

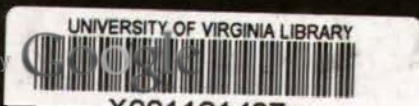
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Poet Lore Plays

AT THE CHASM

JAROSLAV VRCHLICKY

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Poet Lore

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AT THE CHASM

One-Act Play for the Library Table

BY JAROSLAV VRCHLICKY (*Emil Fucik*)

*Translated from the Bohemian by Charles Recht**

Miss Liberty's Chief Jester and Wit, the Adorable Andre Tridon, to him this translation is dedicated

CHARACTERS

KAREL PROSKOVEC, journalist.

CILKA, his wife.

BOHDAN NAVRATIL, a novelist, her brother.

(Plain, simple, but neatly furnished library of modern design. A large desk, upon which are books and papers. At the window, a small embroidery table; between windows a couch, and at extreme left a hearth. Table with chairs in middle. KAREL PROSKOVEC is sitting at the desk and writing. CILKA is working at the embroidery table and BOHDAN is drowsing on the couch; he holds a closed book in his hand.)

Cilka. — Going to the theater to-night?

Karel. — Certainly, there is a *premiere*.

Cilka. — And who, may I ask, is the fortunate one?

Karel (still writing; with a slight irony). — Who else, my dear, than our beloved Bohdan. For him open not only the portals of the theater but also those of immortal glory. Whenever there is a *premiere* it is always a triumphal day of Bohdan's.

Bohdan (suddenly jumping up from the couch). — Does it not tire you to annoy me all the time? Pray do tell me what pleasure you find in it? (*Turns suddenly to CILKA.*) You do not believe him do you, Cilka? During the eight years of your married life, I presume you have learned to know

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him, have you not? Go look at the posters or newspapers and see if my name appears under the title of this novelty.

Karel (still writing). — It is always a *nom-de-plume*, my dear. Our Bohdan took it into his head to be the Messiah of our drama and as you know —

Bohdan. — Oh, do cease this meaningless tirade. As long as you are the theatrical critic of the press, you can rest assured that I will never trouble you with my première.

Cilka. — Still at the old feud, brother?

Karel (to CILKA). — Since the publication of his poetry. (*To BOHDAN with affected seriousness.*) And you want to make us believe, old boy, that you took your manuscripts from the theatrical office; as if anyone could believe it — it happened, of course, but with a slight difference, they were returned to you, that's all. But you are a good and prudent chap and are not angry with us, are you? You know I like you for that.

Bohdan. — Why should I be? On the contrary, I am very grateful to the management.

Cilka. — And why?

Bohdan (with a shade of bitterness). — Because they saved me from a blunder.

Karel. — Now you assaulted the novel. How about your lyric, have you buried it?

Bohdan. — You mean that you buried it.

Karel (continuing). — For the drama you are too young, you admit that yourself and you have therefore adopted the sacred old prose. I'll warrant that you will become a good journalist one of these days (*continuing slowly*). Well, that is good for something anyway.

Bohdan. — Indeed it has an advantage.

Cilka. — Which?

Bohdan. — One can cheaply disgrace his acquaintances and that's good for many things nowadays.

Karel (goes over to BOHDAN and lays his hands on his shoulder). — Enough of jesting, old fellow. Let us look at the whole thing with common sense. You published your poems at the time when I began to visit your house and pay court to Cilka. Be just and recognize the truth. For the education that your father gave you, you are still a wonder of a chap. He once saw in you a Byron, then again a Napoleon, while you, thank God, became the simple Bohdan Navratil, and so remained. At the time when I began to come to your house, Byron was just in the ascendant, as I would say 'all the rage' in your family. You then published that heart-breaking book.

Bohdan (bitterly). — Which you deliberately condemned.

Karel (continuing quietly). — Wait. Don't interrupt. Had I been an unscrupulous fellow and an egotist, I would, like any other person in similar circumstances, have either admired and worshipped the new Byron, or at least kept my mouth shut. That was the time you could have recognized my true character, when, after the hand of your sister, I told you the whole truth as sincerely and openly as I am saying even now, after ten years.

Bohdan (suddenly moved). — But in the meantime, I have learned to love you.

Karel. — Well, some bitterness has remained at the bottom of our cup of love, but that is what makes it wholesome. The drink of love in order that it may be lasting must not be too sweet. 'Love me little, but love me long.' And see now we are relatives and regard each other as true brothers.

Bohdan (slowly). — But to those firstlings of mine you were unjust.

Karel. — Ten years from to-day we will speak about that again (*going to desk*). Excuse me now, I must finish this introductory article.

Cilka. — And what are you writing now, brother?

Bohdan. — Nothing, dear Cilka, and it is the best. To-day an author ought to be sent to St. Helena. The whole atmosphere is deluged with mottoes and motives. Idealism, naturalism, humanism, realism and God only knows how many more isms. One wants to suit them all and suits none. For instance, I am now collecting human documents, because to-day without them there is no truth in a work of art. That is naturalism. Formerly I sat down, thought for awhile until I discovered something, then combined, created and wrote.

Cilka. — And to-day?

Bohdan. — It is much worse to-day. Now I do not think, do not combine —

Karel (with sarcasm). — But he omits all that and writes directly. (*Lays down pen and rises.*) When I have more time I will give you my opinion about that, but now I am in a hurry to get to the office and then to the theater.

Bohdan (with irony). — Thanks — I have time.

Cilka. — But you'll have a cup of tea with us before you go, will you not?

Karel. — Yes, if you don't mind.

(*Exit CILKA.*)

Bohdan. — Brother, don't you notice a change in Cilka's behavior lately?

Karel. — No, not the slightest. Why?

Bohdan. — Perhaps I, her brother, have a better insight into her character.

Karel. — Hardly a better one than I — her husband.

Bohdan. — You are an extraordinary man, Karel.

Karel. — Pardon me, an extraordinary man? Is that your latest? I, on the contrary, consider myself a normal, ordinary character — a prototype of the common-sense man — '*Comme il faut.*' I look upon things without prejudice, and day after day I mind the duties of my business.

Bohdan. — Yes, like a machine. (*KAREL is moved.*) Pardon me, but it is so. You go after your business day after day like clockwork; surround yourself with its cares and duties; look neither to the right nor left, and in the meantime your wife is dying of spiritual starvation.

Karel. — Romanticism, my dear.

Bohdan. — Call it whatever you please, but I am certain that your wife is suffering, yes, suffering extremely. I consider it my fraternal duty to her to tell you so — because (*hesitating, then quickly*) I can't bear it any longer. I have been looking for this opportunity for a long while.

Karel. — My, my! You are telling me all sorts of news to-day. (*Angered.*) My wife suffering? And I don't know about it? Anything else, my dear? And why does she not tell me about it? Does she lack anything? Am I not doing everything within my power to secure her well-being? No, no, Bohdan, I think you are mistaken.

Bohdan. — No, I am not, I saw her several times alone, crying. When she saw me she got up quickly, wiped away her tears and either hurried out of the room or laughed, — a laugh that had the falsest ring.

Karel. — Oh, that! She is mourning the loss of our only child. Time will heal that.

Bohdan. — If that were the only reason!

Karel. — And what should be the reason, if you please? You speak as if you knew of something.

Bohdan. — You are one of those fortunate men who judge the happiness of a human being by his external welfare. You remind me of that good parent who, when they told him that his son was dying of melancholia and wanted to commit suicide, exclaimed: 'He has enough to eat and drink, a place to sleep, enough clothes and the rest is all nonsense.'

Karel. — And why does not Cilka complain to me? She knows well that I would do my utmost to satisfy her needs.

Bohdan. — There is not the slightest doubt about that.

Karel. — We have never had a quarrel —

Bohdan. — And never will have, for Cilka is sensitive. She suffers in silence.

Karel. — What's wrong with her? She does not know herself — Oh, leave her alone — she'll be all right in time.

Bohdan. — I would not drop the matter so carelessly.

Karel. — Well then, if you know of something why don't you come out with it?

Bohdan. — I speak from observation.

Karel (with sarcasm). — And what is it, if you please, that you have observed?

Bohdan. — That Cilka is not happy.

Karel. — Words — conclusions — I want facts.

Bohdan. — Those I have not. I judge only by certain symptoms.

Karel. — Name those certain symptoms.

Bohdan. — Seeking of solitude, taciturnity, and hidden weeping.

Karel. — I've already explained that — she cannot forget the loss of her child. What else?

Bohdan. — What else do you want? But wait. (*Speaks hesitatingly.*) I was at the exhibition of Bystrina's picture yesterday.

Karel (ironically). — That phenomenal 'Triumph of Death'?

Bohdan. — The picture is splendid, but that is neither here nor there. Your wife was there.

Karel. — What of it?

Bohdan. — I entered the hall quietly. She was alone. She was so attentive to the picture that she did not hear my step. I stepped near her and saw how bitterly she was weeping — like a child. Karel, I tell you again that woman is not happy.

Karel. — You saw again with the eyes of a poet, my boy. Is not that picture one which would make any sensitive person cry? She saw in that the death of her child — nothing else.

Bohdan. — You saw that picture yourself, did you not?

Karel. — Certainly.

Bohdan. — Did you not observe anything?

Karel. — Just what do you mean?

Bohdan. — Don't you remember, in that long procession of the dead approaching the throne of Death, the first pair to the right; — the face of the man cannot be seen because he has turned to the side. But the features of the woman — Cilka's image.

Karel (thinking). — Yes — Yes, it seems to me there's a somewhat remote resemblance. But that would really be a pure impertinence.

Bohdan. — The resemblance is positive, but as to your objections,

who can forbid an artist to choose his models from wherever he pleases? And besides, Mr. Bystrina knows your wife; you two were once rivals, I believe.

Karel. — You are opening up a chasm before me, my man — what should I do?

Bohdan. — I do not state anything positive, brother, but you'll admit yourself that Cilka is not happy — that there is a struggle going on within her soul, and you know that you will have to be very careful.

Karel. — And you would advise me?

Bohdan. — To drop at least temporarily that sarcasm of yours, which, I know, offends her. But stop! she's coming.

Karel. — Thank you, — we will see. But I don't know if I'll be able to overcome my habits.

(Enter a servant bringing tea service, followed by CILKA, who collects her needlework into a basket and quickly spreads the cloth and arranges the table.)

Servant. — Evening paper.

Bohdan (reaching out for it). — Let me have it. *(Reads. CILKA pours out tea. KAREL stands by hearth, rolling a cigarette.)*

Cilka (handing cup to KAREL). — Here, my dear.

(Exit servant.)

Karel (cigarette in mouth). — Thanks.

Bohdan (jumps up angrily and throws paper on floor). — But this is impertinence.

Karel (quietly sipping his tea). — What is it all about, Bohdan?

Cilka. — Bohdan ought not to read the newspaper at all. It always excites him so.

Bohdan. — It would excite you too. — Such a criticism!

Cilka. — Is there a criticism?

Karel (with irony). — Of your poems?

Bohdan. — Yes, there is a criticism — no, not a criticism, but an insolent, filthy depreciation.

Karel (slowly putting down his empty cup on table and picking up the paper). — Well, well, you don't say so. *(Reads.)* 'Daily News — Arts and Literature — "Triumph of Death" — picture by Ladislav Bystrina' *(murmurs as if he were reading to himself).* No — I regret, boy, that which is written here is true, the pure truth.

Bohdan. — That, that is true?

Karel (calmly). — Yes sir, Mr. Ladislav Bystrina has talent, and great talent at that, but he is on a wrong path and he must be told by someone some day.

Bohdan. — And of course you journalists have the right to point out the ways of genius.

Karel (calmly). — I am not speaking of genius but merely of great talent. If Mr. Ladislav Bystrina were a genius I might discuss the subject more extensively. His picture is weak, positively weak. It can move, or we may say hypnotize youth and women.

Cilka (sighing). — Poor women!

Karel. — Yes, the children and the women of our sickly and artificial civilization — but strength, health and vitality of original source it has not.

Bohdan. — And who says that it must be healthy?

Karel. — Drop those theories, young fellow, and let us get to that which your Ladislav Bystrina drew. *Cilka's* long face tells me that she agrees with you entirely, and that you both suffer from that cult and cant of unappreciated and unrecognized genius. As I said, youth and women. Well, what did that gentleman picture? On a throne made of skulls and bones sits Death. It has a scepter and a crown and toward it move in a long procession crowds of miserable mortals. First come the children — poor things. They have white chemises down to their heels and in their hands they hold antediluvian palms; and how thin they are, and how their eyes bulge! Is it not absurd — the child, the joy and happiness of life, is put in the first row of a procession of the dead. I need not speak about the other things in that picture. That itself is horrid and bad.

Bohdan. — Just as if not enough children died young. That idea itself is thoroughly humane.

Cilka. — And genial!

Karel. — Humane! Genial! What else will I hear? Whenever anyone wants to move every-day people he always starts to play with their sentiments. He would be a decidedly bad preacher who would not talk of widows and orphans and stepmothers whenever he would make his congregation weep. Of course, everybody knows that all orphans are little angels and all stepmothers infuriated witches, and now add to that, that the public is as inane as ever. Out of a hundred mothers there are at least ten who have buried a little child, and these see it, now, in a white nightgown, marching to the throne of Death. Most certainly they are moved to tears. Then it is that the picture is humane and genial. It can't be otherwise. But the painting is unsound.

Cilka. — The artist certainly did not draw it for old bachelors.

Bohdan. — Nor for heartless people. In order to understand a work of art one must have something here (*pointing to his heart*), but the critic

here (*pointing to the paper*) did not have anything in there, nor in (*pointing to his forehead*) here.

Cilka. — Excellent, brother.

Karel. — I have to give you a pleasant surprise. I am the author of this criticism. I thank you for your kind appreciation, but I will not change my criticisms on that account. I am sorry that you do not agree with me, but as I said before, the picture is bad. But what is the use of repeating it, there it is in black and white. (*Lights cigarette.*)

Bohdan. — That which is written here is an insult of a great work of Art. It is not an analysis — because every conclusion of this criticism lacks facts and proofs. But Bystrina will not offend you much longer.

Karel. — How is that?

Cilka (quickly). — He received a government stipend and he is going to Paris.

Karel. — How do you know about it?

Bohdan. — I brought it home from the club last night. Everybody was talking about it. He is going in a couple of days and he is right. No one is a prophet in his own country.

Cilka. — Oh, stop, Bohdan; you know that Karel cherishes an old prejudice against Bystrina, an old dislike.

Karel. — Dislike, prejudice! Mere phrases again. Of course, I did not forget that there was a time when Mr. Bystrina (*bursts into laughter*) could have been dangerous — but to-day that gentleman is wholly indifferent to me. Let him draw a good picture and I will not deny him my recognition. I will not shout it in hyperboles, but state it simply and truly, just as to-day when I am condemning his work.

Bohdan. — You have to condemn him, you, and there are thousands who are enthusiastic about his work. But that is the misfortune, these thousands have not the opportunity to express their opinions, while you, a journalist, have — that is the whole difference. In that way you have the means in your power.

Cilka. — Drop this matter, Bohdan. Did he not say himself that even if the picture were good, he would not use hyperboles? You can feel the old rival.

Karel. — There are two things which I must make clear to you, Cilka. The first is in regard to those hyperboles and the second in regard to my attitude to Mr. Bystrina. I never use hyperboles. It is a very imprudent and uncautious thing. How do we mortals know that a work, let it be as great and beautiful as possible, is worthy of a hyperbole? — Do

we know that such work is the last link in the chain of human evolution, that after it a work which is greater and more beautiful would not come? Therefore, I am always reserved and conservative in my judgments. Who can tell me whether after a great artist one who is greater will not come?—Nobody. What measurement or rule should one use if he really does come? If you will heap on your contemporaries the greatest praise and bury them in panegyrics and eulogies what shall our posterity do? That's the misfortune of our modern romancers, who now go a begging for a morsel of recognition. You have given to your so-called classics extravagant praise and now our young world is unappreciated.

Bohdan. — Just like Ladislav Bystrina. Now you have contradicted yourself.

Karel. — What! Is Bystrina a beginner? He is of my age and he has already done a lot of work in his day. And in such cases it is necessary to be strict. When he was a beginner I was a little more lenient toward him. Perhaps you remember that first attempt of his, — that peculiar baby in too-many-colored clothes, which he in his picture had thrown into a heap of snow in front of a steaming locomotive. It was original and true. At that time the artist wanted to express something. He did it in a crude way, but I praised and encouraged him. But now, permit me to explain the second thing. Mr. Bystrina visited the house of your father, who always was very fond of all young dilettantes, and of course in his own way he spoiled them.

Bohdan. — As, for instance, you.

Karel. — Well, perhaps he spoiled me too. Mr. Bystrina was a pale, tall young fellow, with a little black moustache. He always wore a bloody Socialist cravat tied à-la-Byron. He was an artist — talked little. And gentlemen with such qualities are very dangerous for young ladies. You can ask your sister about that. There was a time when things looked very much against me, but the common-sense journalist, a man of balanced, positive views, was victorious over the soft, mild romanticist.

Cilka (flares up). — Karel, stop talking about the past. Do not rake up these bygone things, please!

