos, the periapts, the talismans of the tribes, beside the tinsel and the vestiges of civilizations which had been surmounted and relegated to the domain of curiosity. These are the invincible weapons that the spirit of satire discovers in accumulated relics. No doctrine, institution, society, or régime is without its burden of disturbing memories, incontestable flaws, errors, embarrassing variations, and even, at times, illicit beginnings or inglorious origins, which subsequent grandeurs or pretensions must necessarily detest. Laws, customs, and institutions are the ordinary and delectable prey of the critics of humankind. It is a mere game to torment these considerable and imperfect entities which are traditionally harassed from age to age. It is agreeable, it is easy, and sometimes it is perilous to torment them with ironies. The joy of respecting nothing is for certain souls the most intoxicating of joys. A writer who dispenses this pleasure to those who can savour it enchants them by associating them in his pitiless lucidity, for he lends to them the likeness of the gods, who contemn both good and evil.

These eternal victims might have answered the free and erudite spirit that tormented them by pointing out that in their absence there would be infinitely little liberty and no erudition whatever in the world. Knowledge and freedom are not the products of nature. So much of them as man possesses he obtained by effort and preserves by artifice. Nature is not liberal, and there is no reason to think that nature is interested in the spirit. Man's spirit struggles and takes the offensive against nature. Men group themselves to act contrary to their destiny, chance, and the unforeseen—the most immediate of things. There is nothing more natural than

chance, or more constant than the unforeseen. Order, in a word, is an immense anti-natural enterprise whose parts may always be criticized on condition that the whole subsist and that it protect, sustain, and shelter its critic, and provide him with the security, the leisure, and the knowledge essential to criticism. Literature itself demands a whole system of conventions which are superimposed upon the conventions of language.

But here, in the domain of letters, our thinker appears at first blush to be no longer consistent with himself. The dogmas, the formal laws to which he lends such summary respect in the moral and political domain, he finds agreeable and worthy of respect when they order works and consolidate fictions. Highest of all he places those masterpieces which possess the greatest rigour thus far observed in poetry. Nothing is better known concerning him than the kind of passion he nourished for Racine.

I do not know, actually, what might have been the feeling of M Racine towards his zealous admirer. It is vain to wonder what the Jansenist and courtier would have thought of this sceptic and libertarian, but to imagine their meeting might afford one amusement. I had thought for a moment, gentlemen, of permitting these Shades to enter into a dialogue for your entertainment; but I was afraid they might very quickly become involved in the most disparate—I do not say the most heated—converse, and I have left them in peace.

In the course of the single and entirely fortuitous interview which it was my fortune to have with our great lover of Racine, Racine was the unique subject of our unique conversation. I was very far from thinking that after a little time it would be my duty to render to your colleague the homage of a eulogy, and I was not inspired to ask him what he would wish me to say of him one day in this chapel into which I did not dream of entering. I was not without some apprehension. I thought of many subjects which we could not have developed without some dissonance. Perhaps I might have been tempted to thrust upon him a few time-worn remonstrances. He had, in his ripe age, been a critic, one of the most distinguished of critics in style and knowledge, but a little less so in prescience. He was not of those who direct their attention towards the things that might be, who pin their hope to things new-born, and whose extremely sensitive ears are eagerly attuned

to the growth of the young shoots. This eagerness it is true, sometimes engenders a sort of hallucination of hearing. . . . But he—may his shade forgive me—never showed himself anxious to anticipate. Since he did not believe in prophets he never obtained the gift of prophecy, or he was at best but a “prophet of the past.” In certain pages of *La Vie Littéraire* he evinced no excessive tenderness towards the poets then exercising their talents, or the masters they had chosen. He put no great faith or hope in them. He used to say that he felt no bond between them and himself, and that he looked for no good to come of the future. There were times when he compared them to ascetics, which on his lips was, after all, half tolerable. But at other times he thought them no different from Hottentots. He wrote, also, that beautiful things are born easily—mistaken counsel; it is the kind of counsel that engenders Hottentots. True, he used also to maintain the contrary. This man of so much wit either could not or would not trouble to enquire why or how a rather considerable body of young men could understand and love things of which he had no conception.

I have often said to myself that if criticism had the magical power of effacing and abolishing the things it condemned, and if its judgements could, in the last and most rigorous resort, obliterate that which it deemed deplorable or harmful, the destiny of literature would be most unhappily affected thereby. Wipe out the confusing, heresiarchal, and demoniacal poets; take away the precious, the lycanthropic, and the grotesque; re-plunge the tenebrously beautiful into the eternal night; purge the past of all literary monsters; keep the future pure of them, admitting only the perfect with their miracles of equilibrium—and I predict that you will witness the prompt withering of the great tree of Letters, and that all the chances of the very art you worship with so much reason will vanish.

But, gentlemen, in this single encounter we spoke of Racine, that great resource. Racine whom, of all authors, he most constantly, most precisely, and most profitably admired; Racine, whom he worshipped and frequented; Racine, finally, whom I too admired in my fashion.

I admired him as well as I was able, in the fashion of a man who had made the discovery thirty years after his school-days, upon encountering several tiny and immense problems concerning

the art of versification. This incomparable composer seemed to me in my youth merely an instrument of public education, which fortunately, in those days, made no attempt to teach us to love. We never appreciate great men more precisely than by an immediate comparison of their strength with our weaknesses. When circumstance presents to us a problem whose like has been vanquished by the great man, we marvel at the way in which he has untied the knot, abolished the obstacle, and we measure with the greatest and most sensitive precision his triumphant power by our own, which has remained without effect.

An hour went by unheeded in this unique and Racinian conversation. As I was about to withdraw, my future predecessor complimented me. He said I had spoken aptly about Racine, and I went away content with him, which is to say, with myself. I have no memory of the handsome arguments with which his amenity endowed my discourse. I had done no more, doubtless, than articulate in my way the common thought of all those who delight in music and are moved by perfection. I am very sure that I praised that astonishing economy of artistic means which is pre-eminently Racine's and is more than justified by his entire possession of the few means he consented to employ. Not many people realize clearly how much imagination is required to dispense with metaphors, and to attain so remote an ideal. In literature as in science, doubtless, a metaphor sometimes takes the place of a laborious calculation. But Racine preferred to make the calculation. I see him first of all draughting, defining, and ultimately deducing from a thought often pondered and long retained, those pure periods in which even violence sings, in which the most vivid and the truest passion resounds and is golden, and develops only in the nobility of a language which consummates an unparalleled alliance between analysis and harmony.

In order to enjoy Racine completely, we must feel the deep reasons which made him reject all that was so avidly sought by those who came after him, the things whose absence from his work has often been the occasion of reproach against him. One verse or other that seems to us empty entailed the sacrifice of twenty verses which we should have thought magnificent, to keep which, however, would have broken a divine line and clouded the august duration of a perfect phase of the movement of the soul.

When I left the little house in which I had been received with so much grace, these haunting questions were still tormenting my thoughts.

During those states of intellectual resonance which follow and prolong an interesting conversation, there is produced in us an infinite combination of the ideas which were voiced but not exhausted. For some time after, our thoughts are accelerated, their scope is broadened, they illuminate the unforeseen which lies within us before we come back to ourselves, which is to say, come back to insignificant things. The dialogue just finished recommenced within me, metamorphosed into the exchange of more and more daring hypotheses. Once embarked and given up to itself, the mind denies itself nothing. Automatically, it produces lively ideas which embolden one another. I thought of the singularity of that art called classic; I remarked that it begins to show itself as soon as acquired experience intervenes in the composition and judgement of works. It is inseparable from the notion of precepts, rules, and models. . . .

Then I began to interrogate myself. How was it that this art had appeared and made its beauty dominant particularly in France? France, I said to myself, is the one country in the world where the consideration of form, the insistence upon and concern with form as form, has existed in modern times. Neither the force of the ideas, nor the interest of the passions described, nor the marvellous generating of images, nor even the outbursts of genius itself, sufficed to satisfy a nation so exacting as not to enjoy entirely what it cannot enjoy upon reflection. It is reluctant to separate that which was spontaneous from that which will be the product of reflection. It admires heartily only when it has found sound and universal reasons for its pleasure; and the search for these reasons led it formerly to distinguish very carefully between the art of expression and the expression itself. It is not astonishing (my inner voice continued to whisper) that in a country so little credulous, such precision has held dominion. The apprehension and the worship of form then appeared to me to be a passion of the mind which could emerge only from the mind's resistance. Doubt, I said to myself in a brief formula, leads to form.

Thinking again about him I had just left, and of whom nothing is so well known as his love of classic art, unless it is the complete

incredulity that he professed, for he was scepticism incarnate, there came to me the notion that there was some hidden but enchanting relation between worship of form and the critical, sceptical type of mind. Credulity, I thought, is not difficult. It consists in not being difficult. It suffices a credulous person to be ravished. Credulity is the ready victim of impressions, enchantments—of surprise, prodigy, excess, marvel, and innovation. But a time comes, although it comes not for everybody, when disillusionment suggests to minds that they be exacting. Doctrines and philosophies advanced without proof find it more and more difficult as time goes on to attract followers and to satisfy growing objections, until in the end only that which is verifiable is deemed to be true. In the arts, the same phenomenon is observable. There is a kind of literary scepticism corresponding to philosophic or scientific scepticism.

But how are works of art to be ensured against these second thoughts and fortified against instinctive arbitrary judgement? Why, by arbitrary judgement itself, by formulated, legislated arbitrary judgement. The creative sceptics—creative in their manner—have instituted a system of conventions which is directed against personal foible, confusion, and superabundance, in a word, against absolute phantasy. The conventions are arbitrary, or at least are said to be so, but no scepticism is possible concerning the rules of the game.

Rules of the game? Some people will find this expression shocking. To say that classic art is so self-conscious and so desirous of preserving both rigour and freedom at the same time, that its ideal is analogous to that of a game, is surely a shocking assertion; yet the shock, I hope, will last no longer than a moment, only long enough to remind you that perfection in man consists and can consist only in his precise attainment of an imagined goal which he has set himself. Classic art says to the poet: Thou shalt not sacrifice to the idol of beauty of detail; thou shalt not take all words into thy service, for some are rare and baroque and will focus exclusive attention upon themselves, gleaming vainly at the expense of thought; thou shalt not dazzle the eye with paste jewels, or speculate on the extraordinary; thou shalt not seek to strike with thunder for, whatever thou mayest think, thou art not a god; thou shalt but communicate to man, if thou canst, one idea of human perfection.

Classic art says a great many other things, but there are more learned voices than mine to speak for it. I confine myself to reiterating what everybody has said before me. It is an admirable thing that in France only the purposeful intelligence was able to create an art that was the perfection of grace; and admirable too that a superior ease of style, an intimate fusion of form and thought, a charming modesty, might be the astonishing fruits of an extraordinary constraint.

Let us consider again how this came about. The diversity of obstacles placed in the path of the Muses was grievously multiplied. Formidable restrictions were placed on the number of their steps and on their natural movements. The poet was weighted with chains. He was afflicted with bizarre prohibitions and warned of the setting of inexplicable limits. His vocabulary was decimated. The commandments of prosody were cruelly affirmed. This done, strict and sometimes absurd rules having been promulgated, artificial conventions having been imposed, a thing happened at which we still marvel: by the operation of a half dozen men of first quality and by the grace of a few salons, there came into being those miracles of purity, of precise power, and of life, those incorruptible works which bend us despite ourselves in homage before them and before the perfect form in which, like goddesses, they attain to a supernatural degree of naturalness.

Gentlemen, I do not present these imaginary deductions as either sound or profound ideas. My discourse is merely an arrangement of a few notions in which I have no particular pride. I should have been happy if I had been able to compose in a more prepossessing portrait the various aspects of my illustrious predecessor and depict more successfully his great titles to the attention of posterity. A delightful mind, unimaginably pliant, the passionate lover of all that was most beautiful in every domain, and ever the friend of mankind, he will survive in the history of our Letters as the man who made plain to our contemporaries a singular and remarkable relationship—the one I have here attempted to elucidate, between our free and creative nation, emancipated thought, and the purest and most rigorous system of art that has yet been conceived.

## TWO POEMS

BY GEORGE WHITSETT

### ANALOGY

Solemnly along the hills,  
Palely among the vales  
Moves the dying voice.  
Lean goes the wind of evening,  
Alone goes the voice of sighing,  
Bent and alone is the wind of silence.

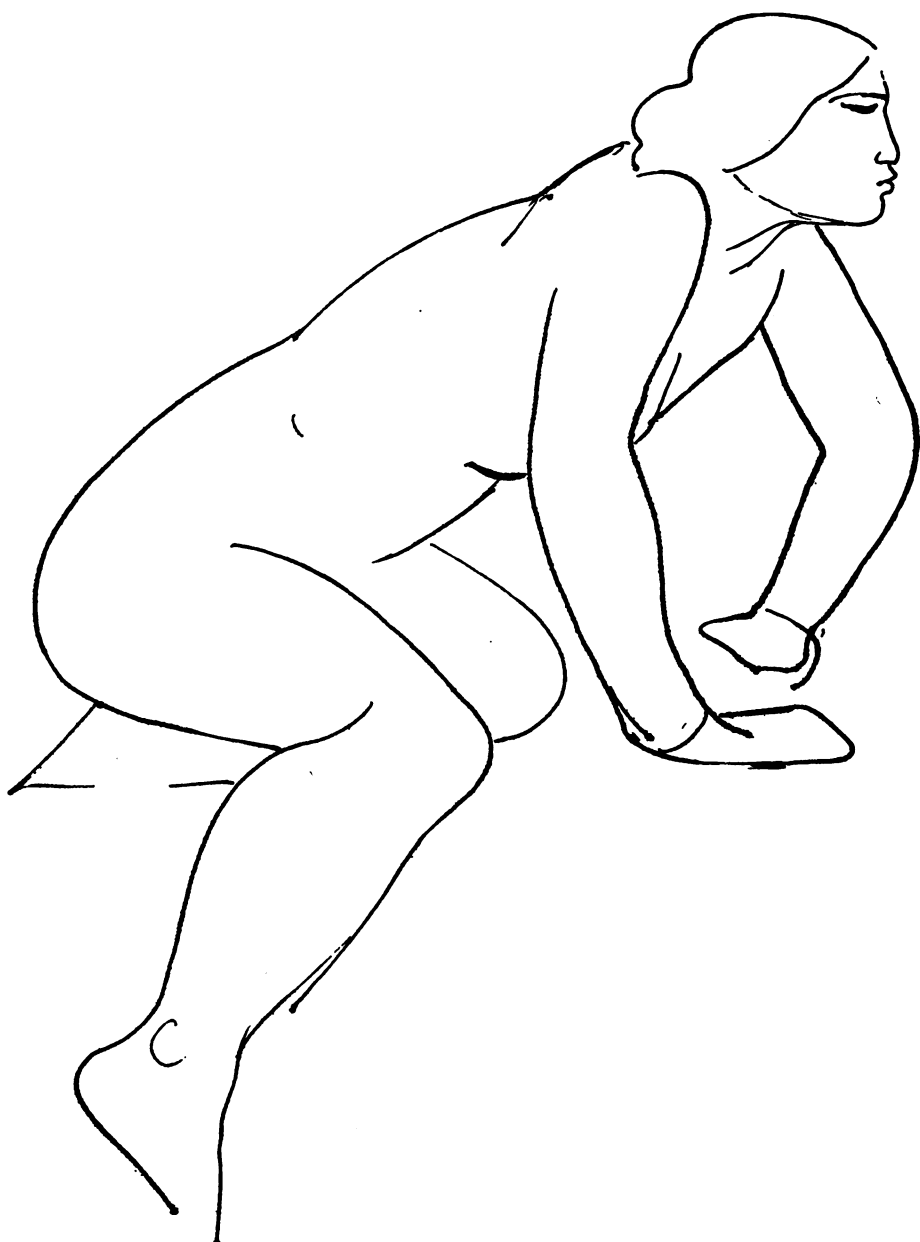
Above the shadowed land  
Gather the clouds of evening.  
Circling the vanished hill  
Marches the mind of remembering.  
Far goes the hallowed wind  
To move with the leaves of morning.

### ISLAND

The bathers return from their waves  
To encircle the calabash tree.  
The long line flies from the sea.

No sound may be allowed,  
No unbirdlike stare.  
Only uplifted wings  
To the pendant air.





A DRAWING. BY MAURICE STERNE



# ON THE POEMS OF PAUL VALÉRY

BY LEWIS GALANTIERE

**P**AUL VALÉRY tells a story concerning Mallarmé and Degas that every poet may read and ponder:

Degas rather fancied himself as sonneteer and laboured as mightily over his verses as over his painting. One evening he declared to Mallarmé that the art of versification was the most hateful of all arts. He had wasted a day in a futile attempt to finish a sonnet. "And yet," he complained in a sort of simple-minded rage, "Heaven knows I have ideas enough!" "But Degas," said Mallarmé gently; "you don't make poems with ideas; you make them with words."

This little anecdote may serve as a key to Valéry's poetry. Everybody now knows that Valéry is concerned rather with method, with technique, than with the finished work. Again and again, he has made this clear in his essays. "*J'avais la manie,*" he says, "*de n'aimer que le fonctionnement des êtres, et dans les oeuvres, que leur génération.*" We may imagine Valéry's poetics in somewhat this fashion: "I set myself a problem in creation. It must be solved in accordance with the nature of my materials and with the effect I have, in advance, determined to produce. My materials are words; the effect is conditioned by the probable reader I have in mind. Does there exist a law, a method, which I can apply to ensure the solution of my problem?" . . . Pure engineering.

This cold-blooded rejection of the heated imagination, the poetic frenzy, is accompanied by an almost total disdain of the commonplace—although entirely worthy and legitimate—"subjects" of poetry. "Novelists," Valéry has written, "create life, whereas I seek, in a certain sense, to eliminate it." His subject is that inner universe, the intellect. The creatures who figure in his poems, the Parca, the Pythoness, Narcissus, the Serpent, are convenient symbols of his consciousness. His concern is not with them, not with things at all, but with the hidden relation between things which renders them all mere variations of one universal element. A

flower, a theorem, and a sound, for example, may exist independently and yet simultaneously in time. What is the explanation of this dual and contradictory duration? "We never think," remarks Emilie Teste in her beautiful Letter,<sup>1</sup> "that what we think hides from us what we are." What is the secret relation between the personality and the consciousness? And what, finally, is the profound relation between the consciousness and the cosmos? . . . These are the questions that have perturbed Valéry for nearly forty years, questions which go unanswered, but which form the substance of all that he has written.

We have here, doubtless, an explanation of the interest of the French Symbolists in the work of Poe. They read with seriousness one of his works—Eureka—which we scarcely read at all, and studied, like so many disciples, his system of prosody, *The Poetic Principle*. Mallarmé was incalculably influenced by these two works, and although Valéry encountered Eureka and was impressed by the essay before he met his master, it was in their common admiration of Eureka that they discovered their boundless intellectual affinity. Inspired in a great measure by Poe, Mallarmé wrote of "*l'ensemble des rapports existant dans tout*" and of "*l'intellectuelle parole à son apogée*"—phrases echoed again and again in Valéry's writings. Through Mallarmé, also, came those Symbolist attributes—*diamant, gourde, hydre, rose*, for example—which gleam in Valéry's poems, as well as that intellectual Narcissism exemplified by Teste, Leonardo, and la Jeune Parque, which has its counterpart in Mallarmé's *Hérodiade* and *Igitur*. Here, probably, the resemblance ends and the debt ceases. Apparently, what the master sought ineffectually, the pupil found. Unless—which we shall never know—Valéry's scruple, great as it is, is less than was Mallarmé's, and his verbal ingenuity, nimble beyond compare, is of a sort less fine, less austere, than his master's.

To sum up these introductory remarks: Valéry is preoccupied by certain concepts which belong partly to the domain of analytical mechanics and partly to that of metaphysics, but which cannot be classed with any of the organized systems of ontology. (Thibaudet calls him a Bergsonian, Daniel Halévy a Kantian, Henri Rambaud a Scholastic, Paul Souday a Hegelian, Lucien Fabre a Positivist.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. A Letter From Madame Emilie Teste, *THE DIAL*, June 1925.

. . . And others have pronounced the names of Spinoza, Leibnitz. . . .) He has set himself, from time to time, certain problems in prosody, and has viewed them with the detachment of an architect calculating stress, durability, and symmetry. These "exercises" as he calls them, are contained in three *plaquettes*, the *Album de vers anciens* (1890-1893), *la Jeune Parque* (1913-1917), and *Charmes* (1918-1922).

*La Jeune Parque* is generally deemed the most obscure of Valéry's poems, yet its passion and sonority are so patently magnificent that it won the immediate suffrage of all lovers of poetry in France. Superficially, it is the monologue of a virginal being, alone in and with the world, who has been stung in sleep by desire, recoils from it, yearns for death when she discovers that she cannot recover her original purity, and cedes finally to nature and to love. This poem has naturally been the subject of much and varied interpretation. Read in the light of Valéry's prose, it appears to symbolize the consciousness emerging from the purity of non-being, the perfection of oblivion, struggling, and finally yielding to the ineluctable imperfection of life. But its music is so ineffable that the meaning of these words seems scarcely to matter:

*"O ruse! A la lueur de la douleur laissée  
Je me sentis connue encor plus que blessée . . .*

*J'étais l'égale et l'épouse du jour . . .  
Rien ne me murmurait qu'un desir de mourir  
Dans cette blonde pulpe au soleil pût mûrir . . .*

*Les dieux m'ont-ils formé ce maternel contour  
Et ces bords sinueux, ces plis et ces calices,  
Pour que la vie embrasse un autel de délices,  
Où mêlant l'âme étrange aux éternels retours,  
La semence, le lait, le sang coulent toujours?  
Non! l'horreur m'illumine, exécration harmonie!  
Chaque baiser présage une neuve agonie. . . .*

*Hier la chair profonde, hier, la chair maîtresse  
M'a trahie. Oh! sans rêve, et sans une caresse!*

*Nul démon, nul parfum ne m'offrit le péril  
D'imaginaires bras mourant au col viril;  
Ni, par le Cygne-Dieu, de plumes offensée  
Sa brûlante blancheur n'effleura ma pensée. . . .*

*Me voici: mon front touche à ce consentement.  
Ce corps, je lui pardonne, et je goûte à la cendre. . . .  
Dors, ma sagesse, dors. Forme-toi cette absence;  
Retourne dans le germe et la sombre innocence,  
Abandonne-toi vive aux serpents, aux trésors.  
Dors toujours! Descends, dors toujours! Descends, dors, dors!"*

There is an echo of this theme in the exclamation of La Pythie, writhing above the fumes of the incense:

*"Mon cher corps! Forme préférée,  
Fraîcheur par qui ne fut jamais  
Aphrodite désaltérée . . .*

*Qu'ai-je donc fait qui me condamne  
Pure, à ces rites odieux? . . .*

*Pourquoi, Puissance Créatrice,  
Auteur du mystère animal,  
Dans cette vierge pour matrice,  
Semer les merveilles du mal?"*

And again surrender to nature, though not to the flesh but rather to the god in the flesh:

*"Honneur des Hommes, Saint Langage,  
Discours prophétique et paré,  
Belles chaînes en qui s'engage  
Le dieu dans la chair égaré,  
Illumination, largesse!  
Voici parler une Sagesse  
Et sonner cette auguste Voix . . ."*

In l'Ebauche d'un Serpent, as in la Jeune Parque, we find once more a dual significance: superficially, a "story," the seduction of Eve; fundamentally, an ideology, the irruption of creation into the purity and perfection of non-being:

*“ . . . l'univers n'est qu'un défaut  
Dans la pureté du Non-Etre! . . .*

*Comme las de son pur spectacle,  
Dieu lui-même a rompu l'obstacle  
De sa parfaite éternité;  
Il se fit celui qui dissipe  
En conséquences, son Principe,  
En étoiles, son Unité.*

*Cieux, son erreur! Temps, sa ruine!”*

The verbal and pictorial magic of Valéry operates here more rapidly, perhaps, than in any other of his poems. The uncoiling of the serpent to the accompaniment of his hissing sibilants is matchless:

*“Je vais, je viens, je glisse, plonge,  
Je disparaissais dans un coeur pur.  
Fut-il jamais de sein si dur  
Qu'on n'y puisse loger un songe? . . .*

*J'étais présent comme une odeur,  
Comme l'arome d'une idée  
Dont ne puisse être élucidée  
L'insidieuse profondeur!”*

The magnificent Eve, all marble and gold and amber, is posed with a painter's art:

*“Eve, jadis, je la surpris,  
Parmi ses premières pensées,*

*La lèvre entr'ouverte aux esprits  
Qui naissaient des roses bercées. . . .*

*Elle buvait mes petits mots  
Qui bâtissaient une oeuvre étrange;  
Son oeil, parfois, perdait un ange  
Pour revenir à mes rameaux. . . .*

*Le marbre aspire, l'or se cambre!  
Ces blondes bases d'ombre et d'ambre  
Tremblent au bord du mouvement!  
Elle chancelle, la grande urne  
D'où va fuir le consentement  
De l'apparente taciturne!"*

The music of this poem is of such splendour, such unexampled variety, that for all its intellectual felicity, it is essential that it be read aloud. One would like to quote the whole of it, if only to show how victoriously Valéry meets the unprecedented challenge: precisely what did the Serpent say to Eve?—a victory the more glorious in that the Serpent's triumph is the triumph of the intellect, and not of the flesh.

In the *Fragment du Narcisse* we have another of the Valérian problems to which reference has been made: the encounter of the consciousness and the personality. The setting is the usual one—woods, nymphs, the dying day, the youth gazing at his reflection in the pool. All the rest—need I say?—is different. Narcissus speaks:

*"Je suis seul! Si les Dieux, les échos et les ondes,  
Et si tant de soupirs permettent qu'on le soit! . . .  
Des cimes, l'air déjà cesse le pur pillage;  
La voix des sources change, et me parle du soir;  
Un grand calme m'écoute, où j'écoute l'espoir.  
J'entends l'herbe des nuits croître dans l'ombre sainte,  
Et la lune perfide élève son miroir  
Jusque dans les secrets de la fontaine éteinte. . . ."*

How much of this music I should like to quote!



“O douceur de survivre à la force du jour,  
 Quand elle se retire, enfin rose d’amour,  
 Encore un peu brûlante, et lasse, mais comblée,  
 Et de tant de trésors tendrement accablée  
 Par de tels souvenirs qu’ils empourprent sa mort,  
 Et qu’ils la font heureuse agenouiller dans l’or,  
 Puis s’étendre, se fondre, et perdre sa vengeance  
 Et s’éteindre en un songe en qui le soir se change.”

To his double, Narcissus says:

“O semblable! Et pourtant, plus parfait que moi-même,  
 Ephémère immortel, si clair devant mes yeux,  
 Pâles membres de perle, et ces cheveux soyeux,  
 Faut-il qu’à peine aimés, l’ombre les obscurcisse,  
 Et que la nuit déjà nous divise, ô Narcisse,  
 Et glisse entre nous deux le fer qui coupe un fruit!

Mais moi, Narcisse aimé, je ne suis curieux  
 Que de ma seule essence . . .

Qu’ils sont doux, les périls que nous pourrions choisir!  
 Se surprendre soi-même et soi-même saisir. . . .”

*Se surprendre soi-même et soi-même saisir.* “Our personality,” writes Valéry, “which we imagine crudely to be our most profound and intimate *property*, our sovereign wealth, is but a *thing*, mutable and accidental, compared to the essential consciousness within us. . . . It is no more than a secondary psychological divinity, inhabiting our mirror and responding to our name.” Valéry’s “personality” must be imagined as hovering constantly on the uttermost confines of thought, straining at the highest pitch of attentiveness, in an attempt to seize and hold his evasive essence, his “consciousness.” This is the meaning of:

“O pour moi seul, à moi seul, en moi-même,  
 Après d’un coeur, aux sources du poème,  
 Entre le vide et l’événement pur,  
 J’attends l’écho de ma grandeur interne . . .

*Et vous, grande âme, espérez-vous un songe  
Qui n'aura plus ces couleurs de mensonge?"*  
(Le Cimetière marin)

*"Je remonte à la source où cesse même un nom."*  
(Le Rameur)

These hours of watchfulness must be lived and are never wasted :

*"Ces jours qui te semblent vides  
Et perdus dans l'univers  
Ont des racines avides  
Qui travaillent les déserts. . . ."*

*Patience, patience,  
Patience dans l'azur.  
Chaque atome de silence  
Et la chance d'un fruit mûr!  
Viendra l'heureuse surprise:  
Une colombe, la brise,  
L'ébranlement le plus doux . . ."*  
(Palme)

Lack of space forbids, unfortunately, a detailed analysis of *Le Cimetière marin*, which has gradually become the most celebrated and most discussed of Valéry's poems. Its central symbol, the roof—

*"Ce toit tranquille, où marchent des colombes,  
Entre les pins palpète, entre les tombes . . ."*

—this roof that symbolizes at once the surface of the psyche, the cemetery, and the sea, is employed with the most admirable ingenuity. As for the significance of the poem, we are to see here, apparently, change brought into the presence of immobility. "*Pères profonds, têtes inhabitées,*" the poet exclaims to the dead,

*"Le vrai rongeur, le ver irréfutable*

*N'est point pour vous qui dormez sous la table,  
Il vit de vie, il ne me quitte pas!"*

The restless worm is in me, not in you. Shall I, he asks, submit to death? Shall I allow myself to be conquered by the philosopher of immobility, by

*"Zénon! Cruel Zénon! Zénon d'Elée!"*

But like the young Fate, he prefers life and change, with all their flaws, and declares himself in a lyrical apostrophe to the sea:

*"Oui! Grande mer de délires douée,  
Peau de panthère et chlamyde trouée  
De mille et mille idoles du soleil,  
Hydre absolue, ivre de ta chair bleue,  
Qui te remords l'étincelante queue  
Dans un tumulte au silence pareil;"*

and in a strain reminiscent of Baudelaire's "O mort, vieux capitaine!" he accepts life:

*"Le vent se lève! Il faut tenter de vivre!  
L'air immense ouvre et referme mon livre,  
La vague en poudre ose jaillir des rocs!  
Envolez-vous, pages toutes éblouies!  
Rompez, vagues! Rompez d'eaux réjouies  
Ce toit tranquille où picoraient des focs!"*

As I have no space in which to deal adequately with this poem, so I have none for a discussion of Valéry's prosody. To read his poems is of immense educative value for those who have hitherto found French poetry something of a disappointment. The sonorities that are patent in *Charmes* and in *la Jeune Parque*, the cadences that inform these poems, are those of the great classic poets of France; and not only the poets of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but even of later ages. Compare, for example, this line of Chénier with the music of Valéry:

*"Dieu dont l'arc est d'argent, dieu de Claros, écoute!"*

Valéry, it will instantly be seen, is in the great tradition of French poetry. Rather than quarrel with him over a syllable or an epithet, his detractors, the self-styled defenders of the classic forms, should give thanks to Apollo for the appearance, in our day, of a poet whose example cannot but turn the contemporary reader's attention once again to the great poets of three hundred years ago.

It is five years since Valéry wrote his last poem. Remember what he wrote of Leonardo: *"Il abandonne les débris d'on ne sait quels grands jeux."* He has mastered the game; its problems are no longer problems; wherefore more poetry? *"Je ne suis pas un poète, mais le Monsieur qui s'ennuie,"* he has said. Meanwhile, it is amusing to reflect that the author of *la Soirée avec M Teste*<sup>1</sup> has become a celebrated figure, a great man, *"taché d'erreur,"* as Teste himself would repeat with scorn. And yet—! Before he consented to present himself as a candidate for the seat of Anatole France, Valéry scribbled in his note-book: *"La gloire doit s'obtenir comme sous-produit."*

Charming. An Academician for whom the Academy is a by-product!

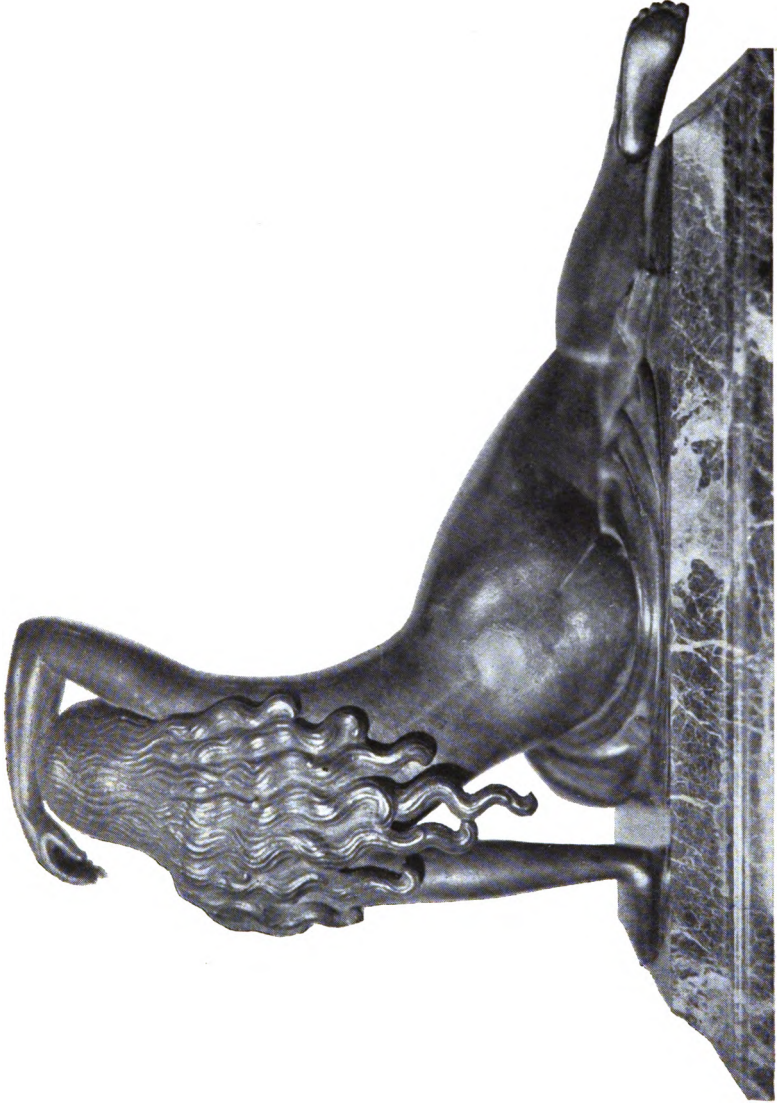
<sup>1</sup> Cf. *An Evening With M Teste*, THE DIAL, February 1922.



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DANAË. BY PAUL MANSHIP





*Courtesy of Scott and Fowles*

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## IN LOVE?

BY D. H. LAWRENCE

“WELL my dear!” said Henrietta: “if I had such a worried look on my face, when I was going down to spend the week-end with the man I was engaged to—and going to be married to in a month—well! I should either try and change my face, or hide my feelings, or something.”

“You shut up!” said Hester curtly. “Don’t look at my face, if it doesn’t please you.”

“Now my dear Hester, don’t go into one of your tempers! Just look in the mirror, and you’ll see what I mean.”

“Who cares what you mean! You’re not responsible for my face,” said Hester desperately, showing no intention of looking in the mirror, or of otherwise following her sister’s kind advice.

Henrietta, being the younger sister, and mercifully unengaged, hummed a tune lightly. She was only twenty-one, and had not the faintest intention of jeopardizing her peace of mind by accepting any sort of fatal ring. Nevertheless, it *was* nice to see Hester “getting off,” as they say; for Hester was nearly twenty-five, which is serious.

The worst of it was, lately Hester had had her famous “worried” look on her face, when it was a question of the faithful Joe: dark shadows under the eyes, drawn lines down the cheeks. And when Hester looked like that, Henrietta couldn’t help feeling the most horrid jangled echo of worry and apprehension in her own heart, and she hated it. She simply couldn’t stand that sudden feeling of fear.

“What I mean to say,” she continued, “is—that it’s jolly unfair to Joe, if you go down looking like that. Either put a better face on it, or—” But she checked herself. She was going to say “don’t go.” But really, she did hope that Hester would go through with this marriage. Such a weight off her, Henrietta’s mind!

“Oh hang!” cried Hester. “Shut up!” And her dark eyes flashed a spark of fury and misgiving at the young Henrietta.

Henrietta sat down on the bed, lifted her chin, and composed her face like a meditating angel. She really was intensely fond of Hester, and the worried look was such a terribly bad sign.

"Look here, Hester!" she said. "Shall I come down to Markbury with you? I don't mind, if you'd like me to."

"My dear girl," cried Hester in desperation, "what earthly use do you think that would be?"

"Well, I thought it might take the edge off the intimacy, if that's what worries you."

Hester re-echoed with a hollow, mocking laugh.

"Don't be such a *child*, Henrietta, really!" she said.

And Hester set off alone, down to Wiltshire, where her Joe had just started a little farm, to get married on. After being in the artillery, he had got sick and tired of business: besides, Hester would never have gone into a little suburban villa. Every woman sees her home through a wedding-ring. Hester had only taken a squint through her engagement-ring, so far. But Ye Gods! not Golders Green, not even Harrow!

So Joe had built a little brown wooden bungalow—largely with his own hands; and at the back was a small stream with two willows, old ones. At the sides were brown sheds, and chicken runs. There were pigs in a hog-proof wire fence, and two cows in a field, and a horse. Joe had thirty-odd acres, with only a youth to help him. But of course, there would be Hester.

It all looked very new and tidy. Joe was a worker. He too looked rather new and tidy, very healthy and pleased with himself. He didn't even see the "worried look." Or if he did, he only said:

"You're looking a bit fagged, Hester. Going up to the City takes it out of you, more than you know. You'll be another girl down here."

"Shan't I just!" cried Hester.

She did like it, too!—the lots of white and yellow hens, and the pigs so full of pep! And the yellow thin blades of willow leaves showering softly down at the back of her house, from the leaning old trees. She liked it awfully: especially the yellow leaves on the earth.

She told Joe she thought it was all lovely, topping, fine! And he was awfully pleased. Certainly *he* looked fit enough.

