SEPTEMBER

1931

THIS QUARTER

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T. O. BEACHCROFT
DANE CHANASE
JOHN COLLIER
JOHN COURNOS
E. E. CUMMINGS - DE CARO
HANS EGGAR - H. J. GRISEWOOD
HERMANN HESSE - PAULINE LEADER
MEYER LEVIN - LUDWIG LEWISOHN
HAROLD LOEB - NORMAN MACLEOD
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THIS QUARTER'S POETRY PRIZE OF 2,500 FRANCS

to be awarded to the ablest young English Poet whose work has appeared in THIS QUARTER.

In the October-November-December issue of THIS QUARTER *we published a preliminary announcement of an English poetry prize, the oonditions of which we now definitely announce as follows :*

1

The prize will be known as the Edward W. Titus English poetry prize. It will be paid annually for at least three years, at the rate of 2500 Francs per annum.

2

The award will be made by THIS QUARTER'S *editorial committee.*

3

The prize winner must be a native of the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Colonies or Dominions, and have contributed to at least one issue of THIS QUARTER *during the previous year.*

4

In making the award the poet's whole output may be taken into consideration, not merely his particular contribution appearing in THIS QUARTER.

5

The award may be made to a young poet not yet known to the public or to one whose work has been overlooked.

In creating this prize the Editor wishes to reciprocate the American poetry prize established by Mr. Richard Aldington, the English poet, novelist and essayist. Since the publication in the last issue of THIS QUARTER of the terms of the American poetry prize its value, thanks to Mr. Aldington's personal efforts to enlist public-spirited support, has been increased to 10,000 Francs. THIS QUARTER is hopeful that there may be found one or more patrons and lovers of poetry in the United Kingdom who will come forward with offers to increase the English poetry prize to an equal amount.

Combining a spirit of sportsmanship with a great love for poetry, Mr. William Van Wyck, an American man of letters resident in Europe, whose translation of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales into contemporary English is published by Messrs. Covici Friede of New York City, has offered an additional prize of 2500 Francs to be awarded to the abler of the winners of the American and English poetry prizes. There will be a special committee to decide the respective merits of the two winners.

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IT is the first time that it has associated its policy with the moderns, but it is pleased to do so because it recognizes that the style of these writers has come to stay.

Why ? Because we realize that the times have changed, that "modernism" exists ; it carries its weight. Its writers are of the best. Its Journals are of the same quality. And so we join them and by doing so invite you to fraternize.

" Moderns " after all express their thoughts in language strong and strange, maybe, but it is frequently the form of expression which carries conviction. We shall welcome a call from High-Brows. Low-Brows and Broad-Brows who all expect and will receive good service at

224, Rue de Rivoli — Paris

// THIS QUARTER

Edited & Published by EDWARD W. TITUS

Vol. IV **No. 1**

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Printed in France.

THIS QUARTER

July - August - September

EDITORIALLY :

THREE POETRY AWARDS

We are announcing in this issue awards of three poetry prizes, —the Richard Aldington American Poetry Prize of the value of 10,000 Francs; THIS QUARTER's English Poetry Prize of 2,500 Francs; and the William Van Wyck Poetry Prize of 2,500 Francs, payable to his personal choice as between the American and English prizewinners.

It will be remembered that in the December 1929 issue of THIS QUARTER announcement was made of the Richard Aldington Poetry Prize for an American poet whose work has appeared in THIS QUARTER. The original value of the prize was 2,500 Francs, but thanks to his enthusiastic efforts Mr. Aldington succeeded in enlisting additional outside support by which the prize was increased to the handsome sum of 10,000 Francs or, roughly, $400.00.

The Editor of THIS QUARTER, desiring to return Mr. Aldington's compliment, announced in the March 1930 issue of this publication a prize of 2,500 Francs to go to a young English poet printed in THIS QUARTER. Possessing none of the persuasive charm and eloquence of Mr. Aldington, the Editor was utterly unable to induce any English Maecenas to raise the " ante. " Perhaps the light which Mr. Edward Thompson's *Cock Robin's Decease* (Hogarth Press, 1928) has thrown on the state of English poetry makes our contumely easier to bear. As late editor of the well-known " Sixpenny Poets, " he learned, he tells us, how impossible the writing and publishing of poetry has become, except by the wealthy.