Karel (surprised). — Oh, no, let us talk about it; let us clear up these things some day. Well, when Bystrina saw that all was lost, he discontinued his visits.

Cilka. — And you began to hate him, which was unjust. The victor should be magnanimous. He could just as well have become your friend. Out of sympathy — just because he had to yield to you.

Karel. — Oh, no, no, not for the sake of sympathy — on the contrary,

that would have been dangerous. I, bring my former rival in here for a friend? Oh, Cilka, what an idealist you are! (*He laughs.*) Child — oh, child!

Cilka (moved). — But for these reasons you need not persecute him.

Karel — Well, did some feeling for him remain in the inner nook of your heart? (*Suddenly serious.*) Women, women — If I did not know you so well, Cilka, I should think over what you have said, but I will leave undisturbed. Good-bye, I have staid too long, anyhow. (*About to go.*) Good-bye, Bohdan.

Bohdan. — Say whatever you please, but you wrong Bystrina. You always judge a work of art by your physical and mental disposition. You are proud of being a normal, healthy man, and you transpose this to every work of art. You think that because you have a good digestion — everybody must have one. You would be a very bad physician, because instead of helping a person to a healthy stomach you would kill him with your sermonizing and reasoning why his stomach is not as good as yours.

Karel (in doorway). — All right, all right, enough of that! The observation of a work of art is also a kind of digestion, and I cannot digest sickly stuff, that is all there is to it. As long as sickly people will go to observe the 'Triumph of Death,' it will be all right.

Cilka. — The pearl is also the offspring of illness, and it still is the most beautiful of gems.

Karel (angrily). — Also a fine phrase. I'll be thinking about it on my way. Good-bye. (*Exit KAREL.*)

(*After departure of KAREL, BOHDAN gets up from sofa and lights a cigarette and with a sigh goes over to the hearth where KAREL was standing previously. CILKA sits down to a table and buries her head deeply into her palms. A long pause.*)

Cilka (looking up). — And such is my life.

Bohdan. — But, Cilka, are you again so sensitive?

Cilka. — Didn't you hear it? Nothing but irony, sarcasm and bitterness the whole day long. How can love exist among these thorns?

Bohdan. — Why don't you try to understand Karel? In his essence he is good and pure. His sarcasm is only his self defence. Rather than to become gushy, rather than to wear out love by commonplace sentiments, he makes it more lasting by adding to it his irony.

Cilka. — And perhaps a little too much.

Bohdan — Sometimes, I myself am inclined to think so — but his essence is splendid and what is more important is that he loves you immensely.

Cilka. — I am not so sure about that.

Bohdan. — Because you are of a sensitive disposition; such people as you are always unhappy. Characters like yours always yearn for more and more, they are never satisfied, and believe me, even love gets tired once in a while. There's a time when it can go no further, needs peace and silence, and asks not for more sweetness. But temperaments like yours cannot admit of such a state of peace; to them empty emotions are dearer and more welcome than that rare, sacred peace of the soul. You, yourself, are to blame for your unhappiness.

Cilka (offended). — Do you speak that way, Bohdan? I see that I was mistaken in you.

Bohdan. — If you will consider these things in a quiet way, your husband's bit of jesting or a bit of irony will not offend you. I have known him for eight years, and since you were married I have lived with you. His soul is a gem, a diamond.

Cilka. — An uncut one, alas!

Bohdan. — You ought to laugh with him.

Cilka. — Then I would have to laugh at myself, at my own convictions, at my own feelings. I would then have to play a farce which would be a tragedy. Would you advise me to do that?

Bohdan. — You take trifles too seriously. Say with Hamlet, 'Words, words, words!' They are but the waste of daily conversation and are soon lost and forgotten. In actual life we do not judge by words but by action, and his actions are good, gentle and loyal.

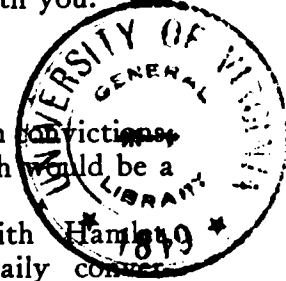
Cilka (excited). — My husband does not even know what a good advocate he has in you.

Bohdan. — The greatest misfortune in a home is exaggerated and eccentric sensitiveness, be it the husband's or the wife's. Karel is trying to kill it with his irony and his jests. You gladly fall a victim to it. Your bringing up was, of course, a great deal to blame, but you yourself give way too much to your dreams. You are one of those who conceive marriage to be like a rosy midsummer night's dream, in which one does nothing but drink coffee and read novels; but instead of that it is a serious and onerous duty. But I must appear ridiculous preachin glike a cad. Good-bye. Meditate over these things while you are alone.

Cilka (gets up and detains him). — Do not leave me, Bohdan. You are right, partly. I will think over it — but stay and tell me more. Do remain awhile. I am so weak just now that I don't know if —

Bohdan. — What is the matter? Why are you so excited?

Cilka. — It's nothing. It's all right now.



Bohdan. — You see, even this constant excitement is something which Karel cannot bear. He is so full of vigor and energy. When he comes home somewhat tired out and weary, instead of being cheerful and consoling, instead of coming to greet him with a pleasant smile, you stand here with a sunken head, always thoughtful and dreaming of things in which his soul does not share. You will estrange him entirely if you do not change. If you will keep on imagining things this way, some of them will finally become realized. Forget all these 'should have beens' and 'could have beens.' Reconcile yourself to the present life.

Cilka. — But then our relation will become very strained because it will be one of constant mutual concessions, which will be false and unnatural.

Bohdan. — On the contrary, your present relations are strained and unnatural. He is nothing but wit and jest; by that he tries to balance your silence. He is health and energy itself, which offends your sickly sensitiveness — this mischief is still unhatched, but take care that it should not take a more serious turn.

Cilka. — And what should I do?

Bohdan. — Live. Abandon these dreams. Be firm and energetic. I know that it is not so easy, but where there's a will, there's a way.

Cilka. — In other words, I should kill all the poetry of my youth —

Bohdan. — No, no, little girl, but learn how to combine and reconcile this poetry with your actual life, that is the whole secret.

Cilka. — According to you, then, the marriage of two artistic temperaments could not at all be happy.

Bohdan. — If they were both sickly and sensitive beings their marriage would be simply a curse. In married life it is desirable to have two, as I would say, complementary natures — characters of a similar kind after awhile become hateful to each other because one tries to dominate the other, and in the long run the relations become unsound.

Cilka. — And if the wife has an artistic temperament?

Bohdan. — In that case, her disposition should be strong, otherwise her sensitiveness will be in her husband's way. By this I do not mean that she ought not partake in her husband's works, on the contrary, I have always been of the opinion that a woman's influence is always beneficial in a work of Art, but I think he ought to find in her a perfect sympathizer; she ought to encourage and reward his efforts; she ought to be his first public and her praise his first laurel. For negations and criticism there is always time. They, at any rate, never influence or direct a true work of Art. But why are we analyzing these problems? Your husband is not an

artist — such theories do not apply to you. This would probably be true in the married life of, say, Mr. Bystrina — but, he is an old bachelor and does not need our philosophies. So, good-bye, Cilka. (*About to go.*)

Cilka. — One more word, brother. Do you think that Bystrina's marriage could never be a happy one?

Bohdan. — Bystrina? Never. Married life requires a peaceful disposition. Bystrina is a wild phantast, his fits and whims would kill his wife a year after their wedding.

Cilka. — And suppose his wife were of an artistic temperament, one who understood him and could sympathize with him.

Bohdan. — So much worse. They would kill each other. In every artist there is a certain amount of illness, but if his wife is a wise woman she will know how to manage and tune it to their every-day life. But it could not be possible with Bystrina. His illness is the source of his own inspiration and some day it will be his death. It is better for him that he remained single and you can thank God that eight years ago you chose Karel even if he is bitter and sarcastic. But now, really, I must go.

Cilka. — And where are you going?

Bohdan. — To the club and the café, my dear. I am collecting color and human documents — I want to write a novel and without some fundamental material such a thing is in our day almost impossible.

Cilka. — And when are you coming back?

Bohdan. — To supper, if you please. Cheer up and take things as they come. The eight years of your married life were, excepting the death of your child, altogether happy. Leave Karel alone; as I said before, measure his worth by his deeds. *Au revoir.* (*Exit.*)

Cilka (*after the departure of BOHDAN, glances quickly at the clock.*) — There is time yet if I want to, that is if I can. (*Takes a letter from her waist and reads.*) 'If your sympathy is sincere, your will firm, your soul pure, come to-night at seven o'clock to the Western Depot. You needn't take anything along. I'll provide for all. We will remain in Paris forever. I swear to you that you will be to me a sister, and only if you yourself wish, my wife. If you do not come I will consider that as an answer. My fate and yours is in your hands. — *Ladislav Bystrina.*' Last night I was crying before his picture, not knowing that he was behind me. 'Do you want to come with me on a like pilgrimage?' he whispered into my ear. I was so weak and exhausted that, sobbing, I glanced at him and hurriedly left the hall. If Karel would not be so perfect and so good — and not even then, even if he were cruel and brutal, if he were to tread upon me, I would not be able to do that which he tempts me to. (*Pause.*) But I should not have written to him after that meeting.

Thus he has a weapon against me in his hands. But at that time I was in a frenzy, the whole night my head was in a whirl. The whole night I was writing to him, describing to him my sufferings of five years; the injuries which life inflicts are more painful the more trifling they are. But he was so magnanimous — and then do we not just as often cry over the book of an unknown poet, just as I cried before his painting? And do not the heartrending tones of music shake the depths of our souls? He stole upon me during one weak moment of mine — only a lack of strength induced me to write to him — I have just heard how Bodhan thinks about it and that must be the way the whole world regards it; at least, that healthy, actual, real world which would condemn us both. But I will write to him immediately — before he leaves. (*Sits down to the desk and begins to write quickly.*)

(*While she has been writing KAREL enters quickly. She rises frightened and stands by the desk.*)

Cilka. — Did you not go?

Karel. — I forgot the opera-glasses. I thought of them on the way and you know how short-sighted I am.

Cilka. — They must be in the bedroom.

Karel. — No. I remember having seen them here somewhere on the desk.

Cilka. — No, no! They are not here.

Karel. — Somewhere among the papers, perhaps. I am positive I saw them here this morning.

Cilka. — You could not have. I am certain they are not here.

Karel. — Let me look for them myself. (*She wants to throw away the papers, but he prevents her from doing so and picks up the letter.*)

Cilka. — You will be late.

Karel (who has read the letter in the meantime). — What in the world have you been writing here? (*Still looking at the letter.*) There is no meaning in that. At least I cannot understand it.

Cilka. — But, Karel —

Karel. — Wait, my dear. I have to read this over a couple of times — such things interest me greatly.

Cilka (to herself). — O God! What shall I say?

Karel (takes his hat off, goes a few steps away from her and reads slowly). — 'Poor, unfortunate friend: Judge me, condemn me, but I cannot. The bond of duty is so strong, that its breach even rends our life. While I am writing this, I am no longer myself, I have duties greater and more sacred than you can imagine, to you only will I entrust that which even my husband does not yet know — I am a mother. You know all; go away

from here and forget; if you can bear your fate heroically, you will find glory where love has not met you.' (*He looks surprisedly at CILKA, who stands before him pale and downcast.*) What is this, Cilka? That's like a letter from a novel.

Cilka. — Yes, it is a letter from a novel.

Karel. — Please don't talk riddles.

Cilka (with a little stronger animation). — Yes, it's from a novel.

Karel. — Then, for God's sake, tell me about it.

Cilka (smiling). — I am telling you that it is from a novel. Our Bohdan is writing a novel.

Karel. — Yes, but this is your handwriting.

Cilka. — Of course, it is mine.

Karel. — What then, are you assisting him?

Cilka (having now discovered the right clue). — Don't fear, I will not become a novelist.

Karel. — But, do explain this, will you?

Cilka. — Oh, give me time. Bohdan is writing a novel. In that novel a wife is supposed to desert her husband for the sake of an artist whom she secretly loves. They appoint a rendezvous, but at the final moment, the wife knows herself to be a mother — she loses her energy and lets the lover go without her.

Karel. — That is not a bad idea.

Cilka. — When you left here, Bohdan explained the plot to me. He is getting on well and is now as far as the letter. He is very anxious about it, he wants to write it as near to life as possible. He showed me a draft of that letter, but no woman placed in a similar position would ever write the way he did. It was too bombastic and full of shallow phraseology.

Karel (laughing). — That's pretty good. So he asked you to write it. Well, really, he had a good idea. At any rate it is truly feminine, a woman would write so in such a moment. (*Still laughing.*) Even the title and the end, 'You will find glory where love has not met you.' Very good, Cilka, good indeed.

Cilka. — Now, go and laugh at me.

Karel. — Apart from jest, let me congratulate you and Bohdan. But tell Bohdan that he should copy this letter into his manuscript. You must give me that for a keepsake.

Cilka (again frightened). — That letter?

Karel. — Yes, that letter.

Cilka. — But it's nonsensical, a trifle. Please tear it up, throw it away. I will write a better and a longer one for Bohdan. (*She reaches for it.*)

Karel (moving out of her reach). — Oh, no, sweetheart, that letter is mine; it is my trophy, which I will never yield.

Cilka. — Karel, if you love me give me that letter.

Karel. — Just because I do love you I will keep it.

Cilka. — And why, pray? You were laughing at it a moment ago?

Karel. — No, I cannot give you that letter, for to me it is a firm hostage of —

Cilka (frightened). — Gracious!

Karel. — You timid child. There is a sentence in the letter and for that sentence it is of the greatest value to me.

Cilka. — Just for one sentence?

Karel. — Certainly, but will you tell me the pure truth?

Cilka. — What do you want to know?

Karel (goes near her and takes both her hands in his). — Did you write the pure truth?

Cilka. — But it is from a novel.

Karel. — Let it. But there is a sentence in it which is of the greatest importance, which you yourself even cannot conceive; I thank you for it, and for that sentence I want to retain this letter.

Cilka. — Which is it?

Karel. — ‘The bond of duty is so strong, that its breach even rends our life.’

Cilka. — Did that impress you so much?

Karel. — Yes, there is more in that than you think. When I left here, on my way, I thought of that little misunderstanding which we had. I wronged you, dear soul, I wronged you greatly — but all will be different now.

Cilka. — I still fail to understand.

Karel. — You’ll understand in the course of time. Our life is so changeable, we are not our own now. A few shocks are necessary so we may regain our balance and equilibrium. I saw your silent suffering — and I combined the whole novel within my excited mind. I lack the strength to tell you all of what I thought on my way in those dark and gloomy streets there.

Cilka. — Oh! How you frighten me.

Karel. — You were partly right; — in my excitement, I came home and here I find the letter and the jest explained the essence and purity of your soul. You wrote from the depths of your heart, did you not? surely it was your conviction when you wrote that ‘The bond of duty is so strong that its breach rends our life.’ Thanks for that, thanks. It surely came from your soul, darling, did it not?

Cilka. — Yes, it came from my soul.

Karel. — You could never forgive me, could you?

Cilka. — What are you thinking of?

Karel. — And this duty is not the marble mask of daily custom, but it is the kind expression of your true and faithful love. Say, isn't it?

Cilka. — Just as you say.

Karel. — And our love is just as great and firm as before, if not greater. Is that true?

Cilka. — Yes, greater, because — (*her head on his shoulder*) I am the mother of your child.

Karel. — Is that also true? (*Embracing her.*) Then the whole letter is true? But, be it truth or not, does it contain the assurance of your sincere faithfulness, your noble conception of duty — my fortune, that after years we will have a child? (*Excited.*) But no, no, no, that letter is not true, but its contents are true, that great important sentence, that our duty is our life, that it is our honor and our love at the same time, if we are whole and perfect. And for that I am immensely grateful to you, and will keep that letter as the dearest treasure.

Cilka (in tears). — My dear husband.

(*BOHDAN enters.*)

Bohdan. — Why, are you home already — or did you not go?

Karel. — I was too late for the first act, and you know how pedantic I am in this particular. One second after the rising of the curtain and I lose interest in the entire play, especially if it is a novelty.

Bohdan. — So much the better; I will at least be able to tell you my adventure with Bystrina.

Karel and Cilka. — With Bystrina?

Bohdan (sitting down). — Why, yes, and it's quite out of the ordinary. I went over to the club-house and was in the middle of a brilliant billiard party, when I heard that Bystrina was leaving tonight for Paris. Some old friends of his went to escort him, so I joined them.

Cilka. — So he is gone.

Karel. — Artist like, he has many friends; there is nothing exceptional in that. Well, you went to escort him.

Bohdan. — We thought that he would be surprised and pleased when he saw so many of us together, but we were greatly disappointed; he was almost frightened, and on the way he began to avoid us and hardly noted our greetings.

Karel. — Well, he was always eccentric in everything. Cilka will forgive me this, but I don't know what she herself would call such behavior.

Cilka (very restless). — And what happened? Is he gone?

Bohdan. — He escaped from us, as in a miracle; disappeared. Most of his friends were offended and with disgust left the depot because he did not even say 'Good-bye' to them.

Karel. — They could not have done better.

Cilka (still more restless). — Did you stay? Is he gone?