The mother of the helping youth gave them dinner at half past twelve. The afternoon was all sunshine and little jobs to do, after she had dried the dishes for the mother of the youth.

"Not long now, Miss, before you'll be cooking at this range: and a good little range it is."

"Not long now, no!" echoed Hester, in the hot little wooden kitchen, that was overheated from the range.

The woman departed. After tea, the youth also departed, and Joe and Hester shut up the chickens and the pigs. It was night-fall. Hester went in and made the supper, feeling somehow a bit of a fool, and Joe made a fire in the living-room, he feeling rather important and luscious.

He and Hester would be alone in the bungalow, till the youth appeared next morning. Six months ago, Hester would have enjoyed it. They were so perfectly comfortable together, he and she. They had been friends, and his family and hers had been friends for years, donkeys' years. He was a perfectly decent boy, and there would never have been anything messy to fear from him. Nor from herself. Ye Gods, no!

But now, alas, since she had promised to marry him, he had made the wretched mistake of falling "in love" with her. He had never been that way before. And if she had known he would get this way now, she would have said decidedly: Let us remain friends, Joe, for this sort of thing is a come-down.—Once he started cuddling and petting, she couldn't stand him. Yet she felt she ought to. She imagined she even ought to like it. Though where the *ought* came from, she could not see.

"I'm afraid, Hester," he said sadly, "you're not in love with me as I am with you."

"Hang it all!" she cried. "If I'm not, you ought to be jolly well thankful, that's all I've got to say."

Which double-barrelled remark he heard, but did not register. He never liked looking anything in the very pin-point middle of the eye. He just left it, and left all her feelings comfortably in the dark. Comfortably for him, that is.

He was extremely competent at motor-cars and farming and all that sort of thing. And surely she, Hester, was as complicated as a motor-car! Surely she had as many subtle little valves and magnetos and accelerators and all the rest of it, to her make-up! If only he would try to handle *her* as carefully as he handled his car! She needed starting, as badly as ever any automobile did. Even if a car had a self-starter, the man had to give it the right twist. Hester felt she would need a lot of cranking up, if ever she was to start off on the matrimonial road with Joe. And he, the fool, just sat in a motionless car and pretended he was making heaven knows how many miles an hour.

This evening she felt really desperate. She had been quite all right doing things with him, during the afternoon, about the place. Then she liked being with him. But now that it was evening and they were alone, the stupid little room, the cosy fire, Joe, Joe's pipe, and Joe's smug sort of anticipatory face, all was just too much for her.

"Come and sit here, dear," said Joe persuasively, patting the sofa at his side. And she, because she believed a *nice* girl would have been only too delighted to go and sit "there," went and sat beside him. But she was boiling. What cheek! What cheek of him even to have a sofa! She loathed the vulgarity of sofas.

She endured his arm round her waist, and a certain pressure of his biceps which she presumed was cuddling. He had carefully knocked his pipe out. But she thought how smug and silly his face looked; all its natural frankness and straightforwardness had gone. How ridiculous of him to stroke the back of her neck! How idiotic he was, trying to be lovey-dovey! She wondered what sort of sweet nothings Lord Byron, for example, had murmured to his various ladies. Surely not so blithering, not so incompetent! And how monstrous of him, to kiss her like that!

"I'd infinitely rather you'd play to me, Joe," she snapped.

"You don't want me to play to you to-night, do you, dear?" he said.

"Why not to-night? I'd love to hear some Tschaikowsky, something to stir me up a bit."

He rose obediently, and went to the piano. He played quite well. She listened. And Tschaikowsky might have stirred her up

all right. The music itself, that is. If she hadn't been so desperately aware that Joe's love-making, if you can call it such, became more absolutely impossible after the sound of the music.

"That was fine!" she said. "Now do me my favourite nocturne."

While he concentrated on the fingering, she slipped out of the house.

Oh! she gasped a sigh of relief to be in the cool October air. The darkness was dim, in the west was a half-moon freshly shining, and all the air was motionless. Dimness lay like a haze on the earth.

Hester shook her hair, and strode away from the bungalow, which was a perfect little drum, re-echoing to her favourite nocturne. She simply rushed to get out of earshot.

Ah! the lovely night! She tossed her short hair again, and felt like Mazeppa's horse, about to dash away into the infinite. Though the infinite was only a field belonging to the next farm. But Hester felt herself seething in the soft moonlight. Oh! to rush away over the edge of the beyond! If the beyond, like Joe's bread-knife, did have an edge to it. "I know I'm an idiot," she said to herself. But that didn't take away the wild surge of her limbs. Oh! if there were only some other solution, instead of Joe and his spooning. Yes, SPOONING! The word made her lose the last shred of her self-respect, but she said it aloud.

There was, however, a bunch of strange horses in this field, so she made her way cautiously back through Joe's fence. It was just like him, to have such a little place that you couldn't get away from the sound of his piano, without trespassing on somebody else's ground.

As she drew near the bungalow, however, the drumming of Joe's piano suddenly ceased. Oh heaven! She looked wildly round. An old willow leaned over the stream. She stretched crouching, and with the quickness of a long cat, climbed up into the nest of cool-bladed foliage.

She had scarcely shuffled and settled into a tolerable position, when he came round the corner of the house and into the moonlight, looking for her. How dare he look for her! She kept as still as a bat among the leaves, watching him as he sauntered with erect, tiresomely manly figure and lifted head, staring around in the dark-

ness. He looked for once very ineffectual, insignificant, and at a loss. Where was his supposed male magic? Why was he so slow and unequal to the situation?

There! He was calling softly and self-consciously: "Hester! Hester! Where have you put yourself?"

He was angry really. Hester kept still in her tree, trying not to fidget. She had not the faintest intention of answering him. He might as well have been on another planet. He sauntered vaguely and unhappily out of sight.

Then she had a qualm. "Really, my girl, it's a bit thick, the way you treat him! Poor old Joe!"

Immediately something began to hum inside her: "I hear those tender voices calling, Poor Old Joe!—" Nevertheless, she didn't want to go indoors to spend an evening *tête-à-tête*—my word!—with him.

"Of course it's absurd to think I could possibly fall in love like that. I would rather fall into one of his pig-troughs. It's so frightfully common. As a matter of fact, it's just a proof that he doesn't love me."

This thought went through her like a bullet. "The very fact of his being in-love with me proves that he doesn't love me. No man that loved a woman could be in-love with her like that. It's so insulting to her." She immediately began to cry. And fumbling in her sleeve for her hanky, she nearly fell out of the tree. Which brought her to her senses.

In the obscure distance she saw him returning to the house, and she felt bitter. "Why did he start all this mess? I never wanted to marry anybody, and I certainly never bargained for anybody falling in-love with me. Now I'm miserable, and I feel abnormal. Because the majority of girls must like this in-love business, or the men wouldn't do it. And the majority must be normal. So I'm abnormal, and I'm up a tree. I loathe myself.—As for Joe, he's spoilt all there was between us, and he expects me to marry him on the strength of it. It's perfectly sickening! What a mess life is! How I loathe messes!"

She immediately shed a few more tears, in the course of which she heard the door of the bungalow shut with something of a bang.

He had gone indoors, and he was going to be righteously offended. A new misgiving came over her.

The willow-tree was uncomfortable. The air was cold and damp. If she caught another chill she'd probably snuffle all winter long. She saw the lamplight coming warm from the window of the bungalow, and she said "damn!" Which meant, in her case, that she was feeling bad.

She slid down out of the tree, and scratched her arm, and probably damaged one of her nicest pair of stockings. "Oh hang!" she said with emphasis, preparing to go into the bungalow and have it out with poor old Joe. "I will *not* call him Poor Old Joe!"

At that moment she heard a motor-car slow down in the lane, and there came a low, cautious toot from a hooter. Headlights shone at a standstill near Joe's new iron gate.

"The cheek of it! The unbearable cheek of it! There's that young Henrietta come down on me!"

She flew along Joe's cinder drive like a maenad.

"Hello Hester!" came Henrietta's young voice coolly floating from the obscurity of the car. "How's everything?"

"What cheek!" cried Hester. "What amazing cheek!"

She leaned on Joe's iron gate, and panted.

"How's everything?" repeated Henrietta's voice blandly.

"What do you mean by it?" demanded Hester, still panting.

"Now my girl, don't go off at a tangent! We weren't coming in unless you came out. You needn't think we want to put our noses in your affairs. We're going down to camp on Bonamy.— Isn't the weather too divine!"

Bonamy was Joe's pal, also an old artillery man, who had set up a "farm" about a mile further along the lane. Joe was by no means a Robinson Crusoe in his bungalow.

"Who are you, anyway?" demanded Hester.

"Same old birds," said Donald, from the driver's seat. Donald was Joe's brother. Henrietta was sitting in front, next to him.

"Same as ever," said Teddy, poking his head out of the car. Teddy was a second cousin.

"Well!" said Hester, sort of climbing down. "I suppose you may as well come in, now you *are* here. Have you eaten?"

"Eaten, yes," said Donald. "But we aren't coming in this trip, Hester; don't you fret."

"Why not?" flashed Hester, up in arms.

"'Fraid of brother Joe," said Donald.

"Besides, Hester," said Henrietta anxiously, "you know you don't want us."

"Henrietta, don't be a fool!" flashed Hester.

"Well, Hester—!" remonstrated the pained Henrietta.

"Come on in, and no more nonsense!" said Hester.

"Not this trip, Hester," said Donny.

"No sir!" said Teddy.

"But what idiots you all are! Why not?" cried Hester.

"'Fraid of our elder brother," said Donald.

"All right," said Hester. "Then I'll come along with you."

She hastily opened the gate.

"Shall I just have a peep? I'm pining to see the house," said Henrietta, climbing with a long leg over the door of the car.

The night was now dark, the moon had sunk. The two girls crunched in silence along the cinder track to the house.

"You'd say, if you'd rather I didn't come in—or if Joe'd rather," said Henrietta anxiously. She was very much disturbed in her young mind, and hoped for a clue. Hester walked on without answering. Henrietta laid her hand on her sister's arm. Hester shook it off, saying:

"My dear Henrietta, do be normal!"

And she rushed up the three steps to the door, which she flung open, displaying the lamplit living-room, Joe in an arm-chair by the low fire, his back to the door. He did not turn round.

"Here's Henrietta!" cried Hester, in a tone which meant: *How's that?*

He got up and faced round, his brown eyes in his stiff face very angry.

"How did *you* get here?" he asked rudely.

"Came in a car," said young Henrietta, from her Age of Innocence.

"With Donald and Teddy—they're there just outside the gate," said Hester.—The old gang!

"Coming in?" asked Joe, with greater anger in his voice.



"I suppose you'll go out and invite them," said Hester.

Joe said nothing, just stood like a block.

"I expect you'll think it's awful of me to come intruding," said Henrietta meekly. "We're just going on to Bonamy's." She gazed innocently round the room. "But it's an adorable little place, awfully good taste in a cottagey sort of way. I like it awfully.—Can I warm my hands?"

Joe moved from in front of the fire. He was in his slippers. Henrietta dangled her long red hands, red from the night air, before the grate.

"I'll rush right away again," she said.

"Oh-h!" drawled Hester curiously. "Don't do that!"

"Yes, I must. Donald and Teddy are waiting."

The door stood wide open, the headlights of the car could be seen in the lane.

"Oh-h!" Again that curious drawl from Hester. "I'll tell them you're staying the night with me. I can do with a bit of company."

Joe looked at her.

"What's the game?" he said.

"No game at all! Only now Tatty's come, she may as well stay."

"Tatty" was the rather infrequent abbreviation of "Henrietta."

"Oh but Hester!" said Henrietta. "I'm going on to Bonamy's, with Donald and Teddy."

"Not if I want you to stay here!" said Hester.

Henrietta looked all surprised, resigned helplessness.

"What's the game?" repeated Joe. "Had you fixed up to come down here to-night?"

"No Joe, really!" said Henrietta, with earnest innocence. "I hadn't the faintest idea of such a thing, till Donald suggested it, at four o'clock this afternoon. Only the weather was too perfectly divine, we had to go out somewhere, so we thought we'd descend on Bonamy. I hope *he* won't be frightfully put out, as well."

"And if we *had* arranged it, it wouldn't have been a crime," struck in Hester. "And anyway, now you're here you might as well all camp here."

"Oh no, Hester! I know Donald will never come inside the gate. He was angry with me for making him stop, and it was I who tooted. It wasn't him, it was me. The curiosity of Eve, I suppose. Anyhow I've put my foot in it, as usual. So now I'd better clear out as fast as I can. Good-night."

She gathered her coat round her with one arm, and moved vaguely to the door.

"In that case, I'll come along with you," said Hester.

"But Hester!" cried Henrietta. And she looked enquiringly at Joe.

"I know as little as you do," he said, "what's going on."

His face was wooden and angry. Henrietta could make nothing of him.

"Hester!" said Henrietta. "Do be sensible! What's gone wrong? Why don't you at least *explain*, and give everybody a chance! Talk about being normal—! you're always flinging it at *me!*"

There was a dramatic silence.

"What's happened?" Henrietta insisted, her eyes very bright and distressed, her manner showing that she was determined to be sensible.

"Nothing, of course!" mocked Hester.

"Do *you* know, Joe?" said Henrietta, like another Portia, turning very sympathetically to the man.

For a moment Joe thought how much nicer Henrietta was than her sister.

"I only know she asked me to play the piano, and then she dodged out of the house. Since then her steering-gear's been out of order."

"Ha-ha-ha!" laughed Hester falsely and melodramatically. "I like that. I like my dodging out of the house! I went out for a breath of fresh air. I should like to know whose steering-gear is out of order, talking about my dodging out of the house!"

"You dodged out of the house," said Joe.

"Oh did I? And why should I, pray?"

"I suppose you have your own reasons."

There was a moment of stupefied amazement. . . . Joe and

Hester had known each other so well, for such a long time. And now look at them!

"But why did you, Hester?" asked Henrietta, in her most breathless naïve fashion.

"Why did I what?"

There was a low toot from the motor-car in the lane.

"They're calling me! Good-by!" cried Henrietta, wrapping her coat round her and turning decisively to the door.

"If you go, my girl, I'm coming with you," said Hester.

"But why?" cried Henrietta in amazement. The horn tooted again. She opened the door, and called into the night:

"Half a minute!" Then she closed the door again, softly, and turned once more in her amazement to Hester.

"But why, Hester?"

Hester's eyes almost squinted with exasperation. She could hardly bear even to glance at the wooden and angry Joe.

"Why?" came the soft reiteration of Henrietta's question.

All the attention focused on Hester, but Hester was a sealed book.

"Why?"

"She doesn't know herself," said Joe, seeing a loop-hole.

Out rang Hester's crazy and melodramatic laugh.

"Oh doesn't she!" Her face flew into sudden strange fury. "Well if you want to know, I absolutely *can't stand* your making love to me, if that's what you call the business."

Henrietta let go the door-handle, and sank weakly into a chair. The worst had come to the worst. Joe's face became purple, then slowly paled to yellow.

"Then," said Henrietta in a hollow voice, "you can't marry him."

"I couldn't possibly marry him if he kept on being *in love* with me." She spoke the two words with almost snarling emphasis.

"And you couldn't possibly marry him if he *wasn't*," said the guardian angel, Henrietta.

"Why not?" cried Hester. "I could stand him all right till he started being in love with me. Now, he's simply out of the question."

There was a pause, out of which came Henrietta's:

"After all, Hester, a man's *supposed* to be in love with the woman he wants to marry."

"Then he'd better keep it to himself, that's all I've got to say."

There was a pause. Joe, silent as ever, looked more wooden and sheepishly angry.

"But Hester! Hasn't a man *got* to be in love with you—?"

"Not with *me!* You've not had it to put up with, my girl."

Henrietta sighed helplessly.

"Then you can't marry him, that's obvious. What an awful pity!"

A pause.

"Nothing can be so perfectly humiliating as a man making love to you," said Hester. "I *loathe* it."

"Perhaps it's because it's the wrong man," said Henrietta sadly, with a glance at the wooden and sheepish Joe.

"I don't believe I could stand that sort of thing, with *any* man. Henrietta, do you know what it is, being stroked and cuddled? It's too perfectly awful and ridiculous."

"Yes!" said Henrietta, musing sadly. "As if one were a perfectly priceless meat pie, and the dog licked it tenderly before he gobbled it up. It *is* rather sickening, I agree."

"And what's so awful, a perfectly decent man will go and get that way. *Nothing* is so awful as a man who has fallen in love," said Hester.

"I know what you mean, Hester. So *doggy!*" said Henrietta sadly.

The motor-horn tooted exasperatedly. Henrietta rose like a Portia who has been a failure. She opened the door, and suddenly yelled fiercely into the night:

"Go on without me. I'll walk. Don't wait."

"How long will you be?" came a voice.

"I don't know. If I want to come, I'll walk," she yelled.

"Come back for you in an hour."

"Right!" she shrieked, and slammed the door in their distant faces. Then she sat down dejectedly, in the silence. She was going to stand by Hester. That *fool* Joe, standing there like a mutton head!

They heard the car start, and retreat down the lane.

"Men are awful!" said Henrietta dejectedly.

"Anyhow you're mistaken," said Joe with sudden venom, to Hester. "I'm not in love with you, Miss Clever."

The two women looked at him as if he were Lazarus risen.

"And I never was in love with you, that way," he added, his brown eyes burning with a strange fire of self-conscious shame and anger, and naked passion.

"Well what a liar you must be then, that's all I can say!" replied Hester coldly.

"Do you mean," said young Henrietta acidly, "that you put it all on?"

"I thought she expected it of me," he said, with a nasty little smile, that simply paralysed the two young women. If he had turned into a boa-constrictor they would not have been more amazed. That sneering little smile! Their good-natured Joe!

"I thought it was expected of me," he repeated, jeering.

Hester was horrified.

"Oh, but how beastly of you to do it!" cried Henrietta to him.

"And what a lie!" cried Hester. "He liked it."

"Do you think he did, Hester?" said Henrietta.

"I liked it in a way," he said impudently. "But I shouldn't have liked it, if I thought she didn't."

Hester flung out her arms.

"Henrietta," she cried, "why can't we kill him?"

"I wish we could," said Henrietta.

"What are you to do, when you know a girl's rather strict, and you like her for it—and you're not going to be married for a month—and—and you've got to get over the interval somehow—and what else does Rudolf Valentino do for you?—you liked *him*—"

"He's dead, poor dear. But I loathed him *really*—" said Hester.

"You didn't seem to," said he.

"Well anyhow you aren't Rudolf Valentino, and I loathe *you* in the rôle."

"You won't get a chance again. I loathe *you* altogether."

"And I'm extremely relieved to hear it, my boy."

There was a lengthy pause, after which Henrietta said with decision:

"Well, that's that! Will you come along to Bonamy's with me, Hester, or shall I stay here with you?"

"I don't care, my girl," said Hester with bravado.

"Neither do I care what you do," said he. "But I call it pretty rotten of you, not to tell me right out, at first."

"I thought it was real with you then, and I didn't want to hurt you," said Hester.

"You look as if you didn't want to hurt me," he said.

"Oh, *now*," she said, "since it was all a pretence, it doesn't matter."

"I should say it doesn't," he retorted.

There was a silence. The clock, which was intended to be their family clock, ticked rather hastily.

"Anyway," he said, "I consider you've let me down."

"I like that!" she cried. "Considering what you've played off on me!"

He looked her straight in the eye. They knew each other so well. Why had he tried that silly love-making game on her? It was a betrayal of their simple intimacy. He saw it plainly, and repented.

And she saw the honest, patient love for her in his eyes, and the queer, quiet, central desire. It was the first time she had seen it, that quiet, patient, central desire of a young man who has suffered during his youth, and seeks now almost with the slowness of age. A hot flush went over her heart. She felt herself responding to him.

"What have you decided, Hester?" said Henrietta.

"I'd better stay and have it out with him," said Hester.

"Very well," said Henrietta. "And I'll go along to Bonamy's."

She opened the door quietly, and was gone.

Joe and Hester looked at one another from a distance.

"I'm sorry, Hester," said he.

"You know, Joe," she said, "I don't mind what you do, if you love me *really*."

## MEDITATION

BY RALPH CHEEVER DUNNING

Now in the wintry garden  
A harsh birds calls  
As once in dreams  
I heard a soul cry pardon  
Down empty halls.  
Oh more than ever it seems  
Judgement is hard to give:  
Eternity is wide  
Each way and every side  
And yet a man must live.

The rhyming waves over-reach  
The dissolving shore.  
Around the lyric bay  
The tortured trees beseech  
The winds for evermore—  
Winds that blow out the day  
Winds that will not forgive  
And still the sea's a drop  
Upon a spinning top  
And yet a man must live.

Sweet appearances deceive:  
There is no truth  
In his or hers.  
Old men cannot believe  
In their own youth.  
Solemn philosophers  
Draw water in a sieve.  
All flows: the veil  
Hides an old tale  
And yet a man must live.

## MEDITATION

Old banners wave no more:  
There is no good.  
Evil is but a name  
These words were said before  
Even as fate would  
Within his circling flame  
Whose wheel will not forgive.  
Berated, slapped  
Debased and rapt  
Surely a man must live.





"A CHARIOT." BY WHARTON ESHERICK





"SOLOMON HAD A VINEYARD." BY WHARTON ESHERICK



# PORTRAIT OF A MAN BEFORE DEATH

BY ANTHONY WRYNN

*August 9,*

*Marglen,*

*New Hampshire.*

I AM still here, Michael, in that highest hollow of the mountains which you at once abased and exalted by calling it the landing-place of the gods. I am still, I might almost say since the moment after you left three years ago, sitting before the window at this table of scarred and tortured manuscripts, the migrant seasons drifting imperceptibly, one after another, with their leaves and snow and lightning across the sky beyond. If I go out under that sky to rest my eyes, to renew my body and mind, anxiety for my work walks beside me, restless and resistless as a lover, and I am back at my table scarcely before the strengthening air has freshened in my blood. Sometimes days pass in this way and only a line will be rewritten, a word, then suddenly some ardent stream is freed and I watch its beauty flow from the depths of an unfamiliar pen, or I lapse into indifference, my pen hanging loosely in my fingers, my papers lying before me like the dismal toys of an idiot.

Three years! It has been like a century set apart in a single life. Yet I remember to a gesture the day that you escorted me, a string of bones, to this sheltered summit, much like an angel escorting the dead to heaven. I was exhausted by the long climb. You threw my knapsack and packages of books on the grass and sank to your knees to drink by the spring among the rocks. But I forgot my exhaustion and thirst as I stood at last on the heights where I should regain the life which I was slowly losing. I came into this silent, neglected house filled with hope, the windy peaks rising bare and blue beyond the dusty windows.

Yet how bleak, after all, has been the fulfilment of that hope. Though the house has become a very bower of ease set up here in the sky, though my lungs have all but healed and my solitude has been as fruitful of work as I ever hoped, I have never once been

able to banish from the recesses of my heart, the sense of sterility which has always been there when I am apart from people. I know how annoyingly weak this will sound to you in your exasperating independence of spirit; rebuke me, but bear with me as you always so kindly did.

The sun is going down in a great daub of cloud over the naked ridge that heads the valley. Its rays are thrust like search-lights on to the wild dark mountains, picking out a section of forest, the shore of a lake, or slipping abruptly into another valley, remote and hidden. The paper on which I am writing lies in shadow before my eyes. Good-night, Michael. How, I wonder, after our long silence, will you receive this word from me. May it not be with impatience of me and of the past.

Fleetman

*September 4.*

Dear Michael,

I am coming back! If it were not for my two trunks, packed and on end by the door, and the desolation of my writing-table and book-shelves, I could not believe it. When day after day, month upon month, my mind has been driven, with all the force of solitude, into every object about me here, how can I live in another place? Even my physical movements are so fitted to the angles of this house—the stairs, the low entrance to my bedroom—so adapted to the contour of this country, that to move within other boundaries seems impossible as my destination when I shall leave seems unreal. To what am I returning, and where? Of course, New York; but what a trailless jungle it will be to me. Who will remember the man who went off to die? And whom will he find to remember? When I came here, the thought of death drove the past from my consciousness, and my horizon shrank to the one which now surrounds me, yet something unfolds itself warmly within me as the moment of my departure approaches, and while I fear, I exult. Yesterday, after the doctor had told me that I might safely venture, should I be as cautious of my health as I have been, to leave here, I stepped into the taxi in the little barren street on which he lives down in Marglen trembling to the heart

with a vague delicious expectancy. I was as susceptible and elated as any gawky young fellow, departing at last from his home and the tiresome security of boyhood, as he mounts the plank beneath the great ready wings of the ship.

It is amusing, after the Odyssey of the passions through which I have arrived at middle age, not that I should speak in this way, but that I should thoroughly mean it! Yet nothing, not even my own wink or shrug, can chill my eagerness to return to the world and its wild, cunning, mysterious people, not even your silence, much as it has perplexed me. Did you not receive my letter?

Fleetman

*September 7,  
Webster's,  
Marglen.*

Michael—Before leaving for New York I am spending a week, on the doctor's advice, at this hotel. It must be merely through long habit that I am following his advice, for never have I felt so fresh and strong and ready for attack.

To be living again within walls which shelter other people besides myself from the searching September wind reawakens in me a certain social assurance, but little opportunity for it to be displayed is offered by these belated, shivering vacationists. However, there is a young girl here who seems to have a sufficient quantity herself to exhibit, and it is a great pleasure watching her do so. She is very young, with bright, bronze-coloured hair, and chaperoned by a heavily seasoned mother, a matron whose salient embellishments are black velvet dimmed with dust, a deafening smile, and a large hat loaded with the spoils of field and forest—worn even to breakfast. The daughter shadows forth an evidently handsome dead or by some other means absent father, for visually she is in no way the issue of her stuffy protectress, from whom, indeed, she differs in every manifestation—the light turn of her head or quick flight of her hand, the clear though pleasantly slight angles of her voice, which I have only *overheard*.

As I still have the greater part of a week to stay here, and one of the quietest rooms in the hotel which offers a wide choice at this time of year, I shall put the last word, so to speak, to a two-volume

novel which I have "worked and reworked" and which, after that word is added, will be not only the best thing that I have done but *the* thing that I have wanted to do.

Fleetman

*September 10.*

Dear Michael,

She of the winged hand and shining hair spoke to me this afternoon just as I was about to come in from the lawn, where I had been covertly watching her, to dress for dinner. She was playing ball at the further end of the driveway with an amusingly sedate boy. Tossing the ball in the low windy sunlight, laughing and brushing back her closely cropped curls as she ran to catch it, she was like some exquisite young pagan taunting the stiff beardless Christian, showing him what wind, a ball, and sunlight could be. When he was finally called by his father from one of the upper balconies of the hotel she ran a few steps toward him and said: Oh, don't go up yet!

My father wants me, he replied in a lowered voice.

But so do I, she said impetuously. The boy turned nervously to the great crazy array of windows—he *must* go. She looked very angry and beautiful and awkward in her little blue suit, and darted her glance away from him only, though obviously accidentally, to direct it toward mine. I sat with a steamer-rug about me in a chair somewhat concealed from the driveway by a cluster of bushes. The evening's newspaper was open on my knee, but I lacked the extra second in which to drop my eyes to it. For the briefest moment the three of us were motionless, the boy, unaware of my presence, watching the girl's averted face. Suddenly she smiled at me. I like playing ball, she said. He has to go up to his father, and he can't catch anyway. Will you play with me?

That such an alarming request (I might have been *her* father) should be the first words that she had addressed to me doubled my confusion. But instead of causing me to pause, fumbling with some remark, that absurd confusion led me from my chair straight into the child's hands. The situation of a bachelor steeped in middle years, playing, as night draws on, remote from the community's gaze, with a girl who is neither young enough to accept



his kindly interest nor old enough to receive his "attentions," is one the oddness of which I appreciate, but to resist her young eyes, her voice, the ball she tossed to me, was not within my power. The boy ran off to his papa, and not until the gong for dinner growled across the chill gold twilight did we follow him.

I received an otherwise unpleasant letter yesterday from a very dear friend, if not of mine, at any rate of yours, who spoke of you with great esteem, mentioning having visited you recently at your old address, so at least I have the comfort of knowing that I have not been offering renewed pledges of friendship to some hardened little clerk in the dead-letter office at Washington.

*September 18.*

Dear Michael,

This morning from my table in the dining-room with its few scattered autumnal guests I sat for a long time watching, through the thinly misted glass, the slow leaves of the yellowed beeches on the other side of the highway drift into the air, sail hesitantly toward me, and sidle gently to the grass just beneath the casement. I was humiliated and depressed with the realization of how little, after seemingly years of growth, I have changed, how vulnerable I still am to life. The week for which I was to be here has passed, a second is more than half on its way, and I have not added or deleted in my manuscript so much as a comma. Even this I might overlook if I were resting and laying up a reserve of strength for my encounter with New York, but I have been restless, brooding and wasteful, obsessed with the image of the young girl when I can no longer see her, when I lie in anguish past midnight trying to sleep.

Last Sunday morning, instead of retiring to my room to work, I found myself walking to the village in the hope of meeting her on the road as she returned from church with her mother. On what pretext I should suggest joining them I did not know. I could hardly have asked her and her mother to play ball with me. At any rate, I entered the village unrewarded, but as I passed the stark white church beneath its wasting trees and saw the less ardent young men of the parish slouching patiently in the wide doorway, my hope was rekindled. Having sauntered further down the

silent leaf-cluttered street, I returned to the entrance of the church just as the congregation was emerging. The spiritually refreshed worshippers nodded festively to one another, smiled. Here and there cigarettes were lighted, and reunited neighbours strolled away in groups talking with the gusto of release. I shifted again and again before the crowd, at once annoyed and happy, glancing at every woman's face, beneath the ribboned brim of a hat, across a tilted shoulder, within a collar of fur. I could scarcely conceal my distaste for each soft or shining article as it attracted my eyes and did not lead them to the face for which I was seeking.

At last I caught a glimpse of a girl slowly descending the vacant church-steps with a lady, and I turned quickly away, as if pre-occupied with something on the other side of the street. When I finally heard their step just behind me I faced them. The lady was very old. The girl was a stranger to me. I looked into her quiet eyes with a bitterness and resentment which certainly must have startled her as I heard the doors of the empty church swung to on the yard, deserted but for her and myself, and the abstracted, trembling old lady on her arm.

My heart, Michael, is riven with apprehension and desire, conflict and regret. Since anxiety for my health or my work does not, I hope that sheer shame will drive me from here.

Fleetman

*September 23.*

My room is as dark as the night outside but for the clear, silent fan of light that falls from my lamp on to this paper. Though it is scarcely past ten o'clock, it seems that there has not been a sound in the hotel for hours. Even the wind has trailed off to sleep. I am sitting, stilled and tranquil, propped on my pillows. A cool medicinal smell that has always remained like the ghost of the doctor after he has left hangs in the darkness, subtle and reassuring. All the fever has gone from my heart, but it has found its way into my flesh.

I have not been out of bed for three days as the result of a walk which, at her invitation and with the frigid consent of her mother, I took with the young girl. We left the highway for an old stony

road which winds hesitantly down the middle of the valley. The sky was strangely grey and luminous and the mountains rose close on either side of us like great arrested waves of trees and rocks. She was feverishly gay. She leaped for overhanging branches, threw stones straight into the air, and then pausing abruptly, as if the question had been in her mind all the while, asked me if I had a wife, or where my home was.

When I pointed out to her the mountain on which I had lived she wanted to climb it to see the house. As I had walked as far as was wise for me, I said that it would be impossible to and get back before nightfall, that everybody in the hotel would be out looking for us. She suddenly became contemptuously silent. She stood, facing me, on the opposite side of the road, slight and pale in that lonely savage place. I could find nothing to say to her. Slowly my gaze detached itself from hers. Slowly my thoughts rose to the house to which she wanted to go, the house which would so joyfully have received her but a few weeks ago and that now was only a nest for the wind. Through these thoughts I heard her voice, soft, yet very close to me. I think you are unkind not to come, she said. And when I saw her frail fingers clasped about the top button of my coat and the little chain of gold falling sideways on her childish wrist I was overwhelmed with tenderness. I consented to go with her.

The woods-road up the mountain is, as you may remember, but a briary path that lapses frequently into merely a continuation of the surrounding wilderness, but it offered little resistance to my once more elated companion. After climbing for about twenty minutes, I was quite tired and suggested that we rest a moment on a ledge of rock. She said that she felt as fresh as when we started out, and fearing that a confession of my fatigue would be offensive to her I did not press the suggestion. But as we climbed higher and higher, over great fallen tree-trunks, up the slippery sides of moss-covered boulders, I fought to sustain my ebbing strength.

We came at last to a little clearing among the dark steep trees and she flung herself upon the pale grass. I sank down beside her trembling with exhaustion, but as we lay there alone on the mountain slowly a delicious turmoil rose within me. To know that my hand, should I reach out but a little in that solitude, would touch her, made me almost delirious. I became only vaguely aware

of her light fitful chatter, like that of the darting hidden creatures in the branches about us. The air, sheltered and so close to the ground, was still, and when finally she lay silent I could hear her young gentle breathing. I turned toward her, at once sorrowful and impassioned, and as I gazed at the folds of her blouse which fell softly across her breast she said suddenly, You'd make a nice father. I haven't any. Then, with a burst of laughter, she exclaimed, Why don't you marry mamma! That would be lovely! She swung herself on to her knees and stood up beside me. Come on, she said. For a moment I could not stir and lay staring miserably at the grass which had been crushed by her reclining body.

We were not long in reaching the house, which is just above the clearing, and, so exhausted and frustrate at heart was I, all that I remember of it during that errant visit is the bare grey windows. As we approached them from behind the naked trees, though I recognized (how well!) their every line, they looked unfamiliar and unreal to me, like the face of someone whom one has known long and intimately and suddenly sees dead. I could not bring myself to enter the bleak empty rooms that lay behind them and waited on the steps in the wind until she came out. She had evidently lost interest in the house, to which I would so willingly not have climbed, for all that she said was, What a funny place to come to live!

I returned down the road beside her as if in some horrible intermittent dream. My head and chest burned with fever, and I was anguished with love. I saw nothing but the twigs and mud and stones on which I waveringly placed my foot as we descended to the valley-road, and there I walked as on a heaving earth, the cliffs and forests tilting and swaying about me.

It was apparent from her casual manner that she had not, I was thankful, observed my condition. In the upper hall of the hotel I took leave of her, flushed with adventure, her bronze ringlets tossed lightly on to her smiling cheek, and walked down the long shadowy corridor that leads to this room with scarcely enough strength in my hand to lift it to the knob of the door. In here, I collapsed on the bed, fully dressed, and remained unconscious until early the next morning when I was awakened by a savage fit of coughing.

The doctor, whom I sent for immediately, was amazed to find

me still in Marglen. I said that I had stayed so long in order to finish some writing and that in doing so had been over-taxing myself, but as I thought of how far I had really drifted from that writing, how far even the desire to write was from me, the tears of sickness and hopelessness rose to my eyes.

To-night, however, I sit here quieted and almost happy, the memory of her passing and returning, like a faint, poignant dissonance, through the harmony of my thoughts in the silence that shrouds this room, this building, and the enormous mountains hunched beyond in the darkness.

*October 2.*

Faithless Michael, why will you not write to me! What can you have heard or imagined that you so turn from me? One afternoon shortly after I last wrote to you, I dressed and went down to the lobby. I had suddenly felt strong, and with my awakened strength there came an uncontrollable longing to see the young girl. Also, the proprietor of the hotel had made pointed enquiries of the doctor as to how I was "getting on." I intended to let him see that I was quite well. Tuberculosis is leprosy to the hotel proprietors in this section, and their instinct is keen. They can sense it even when it isn't there. That this one, as he finally found, did not err in my case must have been a luxuriant fount of pride to him, judging by the flourish with which he sent up my bill a week ago and signed the note requesting me to leave.

I was sitting in the lobby but a few moments, on the afternoon I speak of, when the girl came in from the driveway with the sedate young boy. She saw me immediately and, disregarding the guests that were sitting about, cried, That isn't you? You look awful! She laughed, without any apparent reason, glancing at the boy, and then said to me, You know I'm going home to-morrow.

Feeling well, it had not occurred to me that I might not look so, but my pain at having her see sickness or feebleness in my face was smothered by the sudden panic with which my heart was filled when she mentioned her intended departure. I rose to speak to her, but she darted back toward the staircase, pulling the boy by the hand and calling to me, We're going to have a farewell picnic. I stood staring at the steps up which she had disappeared until the

proprietor passed close in front of me, then I turned away, dazed. The realization that we were, this child and I, but temporarily and by chance living under the same roof, that we were merely coincident hotel-guests to whom partings are as little to be taken as events of surprise as meetings, only slowly and with difficulty formed in my mind. When it did, I grew desperate. I waited until she returned to the lobby, and careless of seeming ridiculous or aggressive asked her permission to join their picnic-party. The young people, gathered excitedly about her with rugs and baskets, became silent at my approach, and to my request she answered, Of course—anybody who wants to. Why not?

The afternoon was flawless. We walked across the bright withered fields behind the hotel toward the woods. The laughter, the lively *badinage* and prattle, eddied upward into the cold air, a little mist fluttering before all the blithe young lips. It was a gay farewell. And I walked lost and wretched beside her, she who was gayer than any.

The party, taking a short-cut to the shore of a near-by lake, scattered and passed shouting through the strange stillness of the woods. When we reached its other edge, where there is a slight falling of the ground, the lake lay before us, blue, motionless, and shining within its bare wall of trees. While the rugs were being spread upon a grassy beach on its border and the contents of the baskets laid out, two of the boys built a fire. The crisp orange flames shone pale and aberrant under the sharp light of the sky, and not until their heat had spread through the air about me did I realize how cold I was. I was shivering. And suddenly I became fearful that I might be taken with a fit of coughing before the girl. I even thought to return, on some pretext, to the hotel, but I could not—I could not, Michael! It was the last time that I should be with her, and though I had little opportunity to even speak to her I could not leave her. In the course of the afternoon as she ran about with her companions, whispering among the girls or racing down the beach pursued by one of the boys, my eyes never left her. I watched her wonderingly. I watched her with longing, with joy, with unaccountable dread. I watched her grieved and ashamed.