He fails to say why the wealthy do not also foster or encourage the practice in others. Can it be that that scapegoat for the country's ills, Mr. Snowden, has turned Pegasus over to the shambles? Hardly, when the stakes for which the many brilliant racing events are held throughout the country continue entirely unabated. The problem, therefore, is not entirely economic. Interest in poetry itself is on the wane. England's poetry, her strongest claim to renown, stronger than her soldiers, sailors, merchants, kings, conquests, has fallen on evil days.

We would like to be proved in the wrong.

The Aldington Prize of 10,000 Francs, and our own English Poetry Prize of 2,500 Francs, will be awarded at least twice again. Will not some English patron come forward or several patrons come forward, and raise the English Poetry Prize to at least an equal level with the American, to Eighty Guineas instead of Twenty Guineas its present value, for the ensuing two annual awards?

We would indeed like to be proved wrong in our diagnosis—but fair warning! Unless noble lords and ladies of England, unless knighted or to be knighted publishers of England, come forward with their guineas, the Editor of THIS QUARTER, a humble citizen of the United States, still old-fashioned enough to thrill to the rhythms of English verse, will overdraw his already threatened bank account, and put them to blush.

The three poetry awards are as follows:

1. The Richard Aldington American Poetry Prize has been divided and goes to Messrs. E. E. Cummings and Walter Lowenfels.

2. THIS QUARTER's English Poetry Prize goes to Mr. John Collier.

3. The William Van Wyck Preferential Prize, as between the American and English winners, goes to the Englishman, John Collier.

EDITORIALLY

An explanation of the division of the American Prize is in order.

Reference has been made to Mr. Aldington's persuasive charm and eloquence. Reference should be made also to another enviable possession of his : the iron fist within a velvet glove.

Mr. Aldington has sent us the following statement for publication :

The judgement of Solomon has been uttered; as usual, the baby has been cut in half; and the remains are now offered to the poets and public.

THIS QUARTER chose Mr. E. E. Cummings. My objection to that choice is that it is too good. It is unimpeachable, but unnecessary. Mr. Cummings needs no bush. He is read in Europe as well as in America, and he has been given the *Dial* Award. I agree that Mr Cummings is among the very best poets now writing in the English language, and I think he is generally recognized as such by most of those who are genuinely interested in modern poetry. Why, then, encumber him with help when he has reached land ?

My choice is Mr. Walter Lowenfels, who is still struggling in the water. I don't claim to have made a discovery, since A. E. (for instance) was publishing his work in the *Irish Statesman* a long time ago. And I am aware that I am not exactly putting my money on the favourite.

There are poets in whom deep emotion overmasters all intellectual interest, who " speak from the heart "—in the common phrase. Such, for instance, was the late Wilfred Owen, who suddenly soared from accomplished verse to poetry under the stress of deep pity and suffering. But there are also poets who quite deliberately exclude emotion from their work, for whom poetry consists in an imaginative treatment of entirely intellectual material. Such, very frequently, is Wallace Stevens; and such, nearly always, is Walter Lowenfels. This is a phenomenon so alien to myself that it fascinates me. Unless I am deeply moved I cannot write at all, or write very badly. But here are people who can construct a sort of " mind poetry, " where the reader's pleasure must chiefly consist in his own alertness in following the allusions of an agile intellect expressing itself symbolically. " Difficult " poetry is nearly always bad poetry, and verbal ingenuities are too often webs over a vacuum. But in the case of Lowenfels (as with Wallace Stevens) I see the expression of a genuinely subtle mind and sense of humour. Originality may be too self-conscious to have any value, but I like to see a new Nephelokokkygia of words. Moreover, Mr. Lowenfels interests me because he writes as a poet who is aware of the main results and ideas of contemporary psychology, physics, and philosophy. He has obviously read Wittgenstein and Whitehead, Eddington and Russell, and this shows determined effort to know " the best that is being

thought " in his own time. It might be argued that hitherto Mr. Lowenfels has been too much absorbed in delight at this complicated new mental equipment (very American that) and not sufficiently intent on what can be done with it. But I am greatly interested to know what a poet, whose interests are mainly abstract and scientific, will do when he has thoroughly absorbed his material. I want to see if these bones can live, and therefore my award goes to Walter Lowenfels.

(Signed) RICHARD ALDINGTON.