Bohdan. — I wanted to go also, but the friend who asked me to join him in this escort affair told me that the whole business looked suspicious and begged me to stay till the departure of the train.

Cilka. — And you stayed?

Bohdan. — Not to be in Bystrina's way we went to the waiting-room, which has large windows on all sides, so that one can see into the restaurant and on the *peron* also.

Karel. — And did you see your eccentric artist?

Bohdan. — He was very excited, ran up and down the *peron*, looked into the waiting-rooms, inspected the cabs, coaches and buses. He was probably expecting someone.

Karel. — Expecting someone?

Bohdan. — So it seemed. But it was getting late. The first gong sounded; Bystrina, all exhausted, sank into a sofa in the waiting-room. The second gong; he did not move. We were surprised and worried, and so we went over to him.

Cilka. — My God, what happened?

Bohdan. — Nothing; he rose to meet us, greeted us seriously, then he turned to me and said in a melancholy way: 'Sir, you are a novelist: excuse my rudeness, but I am going into distant lands and want to get rid of a few things which have no meaning for me, but for you, a novelist, might be of some interest and value.' He put his hand into his pocket (*does likewise*), and took out this envelope (*does likewise*), and continued: 'Here are memoirs of a lost individual, — there's also a letter characteristic of a woman; for you, a novelist, it is almost made to order, — if you want to use the material, do so, as much as you please. Good-bye; the second bell has rung and I would not like to miss my train.' And while we stood amazed, he disappeared in the twilight of the *peron*.

Cilka (extremely nervous). — And is he gone?

Bohdan. — Evidently. His train left the depot the next minute.

Karel. — And have you opened the envelope?

Bohdan. — That will be my feast this midnight. (*Waving it in the air.*) This indeed is something vital, — a real human document, — not even Zola or Goncourt had ever anything of this kind in their possession.

Karel. — Let me look at it, will you? (*Reaches for it.*)

Cilka. — God!

Bohdan. — Oh, no, my dear. (*Moving away from him.*) My novel would not interest you afterwards.

Karel. — In other words, I would know what you have copied and what you yourself created. — You novelists! But you can show me them anyway; you know that your Bystrina interests me greatly now, although I cannot be perhaps as enthusiastic about him as you or Cilka.

Bohdan. — Oh, no, old boy, these letters are a perfect treasure to me; I will not show them to any one so easily.

Cilka. — That's right. They would only spoil a reader's illusion.

Bohdan. — Especially readers who read between the lines.

Karel. — Well, we'll see. (*Sits down to the desk.*) I'll try to do some work before supper.

Bohdan. — *Auf Wiedersehen!*

Karel. — Where are you going?

Bohdan. — To my room.

Karel (writing). — You cannot resist the temptation. Inquisitive as Eve. But you will let me look at them, won't you?

Servant. — A special message from the office, Mr. Proskovec.

(*BOHDAN stops in the doorway and puts the papers into his pocket.*)

Karel. — What can they want? I only left them a short while ago.

Servant. — The man says he was looking for you in the theater. He is waiting for an answer.

Karel. — Go and tell him I will be there as soon as possible. (*Exit servant.*)

Karel (has opened the letter). — Good God!

(*BOHDAN comes forward.*)

Cilka. — What has happened?

Karel. — But you spoke with him only a moment ago.

Bohdan. — With whom?

Karel. — With Bystrina; he is dead.

(*CILKA with a cry falls into BOHDAN'S arms.*)

Karel. — Here is what the night editor writes: (*reads from the letter*) 'We have just received information that our phenomenal artist, Ladislav Bystrina, creator of the "Triumph of Death," shot himself in the restaurant garden of the Western Depot at the very moment when the train left on which he intended to go to Paris. Although we know that you did not sympathize with his aims, still we request you to write a biographical sketch containing appreciation of his art and its meaning. We will wait for the article until twelve o'clock at night.'

Bohdan. — He was a very great genius and passed through this world unappreciated. Now you will write eulogies and enthusiastic hymns.

Cilka. — He was a very unhappy man.

Karel. — Cilka spoke the truth about him.

Bohdan. — And are you going to write the article?

Karel. — Yes, I will. His career is closed; it is easier to judge. I will be just to his genius.

Bohdan. — See now, I will loan you these papers. (*Takes them out of his pocket and gives them to him.*) Take out of them for your article as much as you please, but in judging the man do not forget the artist — there will be sufficient material left for my novel.

Cilka. — For God's sake, Bohdan, what are you doing?

Karel (*takes the letters from BOHDAN, CILKA turns with the greatest anxiety.*) — Cilka!

(*CILKA cries but does not answer.*)

Karel (*softly*). — Cilka, but do look at me. (*Waves the letters.*) I am going to write that article.

Bohdan. — And will you use them?

Karel (*gloriously*). — No, my boy, no. These letters do not belong to me or you any more than they belong to anyone else. They belong to the dead — let their spirit follow his. (*Throws them into the fire.*)

Cilka (*cries out*). — Thanks! Thanks!

Bohdan. — And I could never understand this.

Cilka (*in Karel's arms*). — How good, how magnanimous you are!

Bohdan. — But my human documents?

Karel. — A true artist, my dear boy, has the best documents here (*pointing to his brow*) and here (*pointing to his heart*).

CURTAIN

JAROSLAV VRCHLICKY

BY CHARLES RECHT

EMIL FRIDA (Jaroslav Vrchlicky) was born on the seventeenth day of February, 1853, in the township of Louny, in Bohemia. His father, Emil Jacob Frida, was a country storekeeper. At the age of ten Emil was sent to the Gymnasium of the Piarists, a secular Gymnasium in Prague, and later to the Gymnasium in Klatov. In 1873, at the age of nineteen, he graduated and entered a theological seminary. Seminary life evidently did not agree with him, for he remained there but a few months and registered in the University of Prague in the Faculty of Filisofy, selecting as his major subjects literature, filology and history. During his university years he formed a friendship with Ernest Denise, the Frenchman, who had come to Prague to study the Bohemians. The two men exchanged lessons, and Denise assisted Vrchlicky in his studies of Hugo and Musset, while the Bohemian helped his friend in the preparation of his historical works, 'John Hus' and 'Le fin de l'Independence de la Boheme.' In 1875 he was licensed as a tutor and appointed the instructor of the two sons of Count Montecuccoli-Laderchi. He went to Italy with his pupils and spent a year near the river Livornia, in Marana, near Modena.

When he returned in 1876 he was already recognized as a great poet. He received many honors at home and abroad. In 1879 he married Ludmila Podlipska, a daughter of Zofie Podlipska, the novelist. Three children were born of this union, Milada, Eva and Jaroslav, all of whom are active in literary circles of Bohemia. In 1901 he and Anton Dvorak received from the Emperor an appointment to the Imperial Council, and were granted an order.

Although he wrote about all parts and literatures of the world, his travels were short lived and not extensive. He died in Domazlice on the ninth day of September, 1912, at the age of fifty-nine.

A law of the Austrian Minesterium of Education prohibits students in the secondary schools from appearing in public life. When young Frida began to publish his poetry he was obliged to use a *nom de plume*. He chose the name of Vrchlicky, after a rivulet near Kutna Hora. If his name, Jaroslav Vrchlicky, were translated into English it would mean *Spring's Glorifier of the Hills*. The pseudonym soon became world-famous, and today he is known only by that name.

No other Bohemian writer received such recognition as Vrchlicky. Clubs were formed with his name; foreign critics as, for instance, Alfred Jensen, the Swede, came to Bohemia to write his biography; his works were translated into German, Polish, Russian, Servian, French and Hungarian, in short, like Ibsen, he lived to see his fame.

His value to Czechs and Czech literature is greater because of his cosmopolitanism; his ability to transfuse the spirit and the essence of foreign lore into his native tongue, than because of his inherent genius as a national poet. His themes are mostly foreign, his works a motley wreath of miscellanies. Hellenic, Hebraic, Hindoo, Slavic, English, German and French songs and ballads follow each other, a kaleidoscope of poetical gems. His works total sixty-six volumes. He wrote forty-two hundred poems, three of which, 'Bar Kochba,' 'Hilarion,' and 'Twardowski,' have over ten thousand printed pages, and ran through one hundred and thirty editions. Says Alfred Jensen: 'This unheard of activity in literature, the like of which can only be found in old Spanish school of poetry, shows first of all an undying and inexhaustible desire to work and to create. Vrchlicky could say of himself what he said of Michaelangelo: 'The more I join and lose myself in life's flood and tide, the greater my fervor to love and to labor.'

Urging his muse, Vrchlicky says:

'No, you shan't grow silent, my rising song of storm

Does the lark ask the purpose of its thrill?

Does the gem forlorn have less beautiful a form?

The rose unseen breathe fragrance with less will?'

It is not in drama or in prose that the charm of Vrchlicky can be found. He is distinctly a poet. His favorite creations are traveling comedians, circus-riders, gypsies. A man of the world, a thorough cosmopolite, he, nevertheless, was a pagan at heart; a man who for the poetry of an overturned idol, forgotten urn would sell all the material progress of the scientific world. His poem, 'Down with Wings,' predicts a deluge of apathy and spiritual death, when all have discarded wings, when art, like Ararat, can be reached only by those, who, in the past, in spite of steam, electricity and accomplishments could chase after rhymes and look for images in the stars, clouds and sunsets.

To judge Vrchlicky's work by the selection of his one-act drama, 'At the Chasm,' would be unfair.

The customary introduction of a translator is an apology for his existence; but were he to excuse himself for selecting a minor work of a great author he could justly be accused of literary impertinence.

Nevertheless, the writer by reason of this selection finds himself very much in such position. In 1904, while studying Beowulf and 'the well of English undefiled,' it occurred to him for the first time to translate from his mother tongue into English. He then selected this one-act drama, because of its brevity. And while the merits recommend it highly for publication, the writer felt some hesitancy in introducing Bohemia's grand old man through one of his minor efforts.

Vrchlicky's prosody is not extensive, but it differs from his poetry. He himself intended it to differ.

'In my lyrical works I meant to express myself, my own soul, in my prose I speak as "The man of Nineteenth Century" observing the evolution of the people and trying to interpret its efforts. And so it is that my prose and my poetry are so different, my philosophy is "dualistic"; through my entire activity — for my own self I am a pessimist, for humanity an optimist.'

THE MASS AT DAWN

From the Spanish of

LUIS G. URBINA*

Rendered into English Verse by Alice Stone Blackwell

1

Do you know it? 'Tis a story
That the mothers tell their children
On the cold, sad nights of winter,
While the wind, that vagrant, whistles
In the streets his doleful ballads,
And light hands unseen are drumming
Upon all the clouded windows.
Do you wish to hear the story?
Then into mine eyes gaze deeply,
And within your orbs of onyx
Let those sands of diamond sparkle
That within your eyes are kindled
When you wish my sight to dazzle.
O my verses, birds ungrateful!
Start again upon your journey,
For my spring once more is with me.
Now spread wide your wings of azure,
Build your nests now in my poems!

2

Long ago, in times departed,
Long, long since, in distant ages,
That old church, to ruin falling,
Seemed to gazers at a distance
A caprice of mists and vapors
Hanging from the tall trees' branches.
From afar, the mass looked formless;
Coming nearer, clear to vision
Domes and towers displayed their outlines;
Architraves, a ruined portal,
Griffins, monsters and archangels,
And, in wondrous equilibrium

*Of Mexico.

In the air, long rows of columns.
 Bits of wall, like sails in tatters,
 Cut the blue, transparent background.
 In that glade amid the forest,
 Leprous, crumbling, lo, the silent,
 Gloomy church stood meditating.

In your eyes the diamonds glitter!
 Do you then my tale encourage?
 Let them gleam, romantic dreamer!
 Long ago, in distant ages . . .

3

But as there exists no sadness
 Without comfort, so the ruin,
 Standing vast and sad and silent,
 In its solitude found pleasure.
 Every morn — can you believe it?
 At the advent of the dazzling
 Earliest gleam of virgin brightness
 From the deep, remote horizon's
 Lapis-lazuli, there issued
 From the architraves and friezes
 Of the lofty Gothic belfry,
 From the pinions of the angels,
 From the walls of chiseled stonework
 From the niches of the statues,
 Flocks of birds, in endless numbers,
 Chirping, twittering and singing.
 When the rising sun had kindled
 Vivid, bright triumphal arches
 Back behind the dim vague mountains
 And the mists that veiled the landscape, —
 On the broken ranks of columns,
 On the bent and twisted pillars,
 On the shattered spires and summits,
 In the aisles and their recesses,
 Gleamed and shone — made up of atoms
 Restless, brilliant, scintillating —
 Thin and subtle golden gauzes,
 Like light, filmy shawls in tatters.

Ah, the church is not deserted!
 Worshipers are still within it.
 See how thickly in the transept
 The loquacious swallows gather!
 Of this temple, they the nuns are,
 And the monks are the song-sparrows.
 On the stony wreaths and garlands
 Multitudes of nests are builded.
 And there issue from dark openings
 In the curtains of the foliage
 Flowers of purple morning-glories
 Wild calendulas, red tulips,
 Jacinths white as alabaster,
 Blossoms of the wild field-daisy,
 And, embroidering the drapery
 Here and there — deep spots of crimson —
 Myrtle blossoms, rich, blood-colored
 And the velvets of the mosses,
 Greenish black, of tints that vary,
 Border every edge and outline
 With their tapestries Arabian,
 Torn by gusty winds and breezes
 Into pierced rosettes, huge trefoils.
 Ah, the church is not deserted!
 Worshipers are still within it.
 Here the flowers their mass are holding!
 Do you see how lush the rose-vines
 O'er the church steps, worn and rugged,
 Spread their branches, climbing, climbing,
 In a crowd, the pious peasants?
 Early worshipers, the roses!
 They are going to the temple;
 It is very late already!
 To the choir have come the violets,
 And of each corolla, swinging,
 Now they make a fragrant censer.
 Pinks in legions lift their clusters.
 Nettles green are now adorning
 The 'most holy' of the altar;

And the poppy, very careful
 Of the satin of her petals,
 Peeps among the sharp and prickly
 Labyrinth of thorny bushes.
 Yes, the flowers their mass are holding!
 There is likewise a procession:
 'Tis a swarm of iridescent,
 Restless dragon-flies that wander!
 All the herbage, green and tiny,
 Bows — the birds officiating.
 No, the church is not deserted;
 Worshipers are still within it!
 Sadness finds its consolation,
 And that dark, gigantic ruin,
 Full of ancient memories mournful
 And of solitude unending,
 Meditates: — Yes, thou, O Nature!
 Art a mother, a good mother!

5

But how sad, O ruined temple!
 Thou at eventide appearest,
 When the birds are hushed in slumber,
 When the flowers have closed their petals,
 And the sable parasitic
 Plants upon the domes upgrowing
 Paint themselves against the sunset,
 Straight, immovable, far-branching,
 Looking like the plumes funereal
 Shadowing the helms of giants!
 Faint and long and horizontal,
 Spent and weary with its journey,
 Gleaming like a golden arrow,
 Comes to fasten for a moment
 On the cross above the belfry
 That spreads wide its arms to heaven,
 One pale sunbeam, the last breathing
 Of the light about to perish.
 Come again, as always, Darkness,
 Cold, impalpable and stealthy,
 Thou the silent, thou the soundless,

Thou the traitorous, the constant!
 Come again! The church in sadness
 Meditates: 'God! How the stars gleam!
 What unending light of diamonds!
 Space is now a blazing chapel.
 Oh, what myriad lamps in heaven!
 In the air what deep transparence!
 Ah, would but one star come hither,
 Fix itself among my shadows!
 Ah, if but its trembling brightness
 Would illuminate my shadows!'

6

On a night in chill December . . .
 How did it befall? We know not! . . .
 One cold night, so cold, so frigid
 That amid the radiant heavens,
 All the stars, bestrewn and scattered
 Like a rain of orange blossoms,
 Shivered — it was then a pilgrim
 Came there, sad and solitary.
 'Twixt acanthus leaves, deep carven
 On a capital, which, fallen,
 Overturned upon the herbage,
 Had become a vase of foliage,
 His gnarled staff he placed; then forward
 Took his way, the steps ascending,
 Portico and portal passing.
 The birds whispered, 'Who is coming?
 Who is this? A saint? An image,
 From its ancient niche downfallen?
 No, it is a man!' The pilgrim
 Passed from sight at length, and vanished
 In the depths of dim, dark shadows.
 Suddenly it creaked, the temple;
 Fleeting flashes crossed the shadows,
 As if shining flags were passing.
 And a miracle was wrought there:
 Rose the porch, severe, triumphant;
 All the walls grew whole and solid,
 All the pillars rose unbroken,

Arch and arch embraced each other,
 In a curve the aisles met softly;
 The majestic architecture,
 Slender, elegant and airy,
 In a glorious ascension
 Steadily kept rising, rising,
 Till against the sapphire heaven
 Spires and pinnacles were outlined!
 No detail was lost or lacking,
 Sculptured saints nor carven monarchs,
 Nor the crystals of the ogive
 Nor the leaves upon the garlands,
 Nor upon the walls the lacework,
 Nor the edges of the stonework
 Nor the veinings of the marbles.
 E'en the rusty mechanism
 Of the church clock, slowly, gravely,
 Now began the time to follow,
 One by one the moments marking.
 Now within the sculptured chancel
 How much light! Is someone coming?
 From afar, a row of torches
 Seems the valley to inundate;
 And amid the dense, deep forest,
 Here and there among the tree-trunks,
 Bright red flames now prick the darkness.
 All things are alive and stirring;
 In the air the bell is swinging: . . .
 Come, ye restless, troubled spirits!
 Come, the mass is just beginning!