As the sun, without a wisp of cloud, drew steadily closer to the darkening trees on the opposite shore of the lake, the air grew

colder and was quickened by short piercing winds. I rekindled the charred ends of roots and boughs in the sinking fire, but it seemed no longer to impart any heat to my thoroughly chilled body. My chest was shot with pains. Once, when I coughed slightly, there was a warm, salt, terrifying taste in my mouth. It was at this moment that she ran over to me, throwing both of her hands on to my shoulders which were bent above the fire. Come on, she said, everybody's going to dance good-bye with me! I rose, penetrated by her touch.

The others, sitting about on the beach, sang in the twilight, clapping their hands in time to their singing. As we danced upon the hard sand she sang with them, softly, half laughing, her scarf fallen loosely from her throat. Her young thin body stirred slightly and rhythmically against mine. I felt my hand trembling on her back. The lake and the distant sky, the fire, one after another, passed dimly around us and the fresh odour of her hair floated about my face. My senses were confused and ravished. Suddenly her forehead brushed my cheek. I was blinded. I kissed her.

Her hands darted to my mouth and she twisted herself angrily from my embrace. You! You fool! she shrieked—My mother said you were nothing but an old rounder and that's what you are! The singing ceased. In the silence I heard two of the boys laugh furtively. I stood for a moment, unable to speak, before those children, then turned into the woods.

Distraught, humiliated, consumed with love, I ran, stumbling in the underbrush, in the direction of the hotel. The drooping branches struck across my face. The woods grew denser and in the semi-darkness, lurching here and there among the trees, I became lost trying to find the path. I was as one half crazed. I beat my way through the thickets, and after struggling on thus for about a quarter of a mile stumbled into a pit, coughing violently. I thought I should strangle. The coughing seemed to last for hours. When it finally subsided I was so shaken I could not rise, but looking up, I saw some crows trail across the stone-coloured dusk above the branches and was surprised and grateful that night had not yet fallen. I crawled to my knees, pressing my handkerchief closer to my mouth, and found it dripping wet. I had had a haemorrhage.

How I reached the hotel I could not tell you, but when, long

after dark, I entered the brightly lit lobby, making a last effort to control my faintness in order to pass to my room as inconspicuously as possible, every glance was turned indignantly upon me. The children had returned. Of course they had made no secret of my conduct, conduct that the proprietor, to avoid a scene, might have temporarily countenanced, but in the stained handkerchief which I was compelled to hold to my lips he saw the complete collapse of his organization. He came blusteringly forward and taking me by the arm hurried me, as if I were drunk, through the outraged silence and up the stairs to the door of my room which he flung open, leaving me without a word.

He sent for the doctor immediately with the purpose of having me removed from the hotel; but my condition being so bad, the doctor said that they would have to wait a few days before taking me to the sanatorium. A week has passed and he says that my condition is worse, so I suppose they will have to take me the way I am.

The autumn is now over after the first fall of the early snow. As I lie in this strange place watching the slow bleak tracts of sunlight that occasionally open and fade on the naked mountains, I am saddened and amazed to think that my manuscripts piled there on my trunk by the window could have become things almost of indifference to me. Yet sometimes I am elated with the wildest energy, and everything about me, everything that I see, that I hear, every thought that darts across my brain, seems burning and trembling with life. Take care, Michael. What will you say when some evening you answer your bell and find me standing at the door?

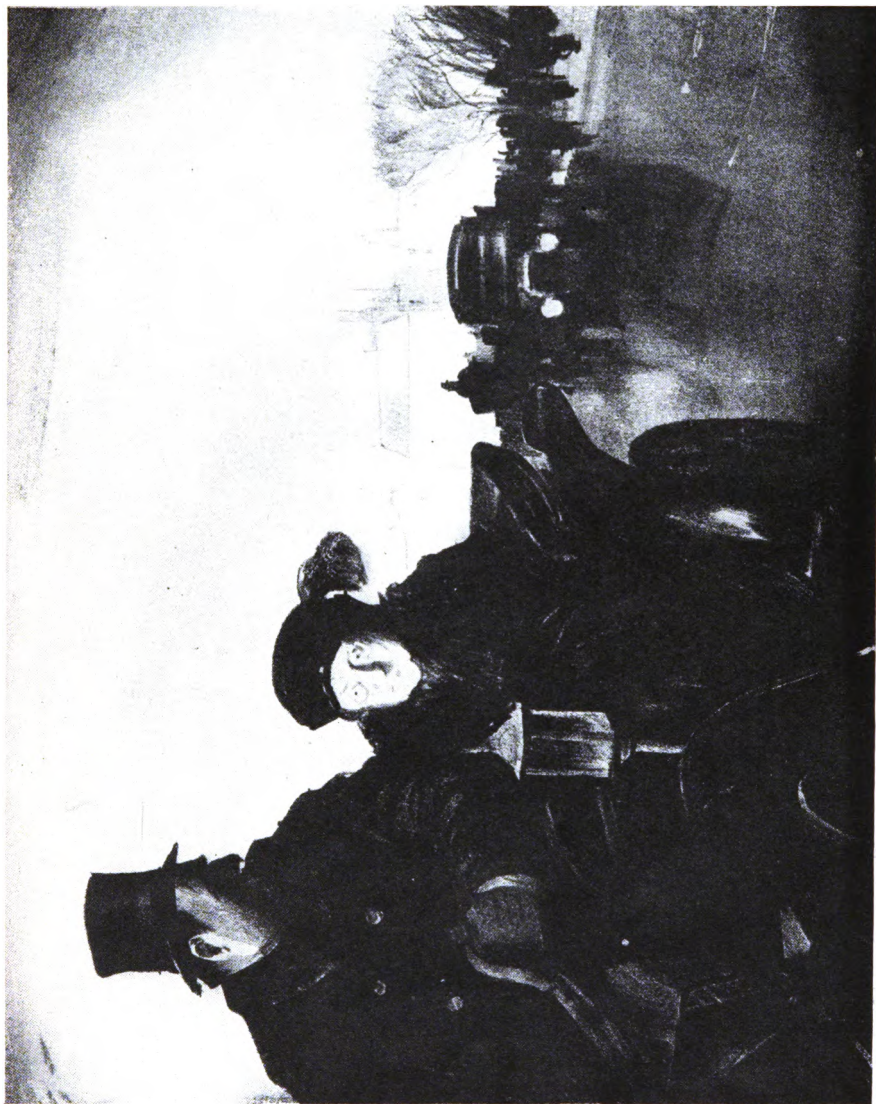
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A LITHOGRAPH. BY CHARLES LOCKE





A LITHOGRAPH. BY CHARLES LOCKE



## NOTE ON PAUL VALÉRY

BY J. H. LEWIS

*La critique universelle est le seul caractère qu'on puisse assigner à la pensée délicate, fuyante, insaisissable du dix-neuvième siècle.*

ERNEST RENAN

**I**N his introduction to the second English translation of the *Soirée avec Monsieur Teste*, Paul Valéry said: "I was seized with the sharp sickness of precision. I tended to the extreme of the insane desire to understand. I was suspicious of literature, and even of that sufficiently precise form of it—poetry. It is obvious, for example, that the conditions to which literature is subject are incompatible with extreme precision of language."

M Valéry has been a pilgrim to that temple in which only intellect is worshipped, through the ritual of mathematics, science, general ideas. Things of this world only interest him in reference to the intellect. "Bacon would say that this intellect is an Idol. I agree to that, but I have never found anything better."

His attitude of renunciation is summed up by M Bernard Faÿ, in his *Panorama de la Littérature Contemporaine*:<sup>1</sup>

"He had high ambitions, while aspiring neither to fame nor obscurity, a sort of pride turned in on itself. . . . He advanced toward a definite end. He was disinclined to literature which wearied him, and in this, faithful to the ideas of Mallarmé, knew the imperfect and deceptive elements in a work of art once realized. He idealized power and had a passion for intelligence, not the kind that simply measures and calculates, but that which constructs and creates, the very mind of the universe which determines its paths, sometimes without even being aware that it is doing so. What he admired was the man who conceives and comprehends the way in which things are made, acts are conceived, and men live. 'My behaviour has tended from the first,' he says, 'towards securing in

<sup>1</sup> *Panorama de la Littérature Contemporaine*. Par Bernard Faÿ. 12mo. 215 pages. Aux Editions du Sagittaire, Simon Kra, Paris. 7fr.50. Authorized English Translation by Paul Rice Doolin: Since Victor Hugo. 12mo. 178 pages. Little, Brown, and Company. \$2.

myself the maximum power,' and in his extraordinary Soirée avec Monsieur Teste<sup>1</sup> he gave an exact definition of his aspirations: 'Every great man is touched with error . . . genius is easy, fortune is easy, divinity is easy. I simply mean that I know how all these things are conceived.' Such a man was M Teste, absolute master of all concepts, and able to interpret and analyse the mechanism, the methods of existence and action, the use of which makes us what we are. And such a man M Valéry would like to be, certain thereby of becoming the true poet, the poet in Greek being the 'maker.'"

It must not be supposed, however, that Valéry, who had started out as a somewhat precious poet and developed into one of the chief contemporary exponents of intellectual universality, was forgotten during the twenty years of rigorous self-development during which he refused to publish, or write for publication. His friends, Ghéon, Royère, Gide, Louÿs, De Régnier, and others constituted a steadily increasing number of devotees. Royère brought his work to the attention of Thibaudet who became one of its staunchest admirers, and wrote in exegesis of it, a book similar to his other studies of Barrès and Mallarmé, though not, unfortunately, bereft of strange absurdities, as when he divides poets into two classes: those who write verse because they are poets, and those who are poets because they can write verse, and places Valéry among the latter. In an anthology of French verse issued in 1900 by Van Bever and Leautaud, six of the one hundred, sixty poems belonged to Valéry and won him admirers. He was considered a bizarre poet, difficult to understand, and to be read only by the discerning. But—important to remember—he was being read and discussed continually, in Parisian salons. Abbé Brémond was converted to *Valérisme*, became an intense worshipper, and won for his idol, the seat in the Académie Française left vacant by the death of Anatole France. Three-fourths of the copies of Valéry's tenuous editions remained uncut in the hands of bookdealers and bibliophiles, but the remaining fourth was eagerly passed round, studied, admired. During the years preceding the appearance of *La Jeune Parque*, the poem on which he laboured four whole years ("I can well imagine that a poet in love with his art," he says, "would content himself with reworking the same poem during his whole life, making a new variation every three, four, or five years, on the theme established once

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *An Evening With M Teste*, *THE DIAL*, February 1922.

for all") which he calls a "farewell to my adolescence," he served as secretary to a person of affairs during the day and devoted the evenings to his studies. Sometimes he would spend an evening in the society of his companions of the little fastidious magazines, *Conque*, *Vogue*, and *Centaure*. The young generation of writers, Apollinaire, Salmon, Carco, Schwob, Jacob, Larbaud—admirers of Poe and Baudelaire and Mallarmé—met and exchanged ideas with him at the *Phalange*. Valéry was to them a "blooded" intellect, *écrivain de race*, and when, after his retirement, he proceeded to publish as results of his thought, some of the essays which comprise *Variété*, he could boast already a following which is formidable both numerically and in distinction. Now, works written about his works outnumber their prototype in bulk. He has been translated into the principal European languages. During the past five years his name has crept into English reviews, and *Variété* has been translated into English.<sup>1</sup>

As he has pointed out, every problem begins with confusion and ends, when solved, in precision. But this same precision is confusion to the general reader unwilling or unable to give to the study in question the same care and concentration that went into its making. To André Gide he said once: "Sentimentality and pornography are twin sisters; I detest them both." He is himself, in the phrase he uses in *Au Sujet d'Eureka*, "the amateur of intellectual drama and comedy." Thibaudet finds that his whole work "coincides with a research" for precision. "If he ponders on music, it is not the music that is source of revery which interests him as poet; it is music raised on the knees of mathematics, and nourished on rigorous numbers."

This emphasis on precision accounts for the popularity now his with the dominant intelligences, in his own country and elsewhere. He represents a shift in values characteristic of our period. Every generation rebels against its elders. The new men of France have found stale, the irony and pity motives so persuasively used by Anatole France. What the present generation seeks is anti-sensationalism, anti-emotionalism. It asks discipline of self, conscious development of the ego satisfied with successful functioning, and has found its spokesman in the dispassionate Valéry.

Twenty years of intellect in play, and of the pursuit of ideas to their lairs, are felt in the work of this free and refined intelligence.

<sup>1</sup> Reviewed in this issue of *THE DIAL*, page 429.

As it crystallized his thoughts, the intellectual privacy into which he betook himself, has purified his prose; but in the same process of purification, charm and style have not been sacrificed. Detachment from mundane and specific problems is reflected in the careful, curious, and excitingly exact prose in which his mental attitudes have been translated. This prose has been compared to a substance washed by the cold, clear waters of a glacier; it is said to be the prose of a poet, but in its definiteness and grey accuracy, it has something of the sadness of the fragments of Heraclitus. It may be the language of a poet, but it is disciplined by restraint. What M Valéry says of the style of La Fontaine might be applied to his own style: "*Il court sur La Fontaine une rumeur de paresse et de rêverie, un murmure ordinaire d'absence et de distraction perpétuelle qui nous fait songer sans effort à un personnage fabuleux, toujours infiniment docile à la plus douce pente de sa durée.*" There you have the sad, pure music, and there you have, as well, determining ideas which, applied by writers to others, really describe their own virtues. *Une rumeur de paresse et de rêverie*, as if hurry and depth were incompatible; *infiniment docile à la plus douce pente de sa durée*, with the spirit moving where it will, free and unconstrained, angling in all streams for varieties of experience. It applies to this intellectual sceptic to whom "every point of view is false," since its fellow of the opposite side can be tricked out in the flaunting uniform of plausibility, and since the self-same point of view adopted precludes the study from a different vantage point. He can carve a phrase of infinite suggestiveness, as when he talks of "immense minutes of languor." Scientific words give to his style, denseness, a close-woven texture. Its properties, however, are but the by-products of his thought, in which dominates, a rigorous exactness. He holds a perpetual dialogue with his demon of the intellect. For intellect has been more important to him than are accidents of expression. "I accustomed myself to consider literature," he says, "as a partial activity, whose highest aim is the study and acquisition of means of expression through language. I passed long years engaged in diverse reflections without ever dreaming that a literary career might suit my nature." That was his attitude in the early twenties of his life; he has not modified it. Uneager for personal glory, he merely signed his initials to his *Introduction à la Méthode de Léonardo da Vinci*.

What did he do throughout these twenty years, when striving for



that central grasp of consciousness, the key to understanding, when he was becoming what he had set out to become—a mind seeking by universality the attributes that belong by definition to a god? The answer is, nothing. He believed that “works are the dead residue of the vital acts of a creator.” Intellectual nihilism was the logical outcome of the position he had taken: a position which does not require the verification of works to substantiate the perceptions, connexions, analyses, dissociations of a mind eagerly wrestling with truth. “Neither Christ nor Buddha nor Socrates wrote a book,” William Butler Yeats notes in *Estrangement*,<sup>1</sup> “for to do that is to exchange life for a logical process.” In *Au Sujet d’Adonis*, Valéry laments that “only to a god is reserved the ineffable non-distinction between his act and thought. But we must labour, and bitterly recognize their difference.”

He began to write, but only when special subjects were suggested to him. He has never written a word of prose, he tells us, that was not ordered, nor a line of poetry that was not requested. *Introduction à la Méthode de Léonardo da Vinci*<sup>2</sup> “owes its life to Madame Juliette Adam who, toward the end of the year 1894, at the gracious instance of Monsieur Léon Daudet, requested that I write it for her journal, *La Nouvelle Revue*.” The political essay, *La Crise de l’Esprit* was an assignment from the London Athenaeum; *Eupalinos, ou l’Architecte*, one of his two Socratic dialogues, was ordered by the review *Architectures*, which requested an article of no more nor less than one hundred fifteen thousand, eight hundred letters. For his resumption of verse in 1913, Gide and Gallimard are responsible. But for these requests and orders, he might have continued to fill note-books with reflections, notations, results of researches—pursuing self-development so as to become ever more successfully a free spirit.

M Valéry is penetrated by everything he has mastered; he has gone to mathematics, physics, architecture, music, poetry, for his synthesis. Moving always from the particular to the general, he is interested in implications rather than in ideas themselves. For him life holds nothing more sacred than the duty of understanding life.

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *THE DIAL*, November 1926, page 359.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *THE DIAL*, June and July, 1926.

## IRISH LETTER

October, 1927

“**T**HE moving accident is not my trade,” and whenever I take up my pen to write an Irish Letter for THE DIAL, I am afflicted by the sense of my unfitness to be its Irish correspondent. My business, I clearly see, is to acquaint the reader with the movement of *Kulturgeschichte* in Ireland; with the fair hopes which encourage and the occasional terrors which shake its bosom; with more or less intelligent surmises of what the Catholic hierarchy intends and what the Protestant, or with such interesting considerations as the methods by which that old stronghold of Protestant ascendancy, Trinity College, is gradually and prudently adapting itself to the new nationalism; with the educational embarrassment caused by the persistent refusal of the ancient Irish language to die outright; or with such minor diversions as Mr Liam O’Flaherty’s *Life of Tim Healy*, or the late Darrell Figgis’s *Recollections of the Irish War*. Or I might enlarge on that tendency, to which I drew attention in a previous Letter, to extend retrospectively the scope of Irish literature, of which there is further evidence in the publication by the Cuala Press of a selection by Mr Lennox Robinson of the *Poems of Thomas Parnell*. Yet now, when it has occurred to me to offer a few remarks on the present situation of poetry in Ireland, and while with that purpose I have been turning over the pages of a new volume by one of the most promising of our younger poets—*The Dark Breed*,<sup>1</sup> by Mr F. R. Higgins—it is this general question which I am moved to propound: why is it that the present age, distinguished as I think beyond any other age by its intense, comprehensive, and “creative” interest in literature, and above all in poetry, is not after all a poetic period? To my mind the reason is that poets no longer seem to have the art of making themselves interesting personally. It is hardly fair to Mr Higgins to seem to have reached this conclusion while reading his poems, for a vigorous personality transpires in them; one feels, if I may say so without disrespect, that he is the

<sup>1</sup> *The Dark Breed*. By F. R. Higgins. 12mo. 69 pages. The Macmillan Company. \$1.40.

“broth of a boy,” and there is always a pleasant personal equality to his subject-matter. Indeed, I might find special reason to praise him in this respect, were it not that I am so often baffled, as I am for the most part in present-day poetry, by the poet’s language and syntax. It is this preoccupation with language which interposes a veil between the poets of our own day and their natural audience, and disposes them to write for one another rather than for men in general, who are doubtless as ready as in the days of the young Goethe, or of Burns and Byron, to be interested in a poet.

Mr Higgins and Mr Austin Clarke, the poets of the new generation in Ireland, both write poetry to which Polonius would have listened with cocked ears. Mr Clarke, I must say, often passes beyond my comprehension. Mr Higgins is more direct and personal, though Polonius’s opinion as to whether some of his coinages (“stalk-crashing marshes,” “moon-drenching orchards” occur in one lyric) are “good,” might have been worth having. But I will give the reader a taste of Mr Higgins’s quality when he is at his best, the first two stanzas of *A Shade from Limestone*:

“While blood ran wild, for her he drew  
 White yewan wood and stone;  
 And where the yewan wood was planed,  
 The limestone married loam,  
 Rearing an airy house for her,  
 With copings cleanly shown,  
 Against the air from Galway,  
 As cool tunes of stone.

Such graceful tones have rarely paired  
 On floors of polished stone,  
 As when those floors with her assumed  
 The shine of sun on moon—  
 Those courtesies on borrowed lights,  
 That shone from her and were  
 Embroideries in marble  
 And lace spun of air!”

“Courtesies on borrowed lights” is certainly an imaginative phrase: Polonius might just have passed it.

The world, I know, has moved away from the Miltonic and Carlylean conception of the "hero as poet," and in any company of poetically-minded young men I have grown to feel ashamed of my own simple preferences. The new poetry puzzles me: I can hardly ever say that I wholly understand it, though once I have found the clue to one of these poems I am bound to say that I enjoy it; yet I hardly know whether a great part of this enjoyment is not the feeling that I am not after all so dull as I thought I was. Turning to Mr Clarke, I have just had this experience in puzzling out a poem of his called *Pilgrimage*, and can now repeat triumphantly to myself:

"Counted with chasubles,  
Sun-braided, rich-cloak'd wine-cup  
Or staves and iron handbell  
Were annals in the shrine  
The high-kings bore to battle,  
Where from the branch of Adam  
The noble forms of language,  
Brighter than green or blue enamels  
Burned in white bronze, embodied  
The wings and fiery animals  
That veil the chair of God."

One thinks in reading Mr Clarke of those bardic colleges of ancient Ireland, in which, with an even more intense feeling for language than the French poets of the *Pléiade*, the Irish poets qualified in their art; and it is instructive to reflect that this poetry, practised solely by the bards for their own delectation, fell at last into abuses from which, one would think, contact with popular favour or disfavour would have saved it. The Irish bard thought no end of himself if he could find fifty adjectives for the word "sea." Language in fact was everything to him, and the consequence was that ancient Irish literature, of which the unpublished manuscripts load the shelves of the Royal Irish Academy, is curiously deficient in poetic personalities. These haughty poets were grounded like Senior Wranglers in metrical subtleties and verbal tropes, yet they never discovered the secret into which the English folk-poets

blundered when one of their number delighted everybody with a few lines beginning, "Sumer is icumen in." And now that our Irish poets find themselves reduced to the practice of their art in a language which even those of them who know the old language have to accept under protest, we find in them a tendency to revert to the principles of the bardic colleges. Mr Clarke in particular speaks of the "sun colours" of Gaelic poetry, "its fine exuberance and phrase-pleasing style unmeet for weak stomachs, its monastic discipline in lyric forms." And the poets of other countries, in whom we observe the like recoil from popular simplicity, and who have begun to write for one another rather than for their "clan," can only envy the Irish poets their classic inheritance.

I am afraid the enquiry into which I have ventured is a little out of place in *THE DIAL*, and I feel almost as uncertain of my audience as St Paul must have felt when addressing the Athenians on the Areopagus; for in considering the situation of poetry in my own country, and while thinking of Mr Clarke and Mr Higgins, and of the later developments of Mr Yeats, I have in mind also "certain even of your own poets." Wrapping therefore my apostolic mantle about me I ask, Will ye then accept my definition of the poet as the man who possesses the magical gift of converting the adventures of his soul into typical human experience? The gift I mean is nothing less than the gift of personality in poetry, and it is, as I have ventured to assert, increasingly rare. The poet is the man who "feels himself" to perfection, and who infects others with his own glorified self-preoccupation. That a poet of this kind, in whom everyone is interested, as our ancestors were in Burns, in Byron, in the young Goethe, or even shall we say in the Matthew Arnold of *Dover Beach*, should now be rare, is natural enough in the age of the novel, a form of art appropriate to an age in which everyone is only too ready at any moment to lay aside his own affairs and to interest himself in things that do not really concern him. The faculty of reading oneself into other people's affairs is far more common nowadays than that of "living unto oneself" (in Hazlitt's phrase) and of finding in the happenings of one's own life a continual surprise and incentive to "admiration, hope and love." If we could take at any given moment a comprehensive view of human consciousness we should probably find that it is

absorbed in an effort to escape from the pressure of actual and personal life—in amusements, in drudgery (almost as frequently voluntary as enforced) in the newspaper, the cinema, the novel, and in countless other devices for escaping the appalling weight of the super-incumbent moment. This the man of true poetic temperament alone sustains gladly. A poetic personality of the kind I mean would be a wonderful explanation of Ireland to itself, and might provide Ireland with a needed vindication to itself, and also to the world, of all that it has done, as well as with the solution of problems which are perhaps rather spiritual than political.

JOHN EGLINTON

# BOOK REVIEWS

## A NEW ACADEMICIAN

VARIETY. By Paul Valéry. Translated from the French by Malcolm Cowley. 8vo. 283 pages. Harcourt, Brace and Company. \$3.

IT is peculiarly fitting that Paul Valéry should have been elected to take the place of Anatole France in the French Academy. For when, in the early part of the seventeenth century, a little group of seven or eight "gentlemen of a social and literary turn" who had been holding private meetings to discuss intellectual and artistic matters, were persuaded by Richelieu to form themselves into a public body they incorporated in their statutes of foundation the following words: "The Academy's principal function shall be to work with all the care and all the diligence possible at giving sure rules to our language, and rendering it pure, eloquent, and capable of treating the arts and sciences." These words apply in a most signal degree to the writings of M Paul Valéry.

It is difficult to realize that this aristocrat of letters, so modern in his understanding, so eminently our contemporary in his power of social analysis, could have daily witnessed Verlaine, as, surrounded by his friends, he passed in his "*brutale majesté*" to the little restaurant he frequented; that he could have conversed on matters of art with Aubrey Beardsley; that he was an intimate friend of Degas; and that he dined frequently at Box Hill with Meredith. Privileged, though still in his early twenties, to be a favoured guest at the celebrated Tuesdays in Mallarmé's rooms in the rue de Rome, where, presided over with indulgent irony by Geneviève Mallarmé, in that harmonious setting, with its heavy carved furniture, its pictures by Manet and Whistler, its atmosphere of sustained and regulated intensity, so many ideas had birth, so many splendid discussions, complicated and brilliant, negated all else in existence save *l'art nécessaire*. Must one re-

mind oneself that it was Mallarmé who saw in the word symbol an equivalent to the word synthesis and adopted symbolism as meaning a living synthesis, rendered beautiful, and presented without critical commentary, a synthesis in which the outward reality no longer existed in its unimproved crudity and the invisible universe of the mind no longer remained but an insubstantial shadow? Primarily a revolt against romanticism, realism, and naturalism, this new revivification of thought, taking music which "unites the freedom of dreams with a consecutive logic born of extreme attention, and forms a synthesis of momentary moods" as its model, penetrated the writings of practically every young poet of the day. It is difficult for Anglo-Saxons with their natural rigidity of mind, their shamefaced apprehension when confronted with ideas of any sort, to envisage a gathering where ideas were so current, so plastic, so liberated, and language so unravished. Such is the happy heritage of M Paul Valéry. Like Mallarmé he has sought to recapture in his poetry the virginity of the French language, and like Mallarmé he makes no concessions, no effort to become popular; "To shine in others' eyes is only to see the glitter of false gems." Discarding the sly and accredited admonitions of the emotions, wily accomplices of our instinctive wishes, he has exercised his intellect in the interests of elucidation and restraint, and in translating into unusually melodious poetry the almost avid response of his senses to the images which he imagines or contemplates. Thus his thought carries within it a kind of sensuality of its own, in which images and ideas pursue each other in harmonious swiftness:

*"La confusion morose  
 Qui me servait de sommeil,  
 Se dissipe dès la rose  
 Apparence du soleil.  
 Dans mon âme je m'avance  
 Tout ailé de confiance:  
 C'est la première oraison!  
 A peine sorti des sables,  
 Je fais des pas admirables  
 Dans les pas de ma raison,"*



Like many famous poets before him, like Goethe, Poe, Baudelaire, Shelley, and Leopardi, to mention but a few, Paul Valéry is impelled to seek a meaning in a universe disconcerting and unassimilable. First of all a poet, he becomes later a philosopher through necessity, and thus develops in its nervous, haughty indifference that same superb eclecticism so nurtured and elucidated by Pater. Indeed, in spite of Valéry's ironic derision of those who find in the smile of the Mona Lisa more than "*un pli de visage*" corresponding in harmony with the rest of the picture and in spite of the divergences of their opinions on Pascal, I discover so much resemblance between these two authors, that it becomes obvious that each must have been equally impregnated with the refined and emancipating influences of the 'nineties. The fact that Valéry was probably in England at about the time that Pater was still writing makes one wonder whether they ever did actually meet. At any rate the similarity is clear: each has learned to nourish, maintain, and multiply those inner moments of realization and scrutiny which are the crowning rewards of the intellectual life, each seeks in music the perfect structure of poetry, each achieves that "quietude of mind," that absence of discourteous confusion which makes it possible for them to disentangle and transcribe their intimate revelations. But in the calm and delicate complexity of Pater's style, fugitive and explicit, like winter sunshine on perfect stained glass, there is more correspondence to one's aesthetic taste, while the lucid and literary prose style, virile, weighty, and trenchant of M Valéry stimulates to a greater degree one's intellectual participation. The quality is indeed rare that is able to join in so brilliant a manner science with poetry, and force them, these seemingly alien companions, to run with so invincible a front, neck to neck, for one's interest and enlightenment.

Mr Cowley has wisely chosen to translate the book in which are collected the criticisms and essays most indicative of M Valéry's general attitude toward life and literature. Here are not, perhaps, his most poetic utterances on art and philosophy, but in Adonis, in Poe's Eureka, and in the Introduction, and Note and Digression preceding Leonardo da Vinci, one is able to trace with satisfactory exactitude M Valéry's characteristic views and his intellectual progress from his youth upward.

One might desire in Mr Cowley a somewhat greater punctiliousness in the translating of this author whose own punctiliousness in pursuit of the one word requisite to detach the thought held in long and conscientious suspension is so celebrated, for is it not a violation of M Valéry's impeccable style to translate "*déduire par un fil de soie ce que chaque instant contient de plus doux*" as "spin the sweets of every moment into silken threads"? And is it not likewise a distortion of M Valéry's clearly defined meaning, a meaning implicit in the Symbolist philosophy, to translate "*la mobilité des choses de l'esprit*" as "the confused flow of images"? In chance words also, such as *carrefour* which he renders into World's Fair and *bassesse* which he translates as "smutty," a word most certainly out of place in this fastidious writing, Mr Cowley shows himself as not wholly attentive. But perhaps it is ungrateful to criticize so generous a labour, one which must have required so high a degree of disinterested concentration, and one which, on the whole, is pursued with such commendable results.

If one desires to find in M Valéry's philosophical utterances an affirmative system of thought more ample and defined than a mere statement of personal values one will be disappointed. M Valéry draws about himself that bright hazardous circle of security in which thoughts, arrested on the march, are held in a state of perfect equilibrium. Some of his general views are as follows.

Thought deforms language. Only the most obstinate and adroit perseverance can ever succeed in making of language a precise engine of expression. One must eschew all base and deceptive ambitions in one's endeavour to detach from consciousness its least distorted truth. If one is lost to these unimpeachable researches one is lost to lucidity and to oneself. Great writers do not fear the reader. "They measure neither his labour nor their own." "What critics call a *realization* or a successful rendering, is really a problem of efficiency in which the particular meaning—the key attributed by every author to his materials—plays no part, but in which the only factors are the nature of the materials and the mentality of the public." If I remember rightly Mr Kenneth Burke has expressed a somewhat similar idea in one of his interesting essays on aesthetics.

M Valéry's own ambition is the discovery of the common origin

of all operations of the mind, above all the important relationship between art and science. In consciousness alone he sees the supreme power and resistance to "the fascination of the senses, the dissipation of the ideas, the fading of memories, the slow variation of the organism." Each person possesses "the fundamental permanence of a consciousness which depends on nothing," and yet this consciousness is powerless to furnish proofs which we need, for it is the will which affirms, and our power of knowledge is circumscribed. "Even our most profound thought is limited by the insuperable conditions which make all thought superficial."

And so in the end one feels that M Valéry's desire for precision and clarity is the admonition he imposes on a multiform disorder which, though crystallizing in many harmonious patterns, escapes at last even the sharpest descent of his trained and scornful attacks.

It is the property, however, of distinguished literature to leave within the mind, side by side with a store of rich and fertile perspectives, questions that live on without an answer, questions that have, indeed, their odd separate flowerings. Such is eminently the case with the present work, so modest in its pretensions, so impressive in its accomplishment, and so challenging in its diverse and far-reaching implications.

ALYSE GREGORY

## AN ENQUIRY INTO THE PRESENT STATE OF LETTERS

THE AMERICAN CARAVAN: A Yearbook of American Literature. Edited by Van Wyck Brooks, Alfred Kreyborg, Lewis Mumford, and Paul Rosenfeld. 8vo. 843 pages. The Macaulay Company. \$5.

**T**HERE is no lack of ideas, even good ideas, in the world. The one inspiring *The American Caravan* is joined with enterprise, and therefore demands a salvo of at least a few guns.

The distinguished editors say:

“‘The American Caravan’ is a yearbook conducted by literary men in the interests of a growing American literature.

“The first issue is the result of a spiritual as well as geographical canvass of the country. . . . Eager to create a medium able to accommodate a progressively broader expression of American life [than that afforded by the ‘passive and recessive attitudes of the leading magazines’] the editors . . . sent out a manifesto. . . . Intermediary forms too frequently discouraged by periodicals and publishers were solicited. . . . Because the many taboos of commercial and rubber-stamp policies set limits not only to the length but on the character of literary work, authors were also urged to submit material in the smaller forms definitive of its own limits.

“The quality of the response was encouraging. . . .

“Without preconceptions of what American life contained the editors selected from the mass of material what appeared to them the most genuine and essential interpretations. . . .

“The editors hope that *The American Caravan* for 1927 will prove to the public and the authors what it has proven to themselves: an affirmation of the health of the young American literature. . . .”

For several reasons, I propose to review this preface rather than the seventy-odd contributions to the book. In the short time I

have had to prepare this review I have not been able to work out critical judgements on so many, and so various offerings; the editors' selections, taken separately, would involve me in a hundred questions in the course of which I would certainly obscure both their intention and my own. Further, the scope of the book, the book as a whole, is far more important than the sum of the items in it; and finally, I am not enthusiastic about these items, but I am enthusiastic about *The American Caravan* as a whole.

First, a superficial examination, by forms. The editors allowed a greater freedom of form than strictly commercial publications do, and it is worth enquiring how far American authors took advantage of this freedom, how far, that is, they required it. Of the three novelettes, one by George O'Neil justifies its length, one by Philip E. Stevenson would be better shortened, and one by Edmund Wilson would be better in almost any wastepaper basket; the rest of the fiction is in conventional form. Most of the poetry is brief and little of it is unconventional-seeming to the eye and ear accustomed to the Imagists of 1920. Malcolm Cowley and William Carlos Williams both write in alternating prose and verse, an interesting development which the average magazine would probably reject. It is improbable also that any magazine would easily publish as many as thirty sonnets, omitted from William Ellery Leonard's *Two Lives*, or the plays by Paul Green, Michael Gold, and Eugene O'Neill; or any but the shortest of the narrative poems. Yet on the whole the American writers are either so satisfied with conventional forms (or so driven to them by commercial necessity) that they remained indifferent to the new opportunities. Possibly those who experiment failed to contribute; I think that if they had, the editors would have been happy to publish.

I note next that although three of the four editors are pre-eminently critics, the amount of criticism in this yearbook is very small. There are two essays in this art, both good: Francis Fergusson on T. S. Eliot and Thomas Craven *On Living with Pictures*; and Williams says some typically acute things about Pound in his *mélange*. The absence of criticism seems to me of capital importance. It implies a serious condition: the flourishing of unconventional creative powers without the curb of liberated criticism. It is as if Joyce wrote without a Larbaud, an Eliot, or a Pound to value his work, as if O'Neill was always left to Alan

Dale to correct and appreciate. Experiments in art have to confront hidebound criticism and resent it; some of them make a habit of being "above criticism," and the reason is that there is so little enlightened criticism to direct them, there is no interplay between critics and creators who are on the same level. A Dreiser between Mencken and Stuart Sherman had his progress marked out for him; all three used the same terms. But critics are few who understand the new terms which artists use; Mr Rosenfeld, himself, is such a critic, and Mr Cowley, and John Gould Fletcher and Allen Tate; but none of these contributes criticism to the yearbook, and the names of Conrad Aiken, Kenneth Burke, and Eliot are missing entirely. What is more, the fiction and poetry in the volume suggest that American writers are not getting appropriate criticism; they are wandering, if not exactly wayward, and the sense of mastery is missing. Nearly fifteen years ago when Professor Irving Babbitt told his classes that America needed criticism more than creative effort, I took this to be the characteristic attitude of a pedant; but in one sense at least I now see that he was right. New creators need new critics; so long as they meet only the old, they will despise criticism entirely. From *The American Caravan*, I judge that this is now our position.

The writers to whom this yearbook gives place are almost all indifferent to that portion of the American social scene which offers material to Sinclair Lewis, to Mencken, and the other social satirists. It is astonishing to discover how little influence of Mencken can be traced here, how unconcerned these writers are with American business and social and intellectual life. The Negro (both in Harlem and in the South) has captured their imaginations, and the peasant, the alien, and the outcast; the average middle-class American hardly figures. The geographical canvass has been well made: the book is not urban, not at all metropolitan. The spiritual canvass has resulted in a range of minor emotions; neither love nor lust has any position of dominance; the yearbook will not figure in any one's erotica. What most of the authors care about, obviously, is an intense expression of some private emotion. Reading all their work under pressure of time, I find a sense of brooding melancholy giving tone to the whole. It is serious, it appreciates tragedy, it is a little sad. A few poets

record minute visions of beauty, but generally there is a sense of desolation and of loss.

This sense, which I find disturbing, I place parallel to the editors' two statements: that they were without preconceptions of what American life contained and that they have received an affirmation of health. The first of these I accept with a single reservation. The character of the editors and the nature of their invitation brought them, I judge, one type of material rather than another; the type must have been the one not generally acceptable. Hence the tragic tone, the sense of disillusion. Obviously Eric Walrond would contribute a story about Negroes and Octavus Roy Cohen would not. And again, the editors would have been surprised to discover a flood of manuscripts recording and rejoicing in the energy of America, its surface humours, its chaos, and its violence. I am equally surprised to find that they apparently received none satirizing these qualities of American life; is it possible that they exist only in my imagination? Is Broadway a figment and Iowa an illusion? The absence of satire is shocking and it is balanced by a lack of indignation. These writers have passed beyond being "sore" at America, which is a blessing; but they have passed, unfortunately, into a dim realm where they seem not to be aware of America at all. (Exceptions noted: for example, a story by Elizabeth Madox Roberts and one by Edna Bryner; one should have much more to say of these and a few other contributions if they were not entirely in the known vein of their authors. This does not detract from their quality; only from their significance in the yearbook. Nearly everything published in *The American Caravan* over a well-known name could have appeared in the medium of publication already associated with that name.)