The statement makes it clear that our choice for the award was Mr. E. E. Cummings, and he alone. Mr. Aldington's unequivocal praise of our nominee relieves us of the necessity of defending our action. " Mr. Cummings is among the very best poets now writing in the English language. " The choice is " unimpeachable, " he says, but proceeds to impeach it. He attests and protests, descants and recants. All of which, seriously or with tongue in cheek, he is entirely within his rights to do. His right is undeniable to the point of entirely disapproving of our nominee, for that, in fact, is one of the provisions of the Prize, as established by him. So much admitted, reference to the terms which govern the Prize will show that while Mr. Aldington may refuse to endorse any award made by THIS QUARTER, he himself is disqualified from giving the award or nominating any one for it. Contrary to those terms and despite the fact that he pronounced our choice of Mr. Cummings " unimpeachable, " Mr. Aldington put forward Mr. Walter Lowenfels as recipient of the award. It must not be understood that we would have objected to his choice, had Mr. Aldington had a shadow of a right to make it. But he had no such right and we had. Rather than have our " unimpeachable " award entirely defeated, we agreed, under duress, to a division. We did not criticize or disapprove of Mr. Aldington's choice; we denied his right to put it forward.

The printed statement is a succinct endorsement of our nominee and a defence of Mr. Aldington's. But before the ink has had time to dry, perhaps even before Mr. Aldington has found the words to express his curiosity " to know what a poet whose interests are mainly abstract and scientific will do when he has thoroughly absorbed his material," a note arrived from Mr. Lowenfels to this effect : " I'm getting into shape a prose book that might be, but will not be, called *No More Poems.* This Note on the Metaphysic of the Machine is from it. Can you use it ? " We said yes, took the note, paid for it, and shall publish it shortly. From that note and from another paper Mr. Lowenfels submitted to us, the inference is unavoidable that Mr. Aldington had been reckoning without his host when he put Mr. Lowenfels in the

category of "poets who quite deliberately exclude emotion from their work, for whom poetry consists in an imaginative treatment of entirely intellectual material." If it is a wise child that knows its father, it is prudence in a sponsor to know his godchild. Mr. Lowenfels writes: "Poems are the history of how the world *feels.*" If that be so, Mr. Lowenfels definitely rules himself out of the award given him by Mr. Aldington, according to whom Lowenfels belongs to those "who quite deliberately exclude emotion from their work," and these, under Lowenfels's definition, would not be poets at all. "No more poetry"—writes Lowenfels. "This is no time for it, nor for talk about it.... There should not be any poetry written for ten years." Why not? Because—Lowenfels insists—there is a poetry crisis. "The poetry crisis is the empty world. The empty world is the empty word. And the empty word is the empty *heart.*" No heart, no poetry, is his slogan. Lowenfels forswears poetry for ten long years because of vacuity of heart, and thus disowns Daddy Aldington, who would place him among those who are guided entirely by their mental equipment.

The fact is Lowenfels is a Romantic of 1931 vintage, but Aldington has been too busy with *The Colonel's Daughter* to notice it.

'THE HOUND & HORN' VS 'THIS QUARTER' Incongruously enough *The Hound & Horn* has hitherto abstained from venery as grimly and consistently as the admirable mush-eating G. B. Shaw from savouring a shoulder of mutton. At last it seems to have managed to rouse an appetite for hunting, though as yet for nothing more dangerous in the way of big game than a quarrel. How else is one to account for the following letter, which Mr. Lincoln Kirstein, one of the editors of *The Hound & Horn*, has done us the honour of addressing to us?

> Dear Mr. Titus,—I note in the June issue of This Quarter a vicious reference to *The Hound & Horn* and to myself. As far as I can see, you object to us on two grounds—the first, that *The Criterion* referred to us as the "best magazine from the literary and philosophic-literary point of view of any in America." You take no trouble to deny this, but lament on the shocking state of affairs in this country where young men could achieve such eminence. You suggest that we fill the place of the *North American Review*—by implication the highest flattery. You will have to forgive us our youth. Henry Adams was not a great deal older when he took over the *North American.* You say we modestly started as a Harvard Miscellany. You infer that since

then such papers as *The Criterion* have given us airs. You neglected to quote the rest of Mr. Bonamy Dobrée's kind notice of us where he said that the *Symposium* was as good or better. This merely to continue the policy of youthful modesty.