And in litters and on horseback,
 In great crowds, from all directions,
 Come they, nobles and plebeians;
 Princesses and royal princes,
 Laborers and lowly peasants,
 And the bishops and the abbots.
 All of them ascend the church steps,
 Cross the chancel, thron the temple.
 From the multitude, so earnest
 To get in, a clamor rises;

THE MASS AT DAWN

They would enter, but they cannot,
For there is no room remaining.

And within — how many tapers!
Radiant, glittering constellations!
They light up the arabesque-work,
Make the altars glow like tinder,
Hang in masses yellow fringes
On the columns, the adornments
Of the aisles incrust with jewels.
All the chandeliers of silver
Flash — how many unexpected
Bursts of luminous effulgence
Blind the eye, around the transept!
See the tapestries, how vivid,
Hanging on the gilded railings!
See the ornaments, how florid!
Oh, what colors! Oh, what contrasts!
And, upon the book-rests opened,
How the church grows white with missals!

See, it stirs, the throng of people
Moves and undulates and struggles,
Like the waters of a river
Which fill up their narrow channel,
Boiling, surging, seething madly,
Till they over-leap their borders!

All things shine and gleam and glitter:
Silk of skirts of antique fashion,
And the canopies brocaded,
Gold of necklaces that glimmer,
The dalmatics of rich crimson,
And the brooches set with brilliants,
And the velvet of dark prie-dieux,
And the broidered and heraldic
Garments of the host of pages.
The procession now advances;
Slowly cross the thick wax torches;
All the censers now turn over,
And the smoke the air embroiders.

From the organ peal sonorous
 Heavenly harmonies; the crowd kneels;
 Pass the bishops, pass the abbots;
 From the belfry still the bell sounds,
 Jubilant and never-tiring:
 Restless ghosts, ye souls in trouble,
 Come, the mass will soon be over!

Then the cock crew! Clear the dawn broke,
 And the rain of orange blossoms
 Disappeared amid the brightness
 Of inviolate blue heavens.
 And the breeze arrived, the herald,
 He that wakes the birds from slumber,
 He that scatters on the herbage
 Handfuls bright of glittering diamonds.
 All the visionary marvel
 — Graceful work of gold and silver —
 At one blow, sinks, falls, is broken,
 Is effaced, is fled, is vanished,
 Blotted out and brought to nothing.
 On the broken rows of columns,
 On the bent and twisted pillars,
 On the shattered spires and needles,
 In the aisles and their recesses,
 Flashed and shone — made up of atoms
 Restless, bright and scintillating —
 Thin and subtle golden gauzes,
 Like light, filmy shawls in tatters.

10

When the sun in heaven was tracing
 His triumphal arches vivid
 Back behind the darksome mountains
 And the vapors of the landscape,
 From the ruined church returning,
 Came the sad, mysterious pilgrim.
 In his hand the dry and knotty
 Staff he took to aid his journey,
 And amid the mists departed,
 And was lost among the tree-trunks.

It was left alone, the ruin,
 With its birds and with its blossoms . . .
 On a night in chill December.
 How did it befall? We know not!

11

Tale of magic! simple story
 Of the mediæval ages!
 You are like my life, the story
 Of my love! Ah me, so many
 Common histories are like you.
 My romantic girl, look at me
 Deeply; let the sands of diamond
 Flash within your orbs of onyx!
 Did you know it? Does it please you?
 Have I told it well? Then give me
 Both your hands — I fain would hold them
 For a moment, just a moment!
 I am glad and proud and happy
 When you with your gaze applaud me.

Tell me, is it true, my lady,
 That your heart is all a ruin,
 That it beats and throbs no longer,
 That the niches all are empty,
 That the angels there have fallen,
 And that sometimes memories chant there —
 Birds still faithful to the ruin —
 And again the withered blossoms
 Of your tenderness reopen
 When upon your clouded memory
 Shines the sun of other ages?

My love came, the wonder-worker,
 Wizard strong, the good magician,
 To that temple. Eve was falling,
 Evening with its gloom and sorrows.
 He approached it, sad and weary,
 For the journey had been painful;
 In the center of the ruins
 Cried he: 'Let the aisles rise newly,

Let the tapers flame and glitter!
Let the shrines be decorated!
Heart, O heart, revive and pulsate!
I am he whom you awaited;
Love me! See, in crowds arriving,
Weary and devoutly zealous,
Come the ghosts, the troubled spirits,
From their sepulchers arising:
Hopes, ambitions, dreams and longings,
The most noble and the richest,
The most beautiful, the grandest
Fancies — these are the princesses —
And the dreams, the youthful pages.
Fair church! to the incantation
Of my wishes, rise from ruin!
Lo, my happiness invokes thee!
Soon will day dawn — late the hour is —
And my love, the wonder-worker,
Knocks and calls, and no one answers,
And he bends the knee, entreating —
And the marvel does not follow!

THE TWILIGHT OF THE ARTS

BY VAN WYCK BROOKS

I DO not suppose that any serious man ever looked upon his own work in the world as anything better than a necessary evil, a stop-gap, something to fill a void, — something, that is, which, as things are, could not well have been left undone. The very fact of being serious implies a personal conviction that things as they might be are, quite exactly, things as they *must* be; while every method, every process toward making things what they must be contains the inherent promise that some day the method and the process will be superseded. All truly disinterested work implies that the worker is a scapegoat. Yet if we are all scapegoats after some fashion, the disinterested man surely has the satisfaction of *knowing* that he is one, — that he is not, at least, his own dupe.

If this is true it is plain that art — the most disinterested and the most ingenuous of all work — endeavors, by every means in its power, to render itself unnecessary, to supplant itself, to permit its forces to be absorbed by life.

I

For example, the art of landscape, which attempts to put before us not the natural scene but the ideal essence of the natural scene. The landscape stirs and elevates us by giving us precisely what we do not get from nature itself. In training us to see the ideal essence of things rather than the conventional appearance of things, it assists us to become unconventional as the artist is unconventional. But if we were able to derive from nature the ideal essence that is put before us in art, should we not obtain from nature the same stir and elevation which we now obtain from art? If we were unconventional, that is?

Art is evidently a method of approach adopted by the artist in his relation to the conventional mind of the public. It is a medium, which may be conceived as growing less and less necessary according as the conventionality of the public's mind approaches the unconventionality of the artist's mind. Now every work of art has two aspects — content and form. And the more the artist occupies himself with his form the more he makes concessions to the conventional mind of the public. On the other hand, the more he occupies himself with his content the more he insists that the conventional mind of the public will make concessions to him.

According as greater relative stress is laid on the form or on the content we are able to apply the terms, respectively, Academic and Individual. Academic art tends toward complete externalization of the content; Individual art toward complete internalization of the form. Academic art, in other words, tends toward conventionality, appearance, imitation; Individual art toward unconventionality, essence, the ideal.

Academic art is collective, mob-art. It represents the collective mind asserting itself on the spiritual plane, — art in the service of society, or politics, or aggrandisement: frescoes in the epic style, abstract paintings of Justice and Rhetoric, such as those of Raphael in the Vatican, *The School of Athens*, Mantegna's *Triumph of Julius Caesar*, etc. All neo-classical, historical, and battle-painters represent mob-art, and spring from the Roman tradition. Such are Cornelius and Kaulbach in Germany; Gerome, David, Meissonier, and the gallery-painters of Versailles; together with Bouguereau and his following (now happily extinct). The French have surpassed all other peoples in this Roman style of complete externalization — the French, who invented the proverb, *le secret d'être ennuyeux c'est de tout dire*. The Japanese, who understand the perils of too severe elaboration, have a word which expresses the dilemma, *ittakkiri*, entirely vanished, in the sense of *all told*. It is quite true that what is all told does entirely vanish — and that is what happens in Academic art.

Even the phrase 'art that conceals art' is too disingenuous to satisfy truth. Every effort which wrenches the soul of the artist away from the unconscious into the intelligent and the intelligible, every concession to the conventional mind, has been a concession, as the artist well knows. True art is never satisfied with anything short of its own annihilation. But so long as other minds are conventional, the unconventional mind will never be perfectly happy. It does not stoop to convert but it cannot refrain from illumining: and it makes every effort to convey the unspeakable essence of things with the least possible expenditure of intelligibility.

This explains the devotional art of Fra Angelico, who in painting the human figure concedes only so much to anatomy, to landscape, to external reality as will serve to give currency to his vision of the infinite felicity of the universe. It explains modern painters who have all the technique which Fra Angelico lacked, but who have chosen to disregard it. Symbolism and impressionism, for instance, and the work of Puvis de Chavannes, of Carrière, of Monet, of Whistler — of the future! This art flatters the public, because it presupposes in the public a tendency toward spiritual freedom. Art is doing its best here to supplant itself, to permit its forces to be absorbed by life. It lays greater and greater burdens on the public, insists that the public shall come more than halfway toward it, shall

eventually accept the point of view that lies behind it. For spiritual freedom implies spiritual responsibility.

Academic art is selfish — it wants to exist at any cost. Only the art that springs from the soul is truly disinterested — it is willing to sacrifice even itself for the life of the soul.

II

Or in sculpture consider Rodin. It is not from ignorance of anatomy that Rodin's work appears to be only half-articulated. Rodin understands anatomy just as Monet understands drawing, but he is no longer its slave. And besides, no more conscientious and masterly piece of anatomy exists than the *Age of Bronze*. But Rodin is interested in the struggle of things rather than the success of things. He draws back from facility, he refuses to take advantage of his obvious powers, to do what is easily done.

III

Music, too, has been dominated by the mob, by form. Music is the freest of the arts because of its essential incorporeality; and it has suffered in consequence more than any other art by the mere necessity of embodiment, of becoming art.

'All composers,' says the pianist Busoni,* 'have drawn nearest the true nature of music in preparatory and intermediary passages (preludes and transitions), where they felt at liberty to disregard symmetrical proportions, and unconsciously drew free breath. . . . But the moment they cross the threshold of the principal subject their attitude becomes stiff and conventional, like that of a man entering some bureau of high officialdom.'

In his very suggestive little book Busoni shows how Beethoven opened the path toward freedom, toward absolute music, in contradistinction to Wagner, who fashioned his musical horizon into a system, thereby bringing its development to a close. He shows moreover how from Wagner springs our contemporary programme-music, in which music has become doubly constricted, no longer by the musical form alone but by the requirements also of the poetical and even philosophical programme. Speaking of a programme-piece which endeavors to present the idea of a 'poor but contented man,' he shows that the contentment can be interpreted in music because it is a state of the soul, while the ethical state 'poor' cannot be interpreted legitimately because the word poor 'connotes a phase of terrestrial and social conditions not to be found in the eternal harmony.' In programme-music then, we have an example of the collective mind asserting itself on the spiritual plane; introducing moral and social distinc-

*Busoni: Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music, p. 8.

tions into the region of the non-moral and the non-social. Is it not easy then to understand Nietzsche's attack on Wagner,* which amounts practically to an accusation of mob-music? 'Wagner marches with drums and fifes at the head of all the artists of elocution, of display, of virtuosity; he has first convinced the leaders of the orchestras, the machinists, and theatrical singers.' Do we not further understand his apophthegm, 'I mistrust all systematizers and avoid them. The will to system is a lack of rectitude?' Wagner took music into the theater, and forced upon it the representation of symbolic noises outside the proper pale of music, systematized music on the social and collective plane according to theatrical tenets.

Busoni points out the inevitable relation, in music, between content and form. 'Notation,' he says, 'is the transcription of an abstract idea. The instant the pen seizes it, the idea loses its original form. The very intention to write down the idea compels a choice of measure and key. The form and the musical agency which the composer must decide upon still more closely define the way and the limits.' This is precisely what Shelley says of poetry: 'The mind in creation is like a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness. . . . When composition begins, inspiration is already on the wane.' Or Shakespeare's:

'Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.'

And finally Busoni shows that the whole present musical system, the two keys, the 'unity of the key system,' is only a 'part of a fraction of one diffracted ray from the sun of music;' how he has by experiment established one hundred and thirteen different scales each in turn capable of transposition; and how music freed from its dogmas can 'follow the line of the rainbow and vie with the clouds in breaking sunbeams.' But all this, he says, will come with 'music — not the strains of *musical art*.'

IV

A conflict there is here then, as also in literature — a conflict which approaches its issue. In literary language it is the conflict between rhetoric and poetry. Rhetoric which is moral (rhetorical ages have always been ages of at least theoretical stoicism) — and poetry (poetical ages have been religious, 'faith' rather than 'works'). Or in other words the conflict between the man of letters, the *form*-man, and the poet, the *content*-man.

Historically, the conflict illustrates itself vividly in English literature,

*Nietzsche contra Wagner: The Case of Wagner.

and English writers have never lost the sense of it. Consider, for instance, two English works which proclaim the conflict in almost identical words, Swift's 'Tale of a Tub,' and Carlyle's '*Sartor Resartus*.' In the incomparable passage where Swift discusses the history of religion, he imagines a sect who 'held the universe to be a large suit of clothes which invests everything. . . . Is not religion,' he conceives them saying, 'a cloak, honesty a pair of shoes worn out in the dirt; self-love a surtout, vanity a shirt, and conscience a pair of breeches?' Here, a hundred years in advance, we have the precise words of '*Sartor Resartus*,' inverted through irony, and indeed the appearance-philosophy of Fichte upon which Carlyle based his conception. It is, in brief, the sketch of a philosophy, a conception of forces in life outside literature; an interior reality, an exterior embodiment—the reality perpetually in the act of being embodied, thereby localized, thereby crystalized, thereby falsified, separated from the universal flux and made to appear in its embodiment absolute. The vesture comes to be taken for the reality it clothes and in clothing conceals.

To take from Swift a concrete example: 'If certain ermines and furs be placed in a certain position we style them a judge.' That is, we infer from the appearance of a judge that we have *in concreto* an assemblage of spiritual qualities, *i. e.*, those which constitute *judgeliness*. We reason inward from the ermines to the judgeliness instead of reasoning from the judgeliness outward to the ermines. Or, in literary language, we surmise from an assemblage of fine words that we are in the presence of a poet instead of surmising in the presence of a fine soul, a poet, that words will somehow come, and that if they do not come it is no great matter. That inverse arrangement of perceptions is the essence of mob-psychology, of the collective mind operating on the spiritual plane. It always accepts the appearance for the reality, believes a man wise if he proclaims himself wise, etc.

Now since literature is a microcosm of life, a repetition in little, we have in the constricted field the same phenomena. And if it may appear that in the arts and literature the conflict visibly approaches its issue, what conclusions may we not be able to draw as regards life itself, society, civilization?

In the field of literature extremes are meeting. We are, in fact, re-approaching the primitive stage. And this is true in ideal affairs because precisely the opposite is true in practical affairs; because in practical affairs we are tending farther and farther away from the primitive stage. Collective matters are tending toward the utmost complexity necessary to bring about perfect smoothness of routine, *an absolutely mechanical world-economy*,

and this field, it seems to me, will ultimately absorb all that pertains to the intelligence proper. But in spiritual affairs, individual affairs, we are receding into the subconscious, into the universal essence which lies behind form, behind embodiment.

And that is why peasant-poetry seems to us so much more 'modern' than classical poetry — peasant-poetry *minus* the fate element, which sooner or later science will clear away by placing us more and more *en rapport* with the still inexplicable forces of the universe. A perfect example of such peasant-poetry, in sentiment at once very ancient and very modern, is the well-known 'Two Rivers:'

Says Tweed to Till —
 'What gars ye rin sae still?'
 Says Till to Tweed —
 'Though ye rin with speed
 And I rin slaw,
 For ae man thae ye droon
 I droon twa.'

Everyone can see the peasant mind in that fragment. Compared with all the contemporary songs to Chloe and Amyrillis, how much truer it is, how much more elemental and universal, and how much more the work of an only half-conscious mind. To be truly modern* it lacks only one thing — the *hope* that comes either from knowledge or from a still deeper insight. In its *formal inconsequence* it is already modern.

In primitive poetry, then, the form is extremely weak. Rhetoric does not exist. Society is not yet sufficiently unified to demand in expression a uniformity, a common currency. Primitive poetry struggles with a medium which baffles it. It lacks facility. The Shakespearean drama, elemental and fatalistic, spiritually completes the primitive ballad on a grand scale. One immense conception dominates it — the inter-relation of love, death, and the impenetrable darkness with which 'our little life is rounded,' and man after death,

'Imprisoned in the viewless winds,
 And blown with restless violence round about
 The pendant world.'