I myself derive no feeling of energy from this collection; an individual here and there, a Hemingway or a Gold, is impassioned, full of sap, living; a few of the poets, Wallace Gould, Williams, seem to give more here than usual, and a few others, MacLeish, Crane, Holden, give their best. But assaying the mass I find weakness, not strength. I do not find fruitfulness and quickening, lightness or brightness. There is neither dancing nor praying, neither gaiety nor suffering. Only brooding.

I do not think this is all health. I think specifically that it is partly due to the editors that their yearbook has this tone, and I am astonished that they should not have learned better from the teacher to whom they dedicate the Caravan. This melancholy brooding one has associated again and again with the followers of Stieglitz, but Stieglitz has at times plunged headlong into beauty and encouraged the light irony of a Demuth as much as the passion of a Marin. The editors know the work of Georgia O'Keefe; would they suggest that the flaming colour of the turning trees in her canvases is without meaning? It is that colour which their yearbook lacks. It lacks affirmation. Even the single act of Lazarus Laughs, by O'Neill, which denies death, seems to me negative, a literary and technical feat, not a living cry.

The American Caravan is interesting chiefly because it has arrived; it has crossed a desert and discovered, as explorers do, that some of the terrors were imaginary. I think that the book will have a considerable success—the newspaper comment I have seen is much more favourable than my own impressions. And this seems to me important for the second issue. I think that a number of writers who should have been included held apart because they fancied that the contributions had to be *outré*; this illusion is dispelled. Except for Gertrude Stein's piece, nothing in the book is wilful, nothing is mysterious or incomprehensible. Others possibly imagined that, in spite of the broad terms of reference, the editors wanted work which would express their own attitudes; the editors have, however, resolutely incorporated many points of view differing from their own. When the caravan starts again—I gather that the process of selecting material is already going on—there will be new offers, new capacities. The idea is a sound one and the co-operation of The Literary Guild in the first issue has assured an auspicious opening to the enterprise; it ought then to flourish. The good things in the present issue do not give character to the whole; but there are good things and will be again. When they establish the tone, The American Caravan will be wholly successful and enormously important.

GILBERT SELDES



## RIGHTING AN ETHNOLOGIC WRONG

PRIMITIVE MAN AS PHILOSOPHER. *By Paul Radin.*  
*With a Foreword by John Dewey. 12mo. 402*  
*pages. D. Appleton and Company. \$3.*

**I**N his *Primitive Man as Philosopher*, Mr Radin has given us the useful counter-volume to M Lévy-Bruhl's *Les Fonctions Mentales Dans les Sociétés Inférieures*. M Lévy-Bruhl, whose book appears in English under the title of *Primitive Man*, had distinguished between a primitive and a civilized manner of thinking. The primitive, by this schematization, has a "pre-logical" method of envisaging reality. Every natural event which is of importance to him, a storm or a tree falling across his path, is given a purposive explanation, is felt as having a personal bearing. M Lévy-Bruhl terms this the primitive's "mystic participation" in nature. Whereas civilized man, with an impersonal concept of causality, a "logical" attitude, would explain the storm or the falling tree as being from his standpoint an "accident," and thus as part of a causal sequence in which he did not "mystically" participate.

M Lévy-Bruhl summons much evidence to show the workings of the "pre-logical" system among primitives in contrast to the "logical" system among ourselves. Yet it might be objected that such a logical attitude is with us very often insecure, not imperious to the individual, but allowed by a state of society in which there are few cataclysms and dangers so that, since we are not regularly pitted against natural forces, we have little occasion to feel their "personal" bearing. Still there are those who have cursed into the "teeth" of a bitter wind, or felt the sinister purpose behind a "run of hard luck"—while our gamblers, our thieves, and our Napoleons inhabit a world of destiny and omen. Even yesterday it was my privilege to hear a woman, who wears no ring in her nose, decide that she must have acted properly by her disinherited son since her two hundred new strawberry plants all lived.

Mr Radin, however, furnishes us with a much less tenuous answer. He shows that the primitive can attain a stage of intel-

lectual sophistication parallel to our own, possessing all the capacities for abstract thought, and even the scepticism, of the most "modern" man, and manifesting no greater literalness or credulity in his use of mysticism and symbolism. The author points out that our ideas of "civilization" have been based upon the intellectual attainments of a few highly expert thinkers and savants, a class always greatly in the minority, whereas ethnologists have almost invariably derived their conclusions concerning primitive peoples from the sayings and beliefs of the most naïve members of the group. Mr Radin, on the contrary, hunts for the "intellectual" among the primitives—and finds him to an extent which is sure to ruin negro sculpture with *Dôme* and *Rotonde*. He asserts that there are two types of character—the speculative and the practical—in every social group; and he amasses much evidence to show that the concerns and solutions of this speculative type among the primitives parallel those of the similar type of to-day. "In temperament and in capacity for logical and symbolical thought," he concludes, "there is no difference between civilized and primitive man."

Perhaps the greatest importance of Mr Radin's contribution lies in the solidity of his proof, while the message itself has appeared in other forms. Even in the last century De Gourmont was talking of man as an "intellectual constant" and doubting whether any modern could surpass in genius the prehistoric inventors of sewing, ploughing, and fire-making. Evolution within the human species is not one of plasm, but of tools, our "advance" being, it seems, merely in the accumulation of documents. Which may be a bleak or a sunshine thought, depending upon the approach: since we can either regret, on reviewing the statistics, that man's shortcomings promise to be eternally recurrent, or we can be relieved to feel that life must inevitably generate out of itself the standard cycle of exhortations.

. KENNETH BURKE

## AN IDYLL OF PIONEERS

THE GRANDMOTHERS. *By Glenway Wescott. 12mo.*  
388 pages. *Harper and Brothers. \$2.50.*

HENRY JAMES has suggested that the art of fiction is an art of preparation; and perhaps not least among the excellences of Mr Wescott's beautiful novel of early Wisconsin are the skill and scruple of his preparation. The story of the Towers, pioneers of Wisconsin, is unfolded through the thought of it which continually dwells in the mind of young Alwyn Tower, their modern grandson. While such a mode of narrative has the advantage of a sympathetically immediate pair of eyes through which the reader may behold the proud meagre lives on which the eloquence of the story is expended, there is also the difficulty that Alwyn Tower could not actually have witnessed much of what is set forth: several of the lives on which his thought is to dwell at length are ended before he is born. This is a difficulty which must be dealt with thoroughly, and it is. It is so dealt with that it largely ceases to be troublesome and becomes a source of force. And the manner of accomplishing this result seems so important to the sum of the effect that one is perhaps warranted in thinking it illustrative of the qualities in general which make the novel work of a major order.

Early in the tale Alwyn Tower is seen for a moment as a young man in Europe, after all his grandparents are dead. He is dining with friends at La Turbie, overlooking Monte Carlo, and he tells them the story of his grandmother Tower:

"He talked of her soldier sweetheart as if it were someone they all knew. . . . His friends listened quietly because they were old friends, familiar with his passion for relatives who were dead, relatives, who had been very poor off there in the States. But one asked 'How do you know all this?'

"Alwyn said, 'She lived with us when I was a child. I watched them all closely, much too closely . . .'"

This may indicate the method of dealing with the difficulty. It does not show the success of the method; that success the book as a whole must show, and it does.

The implication of such a method is, more than anything else, a feat of understanding, a gathering into the mind of what must be lived there before it can be written in words. And such a method and the gifts which make use of it could hardly have fitted better together than they have here. The story is first broached as Alwyn Tower's childhood is depicted. He is seen growing up in the intimate neighbourhood of the tale, gathering up the hints of it, taking them deep into himself and there pondering them. And as the eloquence of his thought is poured out, possessing the reader and rewarding him, the reader in some way does not notice that part of what is told has been seen by Alwyn and part not: this magnificence appears to come all in the same way from the roots of the young man's memory, or perhaps rather from the roots of his character.

It is not merely that Alwyn is seen to have submitted his mind to the needs of the narrative. His character itself is a furtherance of that narrative: he is retrospectively, above all, the son of his people; and quite as clearly we see that he has been born a scholar of hearts. His passion for heirlooms, daguerreotypes, hair albums, and the stories that go with them, his "avid non-committal interest" in such tales of themselves as saturnine elders vouchsafed him, his delight in the reminiscences of an earlier day which his stoic grandmother from time to time related to him, all his childish vigilance to understand "the strange syllables which echoed from one life to another"—these things were merely the first motions of his vocation. It is as if the reader could see him in advance, accumulating the story, with difficulty and reverently, patiently "thinking his way" into its rich inner reality, studying with affectionate and infinite attention, before he depicts them, the grim gestures of his people. Thus he seems very persuasively aware of those trials of soul which were in good part ended before his life began. If the reader never asks, How did he know all this? it is because the unfoldment of these concluded lives is made in a setting that is a miracle of sympathetic attention, the genesis of which has been seen, a spell which has been woven, under the eye of the reader, from the mysterious impressiveness which, for the imaginative

childhood of Alwyn Tower, surrounded all the doings of his relatives. The effect, it may be suggested, is the rare one of wonder, and of passionate and exquisite truthfulness, a truthfulness as far from flattering as satire is, but much more like pity than satire, and much more like poetry than pity, the truthfulness of a child who "ignored nothing and forgot nothing," who wrought out all that he could from hard lives, disappointments, defeats, and deaths, and set himself as soon as he was able to "convict them of their glory." It ought not to be surprising that the tale, though not idyllic, has so much the beauty of an idyll.

As one by one these histories of pioneer hearts are outspread, and the deeds and scenes which Alwyn could not have observed mingle faultlessly with those he did see, the reader is disposed to give up trying to discover the organism of their magic. Partly no doubt the effect is a product of the fact that Alwyn is not the speaker of his thought, but more than this, it is a result of his imaginative sympathy, which, abstracted perhaps, and raised to the force of passion and celebration, is, to the narrative in which it is used, as the blood to the body: such things are not easily to be separated or separately considered. Seldom are the preparation and the frame of a story so livingly a part of it.

There is nothing unusual about the story itself, nothing strange in what happens. It seems such a tale as the majority of men might tell of themselves if words were given and the impulsion put upon them to phrase the realities of their lives. It is a story of many defeats, perhaps chronic defeat. But the effect is more considerable than the effect of defeat, and this greater effect is due, surely, to more than the beauty of the scenes or the firm simplicity and complete fineness of the phrasing. A reader cannot miss the truth of the tale as a picture of men, nor escape some share of the painter's joy and pride in his subjects. It suggests that perhaps the best picturing of humanity is that which sets forth chiefly and with a certain tender and not unpleased, though wholly unmalignant thoroughness, its errors and failure: men possibly are least human when successful.

CHARLES K. TRUEBLOOD

## BRIEFER MENTION

**A PRINCE OF OUTLAWS**, by Count Alexis Tolstoy (12mo, 406 pages; Knopf: \$3). This historical novel of Russian life in the sixteenth century, in the time of Ivan the Terrible, is spectacular, vigorous, varied, and almost everything that an historical novel should be. Its energy and gusto, its verisimilitude, the kaleidoscopic speed with which scene gives place to scene, remind one of that much-neglected novel, *The Cloister and the Hearth*. It is evident, moreover, that the documentation has been very careful; Count Alexis Tolstoy knew his subject perfectly. The whole fantastic era comes sharply and terribly before us. An excellent love-story, with a good deal of psychological insight, is interwoven with the complex pattern of the theme; and the use of dialogue is often brilliant.

**MEANWHILE**, by H. G. Wells (12mo, 320 pages; Doran: \$2.50). Another of Mr Wells's propagandist pamphlets, not too skilfully disguised as a novel. The earlier portions are somewhat fresher than Mr Wells's fictions have been of late—the scene charmingly described, and the heroine well drawn. Thereafter, the propagandist deluge begins; the reader is engulfed in wave upon wave of utopian talk; the British coal-strike is the *pièce de résistance*; the hero writes the heroine interminable letters about the general strike in England; the heroine saves an Italian patriot from pursuing Fascists; the conclusion reached is that it is not by "action" that the world is to be saved, but by a gradual infiltration of intelligence through the social mass. The book is more carefully written than Clissold, and more amusingly, but is none the less unmistakably journalistic.

**MOTHER AND SON**, by Romain Rolland, translated from the French by Van Wyck Brooks (12mo, 415 pages; Holt: \$2.50). In the third volume of *The Soul Enchanted* peace is exposted as that virtue "born of the rigor of the soul" in natural contrast with Europe's simultaneous dissolution through war. As in the previous volumes of M Rolland's novel we are won by the author's moral earnestness rather than seduced by his artistic rigour. M Rolland's integrity is unimpeachable; we accept his characters and the events which encompass them without question; but not being compelled to give ourselves to them we remain unmoved.

**THE BLIND SHIP**, by Jean Barreyre (12mo, 285 pages; Lincoln MacVeagh, Dial Press: \$2.50) has a certain kinship to Conrad in theme and treatment, but the story—instead of moving toward climax—moves toward disintegration. Having evolved a plot adroitly compounded of horror and human psychology, the author is over-anxious to squeeze the last ounce of emotional value out of it. The story drops from the ominous to the fantastic, and from the fantastic to the absurd. This declension is further emphasized by "The skipper ground his teeth in impotent rage" and similar *clichés* of melodrama.

**POOLREFLEXION**, by Kenneth Macpherson (10mo, 244 pages; Pool, Territet, Switzerland: \$2). A useful specimen of the "stream of consciousness" method, in the novel, gone wrong. The style is an unhappy blending of the prose of Mr Joyce and the verse of H. D.: over-intense, over-precious, disastrously self-conscious. The analysis of motive is sometimes acute, the sequences of mood are sometimes convincing; but as a whole the book is a forced hot-house hybrid, and a little repellent. An example will suffice: "Crouched and waiting, aureate, mustered with perceptibly potent forces, intense and sibylline, she glowered from ectoplasmic eyes, wondering. Lex, stealing up to her, knew himself being drawn, perhaps into some subtle context of apprehension. . . . Irritation came lolloping after him, a nigger with a rope around his neck."

**WHY DO THEY LIKE IT?** by E. L. Black, with foreword by Dorothy Richardson (12mo, 199 pages; Pool, Territet, Switzerland: \$1.25). The author—about fifteen years old—protests in this book, against "games he hated, played by fellows he hated, of a school he hated": against unsanitary food, pseudo-instruction, and "this fagging business worse than anything" he "had ever dreamed of." Injustice to children has not the effect of making children just, and Mr Black's condemnation of teachers and parents is a very sweeping one. But aesthetic justice is sometimes to be met with in these pages—certain specimens of conversation having even to the jaded eye of maturity, verisimilitude and charm as exhibiting masculine juvenile psychology.

**THE OXFORD BOOK OF EIGHTEENTH CENTURY VERSE**, chosen by David Nichol Smith (12mo, 727 pages; Oxford University Press, American Branch: \$3.75). The compiler of this anthology knows that a century cannot be charted like a state and disarms criticism by mentioning himself certain difficulties in the sequences of his authors (they are arranged not in the order of their births but in the order of their great achievements) and certain questionable omissions, such as that of *The Ancient Mariner*. There are always plenty of readers who enlarge upon the shortcomings of anthologies but the Oxford series of such publications has been so widely appreciated that it is possible to say that it has placed a new value upon anthologies. The present issue doubtless will please as readily as its predecessors.

**AMERICAN POETRY, 1927: A Miscellany**, with foreword by Louis Untermeyer (12mo, 304 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$2.50). It is a question whether this biennial anthology of contemporary American poetry has not outlived its usefulness. It contains good things—H. D., in particular, contributes half a dozen really distinguished poems, and Mr William Rose Benét, in his *Eternal Masculine*, at least one; but as a whole the collection is curiously without a centre. Mr Lindsay, Mr Kreyborg, Mr Sandburg, Mr Frost, and Miss Wylie, are decidedly not at their best. Mr Jeffers is vigorous, and Mr MacLeish continues to show brilliant promise. One notes the absence of Mr Eliot, Mr Stevens, and Mr Robinson. And one notes, also, the presence of Miss Nathalia Crane.

**THREADS**, by Dorothy Quick (12mo, 72 pages; Harold Vinal: \$1.50). Miss Quick is concerned with what concerns us all, life, love, death, and the pursuit of happiness. Her eager susceptibility to experience, her capacity to respond to sadness or delight, compensates for the extreme naïveté of her verse. If she is to prosecute further her poetical ambitions she must, however, learn to search more uncompromisingly within herself, or be emboldened to follow with more nimble and adventurous a step her inventive fancy on its diverse flights.

**BRANCHES OF ADAM**, by John Gould Fletcher (12mo, 82 pages; Faber & Gwyer: 6s). This narrative poem, which takes as its theme the Biblical story of the creation (following the Biblical narrative to the point at which Noah finds land) is the best book Mr Fletcher has given us since his *Goblins and Pagodas*. With the present thesis—a metaphysical grappling with the problem of good and evil—one cannot much sympathize: it remains a little unreal. But as a story *Branches of Adam* is vivid and sometimes powerful; and Mr Fletcher has found a happy medium for himself in a loose hexametric blank verse. At times, as in his earlier work, he is too persistently rhapsodic and rhetorical, tends to a piling-up of effect which defeats its own purpose. It should be noted, however, that especially in the first part this is more than offset by passages of real beauty and grandeur.

**MASTERPIECES OF ITALIAN PAINTING**, by Francis Pristera (pages unnumbered; Francis Pristera, Publisher). Portfolios of reproductions of art always have their educational uses, even to those who know the originals at first hand, so doubtless, Mr Pristera will find plenty of response to his project of putting the masterpieces of Italian painting into all the reference libraries, public and private. In his first issue, which is devoted to the great Florentines, it is Masaccio and Botticelli who are best represented. The others that are illustrated include, Pollaiuolo, Verrocchio, and Ghirlandaio.

**JOHN SARGENT**, by The Hon. Evan Charteris, K. C., with reproductions from his paintings and drawings (8vo, 308 pages; Scribner: \$6). Mr Sargent led an uneventful life and in death has found an unsensational biographer. Mr Charteris has written every word as though under orders from the spirit of the dead painter and the result is a work that will please the little coterie that supplied the facts, but which will not greatly fire the outside world. The biography has good taste but not much vitality. There were three points in the life that presented possibilities for discussion—the continued and wilful expatriation of an American who still insisted he was an American, the fascination of the Wertheimer family in London for a conventional “society” man, and the Sargent indifference to the conflict in the early stages of the great war. All these danger spots have been skipped over by Mr Charteris as coolly as though there were no dangers in them, but doubtless some other writer will go into them with more zest later on.



**PHEASANT JUNGLES**, by William Beebe (illus., 8vo, 248 pages; Putnam: \$3).

"The sun rose softly—no breeze moved cloud or leaf, and even the light came at first moderately, indirectly, reflected from the higher peaks, or heliographed from the mirror of a half-hidden, distant waterfall." Mr Beebe's prose is as brilliant as the plumage of the birds he describes; he uses the imagery of science with the deftness of an artist. Over and above the necessary equipment of a naturalist, he possesses a rare gift of communicating his own ardour and alertness; the reader shares his solitude and participates in his discoveries.

**THE MAGIC OF HERBS**, by Mrs C. F. Leyel (10mo, 320 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$3). To all who follow the teachings of Nic Culpepper this book will be of extraordinary interest. Mrs Leyel has collected her herb-lore from many sources, and has presented it in a most readable form. She gives us delightful instruction as to what can be done with the simples of garden and field, how, for example, we should go about to make love-philtres, or that divine myrtle water used by Venus when bathing "the secret beauties of her gleaming body."

**OLD STICK-LEG**, Extracts from the Diaries of Major Thomas Austin, arranged and edited by Brigadier-General H. H. Austin (illus., 8vo, 206 pages; Lincoln MacVeagh, Dial Press: \$3.50). This book throws an interesting side-light on the Napoleonic wars. The point of view recorded is that of a soldier—brave, cultured, and of limited vision. No one, however, could read the volume without feeling respect, nay love, for the little Major.

**NAPHTALI**, by C. Lewis Hind (8vo, 253 pages; Dodd, Mead: \$4) belongs to what one might call, for want of a better designation, the album category of memoirs. The author turns the pages of memory, but the pictures are so numerous that few of them get more than a fleeting paragraph; it is about as satisfactory as racing through a gallery with a guide. Mr Hind has known many famous persons, but only the surface of his contact with them is disclosed in this volume. The sub-title of the book is "influences and adventures while earning a living by writing," but accurately speaking, it is the card catalogue of a career.

**BOOK REVIEWING**, by Wayne Gard (12mo, 160 pages; Knopf: \$2). In this handbook the author quotes a number of editorial concepts of the ideal review, reprints typical reviews, makes suggestions for editing a book-page, discusses the beginnings of criticism, and critical methods, and provides an alphabetical conspectus of the market. He cautions the reviewer not to be guided in the choice of books for review, by their literary prominence, binding, or price-mark; nor to review them without having read them and observes that "one who sits in judgment certainly cannot afford to be caught napping in elementary matters." He has not been "indolent," but certain implications and opinions surprise the hardened reviewer and his verbal technique is rather unlucky.

**ADULT EDUCATION**, by Joseph K. Hart (8vo, 356 pages; Crowell: \$2.75). Dr Hart's programme for adult education, which he gives ample reason for believing of paramount importance, is clearly and energetically stated, and if there were enough intelligent, aroused people in existence to put it into practice, injustice would cease, disease diminish, and happiness be prevalent. Alas, such books are found heavy by the general public, unrewarding by the literary, verbose by the student, and in the end only the already enlightened educator divorced from administrative power and impotent to do aught but concur, takes them seriously to heart.

**WORDS TO THE DEAF, An Historian Contemplates His Age**, by Guglielmo Ferrero, translated from the Italian by Ben Ray Redman (12mo, 165 pages; Putnam: \$2). Neither scientific in the strict sense of the word, nor poetic as we might desire so fanciful a social philosopher to be, Mr Ferrero yet manages through the undoubted sincerity of his intention, the ingenuity of his theories, and the facility of his pen, to retain our interest throughout the pages of this, his latest book. Especially pleasing for those of us impotently in revolt against an industrial age, are the passages in which he attacks so justly "that innumerable fire-driven company of giants of iron and steel," who "have more wit than their imprudent creator." We cared less for his remarks concerning art, and we feel sure that Mr Roger Fry would not care for them at all. The quality of Mr Ferrero's mind resembles somewhat that of the Frenchman's, M Elie Faure. Both these Latins are impassioned thinkers whose air-blown theories stir and stimulate one's ideas without persuading one's reason.

**A SHORT HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE, Volume II, 1860-1921**, by Robert Caldwell (8vo, 562 pages; Putnam: \$3.75). If the essential requisites of the good historian are toleration and detachment, Professor Caldwell may be said to qualify in the first rank. Especially admirable is that portion of his book which deals with the Great War, a subject that he surrounds with cool analytical judgements. If his style shows few unusual flashes of imagination, it likewise shows no affectation; it is modest, clear, and eminently readable.

**MAIN CURRENTS IN AMERICAN THOUGHT: Vol. I, The Colonial Mind 1620-1800; Vol. II, The Romantic Revolution in America 1800-1860**, by Vernon Louis Parrington (8vo, 906 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$4 each volume). Professor Parrington is of the type of historian who attaches events to ideas and develops the two side by side. He is interested in discovering the very inner secrets of American activity, American culture—religious, economic, moral, and literary. The first of these volumes treats of our institutions and ideals as inherited from Europe, and our gradual development of the principle of Republicanism; while the second traces the emergence of a new middle class that was eventually to blot out the old cherished values of the privileged minorities. The author writes with that "masculine vigor" and "masculine intellect" which he is fond of mentioning. When, indeed, will so odd and archaic a use of words be permanently abandoned?

## COMMENT

ONE sometimes encounters in one's reading an implication that book-reviewing is not criticism, and admitting that sometimes it is not, asks perhaps inhumanely, why print it? The reviewer, or should one say critic, ought to be collaterally informed and a kind of writing would be welcome in which "everything is easy and natural, yet everything is masterly and strong." Common sense is not innately favourable to Dick Minim, "the great investigator of hidden beauties," and has no particular need of the writer who is so obsessed with his own identity that he cannot refrain from deploring what is merely deplorable. THE DIAL may be abecedarian on occasion, despite its liking for naturalness, substance, and simplicity; but it would rather exposit the treasurable than advertise mediocrity. It agrees with the editor of Copleston's warning to reviewers<sup>1</sup> that "the unbearable repartee" is silence, and though it licenses as antiquarianism an occasional cock-fight, the hurtful inhumanity of Gifford, Wilson, and Judge Jeffery, never make it envious. A business-like rancour may exist in the heart of one who has learned from Erasmus "the smoothest form for each suggestion of politeness," but ill-nature on the part of those who have not learned politeness from Erasmus results usually in a collapse of unequestrianism. If criticism is "the effect of the subjection of the product of one mind to the processes of another," is not the reviewer's own mind disparaged by him in resorting to an inconsequent and disrespectful *ruade*?

THOSE who are displeased by an unduly academic literary mechanics may consider the advantages of verbal unfearfulness, in the recently inaugurated little cinema review, *Close Up*.<sup>2</sup> To

<sup>1</sup> Advice to a Young Reviewer With a Specimen of the Art. By Edward Copleston. 12mo. 22 pages. Houghton Mifflin Company. \$2.

<sup>2</sup> *Close Up*. Published monthly by Pool, Riant Chateau, Territet, Switzerland. \$3.50 a year.

burst into feeling so to speak, and praise an art through a medium other than its own, without having mastered the terms of the auxiliary art is surely an experiment; but zeal, liberty, and beauty are allied phenomena and apart from oddity there are in *Close Up* to reward us, besides certain other items, a poem about light by H. D.; a report of Kopf Hoch Charley that holds the attention; a contribution entitled Mrs. Emerson by Miss Stein; and a letter to the editor: "*About cinemas. I do not care for them, but I do not know why I don't . . . . . I think my prejudice is hardly justified. But I couldn't write about it. I've nothing to say. I'm so sorry.*" We like the letter and we like the movies. We have said something about the theatre's undeserved, sanctified background as compared with the reluctantly accepted celluloid permanence of the movies<sup>1</sup> and we feel, with *Close Up*, that intelligence is "sadly lacking" in the films' critics as in the film world. In producing films, "brains and education" ought not to be "dead weights against you" and often "one wants to see films one has missed."

We are not sure that *Close Up* is in the strict sense informing though it tells us that "all Americans in France, Switzerland, England, are printing their books at the shop of the master printer, Maurice Darantière, Dijon." We read advertisements as we read the body of a magazine and like the impression of energy and ability conveyed by the announcement that the firm of John and Edward Bumpus is to the reader what the camera is to the film.

Perquisites are of secondary importance; motive is the lively factor, and we find here a zeal for enjoyment and for not keeping that enjoyment to one's self. Despite stock phrases, ambiguities, italics, capital type, superlatives, and certainties so sanguine as somehow to seem like uncertainties, there is friendliness here. "By mixing more in the world," "a healthy enjoyment of the business of life is imparted" as Mr Larkyns, the rector, was able to convince Mr Verdant Green's father. It is incumbent upon us occasionally to consent to be lured into the society of others who have, like ourselves, a special fondness for art.

<sup>1</sup> THE DIAL, February 1927, page 178.





*The Kaiser Friedrich Museum, Berlin*

PALMESEL. BAVARIAN MASTER

# THE DIAL

DECEMBER 1927

EDGAR ALLAN POE

BY GEORGE SAINTSBURY

**M**OST people who have paid any attention to the curious and complicated history of the biographical and critical estimates of Edgar Poe are probably aware that the late Mr Henry James pronounced Poe's verses "valueless." But it is unlikely that many know how, after "valueless" had been quoted against him from time to time by Mr Andrew Lang and other English critics, he said to Mr Lang, "I suppose I made a mistake" or words to that effect. Nobody perhaps, who knew the speaker, took this *Confiteor* or *Peccavi* as expressing entirely sincere or thorough-going repentance, but it was probably not all ironical. I should imagine that it acknowledged the truth of Mr Lang's own remark in the matter, that value depends on what you want people to give. Lang himself believed that Poe had nothing to give "but music—lyric music and vague emotion devoid of human passion"—though he thought this very decidedly "valuable"—holding that "the incommunicable and inexpressible charm of melodious words is of the essence of song." And he quoted in the same essay some words of my own written some years earlier but never printed—part of a "rejected address" in which I had displeased the rejecting editor by pronouncing Poe "of the first order of poets."

It has of course been unfortunate for Poe, especially in his own country—though one cannot deny that it was his fault as well as his fortune—that he has been more than usually subjected to the common critical fallacy of mixing up the man and his work. During the course of his life, and immediately after his death, not much was known and still less cared in England, about his life and conversation: and so it happened that while things like *The Raven*

and *The Bells* at once appealed to one class of lovers of poetry, things like *Ulalume* and *To Helen* and *The Sleeper* and especially the two pieces, *Annabel Lee* and *The Haunted Palace*, appealed to a very much smaller but immensely more intense and enthusiastic class of admirers. When—as I think was brought about by Ingram's four-volume English edition of the *Works* in 1874-5—controversy on the subject was aroused in both countries, the *Life* once more insisted on being taken into account with the literature. And more recently still when more new biographical matter has been discovered, attention seems to be mainly devoted to it, even though America has acknowledged "value" in Poe. In England on the other hand I seem to have seen recently something like Mr James's judgement expressed—a fresh example of that queer topsyturviness which in many ways governs the world. To be complete in preliminary matters one must at least mention the odd tangential estimate of Poe in France. Of this it may be said that it derives chiefly from Baudelaire: and that much and long as I have admired him, I do not think that the author of the *Fleurs du Mal* quite escaped an odd peculiarity of his countrymen in their treatment of foreign literature. They make it French before they criticize it, or in criticizing it. But this really need not occupy us much. It is about the "value," in more senses than one, of Poe's poetry as it has presented itself to America and to England during nearly a hundred years that I have been graciously asked to write.<sup>1</sup>

It would however be absurd not to deal at some little length with the present state of consideration of the life as manifested in such elaborate treatments as Mr Krutch's,<sup>2</sup> Miss Phillips',<sup>3</sup> and Mr Hervey Allen's,<sup>4</sup> even though critical notices of them may have

<sup>1</sup> It so happens that The Clarendon Press has recently completed both in Oxford and in New York, its issue of Poe in two volumes—the *Poems*, the critical *Essays on Poetry*, A. Gordon Pym, and a few *miscellanies* in one—the *Tales* in the other. If *Eureka* had been added few people would have asked for more. *Poems and Miscellanies*. By Edgar Allan Poe. 12mo. 688 pages. The Oxford University Press, American Branch. \$1.50. *Tales of Mystery*. By Edgar Allan Poe. 12mo. 570 pages. The Oxford University Press, American Branch. \$1.50.

<sup>2</sup> *Edgar Allan Poe: A Study in Genius*. By Joseph Wood Krutch. 10mo. 244 pages. Alfred A. Knopf. \$3.

<sup>3</sup> *Edgar Allan Poe, the Man*. By Mary E. Phillips. With a foreword by James H. Whitty. Illustrated. Two volumes. 8vo. 1649 pages. John C. Winston Company. \$10.

<sup>4</sup> *Israfel: The Life and Times of Edgar Allan Poe*. By Hervey Allen. Two volumes. 8vo. 932 pages. George H. Doran Company. \$10.



already appeared in *THE DIAL*. The first is indeed neither exactly a biography nor exactly a criticism but a "study in genius"—that is to say one of the numerous efforts in what calls itself modern psychology; though Mr Krutch, to do him justice, is not a mere slave to the usual jargon of that stuff. Mr Allen's vast work contains very little pure criticism; but it has swallowed and in a manner digested almost all the biographical matter, which has accumulated in the all but full century that has elapsed since a couple of score copies of *Tamerlane* were published (if they can be said to have been *published*) in the most unbusinesslike fashion in the world by one of its most unbusinesslike poets but certainly not by one of its least. Of Miss Phillips', more hereafter.

The worst of it is that, by that strange pressure of ill fortune which still seems to rest on Poe, while Mr Krutch's book is rather psychological in the modern sense than critical in the literary, Mr Allen's is not only enormously long and rather carelessly written but constructed on a sort of system of "reconstruction" which may make it deceptive to a careless reader, and must make it exhausting in reading and unsatisfactory in result to any one who himself reads critically. In some respects his process is not uncritical: and he often warns his readers that such and such a statement is not to be trusted. But on the other hand the dangers of the "reconstructive" method are perhaps more fully illustrated in his book than in any other known to the present writer. One can never be sure when Catarina (the cat)—as she has every right to do *really*—walks across the room with her tail up, whether this rests on evidence or not. It becomes clear almost at once to any one whose experience has not only extended pretty widely in purely literary criticism but has overflowed into matters political, social (even juridical if not professionally then) that since, some fifty years ago, American curiosity was thoroughly aroused about this strange bard, "Reminiscence" has been calling Invention to its aid, and Invention has been by no means so unmannerly as to turn a deaf ear to the calling. No one who has ever taken the slightest serious trouble about the matter can doubt or deny the extreme untrustworthiness of long-dated memory, even when there is no special temptation to be untrustworthy. There are things in this immense collection of actual evidence—mixed with endless "probablys" and "may haves" and "would haves" and so forth—which are queer. The story telling how, at Fordham, deputations of literary ladies came to ask to

have—not merely, it would appear, their own but others' love-letters returned to them—is simply enough to turn one's head.

But on the whole, large as is the accretion of a sort of fact and still larger that of not impossible conjecture, one is left, biographically speaking, with not very much more than one knew fifty years ago. It was always evident that Griswold was a spiteful person and probable that he was a liar: evident also that Poe was among the most injudicious of men—in matters of business and conduct and money. As for what, towards the end of his book, Mr Allen, after laboriously collecting everything that seems to be known on the subject, calls the "mystery" of the relations of Poe with his foster-father or adopter or whatever one is to call Mr John Allan, the word is surely not quite applicable. That the conduct of neither was what it should have been, and that while that of Poe was decidedly wanting in head, Allan's at least did not display a particularly good heart, are propositions scarcely to be disputed: but there is very little mystery about either.

Into the physico-psycho-pathology which has taken to busying itself about this once more unfortunate poet one may be excused for not entering. That in almost every respect Poe was not a strictly normal person may be freely allowed: indeed it hath been held by them of old time that poets never are strictly normal persons. As far as his abnormality is a feature of his work it may be very properly touched on: but guesses—for there is no evidence on the subject—about his exact relations with his wife are surely superfluous as well as ill-mannered. His various earlier and later flirtations—with their remarkable results or no-results of being engaged to this widow to-day and t'other to-morrow—have nothing to do with literature at all, except that whether mixed up with the actual marriage or not they gave titles or even titular subjects to some of the most beautiful poems in English. His biographers seem to have agreed that in the ordinary sense Poe was never "in love" at all; or if he ever was it was with

"That lost woman of his youth yet unpossessed"

the original Helen (not Mrs Whitman) of whom the other Helens and the Lenores and the Annies and the Annabels and the Ulalumes were at most what is meant by the admirable Greek word *ἀπόρροια*. These we call in Latin-English, "effluences"; perhaps one might

still better if more clumsily call the ladies "actress-representatives"—with the difference that, while one actress represents many parts, these many actresses represented one original or perhaps no original at all but a creature of the poet's own imagination—a thing not even of memory as one only, and in all the shiftings recognized as not merely unrealized but unrealizable.

When, however, one turns from Mr Hervey Allen's nine hundred pages to Miss Mary Phillips' sixteen hundred, the sense of what in the old Scotch phrase are called "sinned mercies"—benefits neglected or misused—comes very strongly on one. The style is of itself one of the most singular that a rather copious reader has ever met with; and the immense length of the book is to a great extent due to the author's extraordinary habit of describing fully and afresh in her text the name, titles, origin, et cetera, of her authority for everything she quotes usually with the odd addition, "This comes from" James or John Smith, M. A., etc., etc. Further the word "record" has with Miss Phillips a meaning or no meaning in speaking of which I apologize if it has a justification in American usage not as yet known to me. "On record," unless used ironically, means with us that there is some solid documentary evidence concerning the matter. But with Miss Phillips "record" may mean a regularly proved statement of fact, a guess, a tradition, an opinion, and sometimes even an actual criticism and nothing more. Some dozen years ago, it seems, an ingenious person took it into his head to imagine a visit of Poe during his Philadelphia sojourn to a supposed home of his ancestors at "Povally" somewhere up the country. The author of *Israfel* very properly gives a foot-note of a few lines to this flight of fancy with a warning that it *is* fancy. Miss Phillips gives it, with its descriptive and sentimental details, sixteen pages and by way of finishing an innocent reader finishes herself by calling it "done as accurately as possible." That the "English Notes" of "Quarles Quickens" is taken to be Poe's is not surprising for it does not seem to be impossible; though all the best authorities are against it. But exactly what Miss Phillips has got into her head about supposed contributions of Poe's to Blackwood's through the medium of the personage whom she dubs "Sir" Christopher North it is impossible to understand. It is at least interesting to be told that the recondite learning of the Notes to some of Poe's early poems is so far beyond what American libraries at the time could supply that he must

have made a voyage to The British Museum to get it. And it was of course impossible that a lady who reasons in the fashion we have seen would see any difficulty in that remarkable legend of the sailor Tuhey who *inter alia* took Poe on a casual yachting expedition just outside Baltimore to Wexford—the actual Irish Wexford. To a biographer of this sort not only is “what the soldier said” evidence, but what somebody “records” that the soldier said to somebody else is ditto.