Aside from spleen, you gave no other objections to us than that we printed an analytical article on E. E. Cummings, whom you consider we do not fully appreciate, although no other such comprehensive study of him has appeared anywhere else. We also print two of Mr. Cummings's poems in our June issue. Erskine Caldwell, Allen Tate, Paul Valery, Yvor Winters, Rainer Maria Rilke, we have as contributors in common. More valid and precise objections would be gratefully received. Faithfully yours,

(Signed) LINCOLN KIRSTEIN.

'THE CRITERION' AS A CHARACTER WITNESS

Ungrudgingly we express our regrets that our semi-humorous notes in THIS QUARTER's June issue, relating to a paper on E. E. Cummings printed in the winter number of *The Hound & Horn*, should have caused annoyance to a contemporary we admire so much; should have revealed in our colleague a degree of irascibility usually characteristic of those advanced in years rather than the young. The editor of *The Hound & Horn* labours under the impression that our notes were in the nature of an objection both to himself and his publication. In this, let him rest assured, he is entirely mistaken. Our comment was the precise contrary.

We have lamented, it is true, the decline of reviews in America, where things have come to such a pass that a review run by a group of youths excels long-established American publications. We have lamented, we say, the decline of those reviews; but we have not lamented the rise of *The Hound & Horn*; we have, on the contrary, spoken of " the care and conscientiousness with which the editors do their job. " If that be reproach, what must one say to find favour in their eyes?

Why should Mr. Kirstein chide us for *not* denying *The Criterion's* testimony that *The Hound & Horn* is "the best magazine from the literary and philosophic-literary point of view of any in America?" Of course *The Criterion* is right, even if the phrase " philosophic-literary point of view " strikes us as more fruity than pellucid. And on second thoughts, were we in *The Hound & Horn's* favoured place, we should not stress that certificate of quality overmuch, considering that neither *The Criterion* nor THIS QUARTER is being published in America, but in London and Paris respectively.

EDITORIAL GIOVINEZZA It does not seem so long ago since we manipulated our first Gillette, and had fate been more indulgent and not intercalated an extra leap-year day, the difference in the ages of *The Hound & Horn's* and THIS QUARTER's editorial directorate would not have exceeded many minutes. Our hair, it is true, has turned prematurely grey. But not unfortunately, since although grizzly, it is not always looked upon with disfavour. These things being so, it would have been arch-inconsistent and nothing short of self-stultifying to have carped at *The Hound & Horn* on the mere ground of adolescence. As to the *annus mirabilis* of its editor's nativity, Providence has strangely intervened to reveal it to us. No matter what medium it wisely used for the purpose, we can now freely affirm that when the editor of *The Hound & Horn* says that Henry Adams was not a great deal older than himself when he took over *The North American Review*, he is doing himself an injustice. Adams was born in 1838 and became editor in 1871. Without giving away Mr. Lincoln Kirstein's age, the disparity, as years go, in the ages of the two editors, on their assumption of the direction of their respective organs, is much more considerable than Mr. Kirstein's statement in its modesty would imply.

WE KEEP OUR HAIR ON Providence thus having taken a hand in this business, we find ourselves disarmed, so that when our valued confrère charges us with a "vicious" reference to him, we may not, we must not, pay him back in the same coin. We can only say mutedly that in his youthful élan he really did not consider our reference to him " vicious " at all. He could not have meant that any more than he can have meant to say that we " inferred " that " *The Criterion* had given them airs. " He had in mind something else in lieu of " vicious, " as he had in mind "implied" instead of " inferred "; and as he meant, also, to convey that *The Hound & Horn* had *printed* Rainer Maria Rilke rather than, as he put it, we have him as a " contributor in common. " Rilke had been dead before *The Hound & Horn* saw the light of day, and cannot, therefore, be a contributor to its pages. Certainly, youth is not a reproach; it is a valid and convenient excuse.

CRITICISM BY THE YARD Just the same, if our estimate of their youthfulness was excessive or inappropriate, and the editors of *The Hound & Horn* are sensitive on the point, let it be—and it is hereby—withdrawn. Anything in

order to live at peace with the world. We wish quite particularly that our relations with *The Hound & Horn* should remain most cordial. But complaisant as we are on the terrain of personalities, on the major ground of the article on Mr. E. E. Cummings we are adamant. And this we feel certain *The Hound & Horn* will be fair enough not to mind.