It seems to me that in the whole of Shakespeare there is wanting only such a figure as Maeterlinck's Arkël, who could say: 'It is terrible, but it is not your fault. . . . It was a poor little mysterious being, like all the world. . . . There is no such thing, perhaps, as the occurrence of purposeless events.' No, not even this, but some Arkël the future will give us, who will not even have to say 'perhaps.' Some assurance, that

*As regards the modernity in tone of such verse compare it with poems of our day like W. B. Yeats's 'Down by the Salley Gardens.'

is, of an order in the universe with which man can consciously ally himself, and repose in the alliance.*

And indeed, after Shakespeare science was inevitable. The human spirit had spoken with all the apparent irrationality of nature against the rationality of the world. It had pushed destiny to the wall. It required an answer. And with Bacon, constructive science begins — constructive science whose office it is precisely to ascertain what is the order of the universe. With science the elemental mind begins to disentangle itself from the collective mind, or rather to have a theoretical basis for doing so. The world-economy begins to assume its proper place on the practical plane, and man begins to grasp the universal cause and effect and to accept and even welcome destiny as he grows more and more to understand it.

Thus the Puritan reaction explains itself. The Elizabethans had understood that morality has no part in the order of the universe, but they had not understood that morality remains an essential part of the order of the world — that while it does not concern man in his individual, spiritual aspect, it is the very basis of his collective, social aspect. The Puritans ran to the other extreme and upheld exclusively what the Elizabethans had, precisely, excluded. The Elizabethans had endeavored to impose the universal order upon the world; the Puritans endeavored to impose the world-order on the universe. Puritanism and the eighteenth century do not begin to suspect that the moral problem is nothing more nor less than the economic problem. In Swift alone do we find that suggestion, which in Burns becomes almost an open understanding. Burns conceives anew, for the first time since Shakespeare, man set in the universe. And in grasping the essential nature of love he has hard things to say of morality:

‘Morality, thou deadly bane,
Thy tens o’ thousands thou hast slain;
Vain is his hope, whose stay and trust is
In moral mercy, truth and justice.’

That is still Elizabethan — excellent from the universal point of view, but it ignores political economy. . . . And just now, with Adam Smith, political economy begins. It begins with pure finance, on the periphery of life, and gradually through the nineteenth century enters life deeper and deeper, until in becoming sociology it absorbs morality and becomes the science of good and evil.

That henceforth the individual soul is free of the collective mind is once for all established. It remains only for political economy to explain how the necessary is also the feasible. Thus Wordsworth says: ‘Our life

*I do not know how far Shakespeare intended his Prospero to be some such figure as Arkel. But Prospero is evidently a figure whose background is time, not eternity. And his ‘Be cheerful, sir!’ seems to me only the cheerfulness possible in that ‘little life’ which is still ‘rounded with a sleep.’

is turned out of her course, whenever man is made an offering, a tool, an implement, a passive thing employed as a brute mean.' The natural forces of paganism and the ideal forces of Christianity are henceforth identified in their struggle with the Pharisee and the Philistine. Negatively, the problem of modern thought becomes: how to eliminate the middle-class; positively, how to reconcile the world-economy with the universe-economy. This problem Goethe is the first to formulate.

Shelley, at this time, restates in his 'Defence' the laws of poetry and the relation between morality and the ideal: 'A poet would do ill to embody his own conceptions of right and wrong, which are usually those of his own time and place, in his poetical creations, which participate in neither' (the sin of programme-music). 'By this assumption of the inferior office of interpreting the effect, in which perhaps after all he might acquit himself but imperfectly, he would resign a glory in the participation of the cause.' At the same time he points out the relation which exists in poetry between content and form: 'Poetry is a sword of lightning, ever unsheathed, which consumes the scabbard that would contain it.' Henceforth we have no illusions about rhetoric and morality — in literature the one is only the expression of the other, *political economy masking itself as the ideal*.

To-day the truest in English poetry comes from Ireland. They understand rhetoric there and that it is, as W. B. Yeats describes it, 'the will trying to do the work of the imagination,' the practical, that is, operating on the spiritual plane. Irish poetry has escaped the hurly-burly of the nineteenth century while anticipating its conclusions. It connects with English tradition in Blake, in whom the forces of the future were so congested that they broke forth only in strange emanations, and to whom literature had in no sense a special law. Movements that spring from will, movements that spring from imagination — in that conflict he perceived the conflict between the world and the universe. It creates a literature of pure emanation, to be apprehended only by pure absorption, which evades anyone who approaches it with an opinion to find an opinion.

Over-expressiveness, facility in all kinds — whence have they fled from art? 'In order to write well,' said Joubert, 'one must have a natural facility and an acquired difficulty.' Literature very evidently is acquiring difficulty. All the arts in the future will more and more acquire difficulty! Until form entirely defeats their purpose, until they become altogether silent.

V

. . . A tendency away from the intelligent and intelligible world, away altogether from externalization — the path toward silence.

Art as an institution, that is, with its forms and ceremonies, art academic, art rhetorical, goes the way of all other institutions, dissolves toward the pure soul. For art, insofar as it makes concessions to the collective mind, as it mixes its ideality with the practical, is sentimental. And at last we perceive the bearings of sentimentality. Ideality knows none of it, practicality knows none of it. But the middle class knows it well and battens upon it. For what after all is the middle class but the great bulwark of confusions? The great body of minds which obstinately refuse to separate ideality from practicality, fling stones at every Magdalen, sanction the birth of an imbecile because its parents are married, prattle of social art and artistic reform, weep copiously at special instances of misfortune without a substantial thought over the regeneration of all that lies behind misfortune. There exists in its knottiest form the tangle of the world-economy with the universe-economy.

I have been reading the account of an interview with Rodin in which he speaks of the taste for reality as a characteristic of all aristocracies. He admires the grand seigneurs who delighted in realism, Charles V and Philip IV, who permitted Titian to paint all in their faces that was ignoble. And is not the peasant mind equally realistic? It is only the middle class which does not care for truth, which desires the opposite of truth — sentimentality. The rich tradesman wishes *his* portrait idealized.

The example of Tolstoy is suggestive. He began life as an aristocrat and an artist, he ended as a peasant and a seer. Never did he contribute to the tradesman's dream, the mob's dream — the *getting on* of things. He was intensely realistic, first in art, afterward in life. He went beyond art, quite literally — after expressing himself through art he subsequently expressed through life the point of view that lies behind art. And therein gave us the first rough sketch of the artist of the future.

Now realism in art, as I see it, is the last stage before mysticism in art. It is, so to speak, the 'last chance' which art holds out to the collective mind. Thereafter it passes into the Unknown. . . . To the mystical order, to the more and more sub-conscious order, belong plainly the chief contemporary works of art, such as the 'Blue Bird' of Maeterlinck, Ros-tand's 'Chanticleer,' Humperdinck's opera of 'Königskinder.' These works have been popular successes, not of the vulgar but of the universal kind, for they have captivated along with the immense public two classes not often in accord with the immense public, the children and the artists. Managers, publishers, impresarios will observe how close the financial scent has led them to the arcanum of true art, how little it pays to over-estimate the vulgarity of human nature.

Maeterlinck's evolution has been almost palpably out of the uncon-

scious into a final externality whose function it is to point back to the unconscious and to explain it for its own sake. His early poems are totally unintelligible except in the pure mood. Even now his medium is immensely difficult, as of a man laboring with an impoverished vocabulary; all known words open to him but the greater part thrown aside as debased coins of common association, of a connotation too mean to convey high things. Maeterlinck is said to have no understanding of music. That is natural. Carlyle and Emerson, too, had none. It is true that men who see deeply are rude and clumsy at the medium. If by immense effort they have succeeded in forging one for themselves they are the less likely to understand any other. The mind which grasps easily many media is the outer, not the inner mind, — the dilettante, the decorative mind, at many removes from nature. A strong personality, that is, one who has a deep background in the unconscious, cannot be a virtuoso, a technician, a facile man. That is true socially as well as artistically, the facile man is the cheap man. . . . Maeterlinck is the most significant figure in our spiritual world to-day, because, in perceiving the harmony between man and the universe, he points out the possible, the necessary reconciliation of the world-economy and the universe-economy. He has at last built a bridge between the poet and the political economist.

Art then, I say, is tending toward the condition of silence. . . . Consider in all the arts of to-day six or eight principal names: Carrière and Monet in painting, Rodin in sculpture, Debussy and Strauss in music, Maeterlinck and Yeats in literature. Two qualities are most apparent to me in these men — strength and chaos. The strength springs from an immense resistance, an immense forbearance, as if the visible world were being pushed away. . . . The chaos springs from an ignoring of form, which is of the world, which is the collective medium. Often this chaos is rough, as in Strauss and Rodin; often it is dim, as in Monet, Carrière, Maeterlinck, Yeats, Debussy, the dimness of a gradual receding from the conscious mind, the visible world, into the unconscious mind, the invisible world. In painting the mist is necessarily visible, in poetry, in music, it is no less felt.

The collective mind is no longer able to approach this art. No longer can we exercise our intelligence, our joy in obvious skill before this art. But, in that measure, we are called upon to feel, to exercise our intuitional sense of truth, to liberate ourselves. Virtuosity no longer suffices, but the soul is flooded with sunlight. We find ourselves less and less called upon to bring to the understanding of art special devices of criticism, to be active before it. We remain more and more passive, and we find ourselves dwelling not upon art but upon life. Surprising intuitions disturb us.

And we almost accuse the picture, the poem, the song: It has told me all things whatsoever I have known.

And the artist perceives that his art has been only a kind of play-acting, wherein he has 'looked on truth askance and strangely.'

NOON

BY LECONTE DE LISLE

Translated from the French ("Midi") by Mary Louise Dunbar

Noon, the king of the summer,
 Is spreading over the plain
 Filmy sheets of his silver
 That fall from the blue like rain;
 Steeped in the sunshine flaming,
 Earth slumbers in robe of fire;
 Breathless amid the burning,
 Even drowsy, my heart's desire.

Golden in sea of billows,
 Disdaining the forest's sleep,
 Roll and murmur the wheat fields
 And radiant courage keep;
 Waving a welcome majestic
 To triumphing Noon King's car,
 Smile at its shining splendor
 And reach for his blessing afar.

Parched the trees in whose shadow
 Cows, hiding from stalwart sun,
 Dream with languorous eyes superb,
 The dream that is never done;
 Rest in the spell of the noontide
 Of man. So weary of care,
 Throbbing white summer enfoldeth
 In silence, peace unaware.

THE FABLIAU OF THE THREE HUNCHBACKS

After the Mediæval French of Durand

BY FREDERICK BLISS LUQUIENS

Good Sirs, an ye would briefly hear
A lively tale and true, give ear!

Once on a time there lived in Tours
An honest gentleman, but poor,
Whose only daughter, passing fair,
Was courted by a millionaire.
But, as it chanced, though well-to-do,
The lover was a hunchback too!
Nor was that all — his face, alack,
Was no whit better than his back;
His hair, a mop; his head, immense;
Monstrum horrendum et ingens!
Small wonder that the girl demurred!
But when the father still decried
Her attitude as quite absurd,
She, all too dutiful, complied,
And found herself a hunchback's bride.

But, when the honeymoon was o'er,
Beside the faults she knew before,
The luckless lady found that he
Had yet one other — jealousy.
Masculine callers might have knocked
Upon his door until doomsday;
He kept it locked and double-locked —
The poor wife almost pined away.

At last it happed, one Christmas-tide,
Three men, three minstrels, got inside;
Three hunchbacked minstrels, bowed and bent,
Who brought to bear this argument:
Since they had humps as well as he,

It followed by analogy,
 If he had meat on Christmas day,
 And drink beside — why! so should they.
 He liked their logic, strange to say,
 And shared with them his festal cheer,
 And to their songs lent willing ear,
 And gave them each some farthings ten;
 But afterward, right there and then,
 Proffered this counsel, brief but clear:
 If they should come again,
 They wouldn't find a cheerful giver,
 But *would* be chucked into the river.
 And so the minstrels went their way,
 Content with their successful day.

During this masculine merriment
 The hapless wife of course was sent
 To comfort her as best she might.
 Nevertheless, though locked from sight,
 She heard their voices through the wall,
 And vowed, whatever might befall,
 She'd hear again that merry song.
 Nor tarried the occasion long,
 For presently her husband went
 To his affairs, whereon she sent
 A servant on the minstrels' track,
 And they, not loth, came quickly back.
 Inside the house again they sang,
 And all the walls with merriment rang.

But while they sang, and while the dame
 Listened and laughed, the husband came
 Inopportunely back! — Alas!
 Was ever wife in such a pass? —
 Beside the hearth a huge box stood,
 Half filled with logs of hickory wood,
 With three compartments — just the size
 For hiding guests from husbands' eyes.
 And each compartment of the chest
 Contained eftsoon a hunchbacked guest.
 The lady slammed each heavy lid,

And thus the three were safely hid. —
 The jealous husband came, and went,
 With never a thought of discontent.

Fair Sirs, are ye prepared to hear
 A thing most tragical, most drear? —
 When, hardly of her husband rid,
 The lady raised again each lid,
 And those three prisoners uncovered,
 She found them all completely smothered! —
 Alack! no remedy avails,
 All three are dead as three door-nails.

It was an evil plight, and yet
 Her woman's wits were not upset.
 She hailed a porter, who, it fell,
 Was passing by: 'I'll pay thee well,
 My honest fellow, an thou ask
 No questions, only do thy task.'
 'Agreed,' quoth he, with ready zest;
 Whereon she led him to the chest,
 And, opening one compartment, showed
 One lifeless hunchback. 'Take this load
 My worthy man, upon thy back —
 Here, tie it up in this stout sack —
 And tumble it in yonder river.'
 He did as bid with never a quiver,
 And, once his burden overboard,
 Returned apace for his reward.

But hold! the dame sits not, meanwhile,
 Idling the time in smirk or smile.
 One guest is sped — still linger twain.
 The second now, with might and main,
 She hoists and hauls upon the floor
 And leaves convenient to the door.
 The porter, coming for his pay,
 Hunchback the First out of the way,
 Stops in his tracks. Then quick the dame:
 'Thou churl! Thou empty of all shame!
 What meaneth pray, this foolery?

Why bring the hunchback back with thee?
 The poor wight scratched his muddled head.
 'I' faith,' quoth he, 'I thought him dead.
 I dropped him deep some fathom ten —
 And now he turns up here again?
 Alack, my lady, we're undone;
 This surely is the Evil One.
 But, fiend incarnate though he be,
 I'll fix him yet, an God help me!
 A pox, a murrain on his head!
 I'll put him on where he'll know he's dead.'
 Forthwith he thrust him in the sack
 And took him off upon his back. —
 The lady's task is nearly done,
 Of hunchbacks there is left but one.
 She drags him out upon the floor
 To wait the porter as before.

Meanwhile that worthy, from the brink,
 Was watching Hunchback Second sink.
 'Unholy miscreant,' muttered he,
 The river is the place for thee!
 Then hurried back to get his pay,
 And found — Good Sirs, what need to say? —
 Hunchback the Third he seized in wrath
 And took once more the river path.
 'Into the river for good!' cried he;
 'This, I hope, is the last of thee!
 Into the river, quick or dead,
 And if I see thine ugly head,
 Or uglier hump, again, thou knave,
 By all the Saints, and several more,
 I'll tan thee so with my good stave,
 Thou'lt wish thou hadst been dead before.'

So saying, he returned once more,
 And found again the lady's door.
 But, ere he entered, haply glanced
 Over his shoulder. — As it chanced,
 Upon his very heel-taps came
 The hunchbacked husband of the dame! —

The honest porter well-nigh died.
 He crossed himself nine times, and cried:
 'Dei nomine, wretched me!
 And then continued wrathfully:
 'God's wounds! the scurvy fellow lacks
 All wit, to follow in my tracks.
 Mayhap he thinks me from the country —
 I never heard of such effrontery!'
 On that he gripped his quarterstaff,
 And shouted loud, with angry laugh:
 'By our Holy Mother, we shall see
 If I'm the fool thou thinkest me!'
 One swing of his cudgel — one, no more —
 One goodly rap, and all was o'er.
 Into the sack and overboard
 Went the husband without a word;
 Ten fathom deep, tied in the sack,
 And he, in truth, didn't come back.
 At last the porter's task was done,
 At last he was rid of the Evil One.

And so the worthy man returned
 And got the wage so hardly earned.
 The lady paid ungrudgingly,
 And added a gratuity —
 Who wouldn't give a sou or so,
 To lose a husband quite *de trop*?

The mediæval French Fabliaux have a bad reputation, due in great part to the fact that most of us, unable to read the poems themselves, must take the opinions of literary historians, who are inexplicably unjust in this matter.