It was a bad habit of English reviewers in Poe's days to be rude to ladies' books: and I have all my life endeavoured to refrain from anything of the kind: but really this enormous pair of volumes deserves a little plain speaking. It has one good point—a most lavish and often very useful allowance of “illustration” not merely portraits. The wicked Mrs Ellet who tormented the Poes so appears to have been by no means ill-looking. But views of buildings, town-maps, et cetera—like the constant and unnecessary detailed references to authorities in the text—are proof of an honesty which may not be exactly the best policy. It is the furthest excursion yet known to the present writer in a system of biographical writing which has lately been practised on both sides of the Atlantic and which may be called the conglomerate or galantine method. You put bits of what everybody has said about your subject all together as it were in another kind of “press” besides the printing one with hardly any attempt at critical arrangement, “extraction,” combination, and the like. In particular the device of including letters which Mason (if it was Mason) invented and Boswell popularized was a great thing: but it becomes a very doubtful one when the letters “condensed” by constant . . . . .-ing are rammed *into* the text. The result becomes simply indigestible.

It must be clear that, in different degrees, this kind of biographical investigation, though it strengthens in general the purely literary criticism of the poet, weakens its own value by tempting to so much guess-work: and that we may turn to the consideration of the actual work of this benefactor who received so little benefaction; who had a royalty of fourpence a copy on poems which—though no doubt you can't exactly evaluate poems in money—would have been cheap at any number of pounds; who might have taken almost certainly all but his earliest years as the point whence he

“Never had peace in the world sinsyne”;

and whose death took place in circumstances still, after all enquiry, more like one of the ghastliest of his own tales than an ordinary end.

I hope there is neither impertinence nor disqualification for my present business in confessing that my admiration for Poe does not rest upon these tales—or only on a very few of them. *Ligeia* and *The Fall of the House of Usher* satisfy me: though both would be better if they were shorter. But the pieces which attempt humour like *Loss of Breath* and *Mummy* almost make me an anti-Poeite, while those of pure horror are not much more to my taste. And for the “detective” kind, in which he can claim some fatherhood and an undoubted mastership and for which the latest nineteenth and the earlier twentieth centuries have had so keen an appetite, I have no great affection. My pleasantest association with them is that, in early days, I remember English editions presenting us with a Gold *Beetle* instead of a Gold *Bug*. In its class *The Descent into the Maelstrom* is pretty faultless: and of the horrors I used I think to prefer *The Cask of Amontillado*. This may have been partly because I liked *Amontillado*, but so I do still: and I did not find the other day when I reread the story after many years, that I cared much for it. And even in the two expected ones—perhaps owing to the fact that one of them contains one of his very best poems and the other not the worst—I find myself worried by the thought “Why is not this poetry?” Now one of the first laws or cautions of criticism is “Never demand from any work something else than that which it presents itself as being, doing, offering. If you find that you can’t help this there is something really wrong either with the writer or with you.” It must of course be left to third parties to decide which of these alternatives is here the case.

Not to neglect what is, in a curiously complicated way, something between poetry and prose—that is to say drama—we must have a word or two on *Politian*. It is almost needless to say, though impossible to omit the saying, that this curious piece owes much to Professor Mabbott for elucidating its subject, castigating its text, and in other ways making the study of it more profitable and easier. But neither this nor any addition at all probable could

much affect certain general conclusions about it. If we knew nothing about its date and authorship most fairly acute and well-informed critics would put it down, now or at any future time as well as for the last half century, as belonging to that singular period or division of English literature—ostensibly or formally theatrical—from which *The Cenci* shoots up like Ailsa Crag from the sea or the *Wrekin* from the flat country; which begins with Joanna Baillie and ends with Sir Henry Taylor and the sea whereof may be allowed a few islets—the plain, a hillock or two, like Milman's *Fazio* and Talfourd's *Ion*. It is perhaps a pity that Poe who is in some ways so like his contemporary Beddoes, did not attempt the *Death's Jest-book* vein, but as it is one feels that he is not in his proper place. The few attempts at intermixed comedy are positively bad; Politian personally is weak Byron and water; while the whole (and let no one say "But it isn't a whole" for a few scenes will do) is non-dramatic. You cannot imagine it acted with any success. Now a play may, I suppose, be bad to read and yet good to act: but I can't imagine it's being good to read when it constantly suggests to the reader that it would be bad to act.

When Lowell,<sup>1</sup> or whoever it was, wrote "Mr Poe, *the poet*" the catch-sound of the words was no doubt, though not ill-naturally, intentionally the object of the conjunction. But one might, without extravagance, take it seriously. To say that if Poe was not a poet he was nothing would of course be extravagant. He is something more than a squadron-leader in the story-telling army: and I have myself, in books specially on the subject, done my little best to vindicate for him a higher place than has sometimes been allowed him both in general and in metrical criticism. But his extreme inequality, arising in the main from insufficient education, injures his work in both respects: and, except in the points where it touches his poetry nearest, his tale-telling is at most "prime amid peers." As a poet he is absolutely alone. Lang gave him companions to a certain extent in William Morris and Gérard de Nerval; I have just suggested (again to a certain extent only)

<sup>1</sup> There was almost less bad blood between the two than between Poe and any other notable man of letters in his time and country. They principally disagreed about matters of prosody in which I venture to think that Poe was the nearer to the truth. But I have always been sorry that in more than one or two conversations which I had with Mr Lowell when he was in England in the 'eighties, Poe, so far as I can recollect, was never mentioned,

Beddoes; but none of these is exactly of the same variety of the same species of the same kind. Nothing I think is a better specimen passage of "Mr Poe the poet's" poetry, on the smallest scale and neglecting the cumulative effect of his best pieces as a whole, than the famous couplet in *The Haunted Palace*:

"Banners, yellow, glorious, golden  
On its roof did float and flow"

I have said of this in its strictly technical aspect that the trochees themselves "float and flow and settle with the soft slowness of snowflakes." But there is a great deal more than this to be said. In the first place there is the extraordinary manipulation of the vowel-music—the contrast of the prominent sounds *a* and *e* once each and then a whole cascade of *o* in different forms of its sound, with the minor detail of the trisyllabic "glorious" ("glorious" may be left to whosoever likes it) and its subtle connexion with the monosyllabic ending "flow." All that is "music" in a way no doubt: and the additional effect given by the pause at each word of the first line may be such perhaps. But then there is appeal to a quite new sense—the sense of *eyes* of the mind, which insists for itself on the banners, the roof they float from, their colour, and their motion as they flow. You don't want—unless you are the kind of creature for whom "movies" were made and whom they satisfy—any "illustration"—the words make you see the things as they make you hear the music accompanying. And then there comes the tug of war between the two critical views of Poe and even between the two sections of his admirers. There is something more which is not music nor picture, but is begotten in some uncanny, though by no means unholy, way by each on the other—the poetic effluence—the charm only perceptible to that *sense* of poetry which merciful nature has not withheld from myriads though it has only granted the power of production which satisfies it to a few.

Of course there is a certain kind of criticism which can amuse itself by shooting its arrows at the moon. For instance I think I have seen objections taken to the pacification of Psyche in *Ulalume* by kissing her, on the ground that Psyche means soul and you can't kiss your or any soul. I am not myself so sure of the impossibility. Moreover, Poe addressed this Psyche as his "sister"

and you certainly *can* kiss your own sister. Also, I should myself say that this classification of body and soul as brother and sister was not exactly an unpoetical one in itself. But criticism of this sort is better non-suited than put to its trial on points. It is evidently a case of trying to light the blunt end of a match when chemical contact is required.

A few more short instances may be demanded. One might perhaps make a touchstone of the conclusion of *To Helen* (the first) by asking, "Is it as it stands

‘Ah! Psyche, from the regions which  
Are Holy Land’

the same as if it were written in continuous Alexandrine.

‘Ah! Psyche, from the regions which are Holy Land’?”

But that sample-item of what people are pleased, in this curious century of jargon, to call a *questionnaire* might be rather treacherous. It is better perhaps not to take any example from *The Raven*: and *The Bells* have always disappointed me. The piece does not seem as if Poe had ever heard real *old* bells, which indeed is possible: and if the excellent Mrs Shew is to be believed the subject was suggested to, not imagined by him and started with rather childish stuff about "little silver bells" and "heavy iron bells." Poe in some of his moods would have been much more likely to shift the adjectives and might have made something of the shifting.

But the three summits of his range—actually it would seem the latest as well as the highest of his exploits of climbing—For *Annie*, *Ulalume*, and *Annabel Lee*—are simply compact of "specimens," besides showing at its best what has not yet been dwelt on—his wonderful power of working "out and up," of *crescendo* and of producing an explosion after which there *must* be silence—a deliverance following which "there is namore to seyn." Although instances of the same method, they are not in the slightest degree replicas; each is entirely independent of the others.

Which of the three is "the best" it is unnecessary and probably unwise to enquire; perhaps there is not, except in mere quantity



any "better" or "best" in poetry: a thing is either poetry or it is not. It may be asked, "Is there no difference in intensity?" and perhaps there is: but all these are much on a par there. For Annie might, though one is loth to say it would, be improved by curtailment. You know, if you possess the faculty of knowing, that the thing is working up to some point and that point may seem to be unduly—at least unkindly—delayed. This delay, too, gives chance to the danger which proverbially attends the sublime. The line

"I am better at length"

and indeed the whole stanza which it concludes offer "the sons of Belial" one of those "glorious times" which they seldom miss enjoying. But the magnificence of the first with its concluding couplet

"And the fever called living  
Is conquered at last"

should carry you over the second triumphantly to the first line of the third

"And I rest so composedly"

where the adverb is one of those single-word successes of which, considering the small bulk of his whole work in verse, Poe is so astonishingly full.

If the next half dozen stanzas appeared alone one would certainly not care so much for them as at present: in a ferociously judicial mood you might even lift the blue pencil. But you have to put that down again very soon, with never the least subsequent temptation to take it up, some time before you come to those famous "Puritan pansies" which might induce the stoutest Cavalier to make a name-truce at least with Puritanism. And then after this gracious overture comes the main and never thenceforward failing *rise* of the piece—the introduction of Annie, and as it were the saturation of the poem with her presence and her actions and her name more and more to the end.

Observe too how the fellow having got as it seemed the utmost

out of word-fitness with “composedly,” audaciously “does it again” in the same stanza with a repetition of that by the substitution of “contentedly”!

I suppose—indeed I may have already hinted at the proposition—that Ulalume is the pre-arranged and never to be wholly done away with battle-ground—the Belgium as it were of the Europe and not the Europe only of Poeian criticism. When Lang said fifty years ago that “it might require some moral courage to assert one’s belief that the poem has an excuse for its existence” he was by no means speaking in mere irony and still less convicting that curious thing of imagination, “Victorianism,” of one of its criminal follies. There were at least in England, plenty of people who thought Ulalume quite deserving of existence: and I have seen within the last few months an expression of opinion already referred to, if not in the exact words, that she is not. For my own part, critical or not as the Gods or the demons have made me, I cannot find speck or flaw in it except that the name, capital for a poem, does not seem to me capital for a girl, and one other possible superfluity, of which presently. All the names, including Ulalume itself with the gloss I have given, and allowing the specialization in rhyme to Auber, suit: there ought to be a Mount Yaanek, if there is not. The singular motion, as of a heavy-laden charger strongly bitted, which he has put on his anapaestic metre; the streak of charm introduced into the dreariness by the presence of Psyche, the “sisterly” Psyche; the amazing stanza which concludes with what is a sort of motto-distich for Poe—

“Astarte’s bediamonded crescent  
Distinct with its duplicate horn”;

and any number of his marvellous single words, the most marvellous of which is the “immemorial” at the very heart and centre of the first stanza—all these things are there and a great deal more. If anybody says that it would be better without the last stanza I don’t know that I care to argue the point.

But if a critic need not be exactly a Zoilus to suggest thinning in *For Annie* and lopping in *Ulalume*, he is lost if he even thinks of the shears in connexion with *Annabel Lee*. I can imagine a very *very* poor creature saying, no doubt with perfect truth, that the verb “to covet” will only take an accusative after it and not

like "grudge" or "envy" a sort of ablative in the literal sense of that word or dative in the technical as well. One would pat his head and say, "Yes! Yes!" It was perhaps a whim that made Poe wrench the metre a little, without any need or profit, by putting "chilling" at the end of a line. But these are almost beauty-spots—if in the miraculous rush and blaze of the whole thing they are anything at all—the rush that takes one's breath away and the blaze that dazzles one's sight. I am happy enough to have read a not inconsiderable proportion of the poetry which has been vouchsafed to the world in the two great ancient and a few modern languages, with a large amount of sometimes tolerable verse. Of the latter we need say no more while giving it its own honour in the degree in which it may deserve it. Of the poetry there are many kinds: and in each kind there are degrees of glory. But in its own kind I know nothing that can beat, if I know anything that can equal, *Annabel Lee*. It begins quite quietly but with a motion of gathering speed and a sort of flicker of light and glow of heat: and these things quicken and brighten and grow till they finish in the last stanza, that incomparable explosion of rapturous regret that towers to the stars and sinks to the sea.

This however is no doubt terribly like fine writing, which is not my trade. Let us therefore conclude with perfectly plain prose. Some fifty years ago I was not allowed in England to call Poe "of the first order of poets"; fifty years after that I am able by kind permission of *THE DIAL* to call him so in his own country.

By what arguments this position was originally supported I cannot exactly say, for except the passage which Lang quoted I do not know what became of my rejected address. If I could not say with Landor that God is the only person of whom I would ask a thing twice, I certainly should not like to offer the same thing a second time, even to the most different person, after it had been once rejected. But I can sum up what has been here said shortly enough. A poet of the first order must be able to satisfy both the ears and the eyes of the mind; and beyond, though through, this satisfaction he must give the indefinable but by the right recipients unmistakable poetic "effluence," "emanation," or whatever you like to call it.

For me and for my house Poe does this.

## OLD RED

BY PAUL E. TRACY

**S**URROUNDED by a glistening sea of snow, they stood motionless—a small band of shaggy horses drawn up against the fence-posts, looking forward, mildly expectant—as though aboard a ferry-boat, hoping to see some distant shore which persistently refused to appear.

Frozen stiff, an ocean-like expanse of snow and foam lay over the valley and up the dark flanks of the mountain, spreading over the ridges in long, white breakers. The horses had been schooled to patience by five winters spent in this mountain fastness. They knew that feeding time, which came twice a day, was not to be hurried by any sort of activity—by impatient sallies around the corral or by nipping at each other.

A magpie lighted silently on a fence-post and ruffled out his greenish-black plumage interspersed with white. Slowly a horse turned his head in the bird's direction, the bell on the horse's neck giving forth a single, subdued note. The magpie gravely changed its position on the pole and allowed its long, black tail to hang dejectedly down. The belled horse continued to gaze—uncomprehendingly—its lower lip twitching and trembling irresolutely. Then suddenly, the magpie flew to a small barn near by and disappeared through the open door. The bell sounded its one melancholy note as the horse turned his head again to its former position.

A sudden, unanimous pricking forward of ears signified the approach of the feeder, a medium-sized man on skis who balanced a light pole in his hands. Stepping off the skis, he clapped them together and stuck them upright in the snow. This was the cue for the horses to begin moving around in the corral to the accompaniment of the bell.

The man began his work by chopping the ice out of the horse-trough and filling it with water from a covered well. A light vapour arose from the clear water as it surged to and fro in the narrow wooden trough. He then stalked to the barn, frightening the magpie, which fluttered out hurriedly and took wing towards the dark fringe of pines on the edge of the valley. The man stood

in the open door looking at something on the ground between the stalls. Presently he picked up a snow-shovel and a pitchfork and retraced his tracks. Climbing upon a loaf-like mound, he uncovered a stack of timothy hay and began distributing it for the horses impartially upon the discoloured floor of the corral. Occasionally he stopped and looked down the sunken road which led across the valley, straining his ears as if for some particular sound. Now and then he pulled off his canvas gloves and blew softly on his fingers.

A team and sled soon appeared fighting its way through the deep snow. Bells tinkled faintly in the winter air.

The man feeding the horses returned the shovel and fork to the rude shelter, then stood meditatively before some object lying between the stalls. He was thus engrossed as the neighbour's team came abreast of the stable.

"Howdy, Henry," said the driver as he climbed stiffly over the edge of the sled and began to beat his arms against his body. He was a small, black-eyed man of forty-five, in a large, sheep-skin coat. On his feet were felt socks and rubber pacs.

"Howdy, Oliver," returned the other man. "I was just wondering if that hole I dug is long enough. He is stretched out something scandalous, and stiffer'n a mackerel."

The teamster stepped to the stable door and looked in thoughtfully. Then he said: "It will be some job to get him out of this here door, with his legs all spraddled out like that."

"Jack will be here soon," answered Henry—"at least, he said he would." Then carefully wiping a drop of water from his nose with his glove, he added: "I dug that hole three paces long by two wide. It was all in frozen clay and boulders—a hell of a job. It drifted full of snow, chuck full, four different times."

"Why in tarnation is Jack so set on burying the old pelter anyhow?" asked the driver, thumping his chest again.

"Oh well," said the other man, "Jack is queer, you know. He looked real queer when I said I could use his dead horse for coyote bait. He said his horses were his best friends and that they had always stood by him. He allowed he might die some day himself. He allowed he didn't want no coyotes eating off'n him."

"Seems as if everybody is queer up in this God-forsaken country," said Oliver, as he produced a box of snuff and plastered a black, stringy wad of it under his upper lip.

"How is your hay holding out?" queried the other.

"I opened a new stack yesterday and found it spoiled half-way down." "Those late fall rains," he added.

The trail-making began. Oliver drove his team out into the white, unbroken blanket where they plunged and wallowed drunkenly. At each resting period the men conversed.

"Fred Hanks was poisoned again last week," declared Oliver, giving a short, cynical laugh. Fred Hanks was an old bachelor who had been waiting twenty years for the price of his land to rise. Ever so often he would appear at a neighbour's door in a thoroughly frightened condition and declare that someone had maliciously poisoned him. He would then remain at the neighbour's house as long as possible to recuperate.

"How long this time?" asked the feeder watching the steam rise from the puffing horses.

"Two days. Then I hinted that we needed a little wood split up and Fred went home."

At length the team broke the road through, to the grave. The puffing horses snorted curiously at the black pit yawning in the snow. The two men drew up beside the edge and the teamster spat into the hole. "Almost any one would natcherly imagine he had been poisoned who had to eat Fred's cooking very long," he said, grimly.

"I figgered," said the feeder, unmindful of the other man's remarks, "that we had better crowd his head into that far corner, that's why I hollered it out that way."

When the road to the grave had been made, Jack Whitman appeared—the owner of the "ranch"—a spare man in a wide-brimmed sombrero, with walrus whiskers from which tiny icicles depended. The other men showed a proper deference to Mr Whitman, who now took charge of the burial in a business-like manner, and the frozen horse whom he spoke of affectionately as Old Red, was reared over on his back and pulled out of the stable. This was attended by no small amount of snorting and uneasiness on the part of the live horses. They left their hay and, thrusting sharp ears forward, blew out their frosty breath in shrill whistles. The bell clanged noisily.

With this bell and whistle accompaniment, the funeral procession proceeded down the new-made trail, the dead horse's legs making erratic gouges in the dry snow-banks. The grave proved large enough and as the horse was pried over into it and his legs were poked into place, the black-eyed teamster made the observation that

he fit like the pocket in a shirt. Mr Whitman remained silent. The horse was then covered over and the men made their way back to the stable.

Mr Whitman drew out a wallet, and when terms had been agreed upon, he paid for the services of the team, the driver, and the grave-digger. After examining the other horses with solicitude and enquiring about the hay, he said wearily: "Well, I must be on my way back. The stage will leave in two hours," and with a word of parting, he slouched off rapidly on his skis.

Mr Whitman raised hay on his "ranch" during the short summer to feed to his horses during the long winter. In winter he hired a man to feed them so that he might earn the funds necessary for keeping himself and the feeder going. This winter he was driving the stage to Burgdorf and carrying the mail. To-day he had purposely gone without sleep in order to mush the five miles to his "ranch" to bury Old Red. He was now on his way back.

"It took about all Jack had," observed the feeder, carefully putting his cash away in a clumsy, leather money-belt which he wore next to his skin and which had evidently been empty for a considerable time.

"Well, I can't quite figger him out," said the teamster. "Why should he want to bury an old horse and pay out real money for it, too?" Oliver was puzzled. Presently he voiced his conviction: "As I was saying, it does seem as if most everybody up here is queer."

And with that he pulled out a woman's stocking, drew it down over his ears, wadded the leg and foot up under his cap, and drove away.

The other man leisurely drew up a few buckets of water and poured them into the horse-trough. When he was sure the other men were out of sight he fished an old mouth-organ out of his coat and pushed back his cap. Then seating himself on the edge of the trough, he began to play Turkey in the Straw patting the snow with a huge foot in a felt boot.

When the desire for harmony had been satisfied, he arose and went to his skis; and before long he too had disappeared.

Having finished their timothy hay, the small band of shaggy horses drew themselves up again before the fence-posts in the little corral which resembled a ferry-boat traversing an ocean of frozen foam. While they stood looking forward, a magpie lighted on a fence-post and ruffled out his black-and-white plumage. One of

the horses turned slowly to look at the bird and the bell sent forth a feeble, muffled clank. The horse stared at the bird, seeming to understand the futility of its presence. The bird gravely regarded the entire group for a moment, then flew to the stable, and entered the open door. The horse mechanically turned his head and the bell sounded again.

Then all was silent. It was growing dark. Snow began to fall.

## CALLING IN THE CAT

BY ELIZABETH COATSWORTH

Now from the dark a deeper dark  
The cat slides  
Furtive and aware  
His eyes still shine with meteor spark  
The cold dew weights his hair.  
Suspicious  
Hesitant he comes  
Stepping morosely from the night  
Held but repelled  
Repelled but held  
By lamp and firelight.  
Now call your blandest  
Offer up  
The sacrifice of meat  
And snare the wandering soul with greeds  
Lure him to drink and eat  
And he will walk fastidiously  
Into the trap of old  
With feet that still smell delicately  
Of withered ferns and mould.





THE THREE WISE MEN. BY GRETE BILGER





WORSHIPPERS OF THE CHRIST CHILD. BY GRETE BILGER





FORBIDDEN FRUITS. BY GRETE BILGER



# LOGICAL FORM AND SOCIAL SALVATION

BY H. M. KALLEN

**G**OD, said Plato, geometrizes, and almost a worship of such mathematics as was available to his time is an idiosyncrasy of his thought. If the most recent critics are to be trusted, the arts of the Greeks were also products of geometrification; the godhead of Apollo was brought to earth over the *pons asinorum* of Pythagoras. The rich and manifold eyefilling world was however too moving to Greek hearts, too dear to their minds ever to be levelled down in abstract mathematical patterns; the logical perfection of geometry could never replace the living excellence of humanity. Only once, between their times and ours, did it do so. This was in the heyday of Arab civilization. Forbidden by a commandment from Allah to represent the visible world, the Arab craftsmen undertook to present visibly its visible geometric ground-plans. Their philosophers developed algebra and renewed mathematics and their philosophy was a mysticism justified by dialectic. What, most characteristically, the spirit of Arab art is known by, is that purely geometrical intricated loveliness we call the arabesque.

Since the Arabs, our own time is the first in which geometry dominates vision. With us, however, the forms of mathematics do not replace the shapes of reality. With us mathematical forms distort the shapes of reality. Sculptors and painters effectuate what the first modern philosophers only aspired to; they treat of human nature and the world it lives in as if they were made up of planes and lines and angles. The followers of Nevinson and Brancusi fulfil in the show-windows of our shops and on the walls of our galleries the ambitions of Descartes or Spinoza.

This distortion of the real by geometry is not the consequence of a taboo on reality from high heaven. It is the fruit of a fascination exercised upon the eye of the body by the patterns of machines; upon the mind's eye, by the formal logic of the sciences. Its theoretic expression for practising artists is to be found in the work

**NOTE:** Papers of Bertrand Russell. Selected and with a Special Introduction by Bertrand Russell. 16mo. 390 pages. The Modern Library, Inc. 95 cents. The introduction prefixed to this volume appeared in *THE DIAL*, September 1927, under the title *Things That Have Moulded Me*.

of such men as Samuel Colman, Denman Ross, and Jay Hambidge. Its philosophical homologue, comparable to what Plato was for the Greeks, or Al Ghazzali or Ibn Sina for the Arabs, is to be found in the dialectical transformations of reality accomplished by the work of the new sect of philosophers of whom Mr Bertrand Russell is, if not the leader, the spiritual father.

The instruments whereby their transformations are effected derive from mathematics and the physical sciences. By means of them these philosophers create a new kind of "realism" which is to philosophy what cubism is to art. To a large degree this new realism owes its teachings and technique to Mr Russell who, at the age of eighteen, was so disturbed by the weakness of John Stuart Mill's arguments in favour of believing in geometry and arithmetic that he set himself the task of finding whatever ascertainable grounds there were for regarding mathematics as true. Twenty years and longer he kept at it, with the result: "the main question remained, of course, unanswered; but incidentally we [he had a fellow worker in Dr A. N. Whitehead, who has come out of it with a contrasting philosophy] had been led to the invention of a new method in philosophy and a new branch of mathematics." The method substitutes the neutral, generalized *P*'s and *Q*'s of the mathematician for the somewhat more lively concepts of the metaphysician, and the precise patterns of mathematical procedure for the looser logic of the dialectic of convention. It is a super-logic, created by a searching analysis of the logic of mathematics and then by a sifting of the logic of this logic. In its mould any view of the world, any system of religion or science or philosophy, can be exhibited as an intricate pattern of relationships of *P*'s and *Q*'s, with every transition from assumed premiss to necessary conclusion explicitly shown and infallibly set down. Have a look at whatever page you will of the *Principia Mathematica* which Messrs Russell and Whitehead completed in 1910: you will see an intricated geometrical loveliness of black marks on white paper which as an ordinary professor of mathematics you could hardly read, so compact is it with symbols new and strange. These the generations of philosophers have so far refused even to learn. But their sequence moves the eye as might the arrangement of a poem from someone like Mr E. E. Cummings, by some suggestion of a hidden intent behind the outward pattern, some hint of a dialectical arabesque of mutually sustaining meanings, self-contained and self-containing, in the void.



Logistics, as this discipline is now called, was, and is an art to practise. To Mr Russell it was dialectic mystically appreciated and yielded the superlative of existence: "To reconcile us, by the exhibition of its awful beauty to the reign of fate . . . is the task of tragedy. But mathematics takes us still farther from what is human, into the region of absolute necessity, to which not only the actual world but every possible world must conform; and even here it builds a habitation, or rather finds a habitation eternally standing where our ideals are fully satisfied and our best hopes are not thwarted. . . . The true spirit of delight, the exaltation, the sense of being more than man, which is the touchstone of the highest excellence, is to be found in mathematics as surely as in poetry."

The Serpent that destroyed Eden for him Mr Russell declares to have been the Great War. He names it as the chief of "the causes which have made my present style of writing different from that of earlier years."

But to one friendly and sympathetic reader, at least, it is not the style of his writings that has changed so much as the subject. And the subject has not changed in kind but in mass. Mr Russell was always a moralist as well as a logician; he always wrote on ethics as well as philosophy; a little on ethics, much on philosophy. Now he writes more on ethics and not quite so much on philosophy. And to me he seems to write as he used to write, only—more so: with the same clearness and distinctness of ideas, the same lucid articulateness of argument, the same debater's penetration in making points, the same clean, clear, hard outlines, as of a dialectical Amy Lowell. And also—the same razor thinness of the mathematician, the same instancy, the same bi-dimensionality, the same lack of volume and perspective. The war may have forced upon Mr Russell the fruit of the tree and compelled him to look at human nature, but it can hardly be said to have brought about a change in his own. Beginning with *Why Men Fight*, published in 1916, he has written a whole array of works, those that deal with the qualities of men, with civilization and with what to do about it, being mixed in with those that deal with atoms, with relativity, with matter. His way of talking about the first kind seems in no essential different from his way of talking about the second kind, nor from his way in the books—excepting always the *Principia Mathematica*—unrepresented in this volume of selections.

I cannot help suspecting that Mr Russell has mistaken a change in overt belief for a change in temper and attitude. Because of

the war, perhaps, his intellectual sensibilities, like a spectator at the play, have discerned that doubt is preferable to dogmatism. In the sciences, he now says, the empirical outlook has diminished the authority of logic, which only "liberates the imagination as to what the world may be; it refuses to legislate as to what the world is." Mr Russell's own logic, however—precisely because of his concern about what may be—does legislate as to what the world is. He adjudges it chaotic and cruel. Concerning its regeneration he declares "there is no one key. . . . It is necessary to embrace all life and all science. Europe, Asia and America, physics, biology and psychology." Yet, because he cares about it much as he cares about the joys of mathematics his own proposals for regeneration ring with the finality of a judgement and move with dialectic inevitability from doubtful premiss to inescapable conclusion. I say, doubtful premiss. For the premiss must of necessity be selected and abstracted; in experience it never has the sharpness and the purity that it needs for dialectic. Once chosen, it ceases to be an event or a condition and becomes a schema; the conclusions it implies dialectically are not the conclusions it leads to practically—as any student of history knows.

So the quality of thinness in Mr Russell's thinking comes to be. Sheer antitheses like "creative" and "possessive" instincts do not obtain in human nature, in which every impulse is mixed with every other, and each action is a resultant of the whole personality. Utter confrontations, such as Mr Russell imputes to capitalist and communist industrialism and imperialist and self-determining nationalism (these, he says, are the causes of our present chaos) do not occur. Too many other institutions and passions are mixed in, too subtly, too variously, too complexly; and as to which shall rule there is no telling. Chaos itself is a relative term, and if the modern world is called a chaos, it is so called in the light of what is believed to be a more orderly past or what is hoped for as a more orderly future. Whether such a light shall be *ignis fatuus* or illumination is a matter of taste. Human traits do not share the separateness and distinctness of the words that count them, nor can the living personality which is their compenetration be equated with the geometrified abstraction resulting from the combination of the counters.

Humanitarian, but non-human, all too non-human! is the comment of my ruminative mind, as I read these choice bits that Mr Russell has assembled from his own works. The figure of destiny

here presented seems somehow more peculiarly angular and arithmetical than Bentham's calculus of happiness. I think of a remark of Russell's own, in his essay on the *Elements of Ethics*: "the philosopher bent upon the construction of a system is inclined to simplify the facts unduly . . . and to twist them into a form in which they can all be deduced from one or two general principles. The moralist . . . being primarily concerned with conduct, tends . . . to value the actions men ought to perform more than the ends which such actions serve." Mr Russell is both a philosopher and a moralist.

But this is not all. If it were, his achievements in philosophy and in mathematics would have won the recognition of the specialists, but the hosts of the intelligentsia would have passed him by unmarked. To the intellectual masses, sick with doubt of old faiths and hungry for a new one, Russell is a watchman, telling of the night. To the qualities of the philosopher there have been joined for him those of the prophet. In his books the far and cool dry light of pure reason can burn red with righteous indignation, flash electric with wit, or glow to a white heat of ardour for what he sees as true or desirable; pure logic and puritan emotion fuse in a firework of radicalism and rebellion, establishing its momentary luminous pattern in the all-enfolding dark. Withal, there is an aristocratic carelessness in his posture before the world. His deliverances are stark; their form is assurance, their felicity persuasiveness. Thus, he imparts the finish of fine art to moral fervour, the distinction of intellectuality to the urge for reformation, and invests radicalism, which is otherwise either angry or unctuous, with logical good form. In his utterances, the evil he denounces seems so plainly evil, the good he recommends so clearly good! How should men not take his philosophy as a chart of the way of life for them, how should they not be sure at last what to abandon and what to seek? Multitudinous and doubtful and confused as the way in fact may be, the chart is single and simple and sure. To me, as a picture of the way, it looks more like a projection by a cubist than an elevation by a map-maker. But to the hearts of many brave and hopeful men and women of our time, the philosophy of Bertrand Russell, whatever he himself intended, is not a vision of the way of life but a plan for passing over it, a *summa* of salvation in a world laid out by mathematical logic and worked by automatic machines.

# THREE PAGES FOR AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY

(For G. B. D.)

BY R. ELLSWORTH LARSSON

## I

*listen*

in the bleak  
season  
I have heard  
after the final  
dissonance of notes  
fumbled by all four winds  
as a full  
dull chord of freezing silence  
quick to drop from high  
immemorably thick leavage  
of the night  
like the twitching  
body of an ape  
the word  
pronounced  
as memory of a word  
once heard  
heard and foreseen embedded in  
some undated day as final basis  
of a quickly bent  
spent arc of sharp  
infinitesimal progress  
through the dark

## II

*listen*

in the bleak season  
I have heard  
after the final

dissonance of notes  
 fumbled by all  
 four winds

a word

with only  
 sudden thickening of heart  
 and only sudden shuffling of  
 the step  
 as sign of the event

### III

*listen*

in these decaying  
 days

in these bleak seasons  
 when the flesh

unmeshed falls from me  
 flake by flake  
 as light falls from the walls  
 of this

my discontented house

not to

the gods

the words that have  
 as rind and symbol  
 this carved  
 unsigned undated stone

do I

make incantations

but in the marrow  
 of my narrow house

and in the marrow  
 of my bone

alone I conjure as a song  
 all long  
 drawn secret syllables that are  
 the magic of your name

and when the flesh has fallen  
 to the core  
 your name shall be more freely  
 in the rarer  
 altitudes than air

  until  
 it shall again recall  
 all atoms of my flesh about it  
 as inevitable core

## IV

  and in  
 the morning then  
   I came

  the world  
 collapsed about me  
 like a tent  
 in which I ran and rattled  
 loosely like one lone  
 closecurled closefurled  
 and closezoned thought  
 within an empty brain

  and in  
 the morning then  
   I came

  bringing  
 my ashes warmly in an urn  
   again  
 O yet yet yet again  
 immortally to bury them  
 in the deep  
 and fragrant forests of your name



POLO. BY MAX LIEBERMANN





## THE FANCIFUL COUNTRYMAN

BY H. E. ALLEN

ONE winter Billie Appleyard went up to town as a groom in the service of the gentleman who was the shooting tenant at the hall in his native village. He did not stay long, but that was not surprising, for he had already taken a turn at most of the various occupations offered in the almost amphibious settlement on the East Anglian coast which was his home. He had been a boatman on the fresh waters, had made several voyages in the herring boats up to the Scotch Coast and the Orkneys, and before he went to London he was bullock-tender in the hereditary service at the Hall Farm, where his father was head team-man. "He fare extra sharp," said his mother the Sunday evening after he had left for London, as she and her husband sat together in the front room in their Sunday clothes. They looked large and comfortable in their heavy old chairs, but a depressed expression could be discerned on their countenances, and Mrs Appleyard spoke with an unwonted heaviness in her smooth, soft voice. "See how Billa get on however he tarn," she said, turning her broad, fair face to her husband. "He's that sharp at the wark it's a rum job he can't be a bit sharper and see what's gain. What ever make him that oneasa? He's the masterest boy for a change I ever did see. He look different from the rest and he fare different." She spoke almost with animosity, as if Billie's small stature and generally brown colouring were responsible for his vagaries. Her husband smoked silently on, and the thoughts of both the old people seemed to be focused on the bright play of fire in the little grate.

"Billa's a wonderful still boy," said the father after a moment, in his rough genial tones. "We can't tell what he have got in his headpiece. He ain't never ben one to sit on his back-side; hard wark don't flinch him, and he's never a-roisterin' and do. I don't onderstond him, mother, and when I don't onderstond I don't say."

He slowly puffed again at his pipe, turned his shaggy, weather-beaten face to the fire, and his keen brown eyes, sole link with Billie, resumed their intent gaze at the play of flame.

"He give no presentiment," his wife quickly responded. "He fair muddle me," she continued sadly. "We ain't never used our children to no fancies, but Billa fare allus to be set on some fancy or other. That make him act simple, but he don't fare simple." She sat looking at her husband almost appealingly. He took out his pipe and turned to her slowly.

"Don't yo' forget Em'la Woods, mother," he said gently. "He's clear o' that scrape, and to marry into that lot would ha' ben the downfall of ony man."

"A fam'la what hov allus ben on the parish," took up his wife, brightening a little, "what's started half the queer warks and the nonsense a-going about. It's a rum job when a rare pretta gel like that generate in that kind of a fam'la. She's sartin to do destruction among the boys. That she be. And it wor a rum job her makin' a laugh o' Billa that-a-way," she concluded, relapsing into her gloom almost sullenly.

"Pay you no regard to that now, mother," went on her husband. "A gel like that'll do a deal more depredations after she be married than what she did afore. That there gentleman pedlar ha' bit off more nor what he can champ," and he chuckled as if to change the tone; then, seeing his wife still moodily staring into the fire, he rose and slapped her back.

"Bed-time, mother. Don't you fret over this one. You'll bring him to port right enow, same as you have the rest," and he set about the bed-time operations, till his strong suggestive impulse reached her, and she rose and joined him. In silence they wound up the clock, pulled apart the fire, put out the cat, bolted the doors, and changed the lamp for a candle. The husband smiled when he saw his wife yawn and sway a little, as she started before him up the precipitous twist of the narrow stairs. "I now wish Billa had took up with a nice gel here a'ter his misfortune. 'Twould ha' settled him," she said drowsily, as she settled herself to undress.

The truth was that Billie's departure for London was the sign that he was regaining his mental health after the shock given by his jilting. All his life he had required something more to satisfy him than activity, and creature comfort. His mother was right; he had, as it were, an extra sense, his fancy, which had to be nourished. So he changed occupation when he had learned all that any life could teach him, and so, when his fancy was taken by

Emily Woods, her entrancing fairness fed his infatuation longer than would have been possible to another man. He was both lover and champion. In those days he had a heart full of joy, trust, and expectancy, and under the influence of Emily's soft silence, his tongue was loosened. After the country fashion they courted along the lanes and foot-paths and against the stiles. When he saw his mother's distressed looks and once or twice listened to her timid insinuations on the subject of Emily's character, his jaw would set, and he would determine that if they could not live in peace in their native parish he would take Emily to America, to be as free of his family and of hers as they were when they walked out. "'Tain't no good a-mobbin' him, mother," his father said gently one day when Billie had left the tea-table abruptly, to escape her eager narratives on the subject of the Woods's. "He won't alter. He don't care a ding what be the black warks of the fam'la. He want the gel." Near Christmas the cottage was engaged and, when Billie went to sea, he left Emily money to buy the furniture. The herrings were not running well and they had to go far up the coast to get their "crans." The Mollie Ann was still out when Billie's first banns were read, but two days later she came to port, "made up," and all impatience Billie bicycled home with his share of the profits in his pocket.