It is entirely *aus der Luft gegriffen* to say, as does Mr. Kirstein, that we objected to the printing of that article. How on earth could we? Why on earth should we? We pointed out—we believe justly—that its author had failed to support the statements he made, the particular statements, that is, which we found intolerable. We pointed out that, as far as their critical import was concerned, Mr. Cummings's critic had not gone beyond the role of the pot calling the kettle black. We pointed out that if Mr. Blackmur must asperse Mr. Cummings with indulging in Romanticism, he in turn deserves to be told that the critical manner he employs is also Romantic. We concluded our observations by saying that if a guide to E. E. Cummings's language were really needed, Mr. Blackmur's job would have to be done all over again.

Mr. Kirstein's implicit avowal of appreciation of Cummings limps and cannot be taken seriously when he substantiates it by nothing more than an assertion that no such *comprehensive* study as Blackmur's has previously appeared anywhere else. A study of a disparaging character cannot by virtue of its length alone transmute stricture into compliment or appreciation. We have not been taught to use the yardstick to measure analytical criticism. Although mere philosophic-literary bulk or bunk affects us not at all, we happen to remember quite lengthy discussions of Cummings, at least by Humbert Wolfe and Robert Graves (with or without Laura Riding).

BABY-TALK IN 'THE HOUND & HORN'

True enough, the editor of *The Hound & Horn* seeks to make a belated point of his publishing two of Mr. Cummings's poems in a subsequent, the June, issue of his review. Doing this after he had permitted Mr. Blackmur to refer, at the close of his article, to Mr. Cummings's work as " a kind of baby-talk, " is handsomely penitential, and we are indeed disarmed by it. This *volte-face* relieves us, we believe, of the necessity of furnishing the " more valid and precise objections " Mr. Kirstein asks for.

After which, shake hands, and let us both congratulate Mr. E. E. Cummings on THIS QUARTER's award to him of the Richard Aldington Poetry Prize!

E. W. T.

E. E. CUMMINGS*

THREE POEMS

I

what time is it i wonder never mind
consider rather heavenly things and but
the stars for instance everything is planned
next to that patch of darkness there's a what
is it — oh yes — chair but not Cassiopeia's

might those be stockings dribbling from the table
all which seemed sweet deep and inexplicable
not being dollars toenails or ideas
thoroughly's stolen (somewhere between

our unlighted hearts lust lurks
slovenly and homeless and when
a kiss departs our lips are made of thing

in beginning corners dawn smirks

and there's the moon, thinner than a watchspring

---

* See above, pp. 3-7.

II

in a middle of a room
stands a suicide
sniffing a Paper rose
smiling to a self

" somewhere it is Spring and sometimes
people are in real : imagine
somewhere real flowers, but
I can't imagine real flowers for if I

could, they would somehow
not Be real "
(so he smiles
smiling) " but I will not

everywhere be real to
you in a moment "
The is blond
with small hands

"& everything is easier
than I had guessed everything would
be; even remembering the way who
looked at whom first, anyhow dancing "

(a moon swims out of a cloud
a clock strikes midnight
a finger pulls a trigger
a bird flies into a mirror)

III

i will cultivate within
me scrupulously the Inimitable which
is loneliness, these unique dreams
never shall soil their raiment

with phenomena : such
being a conduct worthy of

more ponderous
wishes or
hopes less
tall than mine " (opening the windows)

"and there is a philosophy " strictly at
which instant (leaped
into the

street) this deep immediate mask and
expressing " as for myself, because i
am slender and fragile,
i borrow contact from that you and from

this you sensations, imitating a few fatally

exquisite " (pulling Its shawl carefully around
it) " things i mean the
Rain is no respecter of persons
the snow doesn't give a soft white
damn Whom it touches

JOHN COLLIER*

A MAN DYING

I

Death fills his eyes. He's one who drowns,
And through a cold translucent sea
Sees an eloquent distortion
Clothe what he knows is rock and tree,
Warm mass, and life's green fountain; he
Finds in the shadow of a bird
The secret of all wastes and nights.

Wastes and nights. Can a phrase annihilate
Violent crowds, strangle the lights,
Dissolve the walls and isolate
The soul? Let me speak. Were you alone
That moment? Did you see the wide
Horizon, death?

As I sat sadly by the Serpentine,
And tantalized the hungry, lamp-lit water,
Far on the other side arose the great complaint,
The words dissolved into the weary voice.
What matter what he said? It may
Have been : "I, Jephtha, buried her to-day,
In a cemetery out Barking way;
Where the starved trees were conscious bitterly
Of her starved corpse; and all was stiff and thin and grey.