Here, for example, is the opinion of the late Catulle Mendès: 'In these six octavo volumes (the six volumes edited by Montaiglon and Raynaud) lies buried (*git*) almost all the humor of our ancestors. These tomes, compact, stifling, heavy, are small burial-vaults; they are the necropolis of Gallic gayety; thence issues an odor of flesh, of decay, of disease, a stench of tripe-houses, or of worse places. . . . The Fabliau is wit on all fours (*l'esprit à quatre pattes*), with its snout in the trough, devouring the refuse of all low pleasures and the satisfaction of never lifting eyes toward heaven.' Here is the opinion of Gustave Lanson, in its lack of metaphor more damning still: Immorality and knavery supply the matter; the manner is salacious; and cruelty is the spring of the action. The humor is sometimes sickening, sometimes of a revolting brutality. It would be impossible to count the broken limbs or dismembered bodies, the drowned or sand-bagged victims; a corpse is a humorous thing; if there are three or four they are irresistible.' The injustice of such opinions lies in the assumption that a literary *genre* is as strong as its weakest link. In other words, critics who define the Fabliaux by their worst specimens are like critics who should define

the 'Epic' without considering Homer, or the 'Beowulf,' or the 'Song of Roland.' The Fabliaux should be known by their best examples, and therefore should be defined, not as essentially immoral, salacious, and cruel, nor as burial-vaults, but simply and solely as humorous stories. The proof of the pudding is in the eating. *A mes lecteurs, bon appétit!*

THE CHILDREN OF HOMER

BY MARGARET ULLMANN

Why, of sweet-tongued bards in the times long hoary,
Sounding up through years the old deeds of glory,
Never one, yet, ever has told your story,
Children of Homer?

Little chiefs were you, little learned sages,
Scarcely more than names on our memories' pages;
Yet your lives were real as your sung-of-ages
Warrior fathers'!

Some in Hellas left, with your waiting mothers,
Knowing tales alone of your sires and brothers;
And one, a maid, more lonely than all the others, —
Daughter of Helen.

Some in Argine camps, by the restless ocean,
Born in soldiers' tents, in the dread commotion;
Life as one long war, was your only notion,
Playing with armor.

Some in fated Troy, in the sheltered towers,
Small thought you the woes of the striving powers.
Yours was grief each year for the meadow flowers
Trampled by heroes.

Those who knew your story have long ceased singing,
But yet the silent years to our hearts keep bringing
Still your smiles and tears, and your voices ringing,
Children of Homer!

TITO, THE UNRESISTING

BY GILBERT COSULICH

IT was a sound thinker that defined a scoundrel as one who follows the line of least resistance. This path, as Rudolf Dircks has said, is the one constantly traveled by Tito. In him George Eliot has given us more than what Swinburne calls 'the anatomical demonstration of every process through which a soul may pass in the course of decomposition'; more than a 'thorough and triumphant exposition of spiritual decay': she has sounded a warning against evil that, even in the absence of malice, can spring from an unswerving obedience to the dictates of selfishness. 'What, looked at closely, is the end of life,' he asks himself, 'but to extract the utmost sum of pleasure?' He wants 'his world cushioned with velvet' — and cares little how he secures the upholstery.

The author clearly reveals her purpose in portraying Tito when she puts into the mouth of Romola this summary of his character: 'I believe, when I first knew him, he never thought of anything cruel or base. But because he tried to slip away from everything that was unpleasant, and cared for nothing else so much as his own safety, he came at last to commit some of the basest deeds — such as make men infamous.'

It is probably the betrayal of this purpose that Swinburne has in mind when, without giving reasons, he complains of 'the preacher's or lecturer's aim' in the characterization of Tito. Though there may occur betrayals of this nature, they can scarcely be said at any time to offend literary taste. We must grant the novelist some latitude, else we shall have a chronicle and not a piece of fiction.

In the beginning, Tito is neither good nor bad: he is merely untempted. But his innate selfishness, bolstered by a dangerous philosophy of life, furnishes a ready field for moral disintegration. The pressure of circumstances soon forces him to base deeds; and these deeds in turn react upon his character. As the net draws tighter, he is driven to more desperate measures; and with each downward step, the next becomes easier. He simply falls according to the *nemo repente* principle.

It is interesting to note how the author adjusts the temptation to the necessity, and the man to both. At first, Baldassarre is probably dead: why engage in a fruitless search? By the time news comes that his former guardian is alive, Tito has convinced himself that there is no call of duty in that direction. Warned by his encounter with Fra Luca, he

disposes of the last ring in order to prevent a similar recognition in the future. When the prisoner clutches his arm, Tito feels that he has burned his bridges behind him, and the impulse is to say: 'A madman, surely.' Similarly, it is self-preservation that, during the Rucellai supper, forces him again to deny his foster-father. This time, however, he is driven to the unpleasant necessity of causing Baldassarre's imprisonment. But he does not even debate the matter: frequent friction with the moral law has made him quite callous.

In Tito's relations with Tessa, a similar process is followed: a pleasant acquaintance, the mock marriage, celebrated when he believes that his real love is hopeless; and finally, the partial fulfillment of the marital vows in order to avoid another unpleasantness — that of disappointing the poor, trusting *contadina*.

He is alienated from Romola in the same way. At first he neglects her in order to pursue his selfish pleasures; he sells her father's library to provide the means for a possible flight from Florence; he resolves to desert her when he finds that the nobility of her nature is likely to interfere with his political intrigues.

And in these intrigues his conduct is governed by the same principle — ill-will against no man, but safety and self-aggrandizement at all costs. While in the employ of the Piagnoni, he acts as agent of the Mediceans so that 'whatever party comes uppermost, he may be secure of favor and money.' For this reason he aids the Arrabbiati against Savonarola. Later, in self-defense he betrays his Medicean friends. In that final dastardly *coup* against the Dominican, he is again guided by the *ultima ratio* of all his actions — self-preservation. He expects by this treacherous act to insure his early departure from Florence: 'Many circumstances besides his own weariness of the place told him that it was time to be gone.'

Dircks puts this question: 'A slight divergence in the line of fate, and might not Tito have developed into a responsible and honorable manhood; or was he like a beautiful flower which can distil nothing but corruption and poison?' The first alternative seems hardly possible, unless we can imagine a life in which there is no unpleasantness to be avoided at the expense of virtue. Is there any condition of life devoid of temptations to selfishness? Are we to believe that a man 'destitute of that dread . . . felt by the mass of mankind simply as a vague fear at anything which is called wrong-doing' could ever have a 'line of fate' that would lead him to an 'honorable manhood'?

HAUPTMANN AND THE NIETZSCHEAN PHILOSOPHY

BY ANTON HELLMANN

A TURNING-POINT in the history of the drama was made when the writings of Henrik Ibsen appeared. The evolution of the social-drama of his middle-period marks the place where modern drama begins. Even those to whom his point of view was anathema, granted that he presently produced a technique and form practically flawless. With splendid art he uncovered the ills of society; with unswerving severity he dug below the surface and exposed the diseased will of the individual.

Philosophically, however, he seemed to be ever striving toward something beyond his reach; something which Nietzsche presented, considerably involved, in 'Thus spake Zarathustra' and which the unfinished 'The Will to Power' would probably have made very clear.

Following Ibsen came a group of men all of whom felt the importance of his writings and were filled with new life and inspiration from the study of them. They had the added advantage of being able to draw on the philosophy of Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche. Strongly under the spell of his writings, George Bernard Shaw, in England, presented his interpretation of beyond-man in his drama 'Man and Superman' as well as variants of the character in some of his other brilliant plays. Hermann Sudermann's first play, 'Honor,' which gave him the important place he holds in German literature shows that he must have studied deeply 'The Genealogy of Morals,' and 'Beyond Good and Evil.' In his character of Magda, his best-known creation, are many of the virtues of beyond-man. All over Europe the leadership of these two powerful forces has been felt. In Sweden, Auguste Strindberg, who Ibsen predicted would surpass him in greatness and who Nietzsche, in his late biography, 'Ecce Homo,' declared was the first to incorporate the Nietzschean philosophy into his plays. Gabrielle D'Annunzio from Italy, Jose Éschégeray in Spain, Brieux in France, and Arthur Schnitzler from Austria.

The great Belgian, Maurice Maeterlinck, has more thoroughly blended these influences with his own philosophical ideas, has built up a more independent philosophy of his own, but the debt which he owes to those iconoclastic pioneers is nevertheless a very large one. The ideas that originated in Nietzsche's 'Human all too Human,' and in 'The Dawn of

Day,' were certainly not lost upon him. Gerhart Hauptmann, like Maeterlinck, has not shown so much the effect of these forces. This transvaluation of old values has perhaps had less effect on him than on most of these contemporary artists, but his attitude toward the existing moral order and the church would not have been born without the influence, direct or indirect, of Nietzsche's teachings. Perhaps the orthodox Christian forms of thinking clung more firmly to him than to the rest of this school. An evidence of his pre-occupation with these ideas is found in his beautiful little fairy-drama, 'The Assumption of Hannele.' The inspiration from the statuesque prose of Ibsen is clearly discernible in the realistic social-dramas of his early manner, and the influence of Nietzsche's virile lyric style on the poetic and dream-plays.

Zarathustra came down from his mountains after having gazed daily on the glory of the sun. He had become filled with its beauty and its glory and he felt that he wished to give his inspiration to the world. He came down into the market-place which Nietzsche in his magnificent allegory made symbolical of the world. Here in the market-place the prophet undergoes a humiliation not at all novel, but alas, usually true; he is obliged to give way to the tight-rope performer. The crowd is busy watching the performances of the tight-rope dancer, but when he becomes exhausted and falls maimed and dies at the feet of Zarathustra, the latter is obliged to carry the dead body away. If you would come to the world with serious messages to deliver to mankind, you would soon find that the world does not need you, it is interested in those who dance on tight-ropes and clap cymbals and in those who wear tinsel ornaments. Presently, when too late, the world discovers that what it has taken for real gems is only tinsel, the serious ones must find a way to make things right again.

In 'The Fool in Christ,' Gerhart Hauptmann's last published novel, Emmanuel Quint in his peasant home, during his youth and early manhood, reads the 'New Testament' and is filled with the spirit and thought of Jesus, and with a firm determination to live as he did. He tried to arrange his affairs in his life among the peasants of his Silesian countryside as Christ had his, among the people of Judea. Emmanuel finds that the doctrine of non-resistance to evil is as horrible and impracticable a thing to carry out to-day in a Christian country as it was in the Holy Land two thousand years ago. People are too much concerned with their luxuries and pleasures to make the effort not to resist evil. *It is so much easier to resist evil than it is not to resist evil.*

To say that the brilliant and profound allegory of the market-place was the direct inspiration for 'The Fool in Christ' would perhaps be to force an analogy. It seems to be an unnecessary duty that many critics

take upon themselves to find in every utterance of an artist the genealogy of his thinking, however, there can be little doubt that the philosophical writings of Friedrich Nietzsche have colored deeply much of the art of to-day. Whether for good or for bad he has struck with his hammer upon the mental consciousness of the modern world resounding blows which are so loud that we cannot help hearing them. In one of his sermons, Emmanuel Quint, the fool in Christ, says: 'I did not do right to resort to violence in the house of men of violence. Or do you think a priest is not a man of violence? All of them that falsely call themselves the ministers of God, from the least to the highest, would this very day like to be lords of heaven and earth, lords not only of men but even of God.' Here is another passage from 'The Fool in Christ.' 'The amount of filth in which a man wallows by compulsion or of his own free will is not always a proof of the filthiness of his soul.' Its sentiment is much like this verse from Zarathustra's speech on 'Manly Prudence,' 'And whoever wisheth not to die of thirst among men, must learn to drink out of all glasses; and whoever wisheth to go clean among men, must learn to wash himself even with dirty water.' From the same novel of Hauptmann's, I choose this passage which might have come from the middle of Nietzsche's 'Anti-Christ.' 'Evolution, the state, civilization, are not to be based on unselfishness. Struggle, self-seeking remain the most potent motive factors. The domination of Christianity for two thousand years on account of this false tendency has been nothing but a prodigious hypocrisy, a monstrous fiasco. The world is propped on selfishness, nations are maintained by selfishness, selfishness dictates and inspires all the large and petty transactions among men. The church proclaims its rule in the name of God, and in return demands servitude in the name of God. The lords want to get the better of the lords and the slaves. The slaves want to get the better of the slaves and the lords. There is not an individual in the mad struggle of interests who is not his own fortress. Then shall he be unselfish and let his fortress be razed to the ground? The most barren principle there can be, I maintain, is unselfishness. Because anyone who would want to carry it out in practice to its logical conclusion, that is, anyone who would secure peace at any cost, would have to leave the arena, the battleground, he would have to quit life voluntarily. Suicide would be the true Christian act, the only final consequence of Christian teachings.

Kill selfishness and if you cannot kill it any other way then kill yourself. 'He that loveth his life shall lose it. And he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it until life eternal, I tell you.'

Sitting under a rock in the upper Engadine there came to Friedrich Nietzsche the idea of the eternal recurrence. Together with the belief

that man is not a goal, that he is a bridge to beyond-man, these two ideas and that of the will-to-power are the fundamentals upon which the philosophy of this German who 'thought himself God' rests itself. The idea of beyond-man is reached by a clear intellectual process; without much difficulty one may follow the path of reason by which the idea of the will-to-power is reached — indeed, it is inherent in that of beyond-man. It may be interesting to quote this definition of beyond-man which was made by Dr. M. Mücke, the most diligent and profound student of Nietzsche who has written in English. '*Der wirkliche Uebersensch ist Krafte in Geiste und Geist in Kraft.*' That comes nearer the actual meaning of the philosopher than might be expected in so short a statement. The idea of the eternal recurrence having come to Nietzsche according to his own statement entirely subjectively, by intuition, is a much greater tax on one's credulity, and so would probably not be accepted by so large an audience. It is not strange, therefore, to find the beyond-man the phase of his teaching that has been made most use of in literature. It has been said that the beyond-man is not new with Nietzsche; that it was in Goethe's Faust that this new person in the human family made his appearance. That may be true, but the progress of Nietzsche's beyond-man is a definite one and has certain unmistakable thoughts and characteristics.

In 'The Sunken Bell,' the work usually conceded to be the masterpiece of Gerhart Hauptmann, he makes his clearest presentation of beyond-man. The Master Bell-founder Heinrich has striven with all the strength of his art; he has produced the most marvelous bell imaginable — over all the broad countryside no bell was so near perfection — not a bubble, not a flaw in the mould — tones that rang out like a chorus of angels. The pastor said, 'How masterly will it ring from the mountain-tops.' And now the tragic awakening, a turn comes in Heinrich's psychic history: with crushing sadness born of the realization of the failure of his life's work, he finds that the great bell 'Will ring in the valleys but not on the mountain-top.' It has proved a failure, all his work and his hope. When they carried the bell to the mountain-top it rolled back knelling its sonorous and mocking song of failure till it reached the bottom of the lake and fastened itself among the roots of the water-lilies there. When upon the heights, Heinrich is tortured by the sound of the tolling of the bell, as it is rocked by the ghostly hands of his dead wife, who, unable to bear his neglect, has drowned herself.

Rautendelein discovers Heinrich on the mountain-top. She is the sweetest, most poetic of the red-gold-haired maidens who wend their mystic way through Hauptmann's dramas. She is sister to the water-sprite, the hobgoblin and the rain; she is the voice of nature in man — the

will-to-power — constantly goading him forward to higher purpose and deed — to beyond-man which is a goal.

There is much in Hauptmann's *Bell-founder* that is reminiscent of Faust — like all great Germans he has drunk deep from Goethe's well — but there is much more of Nietzsche in Heinrich than there is of Goethe. He leaves his wife and children. He receives from his children the urn that they bring him filled with the tears their mother had shed. These things prove painful obstacles but he mounts over them; following the call from the mountain-tops. Nietzsche had a passion for the mountain-tops as a symbol. At the behest of Rautendelein he continues onward, but realizing that he has not only the wings of the falcons but also the claws which he knows are unfit to caress a child's soft cheeks — that the virtues that give him the power to breathe the clear mountain air make the atmosphere of the valleys too heavy for him.

He wants to work constantly, to surpass himself; untiring in his energy, he curses the coming night which prevents his working. He says, 'Mornings we are kings, but at night only beggars.' Heinrich was never to hear 'the glad new gospel of the new-born light.' He dies, but just before the play ends we hear the good news that 'The Sun is coming,' but it is a different sun from the one that Oswald Alving cries for. Like Moses dying on the mountain Pisgah, he did not reach the goal himself, but he had a glimpse of what lay beyond the mountain-top.

Gerhart Hauptmann, himself, has given us the authority to consider his poetic dramas as symbolic. That means that there is an opportunity for as many interpretations as there are persons of different temperaments to make them. Many analyses have been made by lovers of Hauptmann of the dream-play 'And Pippa Dances,' but no two have been made alike. The one made by Mr. Paul Grumann, the most serious and profound student of Hauptmann in America, and one made by the poet himself, at the time of the first performance of the play in Berlin, differ fundamentally, the one from the other. If this Nietzschean interpretation seems far-fetched it is perhaps not less valid than the others.

In 'And Pippa Dances' — probably the most mystical of Hauptmann's plays — 'Pippa might be taken to represent the ideal, the goal. Huhn is symbolic of man's lowest instincts — he is the brute type struggling for the ideal. He struggles ever so clumsily, like a bear chasing a butterfly, but is just as anxious to dance with Pippa as those who are further advanced in the spiritual scale, ridiculous though he may appear to the other people. Hellriegel is the transitional creature, a poet living joyously, — he is symbolic of the Dionysian element, of life beyond good and evil, — unsettled and unreasonable, he embraces Pippa and evidently delights

in her possession but really confuses her with his song, his ocarina. He allows her to die in his arms without realizing that she dies. He is so anxious for the song in life, for life's beauty, that he dances out, forgetting that he is leaving his ideal behind him. Like the poet Marchbanks in Shaw's 'Candida' he feels that a hundred years from now it will all be the same. Wann is beyond-man, living on his mountain-top, attended only by his servant, a deaf-mute. He has much wisdom, but is striving constantly to mount higher, realizing that he must ever climb on, beyond, and take greater power. The feeling paramount through the whole drama is this striving beyond, toward a goal. 'And Pippa Dances' is one of the most beautiful of Hauptmann's dramas to read, but we miss much of its beauty, for it should be seen on the stage. There is much to please the senses in the picturesque Venetians among the Silesian glassworkers, and in Wann in his mystic setting in his mountain-house. As a romantic and picturesque drama this is a creation of great beauty; as a play possessing concrete ideas it is certainly not the only one among Hauptmann's that is an utter failure.