His home lay on his way to Emily's, and he stopped a second to drop his bundle. As he appeared at the backdoor, his mother stood "washing up" at the kitchen table. At sight of him her face wrinkled with feeling, tears started from her eyes, and her breast began to heave. She did not speak, only gazed at her son with an intense look of misery and affection.

"What ever's up, mother?" he exclaimed, shocked out of his haste. Then his mother began to sob. "She hov left you, my man. Gone off with that feller what sold gimcracks. 'Twas the mona you left what done it, and the banns wor all read reg'lar. My poor Billa, she have put sumpun on you and made a laugh o' you." Here she broke down entirely and sank on a chair, covering her face with her apron. And it was the strange necessity of Billie to clear his swimming vision, nerve his congealing heart, and comfort his mother for his betrayal by the girl whom he had loved and she had hated.

"Don't upset yourself, mother," he said huskily. "'Twill make

you queer. It's my trouble right enow. 'Tain't yours. There now, be you easa," and he grasped her wet hand, soaked from the dish-water and spattered with tears.

His father's shadow darkened the door-way and Billie went out. As he turned, with the curious short-sightedness of grief he noticed that the dish-water had stopped steaming while it was still white and clear, and Dot, the black cat, was on the hearth-rug methodically washing her face. The whole room bit into Billie's consciousness as if it were hostile, but the world beyond was dissolving.

He stepped into the open and brought his bicycle past the cabages to the shed where it was kept. He was conscious of a gigantic pulse throbbing through him, something unexpected, and quite out of proportion to his human frame. He struck back through the rough grass towards the marsh and, when a barrier of gorse had been raised behind him, he threw himself down sobbing. He felt no anger against Emily and the pedlar, but it seemed to him as if she had died; that exquisite image which he had loved had suddenly been dissipated, as if after all it had been only a ghostly visitant all the time. Indeed, he was shaken as if he had suffered uncanny supernatural contact.

And in the days that followed he seemed to feel all through his being the noxious effects of having entertained his fancy for Emily. It was not that he was acutely suffering so much as that he had aged. He kept much at home, and he even consented to give up the sea, when his father after a time timidly remarked that the master was looking for another hand on the farm. Before the year was up he became bullock-tender, but one day when he heard that a groom was wanted for London, he presented himself and was gone. He had not yet found his anchor in the world, and as soon as his nature began to recover from the shock which he had received, he began to crave the interest that came to him with new work. He was saddened for a moment to leave his mother so gloomy, but as he travelled towards London, he was soon exhilarated by the very rattle of the train.

But a shadow fell on him once he entered the town; the brick and stone cramped and disgusted him. "Even the brick here's mould-colour," he thought as he penetrated deeper and deeper into the vastness of London. He missed the clear redness of the brick at

home, as much as he missed the open spaces and the trees. When he entered the region of squares and of tall pilastered houses, his spirits revived. The town was noble after all, but he soon found town grandeur cramping: formality was the order of his master's household. "I should ha' gone to America," he said to himself, in a few days. "I'm sick o' kings and courts." He had never before known how humble he was, for at home he was in immediate touch with his equals, or less, which to a genial nature is usually enough to secure a happy unconsciousness of class altogether.

The servants' hall was something that he had not reckoned on. There was a preponderance of females and, since his misfortune, Billie had lived after the manner of one too old or too young for gallantry. He wished that he had never come to London when, at the first supper, the servants' hall loudly dubbed him the "dumpling," after the usual nickname of his county. Nicknames were general among the men working together at home, and he had always been "Brown," but to put a new nickname on a grown man he felt to be an indignity. He did not explode during his intercourse with his fellow servants, but grew almost sullen. In all the relations of his new life he felt cramped in spirit, and his town attire cramped his body. But his pride would not let him give notice at once.

In a day or two he began to distinguish details in the general stir of humanity about him, and, in his general discomfort, it was notable how warmly he could approve the upper housemaid, Jennie. He noticed her first on a February day when he came in to tea to find a little glass of crocuses in the centre of the table. It was the season when the lengthened days still seemed rare and precious, and tea by sunlight was a delightful miracle. In the thin sunshine of the late afternoon, the little blossoms looked brilliantly orange. The pleasure on Billie's face caught the eye of the cook, who was alone in the room.

"They're my valentine," said this buxom, kindly woman. "Jennie brought 'em, and they didn't come off no coster's cart. She raised 'em. We was talkin' last week how Valentine's Day's gone out. When I was young the shops was full of Valentine presents. 'Twas a handy day for them that had been misused to get their own again; boys that was too shy to speak to their lady could send a picture." Here the cook smiled significantly. Billie lost the al-

lusion, but her conversation interested him; he felt at ease and spoke up himself.

"I've heerd tell of it down in our parish," he hazarded. "Snatch-walentines they had that time o' day. You knocked at the door and the people come and there worn't no one but a big stick o' wood maybe tumbled in. Once my mother got a box sent her for a walentine and a robin flew out." He laughed boyishly, for he was speaking naturally for the first time since he had come to town. The talk in the servants' hall up to now had been all of betting, foot-ball, royalty, divorces, and murders; as to which he knew little and cared less.

"You'll have to tell that to Jennie," returned the cook genially, gazing with obvious curiosity at the transformation of his face. "She's up to all sorts of devilment, I wager. She keeps herself to herself, but I'd be glad for her to have her bit o' fun now and again." With her eyes on the pretty flowers, she spoke almost with pride and magnanimity. Billie realized that there was something about Jennie that made even the cook, mistress of the whole lower regions, feel flattered at her attentions. When in a moment the rest came trooping in for tea, his eye singled out Jennie, and he was charmed. She was not exactly pretty, for her features were too flat, but she had quick brown eyes, a bright colour, and a very neat figure. "I much like the manner of her," said Billie to himself innocently, quite unthinking as to consequences.

After that his routine seemed more tolerable, and the days and weeks passed. He found more and more to draw his attention and admiration to Jennie. Hyacinths, tulips, and wall-flowers followed the crocuses in the cook's little glass on the table. Jennie's face brightened when everyone was told that she had brought them from home. Usually she only looked and listened while the rest joked, gossiped, flirted, and quarrelled, and in this company Billie liked her very silence. Still, the play of life which he felt behind her expressive face piqued his curiosity. Where was her home? How could she be as she was and a poor person in London? She couldn't have been brought up in any of the poor streets which he learned to know in the very neighbourhood of the big houses, twisting here and there behind the mews. She could never have been one of the swarming children in these islands of poverty,

playing ball under the feet of the passers-by, chalking the pavement white for their games; as the warm weather came on, making in corners their little "grottoes" of sand and shells and asking for coppers as reward. Those flowers which Jennie brought never grew in any of the dark, unwholesome-looking pots which Billie saw on the window-ledges of the poorest houses, on high windows, and in windows below ground. He pondered these things with the inexperience of the countryman, seeing all "poor persons" in London as one and the same.

"Poor things," he would say to himself as he picked his way along a poor street, and noted their attempts to get a little play or a little green. "Poor things. Who'd ha' thought things could be so hard? They're all imitatin' to get things what country people have so plenty they never give 'em a thought. It's warse for the dickey-birds," and, with the memory keen of the larks now trilling across the fields and marshes at home, he would look sympathetically up at the cages here and there nailed on outside walls in the poorest streets as the spring came on. On one house he saw six cages fastened and several of the birds were singing. He decided that if Jennie lived in a street like this, she would have six birds and they would all sing. He remembered how he used to milk the cow over the tame robin that was once his "dickey-bird," but the farm cat, into whose pink little mouth when young he also used to milk, later killed the little robin.

On the whole he decided that the cats had the best of it in London. Birds and game were scarce, but there were rats and mice enough to make up. From his window over the stable he often saw cats silhouetted against the sky at night. The tiles added to them a new world, and almost another element. In a sense they were masters as they never were in the country, for they sat on the garden walls by the dozen, and Billie knew from the curses of the gardener that all planting had to be done with them in view. He felt positive that Jennie had a splendid great pet cat. He longed to ask her when he saw her stroking the storeroom cat, and more and more made excuses to stay in the servants' hall.

And then, one pretty morning of full spring, when he was working in the stable-yard at the side of the house, Jennie, in her flower-like blue and white morning garb, stepped out to hang up some red dusters. To-day the delicate spring sunshine brightened her

whole figure; more than her little face seemed vivid this morning. "She do look a rare pretta sight with them bright things," thought Billie, as she stood reaching up to the line, with her face turned to its pert childish profile, and her dark eyes intent on what she was doing. She finished and went in, unconscious that she had been watched, but the gardener, who had been drawing water at Billie's side, had caught the young man's absorbed gaze.

"This hain't the first time, mate," said this genial old cockney, standing a moment by his full buckets, "that I've seen your heyes a-restin' on that lidy. But you'll find you're backin' a dead 'orse. Do you get me? She don't let no one tread on 'er toes; she's the one to give a dose of the cold shoulder, that's me meanin'." He spoke kindly, then lifted his buckets and went out. The "dump-ling," that round-headed, brown little chap from the country, was beginning to be a favourite with the staff in several quarters.

He left Billie suffering one of the crises of his life. Various emotions leapt out and tore him: he felt the instant conviction that the gardener had spoken the truth, anger that his affection had been conspicuous to the world while he was still unconscious of it, gratitude that he had been put on his guard, relief that Jennie usually "gave the cold shoulder"; all these emotions seethed through him, as he stood a moment with the sunshine falling in pale patterns on the old paved yard before him. Then of a sudden all impressions were liquidated, and he was only conscious of the overwhelming fact that he was again in love. "It's a rum un," he said to himself as he still stood in the sunny door-way of the old earth-brown brick stable. It was as if he did not know how to plot a town romance. He shrank from love-making as he had seen it carried on in the parks, though they were beginning to be lovely. The thought of stolen meetings in the servants' hall or in corners of the basement enraged him. But he felt young again.

And then he went into dinner, and the staff were all assembled, and at the sight of Jennie he was shot through with shyness, so that he was as miserable as if he had suddenly been taken ill. His confusion served him well, for he dropped under his chair a glove that he was taking to his master and he had to come back for it after a moment.

To his joy he found the room empty except for Jennie. She sat reading the newspaper, and he hesitated at the door, seizing



this joyful opportunity to look at her with unmasked eyes. "I forgot the glove," he faltered, when she half turned to notice his entrance. She only half withdrew her eyes from the picture sheet in her hand.

"Better sit down again before you go out; to break your luck. It's bad luck to come back for something you've forgotten."

Joy broke over Billie in a flood. He had already noticed that town people were always talking of their "luck." Perhaps their betting gave them the habit; and then they hadn't so many things to think about as country people had—crops and animals and the weather. Now he blessed Jennie's superstition, and seated himself with alacrity, but in a mood in which joy, unfortunately, had not overcome shyness. So he sat silent, but gazed with all his eyes.

Jennie read on for a moment, apparently having forgotten his existence. Then she turned her page, and became conscious that he was still there, staring at her.

She appeared startled, coloured slightly, and her eyes flashed. "What ever are you after?" she asked curtly. "They do teach you to use your eyes in the country, but they'd better give a little more attention to the tongue. It's easy to see you don't know what's courtesy." She spoke fiercely, as if Billie had sought to molest her, and with a manner as cutting as her words she dropped the newspaper on the table and walked out. Her movements as she did so were more leisurely than any to which Billie had seen her yield her slender, nervous little figure. It seemed that her whole person was changed in order to express scorn of country manners. He remembered that the gardener had said, "She don't let no one tread on her toes."

Then the cook came in, and Billie hastily gathered himself together and went his way. His misery and discomfiture would have been complete if Jennie had not made him a little angry. His former disaster had killed nearly all of his self-confidence so far as women were concerned, but not quite. Jennie, fortunately or unfortunately, had struck almost the only note that could rouse him to assert himself. He felt himself only too polite to women; weak even, and that had been a cause for bitter memories. He felt that women abused such treatment, and that his case was hopeless, since he knew that he could never bring himself to the

rough masterful ways that were said to be the most successful. Now he chose to think that Jennie had taunted him with not being polite enough, and he was astonished, and a new part of him came into action. If that was all, he could show her! Hope and energy stirred, as the immediate memory of the unfortunate scene died away, and he began to consider ways and means of getting into connexion with his new love. He would show her that country courtesy was a little more substantial than city polish. He passed into a state of suspended living; working, appearing at meals as before, until the next day, when he had some time off, and set forth for the district of big shops. He was afraid of shop assistants, and he walked the streets till he saw in a window exactly what he wanted. Then, with determination and dignity, he walked in and made his purchase in short order. He was resolved to make Jennie the gift of a pair of gloves, since gloves had brought them together the day before. They were to be green, to remind her of the country, and of wool of the fleecy sort that he had seen ladies wear. He was very proud of the fact that he knew how to procure such a superior article. He made a point of their being very small, and the only piece of advice which he took from the shop assistant was in respect to the size. She warned him that the ones he was intending to get were children's gloves. So he let the compliment reside in the fineness of the article, and contented himself with a small woman's size.

These gloves were a great joy to him the night when he had them in his room. He could hardly restrain himself from showing them to the gardener's boy, who was his room-mate. That evening, under the influence of the gloves, he loosened so far as to question the cook quietly about Jennie's home and family. He learned that she always went home for her time off, and was said to live in a semi-detached house south of the river, in a street of brown brick where the gentry had moved out years before, and working people had come in. They were a "well-noted family." Jennie's father was a skilled workman, and her sisters were in service in the best houses in London. No one had heard that Jennie walked out with a young man, but she was close-mouthed and might have done so. "They keep themselves to themselves," cook repeated.

This sketch of urban superiority took Billie's fancy hugely. This was the girl for him, different from any he had known, but

with country tastes already in the germ. She was pleasing from all points of view; not like his first love who, though he would never tell his mother, had taken his fancy almost against his will. Billie had a happy night, remembering his gloves the moment the alarm woke him in the morning. He jumped up, feeling with a gush of joy that his whole life was about to burst into bloom, into full blossom, richly scented and coloured.

He wished, if possible, to pass the gift into Jennie's own hand, and he took it in his pocket to breakfast; making no attempt to remove it from the envelope in which it had been bought, lest the evidence should be lost that it came from a good shop. Breakfast passed in the usual bustle, everyone a little late to sit down and in consequence devouring the bacon and eggs in haste and almost in silence. Again the sight of Jennie in the flesh generated shyness, which dissipated some of Billie's exhilaration. The meal seemed quickly over. Jennie, who was always prompt at her duties, was gone before he knew it.

By the eleven o'clock cocoa, the rush in Jennie's work was not over, but by two o'clock dinner the work of a housemaid had slackened, and it was now that she usually lingered to look at the newspaper. Billie had screwed up his courage to decisive action, and he was no sooner sure that the others had left the hall than he returned, and again found Jennie poring over her sheet.

He made no excuse as he stood in front of her, holding out his slender parcel and at the same time trying to bow politely.

She looked up startled, instantly, as he saw, on the defensive; her brown eyes resting on his alertly, with almost the hardness of precious stones.

"What ever's that?" she said, in the tone of one suffering a rude interruption.

"I got them for you," gulped Billie, blushing scarlet, and he laid the beloved parcel in her lap.

This liberty stung Jennie to action. She quickly jumped up, thus dropping Billie's treasure to the floor.

"How dare you?" she retorted, looking first down at the parcel, then up at Billie with scorn and indignation.

Billie just kept his head up out of his misery. The habit of respect for the fallen article made him stoop and rescue it—he tore the envelope and drew out the beautiful gloves.

"I thought they'd become you," he said, with deep feeling, holding them up before her face.

Jennie's amazement at the whole episode had slowed down her pace. Now she burst forth:

"What are you driving at?" she hurled at him fiercely.

"I would much like you to walk out with me," returned Billie, brightening.

"Certainly not. People from the country do take things for granted," and speaking these words as if they under-expressed her meaning, Jennie turned abruptly and left the room. Even as she did so, she raised herself in her lover's estimation, for she seemed to leave the gloves without look or question. His first sweetheart had seized his gifts eagerly, as he had noted even at the time.

This incident blasted all the rejuvenation which Billie had been feeling. He suffered not only the immediate disappointment, which was bitter enough, but the dam seemed to break which had held back the bitterness of memory, and again disillusionment rolled over and submerged him. The hopelessness that he felt had something fatalistic about it: he felt doomed to live the merely practical life of middle age. "I fare a poor thing with women," he said to himself humbly. "My luck's bad," so he added Jennie's prouder philosophy to his own.

And that very evening before his discomfiture had had time to become as it were coherent and influence his plans, his feelings were savagely tossed again. He came into supper with a newspaper from home sticking out of his pocket. It was a time when what the cook called "the sad dreadful murder of a particularly nice man" was agitating the country. The whole staff had taken sides in the judgement which the court was to deliver, and all newspapers available in the servants' hall were in use when Billie entered. The parlour-maid, who had just preceded him, too late to get a paper, cast her eyes at once on the sheet protruding from Billie's pocket. She was a blue-eyed coquette who had resented his indifference to her charms, and she seemed glad to use him a little roughly. She went boldly forward and held out her hand.

"Gi'e me a look," and before he could reply that the paper was an old one, she fairly snatched it from his pocket.

She dropped into a chair to look up the trial, and soon saw her mistake. "What do you mean palming this old thing off onto me?"

she said with fury. Then, as if searching for revenge, she glanced over the front page, which was entirely taken up with notices of farm auctions.

"Just you look here," she said in a moment to Jennie, who sat quietly stitching beside her. Jennie turned to look where Gladys had pointed, and the laughter in her eyes was not lost on poor Billie, though she pursed her lips silently. Her manners were always the quieter when Gladys was about. But Gladys did not restrain herself.

"Listen to what the dumplings read," she said in a loud voice, till the whole company looked up and Billie was evenly balanced between desire to run away and to use his fists. "What do you think of this?"—And screwing up her face she read out in a mouth-ing way:

" 'Live and Dead Farming Stock

- 13 Grand Large Black Young Sows and Pigs
- 89 Splendid Large Black Gilts
- 11 Good Large Black Boars
- 18 Grandly Bred Large White Gilts
- 15 Smart Large White Boars
- 10 Cows in calf and in profit—' "

here she giggled, and several of the company broke into a laugh. Billie's eyes had been fastened on Jennie's twinkling countenance, but now her face became steady. He was so absorbed in watching her that he let the reading go on.

" 'Mr Jonathan Platten is declining housekeeping,' and his 'capital household furniture' is for sale. There's your chance, Jennie," and the two girls read the catalogue together with suppressed giggles. Billie had noted how coolly Jennie was in the habit of bearing herself towards Gladys, and the sight of the two heads close together cut him. "I know the signification of that," he thought. "She fare to be that reada to spite me she'll swaller that artful customer."

In a moment Gladys had hit upon something else with which to regale the company. "Hear what the dumplings want," she called out. "'Hardy ponies bred and reared on the poorest land in England, improve greatly. They are hardy, very thrifty doers,

and are renowned for their docility.'” She ended with a cackle, “There, Jennie, we see what they relish. Let’s beware of marryin’ a dumplin’.” Jennie bit her lip with a flash of anger in her eyes, but the rest laughed. Billie in a fury dashed forward and seized his paper.

“Do you onderstond what you’ve been a-readin’? I lay I could school every mother’s child of you, and so could any simple parson where I belong.” He hastily made his way out of the room, feeling as he did so that he was cutting for ever all connexion with town life and town people.

The next day Billie gave notice, and he spent his last month isolated as much as possible. No change of demeanour was to be noted in Jennie; she passed him with an easy indifference that hardly seemed to recognize his existence, and Billie soon came to shunning her as much as he could. The old gardener had perhaps noted the lack of progress in Billie’s relation with Jennie, and the day Billie’s departure was announced he happened to be in the yard when she crossed it. He came and stood beside Billie, who was currying his master’s horse.

“Wal, mate,” he said, with a kindly look at the young man, “that’s a hindependent young party. They say Madam can’t allus get what she’d like of ’er. She made ’er harrangements when she come, and she wasn’t never to be haxt to go to the country. She ’ates it; it’s so rough and quiet-like, so she says. They ’umour ’er, she don’t never forget nothing, and she’s wonderful trim. She told cook she’d bettered herself every situation she’s took, and she’s still on the rise, I take it, but she hallows about two years to a place. So you’ve a chance to get inco with her yet, my boy,” and the old man chuckled a little, and gave a keen look from under his rough eyebrows.

Billie nodded curtly. “Not at all,” he said shortly, without looking up from his work. “I generate in the country and I don’t wish for no different.”

## II

And the next Saturday evening after his return from town Billie Appleyard sat down with his parents to a bountiful feast of “baked stuff” fresh from the oven. Twice a week his mother

baked the little brick oven in the wall full twice over; with meat-roll, sausage-roll, cheese-roll, short bread (speckled with currants), currant cake, jam tart, pie of fresh fruit according to season. On Saturday night there was a "light poodin'" besides. The grate was tiny, and except for suet puddings or dumplings of meat or of fruit the oven supplied most of the food for the family. Billie had missed his mother's baking in town, where the food was too various to suit him. Even now in his depressed state he did justice to the fare, and stretched his appetite a little when he saw the pleased expression spreading, as he ate, over his mother's broad, delicately-coloured countenance.

"They've a-plenta of all sorts in London," he remarked, "but we ain't never ben pinched. No one can't never say that."

"No, that we ain't," echoed his mother gladly, hesitating to speak further, lest she should interrupt something which Billie might have it in mind to say. Her husband had just brought word that by a stroke of luck Billie could resume the bullock-tending, and her contentment was complete. It was true that the boy looked a little thin and wan, but this did not seem strange, for he supplied her with many details as to his dissatisfaction in town.

"You never see such raggety dirta people as there be in London," he went on. "Then again there's others what's dressed so gay it's hardla dacent. And they eat what a man here wunt give to a dog. 'Twould fair craze yo' to pass some of them butcher shops. Why, the fry's as black as a stone, and the meat's all of it foreign."

His mother nodded delightedly. Foreign meat was one of the prejudices of good old country people like the Appleyards. "I dare not take it indoors. Do, my master'd throw it out," she always told the butcher. On Tuesday he killed, and all good housekeepers were if possible on hand to get the liver and kidney almost before the animal heat had gone out. By next day no "fry" was to be had, and by Friday all English meat was cleared out of the shop. Since the local shops did not always risk the purchase of bacon, shiftless housewives were then often forced to slim fare, but generous bakers like Mrs Appleyard were proudly independent.

She was glad now that Billie had eyes to see some things. He'd come home and fallen on his feet, and he deserved a warm welcome.

"Fare we'd better make o' Billa a little, now he be home," she said to her husband that night. "He do dearla love a dainta mess of eels, if you can lay hands on some." Her husband nodded. "Do, I'll bring 'em," he answered shortly, with a pleased look in his eyes.

And so Billie came home and was feasted, and settled again into his old routine. The openness and fresh air of the fields soothed him, and he liked to see the bullocks thrive, and to feel himself the purveyor of their benefits. It was as if he had always sadness at his heart, and always some comfort for his sadness. But his satisfactions played on the surface. What was deep beneath he tried not to feel: his fancy was starved and he lacked some essential element in his nourishment. Since his first jilting his mother had not had to complain of his wakening her by singing when he went out to feed the bullocks before work began. The men he worked with noted his silence. "Brown's stiller nor what he wor," said one to another one day when they had finished eating their breakfast together under the stack. "Boys bain't allus what men'll be," said his father to his mother the night when she commented to him on the changes which persisted in Billie.

He came home at a fortunate time. He left London at the height of "the season," and he reached home just before the first "haysel." He was accordingly plunged into a whirl of work. This was the time when farmers worked at highest pressure. When the hay was in, the corn harvest soon came on, and he had little time for thought when he worked every day as long as the light lasted, and had to feed his animals in the dark. When harvest was over—beyond the average quickly—he was unnaturally sorry. The money was the same whatever the time of the harvest, and the possible interruptions were many, bad weather, overturned loads, stacks that went wrong and did not pass the master. It was the labourer's habit to look on a quick harvest as the supreme good fortune of the year. Who would be so impious as to complain when harvest was done?

When his turn came, he took up his harvest wage from the hand of the master a little grimly, and as he walked alone down the gravelled path from the farm-house, he felt almost like throwing it into the hedge; except that, being paper, it would flutter away, and there would be no satisfaction in that. Only a fire could put



an end to paper money after a fashion to give vent to an evil mood; and he would like to throw metal far and wide, to fall with a thud. But then someone would find it and talk. So he fingered the thin resilient paper in his hand, as he walked home by the foot-path through the stubble. His indifference to this precious one lump sum in the agricultural year stung him, like a symbol of the general listlessness of his life. He had no family rent to pay, the purpose for which most of his fellows would use it; neither did he wish an "after-harvest frolic"; his wardrobe was in good order, and he had a bicycle.

"I fare in a wonderful bad mind," he muttered. This access of self-consciousness somehow seemed to push forward his emotional development.

"May as well do somethin' with it," he thought, as he went slowly forward, with the potent paper in his hand more and more oppressing his mind. Suddenly he had a change of purpose: Jennie, whose image lived deep in his consciousness, would always take what she could get, to help her to get more; he was sure of that. The old gardener said that she used her situations as stepping-stones to something better; she stayed in each long enough to get a good and long reference. "She'll wait on the Queen in the finish," thought Billie with a swelling heart and fancy. In a flash he saw how heedlessly he had stumbled from one kind of work to another. He was sick of getting interest out of mere change. Jennie had scorned him and his country-life; he would show that a countryman could get on, just where he was. Soon he began to walk briskly forward—he had suddenly leaped to the consideration of practical affairs. How could he lay out his harvest wage to make a little money "off-hand"? He hadn't enough for a cow, goats were no profit unless you had children to feed, the dykes about his cottage made life for ducks too easy; they would swim away; chickens and rabbits seemed small business. He had it—he would raise turkeys for Christmas. Then the finest houses in the land would be eating turkeys from his county: even Jennie would admit that. He believed that he knew where he could get some young turkeys, and he would fatten them on the long gore of rough up-land that ran down to the marsh from behind his father's cottage.

That was a turning-point, and thenceforth he began to enjoy a

degree of mental health that he had not known since his first disappointment. His life was no longer listless; it interested him again, though not with the incandescent firing of the whole man that he used to feel before he had known sorrow. There was an insoluble something deep down, but his consciousness rarely touched so near bottom. Jennie was there: she had not evaporated into nothingness as had his first love, Emily Woods. She lived in his memory as overwhelmingly lovable and admirable, but her image did not beckon him on to hope. He could even think almost without a twinge that he did not know that she remained in the same service: he might have lost track of her altogether. His jilting had taught him the bad habit of disappointment, and he had accepted his rebuff from Jennie as final. This very fact in the end gave an almost abstract quality to her memory. It nourished him the more, being deprived of the teasing sauce of uncertainty and of hope.

By the second year, it might be evident to any one that Billie was "gettin' on," and it even began to be mentioned that he might rise to be a steward, as had one or two of his brothers. He put his spare time into money-making enterprises, and they succeeded, and it would appear that he must have a good post-office account. His mother joyfully helped him with hot mash for the turkeys on cold mornings and whenever she could lend a hand she did. She began to suspect that her son's new manner of life meant some secret intention on his part. "There is allus sumpun wexin' about Billa," she told her husband. "His signification ain't clare. He fare to have got in wi' some gel in London, and he's imitatin' to unite with her, but this time he don't want no talk. Once bit, twice shy. Still," she concluded, "he don't get no letters away from her, and he's ben home a goodish time." Her husband could offer no suggestion, and she continued to ponder the matter. Up to a certain point it was a compliment to a mother for a son to remain single; but after that—An old bachelor was a rare phenomenon among labourers, and she did not altogether relish having one on her hands.

"However you take it," she concluded, "Billa don't exactla foler nater."

In this way came the second autumn after Billie's return from town, and the shooting tenant came down to the hall, bringing as usual a small staff. The first Sunday evening after this new

female contingent arrived in the parish, there was usually a full attendance at church; the staff at the hall had supplied several wives to the neighbourhood. It was one of the disappointments of Mrs Appleyard that she had never got Billie to church since his disappointment. "It's them banns he can't lose conscience of," she told her husband sagaciously. But she did not let her son lose altogether the advantages of church attendance.

This second year after Billie's return she came home from the service in question with a touch of extra excitement showing itself in the bustle with which she laid out the supper, as always on Sunday, in the front room.

"The people from the hall out?" enquired her husband, as they seated themselves at the table and began to stir their steaming cups of tea.

"That they wor," responded his wife, almost breathless. "And there wor as neat a young boda along o' them as I've laid eyes on this good while. Oh I did like the manner of her. She's new to these parts, but they say as she have been some time along o' the fam'la in London. Mebbe you recollect her, Billa? Her name's Jenna."

Poor Billie nodded, but he almost dropped his tea-cup. Then he tried to make himself very busy sipping his hot tea. His parents, made sensitive by hope, saw his emotion, and proceeded impersonally with their meal.

"There'll be sev'ral a-walkin' out in her direction," said his father, genially, as he munched his pastry in his slow way. "Be you a-gettin' a move on, my man." Billie made no answer, and Mrs Appleyard, with zealous discretion, kicked her husband under the table. Their son finished quickly and went out into the mild night of misty stars. He craved a larger room for his swelling thoughts.

He could not have described what he was feeling—it was as if the dead had come to life again and had brought back to him something precious which he had lost. The compact incompleteness of his consciousness of the last years had all of a sudden disintegrated; he was again cast into a rich chaos, and he hardly knew what he wished or intended. There was only one little point of definiteness in his thoughts: did Jennie by any remote and happy chance remember him when she came to his parish?

The next day as he was "scaling" he ruminated all day on the difficult subject of how to meet Jennie as quickly and as advantageously as possible. Should he write? Could he bear to wait till next Sunday and waylay her on her way home from church? Or must he trust to the chance of meeting her here or there? Brunton Fair was over; where his parents, perhaps many of his forbears, had sealed their pact; and so was the "water-frolic," another general holiday. But the Michaelmas Sale was coming on: the gipsies were already on the roads, bringing their "cocoanut shys," their "steam horses," and their "round-about." So far had Billie's boldness risen that with buoyant positiveness he determined to attend Jennie on this occasion. The life as a mere money-maker, which he had sloughed off yesterday, had left its traces. He now attacked his objective more directly than once he would have thought possible. His nature had compensated for the defect left by his jilting; he might not know how he was to connect himself again with Jennie, but he was certain that he would accomplish it soon one way or another.

That very afternoon, as he was returning after tea from counting his bullocks on the marsh, he met her alone on the "wall." This was the ridge skirting the dyke, which had been thrown up in its construction generations before, and it ran as a dry path overgrown with gorse and blackberry and patched with heather almost straight from Billie's home across the marsh to the hall. Billie was stepping quickly along this highway, whistling with a return of his youthful spirits. It was a fair mellow day, with haze seeping through the whole atmosphere; except near at hand, where the sun burnt through clear and strong. But even the radiance at the centre of the landscape was not golden, it was like the gleam of light upon silver. Altogether it was a day of silver and blue. In the distance the air took ghostly substance, but on the horizon it sank into blue clouds. From over the sand-hills came now and then the hoarse muffled sound of fog-horns telling the weather conditions at sea.

It was the season when blackberry pickers were still frequent along the "wall," and when far off Billie saw the dark blot of a human figure, he gave it no thought, till, as he came nearer, he saw that it was a woman, stooping by the dyke. He pulled up a moment, and then he saw that it was Jennie. In a flash his first

delight at seeing her rose to ecstasy as he realized that she must be liking the country and feeling at home here, or she would not wander alone and over rough ground in this way.

Brave as she had been, when she heard rustling through the brambles she looked up startled, and Billie had the intense joy of seeing relief break over her face when she recognized the intruder. She was paler: that is, the red in her cheeks was now set in white, it no longer shaded off delicately into her chestnut hair. But her keen face showed that the vital spark was not quenched, and she met him in the open direct manner with which she had met all the world, and him, until he had raised her hostility.

Now her quick eyes searched him for a moment, taking in the pale corduroy trousers and bright "slop" of blue cotton, which made his head stand out in a general nutty brownness. "You look different here," she spoke with a kind of grave dignity, unexpected to Billie, who remembered with sharp exactness every turn of her contemptuous look and speech during the few direct encounters which they had had in London. Now that she looked at him in such a different mood, for the first time he realized how long a course memory had had to run since they had parted.

She went at once to the point: "I forgot I knew anybody about here," she said, so simply that he could not believe her to be shamming, and so impersonally that he could believe that she had forgotten the incidents of their earlier connexion. "I've been queer, and Madam wanted I should come down here for a change of air. I didn't know I'd got so far. I was after them lilies, and they're mighty aggra-vating. I've come all this way and I couldn't hook one." She glanced back where here and there handsome white blooms floated majestically on the glassy bosom of the dyke as it ran back till the mist crept over it. Her courtesy seemed to mark the hospitality of the land as Billie's, and he felt very different from what he had ever felt in Jennie's company before: it gave a man heart to stand on his native soil.

"I'll get you them lilas," he replied quickly, and he knelt, reached out his supple brown arm and caught some; ran and cut an alder sapling into a hook, and hooked others. Jennie regarded him with a half-intent, half-smiling expression, and he felt as if he were being entertained in the parlour, after never having been allowed out of the scullery up to now.

"'Tain't enough for you," he said in a moment, looking at the few white blooms heading the long dripping tubes in Jennie's hand. He glanced ahead, but the marshmen had nearly reached this spot in their "deek-drawin'," and whatever lilies there had been now lay rotting along the "wall" in the brown refuse thrown up by their long tools.

A panic seized Billie lest he might lose Jennie, and with alacrity he ventured, "Come you along o' me, and I'll get you a-plenta."

"I must go back," she replied politely, though with a slight hardening of the eyes.

"It's on your way. There's nothing in it," he responded gently, but with firmness equal to hers. "I lay you never see so mana as what I'm a-goin' to show you, but they'll soon be a-goin' off. I shew'em to the school-missus a time back, and she allowed as they wor a rare lovela sight." He used even this strong persuasion gently, and perhaps his gentleness won his cause. In any case Jennie turned in his direction.

"Very well," she returned. "I'd like to see a heap together," and, holding the lilies firmly by the head of their slippery stems, she nimbly followed where Billie crossed the dyke. He was happiest when, silent, with her little head steady, she reached the curved middle of the beam from a ship, which had been laid across as a bridge. For a tumultuous second he longed to rescue her; to raise her all dripping from the dyke in his arms. This was the farthest that his fancy had ever dared, but her gallant progress thrilled him. "You can't call that gel citified," he said to himself when, with a proud little smile, she stepped up on firm ground. "There ain't mana in the parish what can walk that ligger straighter'n that."

They had another length of "wall" before them, and never had Billie's beloved marshes seemed so withdrawn into another world as on this mellow afternoon. When the fog-horns out at sea over the sand dunes now and then faintly hooted, the sound seemed to isolate them still further in their little world of sun, and the mist drank up the distance into a pale translucent blue, beside which the sky above looked pale.

Billie and Jennie walked silently along the rough pathway and birds every now and then started up before them. Once an owl rose with muffled flight. "He ain't a-hootin'," said Billie in alarm,

lest Jennie should take him for an omen. "He don't carry no bad luck. And there's the old hanser," for a blue heron majestically flapped up behind the owl. "Ev'ry night I raise him when I count the bullocks," said Billie, feeling joyfully that Jennie was already participating in his daily life.

She seemed to take to country lore kindly. "Madam said this was the best place in England for wild fowl," she vouchsafed, as if she were interested. "You haven't seen a quarter," Billie eagerly assured her. "Just you let me quant you on the mere. There's coots to make the water black in places, and you can see the grebes dive wonderful pretta-like." He did not press the invitation just then, for they came within sight of the mere. The bull-rushes grew thick before them, and beneath the polished green spikes, they could get a glimpse of the serried white petals of the gold-hearted lilies.

"Come you out in old Bob Manes's boat," said Billie, leading Jennie to a tarred "half-load boat" pushed up against the "hovers" of floating vegetation where the marsh ended and the mere began. "Best not step out in the fleet waters. Do, the mud's that thick it'll fair drownd us. I'll quant yo'," and he took up the long pole lying longside, and pushed out towards the channel. Thus they passed through a world of waxen blooms growing in a spiked forest of green rushes.

"The lila grow mighta comfortable-like along o' the old boulder," said Billie, as if he liked to see the mingling of green and white, of fibrous and of succulent.

"Did you ever!" exclaimed Jennie, as she saw the lilies, with a flash of the eyes that this time meant pleasure and not anger. "Upon my word, they are beauties!" Whereupon Billie leaned forward with his hook and began to bring in the finest. As he pulled the long tubes free of their roots in the slimy bottom, in spite of his old waterman's dexterity of movement the water splashed him now and again and his "slop" began in time to darken all over.

It was not long before Jennie noticed his condition. "Don't get yourself all messed about," she said, her manner a mixture of primness and of consideration. "I've got a fine show. We'll leave some for the next lidy," and she actually smiled with childish openness.

"I'll get a boat a-Saturda and quant yo'," went on Billie eagerly.

She hesitated a moment, as if at the direct attack her pride awoke. "All right," she returned, after a moment, dropping her head.

"You don't know real livin' in the town," exclaimed Billie fervently. "Now there's my mother. She have a rare lot o' things to keep her pleased down at ours, and when she get tired o' stoppin' indoors, she dearla love to go a-stickin'. Fine little sticks she get, heaps of 'em, and she boil her kittle in no time ony time o' the year. Then there's the fowls, and the garden, and we've rare pretta kittens twice a year reg'lar. Mother hain't no trouble findin' good homes for her cats. There's some women what take in the Fortnightla Sale and there's a-plenta of farm auctions besides."