---

* See above, pp. 3-7.

JOHN COLLIER

"My thoughts kept withering up to-day,
Whenever they touched her, and the wind
Snatched the parson's voice away.
It wasn't enough; it was all incomplete."
What matter what he said? The words dissolved:
I heard the voice, the unconscious apostle speak;
A voice rising in the desert,
A black and shattered fountain in the dark waste.
Always we taste
The waters of death's bitter sea!

The night
Was green with living grass; rich and remote,
Slow movement warmed the ear;
A thousand urgent whispers spirted
From mass to mass, close-packed with life:
Along the road a cycle lamp
Slipped from tree to tree,
Counting them, insisting on them.

The unheeded voice rose heavily,
The darkly labouring cataract :
The voice of that *sea, overheard?*
The ark rides on the perilous sea.
Ararat! oh Ararat!
Thought returns slowly and wearily,
Bearing no olive in its beak.
The water rises in the hold.
"The lioness cubs. The mare has foaled.
Do you rejoice... rejoice?"
The leak... the leak!

All round, and knowing neither itself nor us.

JOHN COLLIER

II

Hot planks, and rusted iron rings;
The disused wharf on the estuary,
Blistered tar, worn letterings,
WHEAT, ODESSA and MARSEILLE.
The smoke on the horizon gone,
Only the water and the sun,
The burnt sky, the white sun
High over the wide land
And shining sea; thin grass between
The wood and iron; inland the light
Soaks tin roofs, raw green corn, the thin
Pale fields, low fields; clear water runs
Up from the sea, the breeze comes
Under a cloud, darkening and furrowing :
Sudden cold, and a spot of rain.

In the old shed, among dusty
Sacking, dead silence and the colourless
Brightness in the chinks suggest,
This sad, this conscious shell suggests
Myself, my world.
And in a gasp of air I hear
The stiff grass speak for me, rustling, scratching
Outside, on the thin plank down by my head.

I can turn inward from this, closing
Eyelids; turn from this fear, my fear, choosing
Warm darkness, warm with my stored blood.
If you have heard, if you have understood,
Come now, live, breathe, speak in my memory,
Like a cave in another land.
I will believe, I can believe, hand in hand.
Only
" Kennst du das Land wo die Zitronen blühe ? "

I know. But no :
I know not what was sown nor what reaped there,
Nor what we held among dark trees that bear
Golden fruit; nor if they ever were.
The rain is coming.
Alone. Alone. Alone
I saw the river writhe beneath the lamps,
Curl into flame like a torch procession:
Now *walk the angels on the walls of heaven,*
As sentinels!
I buried her one wet night.
The embankment glistens now, glistened before....
See what I have found, turning the page!
Will you eat of the peach, the nectarine or greengage?
Alone on bitter waters rocks your boat.

III

Through the broken street where every line,
Wounded, writhes painfully down to the river,
(and the heavy river pouring to sea)
Where the misty lamp-light fails
In the wet darkness, falls on wet bricks :
Pale faces lifting under the lamp
Where the rain shows, driven aslant in the wind,
Weak voices travail in a hymn,
Rain and hymn, mingling, blown over the river,
(and the swollen river pouring to sea)
The heavy water thudding the stone.
Over the bridge the swaying trams
Spill their gold in the shining road
High-arched over the leaden river,
Crouching under the wheeling wind:
Body struggling beyond feeling,
Mind clinging beyond thought
(the rain-whipped river pouring to sea):

In the town's centre the lights cluster
Meltingly, wind breaks on high buildings,
Rain crumbles to mist, powdering in silver
Through the soft radiance; flesh calmer among men,
And the mind like a hurt bird settling tremblingly down.

IV

The café spreads a marble plain
To glass horizons on each side;
A hurricane of human sound
Sweeps across the glistening tide
Of glasses, teeth and faces; walls,
Like the desperate flesh, resent
External space, and, centripetal,
Volley back the sound and scent
From polished surfaces; the mirrors
Drive back images into eyes.

How the body is invaded
By the weariness of the mind!
It asks, "Are you back?
And what do you bring?
      What do you leave behind?
            Strange bird!
What bone is that you have in your beak?
Where have you been?"

Music flows in with, "I have seen
Down those woodland avenues
Dissolve spring's hyacinth, silver and green."
And then, that land where glows
The round immortal fruit, its gold,
Against the dark green, aureoled,
So rich in life. And there
            But there....