In 'Lonely Lives,' one of the earlier dramas, written in a realistic style, it is Johannes Vockerat who is trying to reach higher. Anna Mahr comes into his life. She helps to goad him onward, helps him with the work of his soul. Like Rautendelein in 'The Sunken Bell,' Anna Mahr becomes to Johannes Vockerat like the call of nature and pours into his soul and being the will-to-power. The pictures on the wall of the Vockerats' living-room are referred to. The portraits of Haeckel and Darwin are mentioned especially among the modern teachers. In his conversations, Johannes speaks of them with reverence as his teachers, his mother speaks of them with bitterness, as the cause of the misery in their household. She calls them '*seelenverderbern.*' Haeckel and Darwin alone could not be the inspiration speaking through the characters of Johannes and Anna. The attacks that they make on the conventions are those of Nietzsche, whose philosophy formed practicable working rules for these teachers of the theory of evolution. Friedrich Nietzsche took the fact of the survival of the fittest at its face value; so, too, Johannes Vockerat does and tries to live accordingly. If he finds it necessary to tread on the hearts of those nearest to him, his beautiful young wife's and his indulgent old parents', he tries to do it.

When Katie, the young wife, comes to Johannes with urgent material concerns that must be attended to immediately, he repulses her, saying that his work, the aspiration of his soul, his manuscript, comes first, and second, and third, and then if there is time left he might devote it to such unimportant affairs. 'You have always the affairs of the family to bother me with, while I am busy about the development of my soul, with thoughts of uni-

versal things.' At another time he bursts out in violent indignation because she speaks of the difficulty she has had in trying to see him alone so that they might discuss private affairs, because of the presence of Fraulein Anna. He feels that his freedom is being jeopardised, that he is a yoked Pegasus. He calls Katie and his mother Philistines and small-souled people.

Johannes wishes to mount high on, he is a man of little strength. Like Ibsen's Master-builder Solness, he cannot climb as high as he can build. Thousands of years ago it was said by a nameless Hindu seer that before the eyes can see they must become incapable of tears, that before the ears can hear they must have lost their sensitiveness. Johannes has learned these things, not from the East but from Nietzsche; but his eyes are not yet dry; his ears are not yet calloused to the call of the heart. He wants to cling upward even though it be necessary to wade in the stream made by his wife's tears, and the tears of his father and mother. He knows that the pathway of self-realization for him lies through association with the mentally superior Anna Mahr, but his emotions are still so large a part of his psychic construction that he is unable to live up to his theory of life, to his attitude toward the universe.

In closing, I repeat that it seems to me that Gerhart Hauptmann has felt less the force of this powerful pressure that has been brought to bear by this new thinking; for it is new in the history of philosophy in spite of the fact that those who hate many of the ideas for which Nietzsche stands, dispute them and rail at them rather than trouble themselves to find out what the ideas really are. So fearful of some disturbance in the conventional moral fabric are most of the critics of ethical writings, that they refuse to investigate or accept anything that tends to change the ordinary trend of affairs. Hauptmann's inspiration is at its highest in the fairy-plays and the dream-plays, such as 'Elga,' 'And Pippa Dances,' 'The Assumption of Hannele' and 'The Sunken Bell.' All of them would be greatly increased in effectiveness if we could see them played; they are essentially plays for the theater. Like nearly all of the dramas of these modern Europeans, Hauptmann's are apt to be very somber. That is probably because sorrow seems to them to be the most permanent aspect of human life — because through sorrow and in tears we are drawn nearer to the veil which covers the Infinite.

In a short time it would be impossible to go through the list, already very long, of the plays that Hauptmann has written. I hope I have shown a few places, wherein it is unmistakable that we hear the blows struck by the philosopher with the hammer; yet even in these places it is more in the unuttered words and the undone deeds that his influence is discerned. The figure of a tragic, persistent fighter, of Friedrich Nietzsche, towers high in the background which forms the poetry and ethics of Gerhart Hauptmann.

A LEGEND FROM THE TALMUD

BY HUGO SALUS

Adapted from the German by Roy Temple House

Chanina and Hosaja, humble makers
Of shoes and sandals, in the land of Judah,
Sat working in a street of wanton women:
Sat all their life-time in a narrow alley
And cobbled slippers for the evil women
Who came in paint and costly foreign odors
And gaudy silks and linen, to be measured;
Set a pert foot across the cobbler's apron:
'Come, make me slippers with loose silver buckles;
Ting-ling! Ting-ling! The tinkle charms the wooers;
Ting-ling! Ting-ling! The sound will charm them to me.'
And one draws free a dainty calf and ankle:
'Tis dancing-buskins, brother, high and narrow,
Two fingers from the knee.'

Dawn, day and even,
Chanina and Hosaja, humble cobblers,
Sat in the narrow street of gaudy wantons
And cobbled slippers for the evil women.
They never looked at her who gave the order
And laid her foot across the leather apron.
They took the length and breadth and hammered leather,
And had their pleasure in the Holy Sabbath,
In prayer and in the Law's profounder questions.
And so it came that God sent down His angels
Who floated through the street of wanton women
And stood before the cobblers, bathed in glory
In the dark street of lovers.

'Take our measure:
By Friday must the shoes be trimmed and ready.'
The cobblers only nodded; for their thinking
Was ever on the Law's profounder questions,
And, searching, they were happy. Feet of angels
Were like the slender feet of the bold women.
They fetched the shoes. But on the Sabbath morning,
When all the people flocked about the temple,

They floated through the sky, and called from over:
'Chanina and Hosaja, look toward Heaven!'
And over them the angels swayed in glory,
And glory lit the shoes their hands had fashioned.

'Know you the shoes? Then listen, all the others:
They sit their lives out in a dirty alley
And cobble shoes for painted evil women:
And yet the Lord of Lords has called them blessed,
Has called their names across the endless Heavens.
And has His pleasure in them. Rab Chanina
And Rab Hosaja, come inside the Temple.'



'I AM SEEKING' AND 'IT IS NOT IN VAIN THAT I HAVE BEEN SEEKING'

BY JULES ROMAINS

Translated from the French by Sasha Best

I AM SEEKING

For years the snow has been falling,
The sky is so leaden and low,
That men of high stature
Are almost afraid of knocking against it
And having it tumble on them.

The only light is from the snow;
All eyes have long since become resigned
To be dazzled by the earth alone.
Ah! but it was less sombre, just the same
And much less cold, in the times of God!

Our fingers are frozen. Oh! to know, to know!
Great souls have become frozen
Like the lakes in the mountains —
It is not enough to know!

Fact by fact, and sun by sun
We have stripped the flesh off the world;
But the strong blade of science
Has broken itself against the skeleton;
When withdrawn, there but remained
The odor of putrid stars.

How happy we would be again to have a god!
What loving words we would give him, and how kindly
We would regard him, if suddenly, to-morrow, to-night,
He were to enter and to take place at our fireside,
Where the century still new,

Is crackling and burning but badly,
Because of the snow falling into the hearth.

Ah! If it were but to-morrow, or to-night!

The flames would light up his face and hands,
And how we would wait for his lips to move!

Alas! Such gods no longer will pass:
They are afraid of showing their too simple raiment
And of cutting their feet on fragments of glass.

But the abstract gods whom no one has seen,
Those whom the breath of reason barely warm, —
Places, like steam on the windows of destiny,—
Those abstract gods that float away into the ineffable,
Those gods who have never spoken on the Mount,
And who, after sorrow and suffering, have not died —
They may exist, those gods,
But our hearts want none of them.

IT IS NOT IN VAIN THAT I HAVE BEEN SEEKING

The shop-keepers on their chairs
Have marked out God along the walls,
And when the sky becomes dark,
I saw some one who raised my arm.
I felt the water come under the oars.

My room like a sieve, has allowed
Subjected forces to glide in to me.
The great outside has thought, I am sure of it!
A night divine, a moonlight night.
The train has realized itself in the tunnel,
Whose breath is like that
Of the oxen, who were there
When a God was born in a stable.

Great forces are stirring:
In theaters and barracks,
In churches and streets,
And in cities.

352 IT IS NOT IN VAIN THAT I HAVE BEEN SEEKING

Great forces
Brute and divine,
Unconscious and naked,

That will be the real gods,
Because so we have dream'd it,
Because so we have willed it.

THE LARGER REALISM

BY HILDA RIDLEY

REALISM, so called, which first made its appearance in fiction, and notably in the fiction of France, during the second half of the nineteenth century, has its exponents to-day. So strong has been the reaction against the quagmire of romanticism, with its arbitrary reflection, that the pendulum still sways in the opposite direction. It is apparent, nevertheless, at the present time, that a sympathetic vibration toward the far horizon of idealism has set in.

This sympathetic vibration signifies the recognition of a truth discovered by those who expelled themselves from the garden of dreams. They turned their backs upon the lotus-eaters, breaking the spell which bound them, because they desired reality, and they found reality, as they thought, in a form of the concrete, unmodified, as far as possible, by the subjective. What they eventually discovered was that the concrete, untouched by idealism, is as barren as idealism arising from a hash of sickly dreams — or, in the words of George Meredith, that ‘we are not so pretty as rose pink, not so repulsive as dirty drab.’ They desired the truth of reality, and they came to realize that, without an admixture of the ideal, they lost a valuable ingredient of reality — hence the sympathetic vibration.

Now those who thus sympathetically vibrate, and show the indication of it in their writings, are the prophets of what I shall call the ‘Larger Realism.’ What is this Larger Realism? Its meaning will be made clearer by a preliminary inquiry into the nature of realism in the accepted sense.

We know that those who have been accepted as the masters of realism set before themselves a primary object. This object, as summed up in the words of Flaubert, is to be ‘scientific and impersonal.’ Now this determination on the part of the realist to be impersonal and scientific has had several important results, which, in effect, cover the field of realism. In the first place, it has affected his choice of ‘concrete realities.’ In order to produce the illusion of the purely impersonal method, he has been tempted to deal with the vulgarities of life. This is because he is conscious of the fact that a photographic reproduction of what is so common, must convey at least a semblance of the truth — and this it certainly does. In reality, of course, the subjective element cannot be entirely eliminated; but the appearance of its omission has been kept up through the dedication of realism to the commonplace. Behind the paraphernalia of every-day

life, the realist imagines he can easily screen himself. He is successfully hidden, he fancies, by pots and pans and the conventional attitudes of everyday people. But the whole construction, of course, swings on the skill of his selection. He sees things in a certain way, and we call him Flaubert, — in another, and we call him Zola. The man cannot escape us, but his effort to do so has resulted in his presenting to us 'concrete realities' which are often decidedly 'dirty drab.'

Another and more important result of the realist's effort to be impersonal is that he has deprived his concrete realities of vitality, and has transformed them by his method into objects of passive perception or scientific analysis. It is true that we should recognize them anywhere, just as we recognize the commonplace from a car window. It is also true that we might assent to the accuracy of the scientific analysis; but — our real life consists, not in passive perception or scientific analysis, but in appreciation. The difference is immense.

'In real life,' says Hugo Münsterberg, 'there is no passive perception, but only active appreciation, and to think anything as object of perception only means a transmutation by which reality evaporates.'

The effort of the realist to be impersonal and scientific makes of him a passive spectator who gives to us of objects of passive perception, while his effort to be scientific causes him to give to us for the human will a 'complicated substitution.' In real life, he is not thus consistently impersonal and scientific, and therefore in real life the objects which he encounters give themselves to him in another way. When he suppresses so large a portion of himself by striving to be impersonal, he perforce deducts from the objects of his contemplation, those characteristics which only his subjective and emotional or complete nature can take into account. The impact of the whole of an object or personality upon the whole of himself is a different thing from the impact of a deduced portion upon an impoverished ego.

As a third result of the effort of the realists, is the pessimistic note which is so dominant in their novels. Life looked at from an impersonal point of view, as it is revealed to us through 'concrete realities,' is indeed dreary, tragical and meaningless. If we are determined to portray merely the process of 'change and decay,' we can make a good deal of the irony of life, with 'its broken hopes, its successes that are often more hollow than its failures, its solid complacencies, its baffling mystery.' Most of the characters of the realists are led like sheep to the slaughter. Their awakening from what constitutes the zest of life is called 'disillusion,' the moments which make life really worth while 'illusion.'

'What life is.' This is the heading of one of the concluding chapters

of Arnold Bennett's 'Old Wives' Tales.' But why should the lives of two elderly ladies of fifty be more real than their lives, say, at twenty-five? — and two elderly ladies, also, seen from the impersonal point of view, no longer able to drink much tea or try their eyes! It is usually our own fault if we come to put more faith in the material world than in the bright visions of our youth, or at least refuse to make it subservient to the spirit; but we may depend upon it that the two elderly ladies in question found more in life than Bennett found for them. 'It is never so bad as they say,' says Emerson of those who reduce their experience to words, and Stevenson's parable of the 'Lantern Bearers' holds a divine truth.

'Justice is not done,' he says, 'to the versatility of man's imagination. His life from without may seem but a rude mound of mud: there will be some golden chamber in the heart of it, in which he dwells delighted; and for as dark as his pathway seems to be to the observer, he will have some kind of bull's eye at his belt.'

We have now seen something of what realism in the generally accepted sense is. How does the Larger Realism differ from it? Chiefly in this, that it occupies an extended field. The subjective element, far from being suppressed, is emphasized. This is because in real life it is also emphasized, and the author who strives to convey reality, can only do so by putting the whole of himself into his work. The exponent of the larger realism enters into his characters and breathes into them the 'breath of life,' so that they become 'living souls.' He imparts to them his own life and they speak and act from the soul's depths, — something rather different from speaking and acting according to the preconceived notion of 'an author who seeks 'causal connection.' In other words, the author who desires truth 'creates' his characters by endowing them with the life principle, which is in himself. He does not proceed to analyze a given object seen in space, but to enter into a given object that he may interpret it through sympathy. Only so can he convey the truth, which is that we appreciate life emotionally, not analytically.

Interpretation through sympathy is the keynote of his mission. This being so, it follows that there will be certain characters into which he can enter far more fully than into others. His choice of a hero or heroine will be, in reality, his choice of a sympathetic medium through which to express himself. Thus, this one character will not only be intensely real, but will in its encounter with minor characters elicit from them their inner essence — for, as we have seen, it is only the complete man who can take account of the whole of another. Of course, such is the sympathy of some great writers that they can enter fully into many characters. The fact remains, however,

that the report of our own inner life is the most reliable of all — shut in, as we are, 'by that thick wall of personality through which no real voice has ever pierced.' If the revelation, then, is concentrated, not dispersed, we shall obtain a greater insight into the 'abysmal depths' of a living, breathing personality. The time is coming when we shall regard such intimate confessions as those contained in the books of J. H. Shorthouse and Arthur Benson (egotistical as these are sometimes supposed to be and devoid of clever 'character delineation') as more valuable 'human documents' than all the findings of the De Goncourt brothers, those indefatigable collectors of details pertaining to superficial aspects.

And what of the pessimistic note which is so common in the realistic novel? Shall we find it in the books of the larger realism? Scarcely. The deeper we penetrate into life, the more we come to realize that its meaning is not at the mercy of earthly vicissitudes, but in the keeping of our subjective attitudes — and we have it in our power largely to determine those attitudes. Life lived from moment to moment is not life passively perceived. Life lived is more or less full of the glamor of what realists call 'illusion,' — another name for the 'values' which alone make life worth while. In youth, our lives are filled with such glamor, because our souls have not been choked by too much intimacy with the material. The glamor fades when we strive to realize it in the material, but it never quite departs, and thus life is never so dreary as the realists report it to be. The man who dedicates his life to the accumulation of wealth is not rewarded by the 'filthy lucre' and the 'vanities' which it purchases, but by the 'illusion' that it will purchase happiness. The inevitable disappointment which awaits him is no more life than the hope which buoyed him. His real story is no more the story of the satiety which overtook him when he clutched his gold than the story of his mastery of the obstacles in his path by the faith that was in him.

We find in life what we put into it; but it lies within our power to put into it far more than we deposit at present. 'Values' are of the utmost importance. This is the opportunity of the larger realist. Let him show us how he has gained courage to live. Let him give us his interpretation of life. If we are in touch with him, how he may help us! Such a novel as 'Diana of the Crossways,' for instance, is a tonic to those who recognize in George Meredith a kindred spirit. In this book, speaking through Diana, he has shown us how 'divine philosophy' may come to one's aid in the most painful exigencies of experience.