There was something almost touching in the feeling way Billie sketched the life of a country woman as he knew it, and Jennie did not laugh, only watched his transfigured countenance and listened to his rustic language with curiosity on her face. "Maybe," she returned, a little absently. "It's very inter-esting here," she concluded.

But Billie's obstinate determination had not reached its supreme endeavour; hope had encouraged him till he was bent on explicitly reversing his rebuff. "Will you walk out with me here?" he asked Jennie in a tone of strong energy.

This time she kept him waiting a moment for his answer, and for the first time he saw her colour rise; but she raised to him that gaze direct but not bold which thrilled his heart.

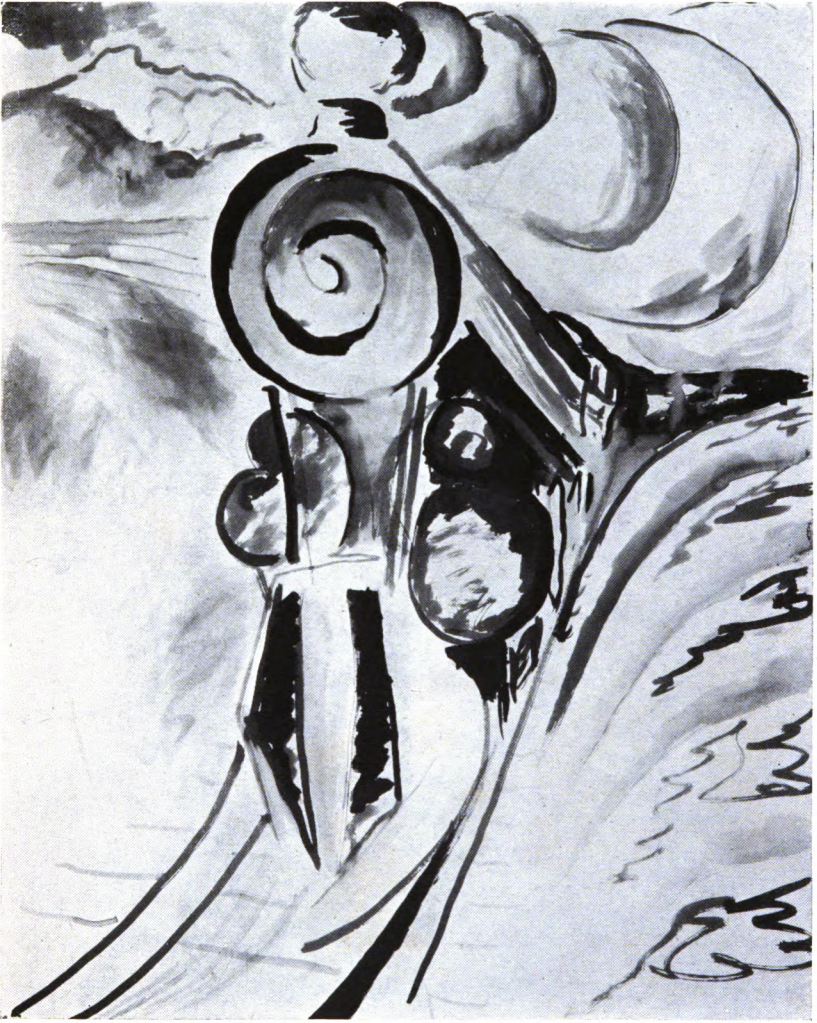
She spoke slowly; the quality of her voice enriched a little by her hesitation. "'Twill serve to pass the time away till I go home." She finished in a proud sort of silence.

These cold words did not chill Billie; given his opportunity, he had a new sense of strength to meet it.

She reminded him that her time would soon be up, and as they went their way towards the hall, he talked to her as naturally as if she had always been indulgent. With delight he saw that he kept her attention.

So their courtship began.





WASH DRAWING. BY E. E. CUMMINGS





WASH DRAWING. BY E. E. CUMMINGS



## DESERTED HOLLOW

BY MARK VAN DOREN

This valley sends another sound  
Than was delivered of its rocks  
When they were seized and set around  
The cloven feet of little flocks.  
The sheep were taken long ago,  
And fences wait a wilder foe.

There is no hushing of the wind  
Between the blows of axes now.  
No breathless timber-lengths are pinned  
And shingled fast to make a mow.  
There is not one expectant eye  
Upon the purpose of the sky.

It was a race of silent men  
That taught the clouds to hesitate—  
If only to upgather then  
A blacker heaven-full of hate.  
Riders up and down divided  
Weather since grown single-sided.

Winds that strike upon these stones  
Hear not an angry voice among them.  
They have smothered their old moans  
Against the hairy hands that wrung them.  
Boulders, grass, and border-trees  
Supinely harken. Fences freeze

And crumble wider every spring;  
They will yet be flat again.  
There is not a wilful thing  
In all this patient mountain-pen.  
There is only the dead sound  
Of slowly unresisting ground.

## PARIS LETTER

*November, 1927*

**A**NDRE GIDE has brought back from his journey in equatorial Africa two books, one of which, the *Voyage au Congo*, appeared this summer. We could not imagine a better traveller than Gide. Untiring curiosity, quick perception, humour, and scientific knowledge, all conspire to give character to his itineraries. "Better be imprudent movables than prudent fixtures," he quotes from Keats as the device for his work. Excellent health also enables him at fifty to tramp through the brush beneath a terrific sun, eight hours a day and feel bright and fresh the following morning, even after a troubled night. When the party was not advancing he made use of the opportunity to question the planters, chat with the blacks, play football with the young negroes, and also to reread the French classics, giving us some excellent pages of literary criticism into the bargain; for there is fine artistic effect in these notes as we pass suddenly on the same page from the highly coloured description of a barbaric ritual in Central Africa to judicious and original reflections on Racine or Bossuet. The *Voyage au Congo* is valuable by reason of its naturalness and its good faith. To be sure, Gide had already been in contact with the natives (in *L'Immoraliste*, for instance); but the Arabs of course belong to the white race even though they are not Aryans. Yet he was unprepared—he the most subtle, the most acute and lucid writer of Europe—to encounter the negro of the Congo, who is the most primitive of them all. Gide's work has already given us ample proof that his sympathies are with the extremes. Has he not written, "It is not what resembles me, but what differs from me, that attracts me"? And apropos of this, one could have wished perhaps that his book contained a greater number of personal opinions and more views of his own on the black question. Will the second volume, announced under the title of *Voyage au Tchad*, reward our impatience? Or is his reticence due to the fact that Gide hates discussing subjects with which he is unfamiliar? A voyage, however, which lasted more than a year, would surely enable him to widen

his knowledge of the subject, and more especially ours. We can see, however, that Gide is a negrophile; not that he has fallen into the error of many of the whites who, on coming among coloured people for the first time, follow the romantic tradition of the eighteenth century and look upon the natives as "good savages" perverted by civilization; but a great intelligence always makes for kindness. The Congo is certainly one of the regions where the blacks are most thoroughly exploited and Gide has been sensitive to their great handicap. The defects in the system of roadways whereby the natives are still obliged to carry the packs of the whites, the tributes in kind and especially in rubber exacted by the big concessionary companies, have shocked him. With his customary independence and his Protestant severity, Gide has not hesitated since his return to take to task these high financial powers, and even to furnish the press of the extreme left with such ammunition as one can well anticipate. I only mention the matter because it is interesting to observe how the most abstract, individualistic, and egocentric of writers can be brought sooner or later to emerge from his isolation and to enter the fray. This ought to effect a reconciliation between Gide and journalism, with which as we know he was recently at odds.

Along with the *Voyage au Congo*, André Gide has issued a *Journal des Faux Monnayeurs*. In a Letter of last year<sup>1</sup> I discussed the *Faux Monnayeurs*, which is perhaps Gide's best novel and is in any case an excellent book. The author had the curious idea of putting down for us, and especially for those of us who are writers, the daily register of his efforts, the chart of his reflections, his most intimate plans of composition, and the editorial repentances which followed upon the evolving of the book. In a sense, it constitutes the voyage of his speculations. How interesting it would be, Gide thought with justice, if we had from the hands of the authors themselves an account of the genesis of famous novels; of the working out of *Clarissa Harlowe*, the birth of *Manon Lescaut* or the *Idiot*. Whereupon, he undertook this task, in which thanks to his fine clear mind, gift for analysis, and habit of watching himself think, he was supremely fitted to succeed. The result is an interesting experience never previously described which falls within the categories of psychology and of literature. We here find a uniformly

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Paris Letter, *THE DIAL*, June 1926.

characteristic Gide, with his slogan, "It is my rôle to disturb." And is he not speaking for himself, with one of his heroes as intermediary, when he writes: "Through hatred for this religion, this morality which oppresses all his youth, through hatred for this rigourism from which he has never been able to break free, Z. works to debauch and to pervert the pastor's children. There is rancour here."

Eglantine is the title of the "latest" by Jean Giraudoux. The work of this author has the unity of life itself. "I write just as I think," summarizes what he once said in an interview. "When the required length for a book is reached, I stop, add a title, and send to the printer." This is very accurate. The work of Giraudoux is one long uninterrupted reverie, a psychic monologue which nothing could stop but the exigencies of the trade. Out of deference to custom, Giraudoux consents to a nominal change in the subject of each volume; but he does so without conviction, and he could be willing in no other respect to impose on us. Rest assured that in buying a book of Giraudoux's you may count on three or four hours in the company of one of the rarest and most poetic spirits of the times. Who would ask for more? Eglantine may boast of being Giraudoux chemically pure. The famous *Bella* was a study in adaptation to life. Actuated by violent emotion (animosity towards Rebendart, which is to say Poincaré) Giraudoux allowed himself to etch those harsh, pitiless portraits to which the book owed its success. But this was not his true self. He returns to it however in *Eglantine*, the story of a sweet girl who shares her life with two elderly men, one a French nobleman, Fontranges, and the other a Jewish financier, Moïse (known to us already as characters in *Bella*). Between these two persons of advanced years Suzanne is as it were face to face with two hemispheres, Orient and Occident—neither having seniority of the other. So many poetic qualities, the purity of the style (the purest French since Anatole France) the transparent and almost dreamy lightness of the characters, the gentle and fantastic movement of the plot, make *Eglantine* as fresh and delicious as a cool drink in summer.

M Luc Durtain gives us in 40° Etage three stories with the United States as background. They possess a charming brand of satire and an alert style, and are unusual in design. *Crime à San*



Francisco is really excellent. When so many young American writers take Paris and present-day France as a setting for their work it is quite fitting that French authors begin returning the compliment. Edmond Jaloux with *Soleils Disparus* remains the sensitive novelist typical of a generation whose feelings never obscure intelligence and who are immune to the barrenness of the post-war era. Jaloux has also published a serious little work in memory of Rainer Maria Rilke. In his new novel, *Le Quai des Brumes*, Pierre Mac-Orlan has undoubtedly succeeded best of any author in extricating his personality from the aftermath of the war, thanks to his athletic vigour, his love of the fantastic, his sense of modern life, and his admiration for that German romanticism which we saw reborn elsewhere, dressed out with American innovations, under the fallacious name of expressionism.

I should mention a special number, which certainly will become rare, of the review *Feuilles Libres*, devoted to the poet L.-P. Fargue. Fargue is one of the three editors of *Commerce*, a review in which art unmixed is in the ascendancy. A contemporary and friend of Valéry, of Valéry Larbaud, of Marcel Schwob, of Apollinaire, of Jarry, and of Gide, though he has written little, Fargue has had a profound influence upon many of the French writers of our day. The public at large does not know about him, but how could it understand pages so curiously new as *Poèmes* and *Pour la Musique*? "A child having for its plaything a mind prodigiously cultivated"; it is thus that Valéry describes him, and as such he will certainly pass down to posterity, an hermetic and perfect poet, the curious personality of a Parisian noctambulist, the first of the indolent, the last of the *flâneurs*.

While still young, Robert de Flers, of the French Academy, died this August. He was a childhood companion and close friend of Marcel Proust, though their careers had otherwise, little in common. Flers was a very likable Parisian, of the pre-war *boulevardier* variety, a Frenchman with a flowing tie, vivacious and clever. His glory was born in the salon of Madame de Caillavet, of which he will be one of the last representatives. Like Meilhac and Halévy, he is related to a charming tradition of the Second Empire—though with less distinction. In their time, *Le Roi*, *Le Bois Sacré*, and *L'Habit Vert* were great dramaturgic successes of

the boulevard; and if these plays did not cross the Atlantic, it is because they were written in a spirit and for an era where talent was not yet bridging oceans.

The 1927 season of the Ballets Russes, which celebrated its twelfth anniversary this year, was quite brilliant at Paris, and perhaps even more brilliant in London. I was on the Lido a few weeks ago with Serge de Diaghilew; and by the shore of the Adriatic, where his remarkable dancer Serge Lifar was dutifully engaged with his exercises, I watched this indefatigable impresario of genius bent over a large map of Europe, as he traced with a blue pencil the locus of his approaching autumn triumph at Berlin and at Vienna. *La Chatte* was the best liked novelty of the season. M Henri Sauget is a very young French musician, younger than any of the Six (all of whom are now thirty or over) and claims for his work a direct attachment to Erik Satie. His music is dextrous and light, expressly continuing the tradition of the French operetta. The settings by MM Gabo and Pevsner, all spirals and mica, contributed greatly to the success of this charming ballet. *Le Triomphe de Neptune* betokens in Lord Berners great musical skill and a thorough grounding in his predecessors, from Bizet and *Délibes* to Auric and Strawinsky. An ingenious transposition into the atmosphere of Early-Victorian England, it will serve superficially to give the public across the Channel the impression that at last an original musician has been born to them. As for the *Pas d'Acier* of Prokofieff, which has enjoyed a brisk *succès de snobisme*, it is a "red ballet" in the fashion of Moscow, agreeably and intelligently choreographed, with organized workers performing musical arabesques and cutting rhythmic capers to the glory of the Sickle and Hammer. But the music seems to me unoriginal, despite pretensions to audacity, and I make many reservations as to its future.

Oedipus, on the other hand, marks a new turn in the work of Strawinsky. But are not the *Oiseau de Feu*, *Petrouchka*, the *Sacre*, and *Mavra* all so many abrupt veerings in the remarkable development of this man, whose zigzag course baffles us as much as that of Picasso? Yet one can say that each new stage in Strawinsky is a refinement and an advance. Certainly Oedipus is not a ballet. These austere groupings of soloists and of choirs banked upon the stage obviously disconcerted the frivolous public of the "Russes."

The Latin text, after Jean Cocteau, astonished. As to the music, it was more in the nature of an oratorio, a concert piece. It is a vast architectural structure in the style of Bach or of Handel, with concentrated emotion, compactly and concisely written. Here, in the words of the musician himself, "there are no lies"—and the formula is so new that one would naturally not expect a great immediate success. The public of the Ballets will of course continue to demand Petrouchka; this is its privilege, as it is also the privilege of Strawinsky to evolve and to outstrip his audience's ability to follow. Oedipus is a work which can well await the judgement of posterity.

Jean Cocteau has given us in October another volume of poems, *Opéra*. In *Poésies* some pieces on death with an accent particularly dolorous and profound had already led us to anticipate a new expression. *Opéra* confirms us in this, and yields some marvellous poems on all those subjects with which Cocteau has since been pre-occupied: death, converse with the invisible, the value of Right and Good which henceforth vie in his work with Beauty. Cocteau plunges into a world of dreams, and brings out of it for us something beautiful, fresh, and perfect.

PAUL MORAND

# BOOK REVIEWS

## AN IMPARTIAL INSURGENT

*MORE CONTEMPORARY AMERICANS.* By Percy Holmes Boynton. 8vo. 229 pages. The University of Chicago Press. \$2.50.

**M**R BOYNTON follows a dignified and laudable tradition in opening his new volume of critiques with a discussion of the function of criticism in the United States at the present time. Although his *Winds of Criticism* is a historical sketch of movements and attitudes since America became conscious of the need of criticism at all, it is clearly intended to give his readers a general idea of the topography of the subject, in which they can describe their present critic with reference to various critical landmarks—perhaps it also serves to define his position for himself. In this introductory chapter Mr Boynton recognizes two types of critical effort. The first is precisely indicated in a passage which he quotes from Mr W. C. Brownell to the effect that the end of a critic's effort "is a true estimate of the data encountered in that search for beauty which from Plato to Keats has been virtually identified with truth, and the highest service to criticism is to secure that the true and the beautiful, and not the ugly and the false, may in wider and wider circles of appreciation be esteemed to be the good." Such a conception of criticism clearly apprehends a static world, a world of given data among which the critic engages in his search, and upon which he exercises his faculty of appreciation and stimulates its exercise in others. Over against this type of criticism, which is necessarily and properly conservative, there is the militant and radical type which regards the world as becoming rather than being, which refuses to accept any given data from the past, which is concerned less with evaluating things done than with changing conditions in order that they may be done better. These two attitudes are perfectly exemplified by the earlier and the later Ruskin, by him of *Modern Painters* and him of *Unto This Last* and Fors

Clavigera, the one concerned with "a true estimate of the data encountered in the search for beauty," the other with a revolution in social conditions in order that creation of beauty may be possible. Mr Boynton markedly holds aloof from both schools, as a neutral, a dispassionate and innocent bystander. He cites Professor Sherman's doubt whether criticism such as Mr Brownell's can find a point of application from which to exert an influence on such a public as ours. On the other hand, he treats with good-natured persiflage the efforts of the authors of *Civilization in America*, who seeking "to contribute a definite and tangible piece of work toward the advance of intellectual life in America," begin by denying good to any American thing. Nevertheless Mr Boynton is himself of the second type. He enrolls himself as such with the catholic announcement: "Criticism in America is implicitly an attempt by each critic to make of America the kind of country that he would like, which in every case is a better country than it is today." And by a quotation from John Dewey he recognizes the pragmatic approach by way of experience, instead of the absolute approach by means of standards, as the fruitful method in dealing with artistic as well as social problems.

These considerations give special pertinence to those of his essays which deal with writers who are active in the flesh at the present day. Three earlier men, Herman Melville, Lafcadio Hearn, and Ambrose Bierce, Mr Boynton includes among his contemporaries on the rather specious ground that they have recently come into favour, and have more to say to the present generation than to their own. He does not limit himself, however, to treating them according to this formula; and his essays are merely sound, academic appreciation which we expect from the holder of the first chair of American Literature in the country. Of his essays upon Joseph Hergesheimer, Sinclair Lewis, and Sherwood Anderson there is more to say. In the first place, he has chosen the three writers of American prose fiction who are representative of the three leading tendencies of the present day: Mr Hergesheimer of the romantic and decorative impulse; Mr Lewis of the broadly realistic movement; and Mr Anderson of the trend toward mysticism which finds in common experience intimations of a reality behind the concrete fact. And of each he seems to me to have said that right thing, which after it is said seems so inevitable and becomes so

final. Mr Hergesheimer he describes as inhabiting "the Dower House," on a life tenancy with enjoyment of its collected *objets d'art*, among which he moves with a formality befitting his surroundings. Sinclair Lewis's broad canvases he sees as significant of a talent for representation rather than penetration. He calls attention to the very few characters in Lewis's novels, aside from the caricatures, whom we remember, and attributes their paucity to the author's tendency toward exposition, toward writing *about* his subject instead of writing *into* it. To Mr Lewis, as to the historical realists, environment is the force which determines character, and is the chief subject of art. "Life for him is not inherent in John Smith or Babbitt. It is the force that surrounds the man. In applauding his fellow-novelist [Mr John Dos Passos] he applauds him not for creating characters but for painting the panorama of the metropolis." And in Sherwood Anderson Mr Boynton recognizes the strange uncanny power of the man to enter into the very reality of other men's experience, and divine by an exquisite intuition, the emotion which accompanied their acts. "The one matter that counted was to catch the rare moments when people were really living and to find the words that could record these moments." In this process Sherwood Anderson's apprehension of his own life has counted for much, and he has done wisely to begin and complete his fiction in autobiography. "He shows that the tales he tells are one with the life he has lived."

In these essays, and in those on *The Public and the Reading Public*, and *Democracy and Public Taste*, Mr Boynton reveals his sense of the work which criticism has to do, not only on behalf of the artist, but much more on behalf of the public. That Mr Boynton knows the public with which he is dealing, witness this passage from *The Public and Public Taste*, which begins by a citation of Mack Sennett . . . Harold Lloyd, Edgar Guest and Walt Mason, Sidney Smith and Bud Fisher, Frank Crane and Parkes Cadman, Irving Berlin and Paul Whiteman, as chief purveyors to his majesty, the American people.

"Uniformity of thinking, or what passes for thinking, is a natural consequence of all this. The courthouse square still echoes to the refrains that became familiar in 1917 and 1918, sprung from the impulse then to enlist all efforts toward a common end and

to discourage any asking of questions or airing of opinions. To question as to the righteousness of the war was to be a traitor; to inquire openly as to its objectives was to be burned in effigy; to withhold from investment in war-loan securities was to invite ostracism; and the prolonged imprisonment of political offenders and conscientious objectors has found no parallel in Europe. This, though vicious, was normal at the time; but the 'return to normalcy' has brought no general return to toleration of divers opinions, for America is now in the actually normal post-bellum period of hysterically reactionary conservatism. Zealous patriotism is trying to convert the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights into seditious utterances, and organizations have multiplied in behalf of hundred per cent Americanism, all ostensibly founded for the promotion of positive ends, but all repressive in intention, and many lawless in procedure."

To break up the hard pan of American complacency, to plough the soil by a great insurgency, and to sow the seeds of a realistic national culture require a widely popular, democratic art, and such an art, to be understood by its public, needs the interpretation of an alert and intelligent criticism. It is an encouraging sign to find such men as Mr Boynton ready to supply it.

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT

## GEORGE GISSING

A VICTIM OF CIRCUMSTANCES. *By George Gissing.*  
12mo. 308 pages. Houghton Mifflin Company.  
\$2.50.

TO this collection of short stories by George Gissing, "never before issued in book form," Mr Alfred Gissing contributes a preface, which is largely a discussion of "realism" in fiction; and in this preface Mr Gissing moves, a little naively, to the conclusion that the author of the *Private Papers of Henry Ryecroft* was something more, or better, than a mere realist, because his stories contained a "moral," or here and there pointed to a "higher truth." At this date, it seems a little odd to encounter a critic who is still worrying about the defence of the "ugly" in art, and who finds it necessary to discover a moral or social—if not aesthetic!—justification for such a portrait as that of Mrs Gamp. And it is odder still that Mr Alfred Gissing can proceed, as he does, with his pointing of Gissing's "moral," after quoting a passage from a letter in which Gissing wrote: "Human life has little interest for me, on the whole, save as material for artistic presentation. I can get savage over social iniquities, but, even then, my rage at once takes the direction of planning revenge in artistic work." This could hardly be clearer. If, in his early work (*Demos*, for example) Gissing was occasionally tendentious, in his maturity he was first and last an artist. His purpose, in his descriptions of lower middle-class life, was not moral at all, but aesthetic: his problem was a problem of presentation. His novels and stories were his reports of life as he knew it; he was, in his narrower field, as honest an observer as Trollope; and if he was of far smaller stature as an artist than Chekhov, less poetically gifted, he shared with that great man a tendency to minimize "plot" and to make of his stories mere evocations of life.

In this regard, Gissing was very much ahead of his time. When one reflects that it is now almost a quarter of a century since he died, one reads this posthumous collection of his short stories with astonishment: for with only one or two exceptions these stories



are strikingly, in tone and manner, like the sort of thing which, in the hands of such a writer as Katherine Mansfield, critics hailed as revolutionary. In most of these tales the "story" amounts to little or nothing. If one compares them with the contemporary work of Hardy or Meredith or Henry James, one finds a difference as deep as that which severed Chekhov from Turgenev. Here is little or nothing of Hardy's habitual use of tragic or poetic background, his intermittent reference to the backdrop of the Infinite; here is none of Meredith's brilliant, and brilliantly conscious, counterpoint of comment, with its inevitable heightening of distance between the reader and the story; none of the exquisite preparation and elaboration of James. Much more than he admitted, or realized, Gissing *was* interested in "human life"; it is above all for his uncompromising fidelity to his vision that we can still read him with pleasure and profit. He seldom shapes or heads his narrative as these others did, attached less importance than they to dramatic climax. He is content with a bare presentation of a scene or situation.

To say that Gissing would have been liked by Chekhov is to say that he is a "modern"—he is decidedly more modern than Hardy or James. James, of course, would have disapproved of him, as he disapproved of Mr Arnold Bennett, on the ground that he offered his reader a mere slice of life, the *donnée* without the working out. Whatever we may feel about that, and however much this sort of modernity may ultimately make Gissing appear old-fashioned, we must unquestionably accept him as an artist of the Chekhov generation, and a good one. He is not great—he lacks force, depth, range, subtlety; he has almost nothing of Chekhov's poetic profundity, only a tithed of his exquisite sensibility; by comparison with him, Gissing seems prosy, bread-and-butterish. But he is good. He can almost always be counted upon to tell his story with a clear eye and a fine gravity of spirit. There is no rhetorical nonsense about him, he is capable of no literary pyrotechnics, his style is level and undistinguished; but within his limits he is an honest and just creator of people and pictures, exaggerating nothing, never forcing a mood, and often using understatement with the most delicate skill. What could be better than the ending of his charming story, *The Fate of Humphrey Snell*? Humphrey was a queer stick—lazy, dreaming, impractical, not

very strong; he had a passion for countryside; and eventually found a happy solution of his difficulties by becoming an itinerant herb-collector. He tramped the country, slept where he found himself, enjoyed this simple existence hugely. And then one day he fell in love with a girl who was no better than she should be; applied for a job as steward to a Workman's Club; and asked the girl to marry him. And this is how Gissing ends his story: "Annie, whose handwriting was decipherable only by a lover's eyes, answered his news by return of post: 'Send me money to come i shall want all i have for my things i cant tell you how delited I feal but its that sudin it taks my breth away with heepes of love and—' . . . There followed a row of crosses, which Humphrey found it easy to interpret. A cross is frequently set upon a grave; but he did not think of that."

That is all—and it is all we need. And Gissing is just as good in his story of the two Cockney families who go to Brighton for their Bank Holidays, or in the story of the matrimonial failures of Miss Jewell. These tales are, in their kind, perfect. The Budes, the Rippingvilles, Miss Jewell, and the two splendid Cockney girls, Lou and Liz, are done from the life—they are as trenchantly recognizable as Mrs Laura Knight's etchings of Cockney folk on Hampstead Heath. And if the interior of an English middle-class boarding-house, with all its heavy smells and dreary sounds, its aspidistra plant and its scrubbed white step, has ever been better done, one doesn't know where to find it.

CONRAD AIKEN

## CRITICISM OF BIOGRAPHY

OXFORD READING COURSES: BIOGRAPHY. *By Alan C. Valentine. 10mo. 67 pages. The Oxford University Press, American Branch. \$1.*

ONE can welcome the present small book both because it marks further explicit recognition by publishers of the broad demand for biography, and because, as critical preface to a reading course of fifteen biographic classics, it represents what may be the beginning of formal and specific criticism of the various kinds of effort in the field. Biography, it is true, has had a long and honourable career with but inconsiderable notice from critics. Nevertheless one is perhaps not without warrant for believing that the situation in the writing and reading of biography, certainly in the reading of it, is not quite as it has been, and that criticism has offices to perform.

The critic as representative of the reader can scarcely mistake the fact that the public taste for biography, while it has not grown at the expense of other tastes in literature, has grown insistently in the last decade—and is not without importance for or against that health of the mind which ought to be, as Mr I. A. Richards urges, a principal concern of critics. Might it not be a relevant initial enterprise of criticism in the field of biography, to attempt to determine with more precision than has yet been attained, why we go to biography and what we get out of it? Mr Valentine finds the matter, at all events, worthy of consideration.

“Biography [he writes] is more popular now than ever before—partly because in this material age most of us demand concrete and certified truths rather than imaginative expressions, and also because in the narrowness of our lives many of us seek to escape into the lives of more free and more interesting souls. No field of art fills better the demands of modern intellectual curiosity.”

In suggesting that when we read biography we read for escape merely, perhaps Mr Valentine is not quite so accurate as it is

possible to be. The impression is corrected, it is true, by the concluding sentence, in which, however, one is inclined, for other reasons, to suggest modification to: "No field of art *could* better fill the demands of modern intellectual curiosity."

Our interest in biography seems very deep-seated and is probably not uninfluenced by curiosity. Biography is not disparaged in being thought of in one sense as a higher form of gossip, for gossip can be serious, and doubtless has its roots in our robust eagerness after the modes, not merely of existence, but of all that is implied by living. "A large acquaintance with particulars," said William James, "often makes us wiser than the possession of abstract formulas however deep." And he it was who once argued that some form of biography or biographic history ought to have a significant place in the more cultural part of our college curricula.

Perhaps it is considerations of this sort that lie back of our interest in biography, though of course one cannot be so ingenuous as to suppose that anybody reads biography as the early fathers read the Bible—for special guidance in specific crises. Our modern biographic appetite seems hardly so easily assorted. We are to notice, for instance, that contemporary interest in biography is coincident with an equally broad interest in psychology, the two interests perhaps being cognate. Such a relation would be a pledge of possibility both for biography and psychology. For biography in its attempt to trace the course of significant thought in its subject could obviously use all the expert assistance which psychology could offer. And psychology at the present moment is certainly no self-contained science hanging in the void: it deals with the men of this world, and for its purposes biography must prove a considerable storehouse of matter. Indeed the richness of our interest in the field and of the field itself tends to make the reader accept without hesitation all that is implied in such sweeping preliminary statements as Mr Valentine's present one: "No field of art fills better the demands of modern intellectual curiosity." Such statements may or may not prove true, but one is antecedently inclined to believe them of biography, for where other arts are the signatures, it is the tale of personality; and personality may be the source and epitome of civilization.

From the nature and characteristics of our interest in biography, the critic passes to his chief business, a consideration of specific biographies, their success or their failure in satisfying us. In doing

this, Mr Valentine presents to us touchstones which seem well considered.

“Does this work [the biography] re-create and make human a man who once lived?” he asks. “Does it show what the man was as well as what he did? Does it make clear the motives that lay back of his actions? Does it do all this without prejudice, without hypocrisy, and without cant?”

Such questions satisfactorily cover the ground in a general manner. Yet there is danger in such generality that biography may be made out a simpler matter than it is. If one knows anything at all as a result of modern psychology, he knows that the great are, like the rest of us, neither so simple nor so stable as they have been conceived by biographers of the school of Parson Weems. The differences between two persons may easily not be so large as the differences between two successive moments of the same person. There are many things that admittedly the biographer does not and cannot know: and since he must, somewhat ignorantly, guide himself as best he may, it is not out of keeping to suggest that candour is indeed a desideratum.

All this is not less true of biography than of autobiography, and makes good autobiography, instead of easier—as Mr Valentine seems in another place to imply—harder to write than biography—harder that is, to write with due truth. Cardinal Newman had no illusions on this point, and it may be a result of such percipient conscience on his part that he has written what is possibly one of the most psychologically truthful of autobiographies. “Who,” he exclaims, in early despair over his narrative, “who can know himself and the multitude of subtle influences which act upon him?”

As for an apparent implication by Mr Valentine that the art of biography has more past than future, one is disposed to pay our age the compliment of doubting it, though such an implication is probably natural since Mr Valentine's object is to introduce readers to established biographic classics, the latest dated 1883. Criticism, however, can hardly afford to neglect the fact that biography is being written and read to-day, written both well and badly, and doubtless read both well and badly, and certainly both written and read in greater measure than at any time in the previous history of the art. It certainly seems worth while to suggest that biography may be—now more than ever—an art with a future, an

art in harmony with the modernist spirit, seeking refreshment of the terms and conditions of thought by newer and more various approaches to the actual.

At all events the possibilities are here. The biographer as much as a dramatist or novelist, has the right so far as facts permit, to consider himself the historian of thought and feeling in its conflicts, its life and death; and of individual character, not alone in its outlines, but in its causes, its growth, its battles, its decay. The facts of biography are given, like the mytho-historic frame of an Attic tragedy and it is for the biographer to infer and image forth the spirit.

Consequently, without going into the question of fictionized biography, that stultified hybrid, criticism can certainly find matter for consideration in the relations of biography with its correlative art, fiction; for biography, like fiction, has a story, and seldom a simple story, to tell. Biography is undoubtedly already obligated to fiction, as fiction is to biography, though it might be hard to say precisely what the debts are, except that to-day they have perhaps increased. Great as the debts may be, however, one may dare venture the suggestion that biography still has lessons to learn in the modes of narrative, lessons that could profitably be learned of fiction, lessons in story-structure, time-scheme, the management of subordinate incident and character, of which there is always enough and of numerous sorts, biography being never the tale of one man alone. There is also in fiction, and of possible value to biography, a certain abundance in modes of personal atmosphere and mental background, in the setting particularly, and personal *locale* of the subject. Again, in the mere business of narrative composition biography may have something of profit to take from the economy, the precision, the colour, the nervous life of the best prose as known to us in fiction.

It is not that criticism may frame formulae for biography. The fact that biography has come so far with so few is perhaps one of its advantages, certainly one of its charms. Criticism may render service best, it would seem, not by propaganda or paternalism, but by sharpening its sense of current biographic effort and by heightening our general consciousness of biography as literary art, as one—not the least—of the cultivations of the modern spirit.

CHARLES K. TRUEBLOOD

## ARCHAEOLOGIST AS HISTORIAN

A HISTORY OF THE ANCIENT WORLD. The Orient and Greece. Rome. By M. Rostovtzeff. Translated from the Russian by J. D. Duff. Two volumes. 8vo. 846 pages. The Oxford University Press, American Branch. \$5 each volume.

THE reading of these two massive volumes gives us an impression of Professor Rostovtzeff as arranging, interpreting, and making a whole of monuments which are being excavated—in short, as following the man with the spade. We never find ourselves in a camp or a senate; we never hear decisive words being spoken: the memorable things which are told us of empires and civilizations can be referred to monuments which we can look upon: to the predominance of Athenian pots in Italy the Peloponnesian War is referred. “The growing trade and industry of Athens and the states in alliance with her, including the islands and the Anatolian cities, made the question of the Western markets, which had not been settled by the wars of 500–450, still more acute. Corinth and Megara would not and could not put up with the increasing competition of Athens in Italy and Sicily. . . . Sparta also, though not interested in export trade to the West, was menaced by this danger [Athenian ascendancy] and therefore inclined to listen to the complaints of Megara, Corinth, and Sicyon.” Sumerian and Babylonian sculpture and building make us know that the artists of that civilization devoted all the power of their creative genius to the gods and to living men. “They think most of religion and government, of temples and palaces, of the lives and exploits of gods and kings.” And so we know that their notion of a future life differed from that held by the Egyptians. “They did not suppose that earthly life went on beyond the grave, keeping all its joys and satisfactions.” Aegean palaces and Aegean frescoes show us that the people of the first European civilization never sought to create anything imposing by mere size; the buildings they preferred were of moderate proportions, adorned with colour and pleasing to the eye. And then we realize that

“the manner of life among the Aegeans was unlike that of the

East—it was more akin to the type subsequently created by Greece, more democratic. Men lived in a swarm, with one of themselves for chief, like the queen-bee in a hive, but their life was identical with his. In the East the king was divine and lived in magnificent isolation, an object of reverence and worship. The life of the Aegean king was more human. He had neither the will nor the power to separate himself from his comrades in war and partners in trading ventures; to them and to their wives he was not, and could not be, a deity. But after death, as the best and strongest and bravest, he became a hero and his tomb became a temple.”

Professor Rostovtzeff's great achievement is that he takes us beyond the Roman Empire, the Hellenistic states, the Greek Commonwealths, that he opens up the Aegean and Hittite worlds for us, and takes us back through Persia, Assyria, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and makes us know these empires, not as formidable frontiers to our knowledge of real history, but as having a history of their own. As an outline of the History of the Ancient World—a History which lasts from the first Sumerian dynasty in Babylon to the flickering out of the Roman Empire in the West—these volumes are indispensable.

Indispensable, but uninspiring. They are history without any display of the abilities by which great historians make their works memorable—narrative power, delineation of character, vivid generalizations on the course of history. Like every other archaeologist Professor Rostovtzeff is interested in things. And, as with every other archaeologist, his interest in things overbalances his interest in human actions. He is interested in men primarily as makers and users of things.

Through his habit of surveying civilizations—a half a dozen heaped one on top of another in the limits of some citadel—his sense of time has become blunted. This, with the domination which things have over actions in his mind, accounts for there being no passages of real narrative in his volumes. For, without a distinct feeling for time, without being able to order things in a right sequence, we can have no narrative in history. Let me make a quotation which shows, I think, how this great archaeologist, by his failure to set things out in any time-order, makes a particular passage almost pointless:



“The Senate looked forward with no less alarm to Caesar’s return. They knew that Caesar in power meant ruin to themselves. In his first consulship he had openly declared himself their enemy and had refused to recognize constitutional restraints; there was no hope that his second consulship would prove less dangerous. But without allies they were helpless. Yet not one of their number was really popular with the soldiers, and no new Sulla could be found in their ranks. They were forced to appeal to Pompey. He had tried to avoid flagrant outrages against the constitution; and it was possible to hope that it would be easier to make terms with him if he defeated his rival. Every effort was therefore made to detach Pompey from Caesar. For long Pompey hesitated. When at last, in January 49 B.C., he decided on a rupture, the military advantage was all on Caesar’s side. Pompey had hardly any troops in Italy; and, therefore, when Caesar crossed the Rubicon, the boundary of his province, with a small force and marched on Rome, to leave Italy became inevitable.”

A passage like this gives us no sense of events shaping themselves in time.