JOHN COLLIER

Let me be quiescently aware
Of the shape and the weight of my hand on the table;
My blood is in it. Let me be able
To feel my life.
Turning to where
Shines the water in the sun;
The breathing tree, the warm stone.

Death fills his eyes. He's one who drowns,
And through that cold, translucent sea
Sees its eloquent distortion
Clothe what he knows is rock and tree,
Devour the forest and the sun
Wherein his life has habitation:
The light fades from them all, or they
Fail in the shadow of his vision:
The secret of all wastes and nights.

HERMANN HESSE

NOTES ON THE THEME : IMAGINATIVE WRITING AND CRITICISM

On Good and Bad Critics

Any one born and bred to his life's occupation is at all times a rare and refreshing phenomenon, be he a born gardener, born physician, or born teacher. The born poet* is even more rare. The born poet may be unworthy of his endowments, may content himself with the mere possession of talent, and never exhibit the constancy, the courage, the patience and the industry, by which talent can alone be carried into production—even so he will fascinate, he will be nature's darling, he will enjoy gifts which mere industry, honest application and excellent intentions cannot supplant.

A born critic is probably even more rare than a born poet; a critic, namely, whose original impulse does not spring from diligence and erudition, from industry and exertion, even less from party-spirit, vanity or malice; but from native acuteness, native analytical faculty, and serious cultural responsibility. A critic so favoured may have additional personal qualities, which enhance or deform his talents; he may be kindly or malicious, vain or modest, painstaking or lax; he may carefully foster his talent or abuse it; yet always, in virtue of his creative faculty, he will tower above the critic who has perseverance and erudition alone.

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* "Poet", as the translation of "*Dichter*", is used here of the imaginative writer in general.

Born poets are obviously more common in literary history—German literary history in particular—than born critics. The single period between the early Goethe and, say, Mörike or Gottfried Keller will yield dozens of names of first-rate poets. The interval between Lessing and Humboldt, on the contrary, is rather less rich in eminent names of critics.

Soberly speaking, his country may well be able to dispense with the poet, rare and exceptional though he may be; but not with the critic, whom the rise of journalism has invested with the dignity of being a permanent institution, to whom it has given a profession, and whom it has made an essential factor of public life. There may or may not be any need for imaginative writing, but as to the need for criticism there can exist no doubt, since society requires organs specially qualified to deal with contemporary intellectual phenomena. We would laugh at the idea of poetry officials or poetry-bureaus, but the existence of hundreds of salaried critical posts on the press is considered normal and proper. Nor would there be any objection to this, were it not that, although the true born critic is a rarity, and although, while the knack of the critics's art may well be learned and critical technique refined upon, propagation of genuine critical talents cannot but remain unattainable, we yet witness the spectacle of hundreds of salaried critics practising their profession, the technique of which they may have learned after a fashion, but to the innermost significance of which they remain strangers forever—even as hundreds of physicians and merchants plod along the routine of a career for which they have been rudimentarily prepared, but in no way fitted.

I am not sure whether such a state of things does a nation harm or not. For a people whose literary pretensions are so modest as those of the Germans (not one in a thousand of whom really masters his written or spoken language, for in Germany a man may become a govern-

ment minister or university professor without knowing German)—for such a people it is probably of small concern that they possess a proletariat of critics as well as a proletariat of doctors and teachers.

Unfortunately, such an ill-functioning critical apparatus places the poet at a great disadvantage. It is a mistake to suppose that he is averse to criticism, that owing to artistic vanity he gives preference to stupid adulation rather than to a criticism that is both sincere and penetrating. True, his craving for love is as strong as any other creature's, but he longs for understanding and appraisal as well, and the old-time taunt that the poet cannot tolerate criticism comes from a spring whose waters are muddied. A poet of real worth rejoices in a critic of worth—not because he expects to learn much about his art from him, that of course he cannot—, but because it affords him a high sense of awareness, and an index, to find himself and his work figure on his country's cultural balance sheet, and to share in the barter of promise and performance, instead of finding himself and his creative work neither of them understood and (no matter whether over-rated or under-rated) suspended high and dry in an amtosphere of paralyzing unreality.