'The material good reverses its benefits the more nearly we clasp it,' says Diana. 'All life is a lesson that we live to enjoy but in the spirit.'

In a new and beautiful book called 'Christopher' by Richard Pryce,

the author has revealed to us the inner life of his hero. To the boy who so stores his mind with 'impressions' his subjective self is the supreme reality, and when inevitable disappointment in the material world overtakes him, he knows how to transmute that experience into sustenance for the spirit.

Are we not also coming to realize the supreme importance of the subjective element in ourselves? In the larger realism it is probable that we shall devote to it the larger place. We must very certainly refuse to be puppets, tossed about by fate. To the 'impartial observer' we may appear so — but we know of a refuge. Henceforth, the subjective element in man must play a dignified part. It will not be the toy of the concrete, but its master, extracting from it the essence which makes for the growth of the spirit.

TRISTRAM FORETHOUGHTFUL

BY CHRISTINE LIEBENECK SWAYNE

Lie there within my arms, thou treasure trove,
Thou pearl, thou prize, thou crown of life's wild joust,
Thou sweetest rose for whom I bleed with thorns,
Thou fair white tower besieged and battled for,
Thou moon new torn from out the angry sky
That lowers and threatens to out tempest *me*; —
I guard like beasts about a desert well;
Like men at arms with treasure in their poke,
Or sailors casting off assailing foes —
Long-fang'd bare pirates knifing at their throats —
Or priests the Cross in a vile heathen land,
Or men their very souls from ban of priests,
Or souls their hold upon the Bridge of Heaven,
From angels straining to dispart them thence,
To hurl them down into God's waiting Hell. —
So *I* guard you, and you to me must look
For refuge, roof and riches, yea to me
For even your shortest day of life; King Mark,
That coward king, your Lord, would drive
You sheeted, penitent through jeering streets,
Would hale you out to stone you on yon shore!
Or burn you, sheathing round with flame,
A lily shrivelling mid the blades of fire!
Yea, you to me, and I to you, we two!
We make all heav'n and earth between ourselves,
You, lacking me, have here no shield in life —
I, losing you, lose all my earth and Heaven —
Aye, willing well I paid my soul in fee,
Eager, Eternity for *this* I gave,
This life with you and yet I hold it cheap!

Whenas I burn on those red coals below
I'll count each pang and kiss, and keep each scar;
I'll cry, 'Sir Fiend! *This* paid I for that day
'When first we saw, looking from Joyous Gard,
The sun recline against the blushing West!

And Iseult, yea, la Beal Iseult, held me,
 Another sun, against a rosier west,
 Who lean'd and made my Heaven of her face; —
 This long, hot, welt athwart my praising lip
 Thou, Devil, laid, lusting to list my groan,
 I took a keepsake of that burning hour
 When she and I from off the tower head saw
 The sea, like to a softly breathing breast,
 Upturned unto her lover's face, the moon,
 Bending, adoring, drooping near — and near,
 Until his white, hot fire was hid against
 That rhythmic, breathing, shining breast: ah me!
 Can Hell repent me of an hour like that?'

Iseult! Iseult! My Heaven and Hell! Iseult!
 Ten thousand times I cry your name, Iseult!
 The very naming hath a grace to me —
 But when you come, thinking I call yourself,
 Ah! if you come I bless that wingèd cry
 That brought you homing to your cote, my breast.

'But you,' I cry, 'Iseult,' I cry, 'but you, —
 A living angel loaned to our dark earth,
 No Heaven could be a Heaven lacking you —
 And only I for our dear life go damned,
 You gave my boon, your love my chosen Heaven.
 I must take leave and part me from your soul.

As that wild void before the world gat form,
 (Yclept the chaos) writhed, a shapeless mass,
 And lay, a sight not fit for mortal eye —
 For, wanting shape what eye could grasp the world? —
 What dread, dire *nothingness* could brand
 The rolling balls that see but mass and form?
 What wind from outer blankness, scorned of God —
 Forewore and wasted those unstable things,
 The earth, the Heaven and ocean uncreate?
 So I, a freer fluid, less pent up,
 Less moulded than the dreamiest vapor mist,
 Or made and built and founded in God's hand,
 So I, less you, am troughly uncreate.

But you must live, unspotted soul you are,
 Ah! Iseult, I would rescate you from death,
 Would build a chauntry of unshushing song
 Where ever, and forever, and for aye,
 Bland voices would arise in prayer for you:
 Where men might pause and hearken well and say,
 'There do the heavenward hills lift up the prayer
 And there unending echo bear the plea,
 There peals the chaunt by damnèd Tristram will'd
 To beg all Time for Iseult's flaw-free soul,'
 Therefore, Adored, bend near and hearken me,
 Over the causeway, from the rock-tooth'd land,
 I rede we call the nearest powerful priest,
 — The Bishop of the Dane-suck'd see of York,—
 That silk-stoled, golden-mitred, holy man,
 With amethystine gleam of ring and chain,
 And great carved cross with inset ruby heart
 (That glows, and shines, a pigeon-blooded red,
 A red of reds, the kingly king of reds),
 Yea call to charge upon his sacred faith,
 The building of a chauntry as I planned;
 The swallow nests against the high skew arch
 Are plastered, so y-edified be our
 Wee chapel, clinging to the vasty walls,
 A man's one love to God's uncounted all;
 There from the blow of wind, or slap of sleet;
 The noise of brawl, of pagent, or of masque,
 May seek, who list, a shelter, and may find,
 A peace like dear hands on an aching heart,
 A circling silence, barely jarr'd with sound;
 (Like silver wave bestirred by soft-flung rose)
 There kneeling mid the candle-fluttered shade,
 There prostrate neath a strong-back'd, rounded arch,
 There breathing age-old incense for each breath,
 Some man may find a Sanctuary-right,
 His soul may cling and set its foes at naught,
 While through each ear to find his waiting heart
 Will steal the sound of my long prayer for you!

THE TESTING OF PHAËTON

BY JOSEPH WARREN BEACH

Phaëton, son of a nymph, on earth, where he made his dwelling,
Had but his mother's word naming him son of a god —
Had but his mother's word and the faith in his bosom welling,
Powerless ever to stay the doubter's incredulous nod.

Mortal and slave is man that is born of a mortal mother,
Bound to a servile task, sweating for meat and wine —
Fire he felt in his breast no smoke of the flesh could smother,
Upward pinnacled flame fed from a fount divine!

Daily his eyes upraised the course of the god would follow
Driving the steeds of light, beautiful, strong and bold.
Him he knew for his father, the splendid Phœbus Apollo —
Sick at heart was the youth for home in the realms of gold.

Stung with his own desire and a sceptic's sneers and scorning,
Forth he sped to the skies to prove him a god full-grown.
Straight he passed to the palace beside the gates of the morning,
Upright took his stand proud by Apollo's throne.

'Father, if thou didst plant in a mortal woman thy spirit,
If from a seed of thine Phaëton be the flower,
Grant me a token sure the sons of heaven inherit
Breath of the spirit divine, portion of god-like power.'

Down from the golden throne the parent and god benignly
Gazed on his offspring proud, smiled at the boy's demand.
Humanly tender he smiled, then spake with power divinely,
'Whatsoever thou choose straight be at thy command.'

'Mine,' cried the youth at once, 'to guide the steeds of the morning,
Hardest of deeds in heaven, noble and rich in praise!'
Cloud drew over the face of the god, and he spake in warning,
'Any petition but that, son of my wandering days!

'Hardest of deeds in heaven — none but Phœbus Apollo
Dare put hand to the reins guiding the car of the sun.
Jupiter, he that wields the lightnings, dare not follow
Fire-breasted steeds the ways of noon that run.

'Breathless the steep ascent beyond the gates of beryl,
 Giddy the zenith height, causing the brain to reel,
 Every way beset with multitudinous peril —
 Tentacled scorpion waits where from the lion you wheel!'

Then cried the ardent boy the god essayed to frighten,
 'Scorpion, lion, bull, such but feed desire.
 Wheresoever thicken the fears, the glories brighten:
 Fire in the breast of a god strives to the region of fire!'

'Though for yourself you fear not, yet show for the skies some pity,
 Foolish and all untried — pity thy mother's earth.
 Many a fruitful meadow and many a peopled city
 Thou shalt cause to bewail this thine unfortunate birth.

'Better no god had breathed his soul in the breast of a mortal,
 Better thy race should dwell blind to the golden light
 Rather than thou shouldst pass through yonder fateful portal,
 Pass and plunge the world back to eternal night!'

Thus the god, but ere the words of despair were uttered,
 Lo, the steeds of the sun, ready and keen for the road!
 Streamers of flame from their nostrils and round the wheel-spokes
 fluttered —
 Lightly into the car Phaëton leapt, and abode.

Lightly he caught the reins, and his face was bright with the glory,
 Dreams were upon his lips, joy was gold in his eyes.
 Never a son of earth had won him a place in story
 Worthy to stand with this Phaëton's wild emprise.

'Son of a woman of earth, and born to a helot's labor,
 Phaëton proved him a god, working a task divine:
 Drove the shadows afar with a Titan's brandished sabre,
 Held a torch for men sweating for meat and wine!'

While on Phaëton's lips the flattering dreams were forming,
 While the slack-held lines slipped in his flaccid hands,
 Wildly Apollo's steeds the heights of the heavens were storming;
 Straining necks of the beasts felt no god's commands.

Wildly plunged the steeds the while the youth was drowsing,
 Out of the beaten road followed a blind desire.
 Suddenly then from visions Phaëton arousing
 Waked to find the heavens round him catching fire.

Wildly up and down the blazing car was lunging,
 Terrors every side, a ship that shuns the rocks. —
 Dizzily down he glanced to where the earth was plunging —
 Ah! to be there below peaceful among his flocks!

Up again he raised pale eyes to be struck with terror —
 Tentacled scorpion dripped venomous over him there!
 Phaëton, smitten weak with a sense of his fearful error,
 Dropped the reins from his hands, yielding to black despair.

Wild were the steeds elemental, forces without a master.
 Heavens aflame, they plunged down to the region of earth.
 Then were the meadows scorched and the fountains dried, and
 disaster
 Followed the course of the fire round the wide planet's girth.

Till from the suffering planet many an anguished petition
 Rose to the ears of Jove where in the clouds he dwelt:
 Let him with stroke of his thunder rebuke overweening ambition,
 Stay with a lightning-bolt ruin a mortal dealt.

Loth was the ruler of heaven to launch at the stripling his thunder —
 Bold was the deed of the boy, passing the deeds of men.
 Lo, while in doubt he considered, there came on his vision a wonder,—
 Phaëton, son of the earth, master in heaven again!

Phaëton, son of a woman of earth, with pitiful yearning
 Heard the cries of pain rise from the earth below,
 Felt in his cheeks like shame the terrible heat of the burning,
 More than ruin of self suffered the people's woe.

Pondering all the disaster, he cried in deep contrition,
 'Cursed be the pride that drove Phaëton into the skies!
 Tasks of the gods ask more than a mortal's mad ambition, —
 Burdens of weight, not boons, seem to the noble and wise.

'Fain to be known for immortal, I dreamed alone of the glory
 Passing the glory of men, noble and rich in praise:
 Ruin of earth and heaven shall run the tragic story, —
 How for his whim a child set the wide world ablaze!'

Sudden he came to himself. Despair he thrust behind him,
 Seized the dragging lines, braced his feet in the car,
 Steered the chariot upward and found the road assigned him,
 Far above the earth, under the heavens far.

Stern is the glance of his eyes, no longer soft and dreaming,
Every sinew strained stark as tempered steel.
Swiftly along its way the golden chariot gleaming,
Loosens silvery shafts from off each spinning wheel.

O, shall he win to the goal beneath the western ocean,
Shun each beast of the skies lurking within his lair,
Tame the steeds of the sun, direct their mad commotion,
Hold a torch for the earth? — Noble the deed and fair!

Scarcely the course begun young Phaëton must follow,
Holding a torch for men sweating for meat and wine.
Let him but do the task of his father Phœbus Apollo,
Then shall a son of the earth finish a work divine!

IN THE WORKSHOP

BY LEWIS WORTHINGTON SMITH

And here I shut myself from all my kind,
Serving the nobler needs they might not know,
If I should pause for pleasure. While I plan
By day and night the turning of a wheel,
The thickness of a rod, the strength and strain
That falsely matching in the tiniest bar
May make the hope a sudden thrill of wreck,
While I devise each day some better shape
For cam or lever, they pass lightly by,
Unknowing, happy in their own desires,
Rejoicing in their own companionships,
Careless of what they do not understand.

I might have written, painted, for their praise;
Or made the songs that lift a people's joy;
I might have been a poet; I have felt
The stirrings of that greatness in my soul.
I might have known a woman's sweetness mixed
With all the duller passions of my life
And so have saved myself for happiness;
But all this I have dared deny my heart
That I might make a thing of iron and brass
For men to use, a something that shall take
The weight from burdened shoulders, leave the thoughts
Free for the play of finer fantasies,
Make every meaner life that plows the muck
Of uglier needs be glad in nobler tasks
Of fairer service, while the fouler toil
Is left to such dumb servants as are here
Growing to life and use in this dark room
I call my workshop. How I crave sometimes
The flood of summer sunshine and the breath
Of that free air of park and garden-bloom
That those may have who walk this present world
And find it fair without a need or thought
Of nobler beauty shaped for fuller joys
By toil and patience, love and care like mine.

But one thing still appalls me as I work.
 Are all my thoughts made grosser by the tasks
 I set myself? I lightly put aside
 The lees of happiness I might have drained,
 But must I turn away from all I am
 And lose myself in these dead, senseless things?
 Must I to serve the finer hopes of man,
 To free his spirit from the primal curse,
 Take on myself the earthiness and be
 A something worse than angel sunk to brute?
 That seems too much, too much. The fellowship
 With those ennobled ones whom I have seen
 In that far future that I hope to shape
 Would be denied me. They might know my hands
 Were strong, but would they ever dream them fair?

It cannot be the curse lights on me so.
 I shape the iron, but all my fancies rove
 The happy, busy, crowded thoroughfares.
 For this fine care I spend on every part,
 To make my thought work ceaselessly for men,
 There shall be sculptors, painters, lords of earth,
 Great poets walking freely all their days,
 Rejoicing in the wonder of the world.
 I shall be with them. I shall see their eyes
 Grown greatly luminous and marvelous
 With new-found splendors of the universe,
 New trackings of the Infinite on earth,
 New systems circling with the far-off suns,
 Great thoughts that light our human destinies
 With sudden glory. I shall walk with them
 Through dim-lit woodlands in the summer nights,
 Shall hear the music of the rolling spheres,
 Shall know the wonder of new loves and laws,
 The chemic, biologic, shall be glad
 Of that long vista of the troubled years
 Through which we glimpse the whence and how and why
 With that fine frenzy holier than joy
 Of those that know. Beside the sunset sea
 They shall be rapt on all the far-off lands
 Where other customs rule in other lives,

The painters, who have love for all things fair,
The singers, who have hearts for every joy;
And I shall be among them, I shall feel
The rapture of their souls with that great thrill
That only he who makes a thing can know
When he has tried it and has found it good.

I might have been a poet, — but, indeed,
I think I am and shall be. Is he not
To be a poet just to know the worth
Of all things as they are, as they must be
Forever and forever? Is he not
A poet truly who, because he sees
The good, the beauty, the unstinted joy
In something that is not itself a joy
Or beauty, does it gladly, with his soul
Filled with the good he knows he so creates?
What does the poet but see true and far,
Knowing the seeds of good with subtle skill,
And knowing so the things to make his joy
The mad delirium that lesser men
Must stand agape at? If he shapes, besides,
The things he sees and makes them true and fair,
Sweet with the joys of ages yet to be,
Rich with new passions born of nobler lives
And finer aspirations looking up
To possibilities more bravely dreamed, —
It is enough, I know, it is enough.
Let those who will breathe out their hearts in words;
For me these hands, these tools, this iron and brass.
In them, my dreams, imaginings, desires;
Through them, the purposes that live and grow,
That call men onward to horizons dim
Where under new-discovered suns and stars
Their souls shall sing in new antiphonies,
Where all the gracious beauty of the world
Shall breathe upon them from this dingy room.

THE NYMPH

BY MAXIM GORKI

(Translated from the Russian by J. Vital DePorte and Roy Temple House)

A nymph lived long about a stream
Till once, when seines were set,
She floated in a blissful dream
Straight down against the net.
The fishermen were dull with fear
And whispered: 'What is this?'
But one, young Marco, ventured near
And met her with a kiss.
Lithe as a slender willow wand,
As quickly reconciled,
She met his gaze with glances fond,
Caressed him back, and smiled.
She fondled him the livelong day,
But when the night came on
The winsome creature slipped away —
And Marco's joy was gone.
He wandered where the river laves
Its wooded bank, and cried:
'Where is she?' to the passing waves.
'Who knows?' the waves replied.
'Tis false!' he raged, 'You know full well
This is her native shore.'
And plunged beneath a mocking swell
To find his nymph once more.
The nymph sports on, as women will,
And nothing brings to mind
Poor Marco lost and dead. But still
He left a song behind,
And you who safely live on land
Where poor blind worms belong,
Your deeds will move no poet's hand,
Your name inspire no song.

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