In a history having such scope—including as it does the beginnings and the endings of half a dozen civilizations—one should not expect to find narratives of particular events nor full-length portraits of great historical characters—such narratives and such portraits as there are, say, in Mommsen’s *History of Rome*. But one might expect to find pregnant sentences which are clues in the events and clues to personages of the time. “Rome did not conquer the world, she took possession of it,” says Spengler, and that sentence seems to make a series of events clear to us. “Sertorius had Hannibal’s ability for organizing war by war,” says Mommsen, and that judgement makes us understand how it was that these leaders withstood for so long the forces that were against them. We find no such memorable summaries in this *History of the Ancient World*. It is not that Professor Rostovtzeff is one of these historians who have no interest in literary expression: while becoming more and more a department of exact science, he notes, history cannot, and must not lose its literary, and therefore, individual character. It is not that he denies to men the power of influencing the course of history: a more thoughtful attitude to

historical events, he writes, has shown the very great importance of personality in the history of man's development. It is that Professor Rostovtzeff being an archaeologist has not a very great interest in events or in living personality.

These volumes are valuable for an extraordinary number of reproductions which accompany the text—reproductions of sculptures, pictures, coins, which in themselves are memorable illustrations of the civilizations written about—they extend the whole way from early Sumerian sculpture to the Christian mosaics of the Roman provinces; only an archaeologist writing history could have assembled all these illustrations. The frontispiece of the first volume is a reproduction of the relief of Archelaus of Priene—the Apotheosis of Homer—and when we look upon it we know how much Homer meant to the people of the third century B.C., and how far they had departed from the heroic simplicity of the Iliad and the Odyssey.

PADRAIC COLUM

## BRIEFER MENTION

**THE SHIP SAILS ON**, by Nordahl Grieg, translated from the Norwegian by A. G. Chater (12mo, 219 pages; Knopf: \$2.50). "The sea is no longer a playground for swelling white sails. A narrow channel is all the steamships want. But the ocean is still there with its brutish instincts, more meaningless than ever, a vast and terrible image of the perfect folly of life." Like an orchestral theme, this thought is woven into the cruel pattern of the story—endlessly varied but monotonously the same. Here is a fine piece of realistic prose, as sharp and unadorned as truth itself.

**GALLION'S REACH**, by H. M. Tomlinson (12mo, 283 pages; Harpers: \$2.50) is furnished forth with the descriptive munificence which one expects from this author—fifty well-written pages of Indian Ocean simoon ending with the sinking in mid-sea of the steamer concerned, twenty more with the survivors in open boats, and a hundred more in the jungles of Malay. All this affords exterior for a striking tale. The tale, however, is anything but striking. James Colet, to whom these remarkable and remarkably described things happen, approaches as closely to non-entity of narrative presence as would be possible in two hundred, eighty-three pages devoted expressly to his thoughts and doings. A reader can scarcely agree with the suggestion on the slip-cover that the author is the "English Conrad."

**THE STORY OF AN AFRICAN FARM**, by Olive Schreiner (16mo, 375 pages; Modern Library: 95 cents); **FROM MAN TO MAN**, by Olive Schreiner (10mo, 463 pages; Harpers: \$2.50). To read these novels is like returning to the village of one's childhood and being disillusioned at every turn. The trees are not so big, the brooks not so wide, the houses not so pleasant as one had once thought. *The Story of an African Farm* did impress a former generation, but it seems a trifle stuffy now; and as for the new book, it is positively dull. Miss Schreiner was a moralist first and an artist afterward, and nothing out-modes so quickly as morals. She is by no means—as her heirs and publishers would have us wish—a Charlotte Brontë.

**THE DEATH OF A YOUNG MAN**, by W. L. River (12mo, 206 pages; Simon & Schuster: \$2) is the diary from April to October, of a young man, a university student, who has learned that he has not more than a year to live. The reader can make no doubt as to the literary competence with which the young man's experiences are set down. The persons of his tale are distinct and the scenes set in considerable relief. But the net effect seems somewhat insignificant, and the reader ends by being less impressed than he had expected to be. As here conceived the subject seems hardly to be the material of even the curtailed novel it makes.

**A NEW TESTAMENT**, by Sherwood Anderson (16mo, 118 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2). On reading this little book we find its sincerity so disarming that it robs us of our desire to mock. However unctuous in a literary sense Mr Anderson may be, he has the soul of a seer and of a poet. The present volume is made up of a number of "inspired" utterances after the manner of Whitman and Nietzsche and we must, it would seem, reward the author's zeal by allowing him a place amongst the minor prophets.

**FUGITIVE PIECES**, by Mary Hutchinson (12mo, 210 pages; Hogarth Press: 7/6). These papers waver along the feather-edge which separates the story and the sketch, those falling in the second group being the more notable, particularly the swift studies of London and Paris life which possess the definite richness of etchings. Among the stories Mr Paddle and Mrs Meryworth stands out; one or two of the others are marred by a note perfectly described in one of the author's own phrases—a sense of shrill discrepancy.

**RUSTIC ELEGIES**, by Edith Sitwell (10mo, 69 pages; Knopf: \$2.50). The rustic elegies of Edith Sitwell, be it understood, are the rustic elegies of an essentially city lady. Miss Sitwell, therefore, is an elegant trifler. The portrait that is used as a frontispiece, shows the authoress leaning her head and gazing in bird-like fashion at the spectator. The songs the singer utters often have the feathered warbler's fluidity, but never achieve an innocent effect. But who is innocent nowadays? We are all, alas, like Miss Sitwell, guilty of knowing too much. The Prelude to a Fairy Tale is the most dismayingly clever of her poems.

**UPPER NIGHT**, by Scudder Middleton (12mo, 97 pages; Holt: \$2). It is difficult to say why these poems by Mr Middleton are not better than they are. Mr Middleton is an accomplished enough technician—he writes easily, he rhymes with facility, his use of assonance is skilful, he knows how to make blank verse march toward a rhythmic climax. And he almost always has something to say. Nevertheless, one always has a faint feeling that something is just a little wrong or a little lacking. The climax of the poem is never quite enough of a climax—tends to a disappointing flatness. Is it that Mr Middleton simply doesn't feel these things with sufficient intensity? Or is it that the gift of sovereign speech was denied him by the good fairies? One respects this work, but one is never kindled by it; and one never finds out just who Mr Middleton is.

**EXCURSIONS AND SOME ADVENTURES**, by Etta Close (8vo, 296 pages; Lincoln MacVeagh, Dial Press: \$4) aspires to be nothing beyond a personal garnering of "scattered memories of bygone times," and so it has its inevitable excess of not very exciting anecdotes, which differ from one another chiefly in that some of them originated in Africa, some in America, and some in the Orient. The author belongs to that class of globe-trotters whose reminiscences are inevitably entangled with recollections of personal comfort or discomfort—a circumstance which renders these pages perhaps more vivid to her than vital to others.

**THE MAIN STREAM**, by Stuart Sherman (10mo, 239 pages; Scribner: \$2.50) is aptly named. Mr Sherman's criticism was essentially a current of thought, fed from the clear springs of sincerity and rippling with enthusiasm. He never sought brilliance at the expense of fairness, or used another man's work to decorate his own importance. Believing that the primary function of the critic is interpretation, he based his appraisals on thoroughness—a virtue too old-fashioned to be widely imitated.

On page 203 of **GILBERT AND SULLIVAN, A Critical Appreciation of The Savoy Theatre**, by A. H. Godwin, with introduction by G. K. Chesterton (12mo, 298 pages; Dutton: \$2.50) the author, who is, we understand, editor of a Journal devoted to the Savoy operettas, says that the logic of "The policeman's lot is not a happy one" "seems to go a little astray." As it is precisely the logic of the matter which is its whole point, one disqualifies Mr Godwin utterly as a judge. The best part of the book, apart from the quotations, is the introduction by G. K. Chesterton.

In **LETTERS TO A DOUBTER**, by Paul Claudel (12mo, 261 pages; A. & C. Boni: \$2.50) the thought of God is set forth with a firm contemporary aptness which seems to give the faith recorded a practical modern presence unaffected by, yet not out of harmony with the current intellectual scene. At all events the faith here depicted appears to have behind it not only the force of faith itself but the more secular forces, energy and clarity of intelligence. And while the earnestness of these distinguished correspondents may seem to some persons more appropriate to the first than the twentieth century of the Christian era, nevertheless their meditations are focally modern in bearing, and worthy the perusal of modern readers.

**THE FORERUNNERS OF SAINT FRANCIS and Other Studies**, by Ellen Scott Davison (8vo, 425 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$5). The portion of this work dealing with the reform movements in the church before the appearance of St Francis is written with scholarship, while the presentation of mediaeval life shows careful research. There hangs, however, over the whole volume an unlifting cloud of academic unillumination. Perhaps if Miss Davison had lived she would have handled her notes with more spirit.

If **THE DISCIPLE OF A SAINT**, by Vida D. Scudder (12mo, 383 pages; Dutton: \$2.50) is "imaginary biography," it is in the valuable sense of the word *imaginary*. From such records of fourteenth-century fact as remain to us the author has constructed a scrupulously elaborated inference as to the life of thought and heart that was lived by Raniero di Landoccio dei Pagliaresi, chief disciple and first secretary of St Catherine of Siena. And while the result is not biography in the confined sense that it is a mere record of bare fact, neither has it any relation to the sloven incontinence that is customarily known as fictional biography. Indeed, as a finely founded and finished example of the artistic interpretation of biographic fact it merits consideration by readers (and they must be growing in numbers) who would see biography more fully developed as an art than it has been in the past.

**DANTE**, by John Jay Chapman (8vo, 99 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$2.50). Mr Chapman compares *The Divine Comedy* to a solar and lunar clock made in the Middle Ages by an astronomer-mechanician. "Ten thousand experts" have sought to understand it, and in their efforts have stopped the complicated machine. "But at night, when the collaborators are asleep, the machine resumes its ticking." His own translation, limited to thirteen cantos, is one of the most distinguished that has ever appeared in English, and his Commentaries, besides being illuminating, are a definite contribution to the criticism of poetry.

**SHAKESPEARE: Actor-Poet**, by Clara Longworth de Chambrun (10mo, 357 pages; Appleton: \$3). "It is better," says the author of this rational and minute re-examination of the available facts of Shakespeare's life, "to take note of the documents in our possession rather than twist historical truth to fit in with the tenets of modern writers." Accordingly she has prosecuted an extended and independent analysis of the large body of Shakespearean data, including in her very productive scrutiny, records hitherto not over-consulted for their bearing on Shakespeare, such as the works of William Fulman, a scholarly Elizabethan, whose twenty-five manuscript volumes are a part of the library of Corpus Christi College, Oxford; or the life and works of Giovanni Florio, translator of Montaigne and resident professor to the Earl of Southampton. The result is an additional and considerable illumination of such questions as Shakespeare's youth and education at Stratford, his London acquaintance and literary beginnings, his means of cultivation, his contemporary vogue, his part with Southampton, Essex, and the dark lady of the sonnets. The book is important.

**ROBERT HERRICK, The Last Elizabethan**, by Leon Mandel II (8vo, 71 pages; Argus Press: \$5). Mr Mandel has evidently a genuine admiration for Herrick's poetry, but his appreciations are in no way original and his style has upon it the unmistakable hall-mark of the amateur writer. He tells us in his foreword that he is "a busy man of affairs" and we are inclined to think he should reserve his energy for the activities that are natural to him.

**THE MODERNITY OF MILTON**, by Martin A. Larson (12mo, 277 pages; University of Chicago Press: \$2.75). Stating briefly the thesis of this book, Milton's Christianity and indeed all his thought underwent a considerable evolution in the course of his career, without losing, however, its essentially humanistic and thus modern character, as a result of which "his whole life was a constant battle against mediaevalism to procure freedom for the individual." That Milton was one of the founders of the modern spirit is apparent to the author, moreover, in a "plea" such as *Paradise Lost* is, "for a realization of the homogeneity and interdependence of all mankind and nature." The study is not one, perhaps, to excite attention outside of Miltonic circles, or induce those to read Milton who would not have read him anyhow. Nevertheless it has been done in a manner to make it seem worth doing, for, as the author rightly urges, "it is no mere trick to read Milton."

**CARLYLE AT HIS ZENITH** (1848-1853), by David Alec Wilson (10mo, 506 pages; Dutton: \$5). In this, the fourth volume of his biography, Mr Wilson continues his prolonged anecdotal instruction into the peculiar temperament of his subject. Jane Austen's novels Carlyle describes as "dish washings," Milne's life of Keats as "fricasee of dead dog," living for the sake of happiness is "the philosophy of the frying pan"; "poetry is no longer a field where any true or worthy success can be won or deserved." No wonder Emerson described this great and limited man as "a practical Scotchman, such as you would find in any saddler's or iron dealer's shop." Mr Wilson's own literary style may be indicated by the following quotation, "A he-woman is apt to go wrong and not leave a man to mind his own business in his own way."

**ROBERT EYRES LANDOR: A Biographical and Critical Sketch**, by Eric Partridge (10mo, 108 pages; Fanfrolico Press, London: 10/6); **SELECTIONS FROM ROBERT LANDOR**, edited by Eric Partridge (10mo, 176 pages; Fanfrolico Press, London: 7/6). To defend from oblivion the younger brother of Walter Savage Landor—which is the intent of these volumes—is doubtless commendable, but it is not easy. Robert Landor seems pre-eminently to have been one who—whether consciously or not—did all that in him lay to court obscurity; his efforts during his own lifetime, at least, being crowned with frightening success. According to his brief biography he was as proudly withdrawn as his brother was tempestuously outspoken, and so irreproachable that he not only had no legend but scarcely a history. Furthermore, a perusal of the selections from his works reveals prose and verse which is accomplished and distinguished but formal, which labours under a burden of dignity that is frosty indeed. His work is patently not without nobility, but nobility here seems not to compensate for the lack of warmth. In fact the kind of thing which the editor has hoped to make better known to the generality may prove the kind of thing from which the generality makes off, with a haste that is characteristic but perhaps not wholly culpable.

**ANTON TCHEKHOV: Literary and Theatrical Reminiscences**, translated from the Russian and edited by S. S. Koteliansky (8vo, 249 pages; Doran: \$5). Despite the reprinting here, of certain prepossessing sketches by Bunin, Kuprin, Gorki, Andreyev, Stanislawsky, and others, these reminiscences with certain not-to-be and surely not-intended-to-be published fragments, cannot be said to add to our understanding of Chekhov. And what of Sobolev's statement that in Russian literature, Chekhov "occupies a place along with Pushkin, Dostoyevsky and Tolstoy"!

**FLAUBERT'S YOUTH, 1821-1845**, by Lewis Piaget Shanks (12mo, 250 pages; Johns Hopkins Press: \$2.25). The argument that Flaubert was a romanticist before he became a realist is illustrated exhaustively and exhaustingly by quotations from the early letters and writings, which, however, sufficiently prove the case. Professor Shanks has not enough style at command to make the dull chapters—the first ones—bearable; but he grows in security of touch as his author does, and towards the end of the little book both the professor and his subject become almost enticing.

**LETTERS OF VOLTAIRE AND FREDERICK THE GREAT**, selected and translated with an introduction by Richard Aldington (10mo, 396 pages; Brentano: \$5). "You think like Trajan, you write like Pliny, and you use French like our best critics"; Voltaire was forty-three when he addressed these lines to his royal admirer of twenty-five; and Frederick answered, "May my eyes one day see him whose mind is the charm of my life." Twenty-three years had elapsed and the words of the great Frenchman then were, "You have done me harm enough." Between those two periods may be followed one of the most diverting correspondences of history, between a king who aspired to be a poet and a poet who aspired to be supreme. Typical of the eighteenth century in their punctilio and dry ceremoniousness, these letters yet have within them a wisdom not wholly sheathed in diplomacy and a grace that flashes with malice. Mr Aldington's treatment of his material is in every way admirable.

**THE RIGHT TO BE HAPPY**, by Mrs Bertrand Russell (10mo, 295 pages; Harpers: \$2.50). No contemporary work dealing with the "rights of children" and the relation of women toward sex and society is more carefully thought out or more cogently expressed. This is an honest, gallant book by a woman of character, insight, and culture. It should be read by every young girl and every young man.

**THE RELIGION OF BEHAVIORISM**, by Dr Louis Berman (12mo, 153 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$1.75). The psychology of Behaviorism is certainly unpalatable to Dr Berman as it is to many sensitive people. He summons to his aid the experiments of Köhler with apes to disprove the Behaviorist contention that the organism reacts with every part of itself to a single isolated stimulus. He tells us also that "religion consists of a self-conscious attitude toward life," and no mechanism such as Behaviorism implies is capable of this attitude. Hence Behaviorism is destructive of religion. Did Dr Berman write with scientific detachment, he might be received with greater respect. As it is, he is betrayed by his heat, and no saving literary grace preserves his words for the fastidious.

**THE TASK OF SOCIAL HYGIENE**, by Havelock Ellis (12mo, 414 pages; Houghton Mifflin: \$2.25). Like everything written by this eminently rational, eminently enlightened author the present work is prolific of sane instruction. But do not such phrases as "the destiny of the race rests with women" and "the glorious freedom of a new religion" remind us perhaps a little sadly of those pre-war days when disillusionment was still the property of the few rather than of the many?

**ON LOVE**, by Marie-Henri Beyle (De Stendhal) translated by H. B. V., under the direction of C. K. Scott Moncrieff (12mo, 420 pages; Boni & Liveright: \$2.50). It is difficult to understand why this book, published more than a hundred years ago, should have secured so few readers. The subject is certainly one of universal interest, the style lucid and entertaining, and the point of view enlightened, witty, and subtle. Modern psychology has told us as much, but it has not told it in a manner so varied, so ironical, and so vivacious.



## THE THEATRE

**I**T would be inaccurate to say that The Theatre Guild's **PORGY** is **UNCLE TOM'S CABIN** produced by The Moscow Art Theatre. Where Rouben Mamoulian, the director, received his training I do not know; I can only guess that he must once have seen and loved the Ballet Russe. For the first scene of **PORGY** is in general rhythm and in small detail, the opening scene of **PETROUCHKA**; and later in the play, when this impression is somewhat dissipated, there are hands beating desperately against a door, precisely as **Petroouchka's** hands beat against his door. On the other side, there are scenes as American in rhythm as the opening scene in **SALVATION NELL**; and the minor incidents in the play sometimes suggest the plot of **SHUFFLE ALONG**.

**PORGY**, therefore, is a bit mixed. I came to the play without knowledge of **DuBose Heyward's** novel from which he and **Dorothy Heyward** made it. I know now that in one important matter the authors forgot that the spectators of the play were not familiar with their text. In the third act there is a hurricane; it is a necessary element in the plot and it has certain emotional values which the play needs. And particularly it is supposed to rise out of the brooding heat which has lain like a weight on **Catfish Row** for many days before. This heat is the true atmosphere in which **PORGY's** people move and live—and I had no sense of it whatever. There was atmosphere of the other sort—local colour in speech and customs; but that priceless sense of the air which characters in a play are breathing, that savour in their lives, I missed. So that the storm was “planted” for me about three minutes before it broke, and I felt it a dramatic expedient.

Was this due, I wonder, to the style of the production? The Guild courageously entrusted this folk play to a foreigner; I can see many reasons for doing so. I would rather have a negro play in the hands of a **Little Russian** or of a **Scandinavian** who understood folk forms of expression, than in those of a negro who knew nothing but **Harlem**. Technical veracity can be summoned from around the corner and from the libraries; but spirit cannot, nor style. In a sense the Guild was doubly justified, because there

seems to be no carping voice raised about veracity (the Heywards themselves know their material too well to have encouraged slips) and there has been a great deal of praise for the handling of crowds and the pacing of scenes.

My own criticism is that the manner is so obviously foreign that it may not be exactly appropriate to the material and therefore gives the effect at times of a mannerism. There is a rhythm; but is it darky rhythm entirely in the street scenes and negro rhythm in the wailing scenes? Of the latter there are two: in the first a "saucer burial" is being provided—a widow and her friends sit around the bed on which the dead man lies, singing and praying for sufficient money for the funeral; in the second the entire community huddles together singing their trust in the Lord while a hurricane strikes down their brethren on the sea. The first of these impressed me as entirely false, and even if I were told that on such occasions negroes range themselves in parallel lines with a slight pitch and keep time as these players did, I should still say that the effect on the stage was one of artificial arrangement of which one remained conscious. Whereas the second scene, broken by the entrance of the blasphemer and marked by mystery and terror, was obviously as planned by the director, but much more successfully realized. It had its own rhythm, an inherent, not an applied one; and was extraordinarily effective.

There are beautiful things all through *PORGY*—beautiful music, attractive settings, bits of action extraordinarily appealing. They are mingled with some trivial things and some absurd ones. Perhaps the finest thing of all is the creation, by the Guild, of an entirely fresh company to present this play: it argues a capacity to escape from rigid forms, an adaptability which will save the Guild from ever becoming so much an institution as to lose the life of the theatre.

About *THE TRIAL OF MARY DUGAN* it is briefly said that it is the old hokum getting by again because it is well done. Once you know that the entire play follows a murder trial from its beginning to its end, and that the brother of the accused girl rushes into court toward the end of act one and takes over the defence, you see that hokum is bound to be part of the proceedings. But I found myself so pleased that I think something more is justified.

For since *WITHIN THE LAW* (by the same author) and probably generations before that, the crook play, slickly done, has been one of the pleasures of the American stage. Obviously, the pleasure has come from the slickness, which corresponds to the wit which made a certain type of English comedy so delightful. It exists in George M. Cohan's plays and productions; it reached a very high level in *BROADWAY*; and it is oddly something which intellectual playwrights and producers seem to scorn, as if it could hurt them.

The current example is not the best, by far; but it is good enough to be always interesting. There was, to my taste, too much hand-clasping and deep breathing on the part of the defendant-sister and defender-brother; but it was matched by the skill in which court procedure was squeezed of its last drop of dramatic juiciness. For example, everyone who has served on a jury in criminal court knows how sickening it is to start the day not only facing a crime, but under compulsion to hear sentence passed on criminals previously convicted; and this was used, right at the start, to put salt on the wound which the first act was preparing for the audience. The way the intermissions were related to the course of the trial is another instance of exceptional cleverness. And the swift passage over relatively unimportant matters (the things detectives always explain in the last chapter after the villain has been apprehended) is really admirable.

The promise of the early months of the season is a year of melodrama and *genre* work. They are not the highest type of theatre; but if they are good, they are a hundred times more satisfactory than seriousness of intention and feeble execution.

GILBERT SELDES

## MODERN ART

**T**HERE is something humorous in this year's distribution of prizes at the Pittsburgh International Exhibition and it is impossible not to suspect that a joker stumbled into the jury-room and put a finger in the pie. Henri Matisse gets the gold medal and fifteen hundred dollars! This is very nice but also droll. Bernard Karfiol and Andrew Dasburg, two young Americans who are as unconventional in their different ways as Matisse is in his, come in for honours!! It looks, on the surface, as though it were a complete rout of the academic forces. In reality, of course, it is nothing of the sort. Next year there'll be a jury of the ordinary calibre and the regulation prize-winners will garner the regulation medals and all will be as calm as usual along the Monongahela.

It may seem to some that I take an ungracious attitude to Pittsburgh's this year's prizes, considering the fact that in times past I have never failed to cavil at the announced honour-lists. The truth is, as you suspect, that I fail to attach any deep significance to prizes—and even when, by a combination of weird chances, the choice happens to fall on men I approve of, as it does this year, I am amused but not impressed. I know the dear old Academy hasn't changed just because a progressivist got by mistake upon one of its juries. Matisse, who must by this time have heard the news, is doubtless laughing, too, up his sleeve. He is not, and never was, even in youth, an innocent like Cézanne yearning to be included in "Bouguereau's salon." He is not that type. He saw very clearly and at once that his business was to be "agin the Academy" and he gained fame and riches doing just that. To receive at the age of sixty a *douceur* and a pat on the back from Pittsburgh after twenty years or more of strenuous opposition to what Pittsburgh represents, ought, if the prize system means anything at all, to be very disconcerting to Matisse. It would imply, would it not? that the artist, in the eyes of the institution, was no longer rebellious—in other words, that he had lost his punch? The alternative, that the institution itself had turned radical, is not to be thought of for an instant. So, as usual, there is no meaning to the prize. A very fine painter who no longer stands in any

particular need of money is the richer by fifteen hundred dollars and that is about all there is to it.

By the same token, it will not be astonishing if Bernard Karfiol and Andrew Dasburg are called upon for explanations by their friends. It is conceivable that they may feel compromised. The *intransigent* is so much the note of the day, among young people, that, like Matisse, they almost feel that defying institutions is the principal part of the game. Being younger than Matisse and not as yet accustomed to much notice, they might succumb to the insidious flattery of the press-notices that will be theirs, for a week or two, were it not for the obvious fact that they are not likely, either of them, ever again to receive such prizes and will shortly, in consequence, be able to feel that they have the usual grievance against academies. Both Dasburg and Karfiol are DIAL artists. That is, their work is familiar to you who read this. Dasburg seeks for compactness of design and binds his compositions together at times so tightly that they take on the aridity of the country of his adoption. He lives in New Mexico—one of Mabel Dodge's neighbours, and, I think, one of her protégés. His prize-taking picture, an arrangement of poppies, is quite the best thing of his that I have seen. Karfiol is more poetic. He is poetic on principle, I always say, and not because any overwhelming passion takes possession of him, insisting upon utterance. The mere act of taking his brushes in hand impels to the mood, but it always works, and he is always poetic. Youths and maidens who have just come up from a bath in the sea and who still drip moisture and cling to each other for warmth, supply him with themes. He draws recklessly, uncertainly, and tenderly. For the sake of the last the two first are easily enough forgiven. In drawing, he seems to struggle particularly with feet, but something in the artist's helplessness in this matter aids in giving his people an unearthly, appealing quality—and I am far from counselling the artist to take a few days off and learn feet. The Karfiol feet remind me, in a far-off way, of El Greco's. Karfiol's are awkward and shuffling and El Greco's are invariably elegant but both are too fragile for the thorny paths of this old world.

All this excitement about unprecedentedly challenging prize-giving may give you the impression that the entire International Exhibition reaches unwonted heights. It does not, alas. The affair is astonishingly like most of those that have gone before,

and visitors who saw the collection of last year, must rub their eyes to assure themselves that they are not seeing an absolute duplicate. This effect of repetition is especially pronounced in the French section. There has been instituted the system of showing three or four examples of the work of the invited artists—which is a good thing of course—but when the best the French can do is to assemble three or four each of works by Monet, Le Sidaner, Maurice Denis, Ménard, Roussell, and Utrillo, even the presence of three or four rather repressed Matisse's cannot go far towards conveying an effect of contemporaneousness. One gets the idea, on the contrary, that one is in an old-fashioned, conservative art shop where nothing has been sold lately. Slightly stuffy! Any one who knows Matisse well can take a certain recognizing pleasure in his group of canvases; but newcomers may be puzzled. I liked his *Violinistes*, for the two young women are posed in one of those *bourgeois* interiors that a *bon bourgeois* like Matisse can paint with his eyes shut; but it is quiet. Designed for the *bourgeois* trade, probably; not intended for a museum; not at all like the great *Odalisque* that we saw in New York last winter. And the actual flower piece that got medalled is a brave attempt that does not quite come off.

The English, the Germans, the Spaniards and Italians are much as they were, and the star performers, such as Augustus John, Sir William Orpen, Mancini, and Zuloaga will not be much talked about; what is there to say about them (between yawns) other than they have been doing what they are now doing for a considerable time and that they used to do it better. Henry Lamb, not so well known as those mentioned, nevertheless gives more pleasure than all of them put together, with his *Tea Party*. Mr Lamb is not blind to the frailties of his countrymen, even when they happen to be his friends, and the excessively unornamental, heavily intellectual people whom he paints, may be, as like as not, taking tea in his own house. . . . A word of praise would not go amiss, either, in closing this narrative, for the portrait by Anton Faistauer, of Austria, of *The Singer*, Richard Mayr, as Baron Ochs, in *Rosenkavalier*. It is vigorous and freely painted.

HENRY McBRIDE

## MUSICAL CHRONICLE

**D**ECIDEDLY, it is with misgivings. And one's resolve to learn docent is an inadequate apology to others. Nevertheless, Mr Rosenfeld having called for a sabbatical year and Mr Gilman having at the last found it impossible to take his place, we enter by a *non-sequitur*, though never for a moment forgetting our office as makeshift.

But to the Inventory. Music as a substitute for religion, a secular mysticism, belief without theology (which incidentally it has been ever since the founding of the Church); or music as the individuation of certain harmonic principles, to be discussed in terms of modulation, cadence, augmented fifths, and as many of the newer clusters as one could find names for. Music as orgy—or music as a mechanism. The greatest of composers, it seems, have been given to describing the mentality or inspiration of their works, and have not hesitated to use for this purpose the vocabulary of heroism. This we should continually take into account; yet to an extent they may have been handling a technical phenomenon in a lyrical nomenclature. Music elements do conflict and later submit. Minor disputes become reconciled in larger entities. Themes, first introduced tentatively, may grow powerful and assertive as the whelp ripens to lionhood. Their character, from phase to phase, may be transformed. And there is a certain *fiat lux* about all this, much which is analogous to chaos and triumph over chaos, a symphonic programme always being somewhat a book of genesis. In the weldings and modifications, there is even the record of revision—and thus the result is all the more like a process of creation. All music has in it something of the development which we watch expressly in Walther's *Preislied* as it undergoes the interruptions and corrections of Hans Sachs.

On the other hand, to analyse a work technically. Note how the theme of the first movement reappears with a difference in the third! Recalling Mr Damrosch on the radio: "this daring motif, perhaps one of the most audacious conceptions which has ever sounded in the ear of man"—and then stops to play the

three godless notes at the piano; and they too are broadcasted, the forces of nature being catholic to all purposes, while one sets himself to feel into, to empathize with, the audacity. Yet we know that Mr Damrosch is authentically and impregnably at home in music. Consider, then, the offence of going one further, and talking about the emotion-machine with the vocabulary of suffering and salvation reduced to a minimum (on the theory that, being ever present, it can like the more strictly physical vibrations be omitted as common to all). . . . Analysing a work technically, one would (a) become quickly aware of one's own lacunae in musical knowledge, and (b) attempt a task in which ignominy would be in direct proportion to efficiency. Further, we do not forget that this anti-orgy, unwieldy as it may be to the criticism of music, has proved even more disastrous to the production of it. For whereas the critic may regret or deplore, the composer similarly placed was forced to write of pickled embryos, and coax forth the waltzes of the precious disgusted—had as much as that to wake up with each morning.

These we see as the only two possible alternatives. Obviously, with both of them eliminated, the wise critic will choose what is left.

However, we may gain courage from the very stressing of criticism as an irrelevancy, by admitting at the start that one must turn to the music itself for the sterling experiencing of those moments wherein the medium of tones is most skilfully and magnanimously exemplified. We categorically refuse to be depressed at least in this, our failure to regive in another medium the equivalent of these wholly musical events.

Were fire as much the small coin of musical performance as *fuoco*, criticism would be promptly reduced to that state towards which it gravitates: the compiling of anthologies, the search for typical similarities and divergencies, and—on the assumption that criticism will always deal with a thing in terms foreign to itself—the recalling of yesterday's concert while listening to to-day's. We recognize, perhaps too readily, that even the sublime can be cheapened by multitude—and here enters the wedge whereby criticism may force itself out of the class of parasites into the class of the useful; for at those wayward and unpredictable times when a composer's eloquence is happening outside of us rather than



within us, much can still be made arresting to the prying eye and we be rescued from sloth, by substituting investigation for sympathy. In five hours of Wagner, are not at least three of them best salvaged by "study"? Relaxing from the attempt to vibrate avec, one watches "what he does with the horns"?

Though ceremony seems more indigenous to music than to letters, even a grand manner can effect a climax but by the grander manner, which inversely means a manner less grand—and here too one must face a comparative lapse. Also, precisely because of music's spontaneous tendency towards ceremony, the decorative element closely rivals the confessional one, indeed the two have not been felt as opposites as they have in letters. Even a musician like Bach will renounce sublimity to impress us as interesting. To call art "emotional" is not to pen it totally within the obligation of "intensity." There are not only degrees of emotion, but even kinds. The satisfaction of the *Kantianer* over his page of syllogisms is no less an emotional state than the static pall of Chopin. So one could hold that musicians must keep the pot a-boiling with pedantry, and that to expect of an audience a sustained emotional tension is to ask for nothing short of pathology. I know an individual who, the first time he heard the *Sacre*, wept, choked, and suffered acute convulsions of the chest muscles at each irruption of the rhythm. On second hearing he was an old man, and sat motionless, stonily suffering the concert like an Indian scanning the horizon. He voted that it had failed—but perhaps it was this second man for whom Strawinsky was writing.

Inventory: classical-modern dichotomy. Could not all of Western music be interpreted as a *continuum*, all of it exemplifying, with varying degrees of observance and violation (the violation being an involute form of observance) the same aesthetic principles? Even accidental street-noises must have their appeal—in so far as they appeal as music—in some vague "classical" synthesis, some accommodation to an emotional logic capable of being reduced to grammar and speaking in the language of our childhood voices (the Ninth Symphony as lullaby). New elements, that is, are incorporated in accordance with one's previous organization; beauty being little different from morals in this respect. At the end of much effort, we rediscover our first conditionings—and ineffective thinking in art may be only that which has not thought

long enough to convert its oddities back into the wholesome, the offence not being in having thought, but in having thought only halfway through the cycle. Thus those raw who cannot brook anything but atonality and polyrhythm are in most cases more *bahnbrechend* than the composers themselves who provide for their amusement. The values of a neologism depend upon the values of a language to which it is added.

Music is a vocabulary, and all vocabulary is subject to disruption into dialect. It is not as the result of an aesthetic property, but purely through error in codification, that music has been thought of as "universal." (The so-called "natural laws" of harmony do not make for universality any more than do the equally natural laws of rhetoric.) But its indeterminateness from the standpoint of the literal and the ideological has made the question of misunderstanding a matter of less moment. To misunderstand an instruction is to stop-stop when the signal is turned to go-go, but there is no similar non-aesthetic test for music—and thus the erroneous belief in its universality could thrive, not on the soundness of the doctrine, but on its irrefutability. We might add that this refusal to compare musical and literary dialect has had another important consequent. Failing to understand a foreign language, one does not assume that his mind is closed to language as a whole. But it is customary, when not following a certain musical idiom, to conclude that one "has no ear for music."

The situation may be further complicated to-day by the fact that the creation of musical idiom is—as I suspect at least—in itself a primary pursuit with musicians. The average musician seems to be much more of a Mallarmé than the average literator. But to an extent this dual purpose has always figured in art, the artist asking first that the audience divine his idiom and then, divining it, be influenced by it and obey its exhortations. And if this is so, if much of the work now being done is turned upon the development of the medium itself, then in these cases there must be more importance attachable to the creation of the idiom than to its subsequent exploitation for emotive purposes. Merely because this tendency is in many cases sterile, or trivial, we need not condemn it in the absolute. Those who reap the rewards of a method are always rare in proportion to those who exemplify it. The vogue of the age for which they produce, however, should

give these mere exemplifiers a certain temporary importance—and often does. (Incidentally, it is probable that the war has now definitely ceased to exist as a psychological factor influencing artistic technique. Though perhaps with greater hesitancy, the “pre-war” directions are being resumed. We speculate upon this as a possible fact, without yet daring to evaluate it.)

And lastly, Inventory: “pure” music. Tone seems to share the pudency of pigment at telling a story, or at least at avowedly doing so. Yet what line is there to be drawn between a succession of chords in a school-book and the twits and cocoo calls of a piece entitled, say, *A Ramble in the Wood*? Even the eighteenth-century composers seem to have depicted their storms and furies literally; and though the results are highly conventionalized, much closer to minuets than to a ride of the *Walkyrie*, and are perversely neither so loud nor so discordant as they easily could be, they are none the less “programmistic.” Beethoven’s sixth and seventh symphonies are clearly on the edge, if not of the literal, then of the metaphorical. Bach sets his *flehen* to nagging chromatics and his *weinte bitterlich* to plaintive ones. And Wagner’s literalness, according to Nietzsche, was carried even to the extent of musical prose. In all music lurks the opera (as Roger Fry says of abstract painting, that it merely utilizes a less obvious set of literal representations). So the ambition to write pure music might mean one of two things: to give us either pieces which recommend themselves as embodied treatises on musical method, or those in which the operatic aspect is a little less obvious than it was heretofore. The usual result probably contains something of both: the original representative (or realistic; or impressionistic!) element being present, but subjected to a purely musical destiny.

We must reserve for subsequent numbers the hazard of specific concert criticisms.

KENNETH BURKE

## COMMENT

*The trees have wisdom, for they sleep*

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*But man claps on his coat of brown,  
His badger coat,  
When winter whistles through the town  
And sledge is boat.*

DOUGLAS AINSLIE

**H**ERMAN PATRICK TAPPE would be sorry to have us outgrow the Christmas of Bracebridge Hall and a garland, tinsel diadem, or "so personal" wreath of mistletoe refuting scepticism, he is justly reminded of Lord Chesterfield's conviction that "the manner of giving shows the genius of the giver more than the gift itself." The Christmas battered, that is to say the Christmas-gift-battered heart, however, inclines to the scene outside "where white winds blow" and to James Joyce's dislike of gifts that are appropriate—"a spellingbee book for Rosy Brooke;" "scruboak beads for beatified Bidy;" "for Camilla, Dromilla, Ludmilla, Mamilla, a bucket, a packet, a book and a pillow".

"I am compelled to celebrate Christmas in some way, but I had much rather not," Bernard Shaw is quoted as saying and the complaint is far from outrageous. We have observed the bareness of giving which is not inclusive of the giver, yet the preposterous aspect of a thing ought not to do away with the thing itself; it is apparent that counterfeits are not able to make people dislike money. What we probably need, as Mr Shaw shows, is not judiciousness but continuity. "I have no quarrel with the Christmas feeling" he goes on to say, "but I think it should be spread over the whole year," and Washington Irving, Lowell, Dickens, Mr Tappé, and certain of us by nature more sardonic than these, would agree with him.

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