Incapable critics—aggressive because they are uncertain, being continually required to judge values for which they have no instinct and regarding which they acquire no more than a routine smattering—always chide poets for their vanity and hyper-sensitiveness to criticism, even with hostility to all intellect, until the innocent reader can no longer distinguish between the true poet and the long-haired idiotic poetaster of the comic papers. I have myself several times attempted, in the interest of certain writers who seemed to me to have been neglected, to approach second-rate critics—not to influence their judgement of values, to be sure, but, by pertinent information, to rouse them sufficiently to formulate a judgement. I have never once come upon a genuine readiness,

a real acquiescence, or anything like enthusiasm, where things of the spirit were concerned. The professionals' answer was always a gesture which meant: " Give us a rest! Don't take these things so damned seriously! Look, we have more than enough of this daily drudgery. Where should we be if we were to examine microscopically every word we write! " In brief, the second- and third-rate professional critics take the same uninspired, irresponsible attitude towards their profession that the average factory-hand takes towards his work. Having adopted one or another of the critical methods that were in vogue when he was young and still learning, he sceptically disposes of everything with a smile, or praises with far-fetched superlatives, or seeks in some other way to evade the real problems of his business. He may also (and this is most common) prefer to abstain entirely from any criticism of the artist's work and concern himself instead with the author's origin, opinions and leanings. If the author belongs to an opposing coterie, he is simply suppressed by continued hostility or ridicule. If he belongs to the critic's own group, he is praised or, at least, treated sparingly. But if he is a free-lance, he receives no attention whatever, since he has no power behind him.

From these conditions there results not only the poet's disillusion, but also a complete fogging of the mirror in which the country believes it sees reflected the state and progress of its spiritual and artistic life. What the press, in point of actual fact, presents to us is a picture of the spiritual life directly opposite to that life itself. For years at a stretch names and works are taken seriously and discussed exhaustively that remain without the slightest influence on a single stratum of society, while authors and works that powerfully affect contemporary life and temper are completely ignored. In no technology or social economy would society tolerate such arbitrary and uninformed reporting. Although there are here and

there gratifying exceptions, the sporting and financial pages of the average newspaper are far more competently and conscientiously conducted than is the literary section.

The critic genuinely fitted for his vocation may have certain weaknesses and peculiarities; nevertheless, his criticism will be much more pertinent than that of his more dignified and conscientious colleague who lacks the creative quality. Above all else, the true critic will manifest an unfailing feeling for authenticity and quality of expression, whereas the average critic will easily mistake the imitated for the authentic, will sometimes fall victim to pure bluff. The genuine critic can be identified by two distinguishing marks: First, he writes well and vividly; he is always on the best terms with his language and never abuses it. Secondly, far from being under the necessity of suppressing his subjectivity or personal attitude, he endeavours to express himself so clearly that the reader may avail himself of the subjectivity as he would of a foot-rule: without sharing the critic's subjective standards and predilections, the reader is able to deduce objective values from the critic's reactions. To put it more simply: the true critic's personality is so marked and he expresses it so forcibly that the reader is never in the least doubt about him, and knows perfectly well the type of lens through which travel the rays that are reaching his (the reader's) eyes. Hence it may happen that although a gifted critic will refuse to take seriously a gifted poet, will belittle and antagonize him for years, yet there will be found no difficulty in deducing an authentic estimate of the poet's quality, simply by observing the critic's reaction to him.

The feeble critic's chief defect is that he has little personality or that he is unable to express it. But highest praise or severest stricture must remain ineffectual when it is voiced by a critic who does not boldly come out into the open, who is unable to make an impression, and remains a nullity. It is precisely the inept critic who

frequently feigns objectivity and makes believe that aesthetics is an exact science. He mistrusts his own instincts and veils them with impartiality ("on the one hand... and then on the other hand") and neutrality. Neutrality in a critic is almost always to be suspected and it argues a lack of fervency in spiritual experience. If he possesses that fervency, the critic should not keep it under cover, but display it. He should not behave as if he were a mere measuring-stick or a government minister of public worship; his part is to assert and cling to his personality.

The relation between wholesale authors and wholesale critics is approximately this : they have not much confidence in each other. In reality the critic takes but little interest in the author, but fears that the fellow may turn out to be a genius after all. The author feels the critic has never understood him, has understood neither his faults nor his virtues; but he is glad that at least he is not facing a past-master in the craft, capable of demolishing him, and so he is hopeful that he may yet make a friend of the critic and use the friendship to good advantage. Such is the shabby, small shop-keeper attitude that may be said to exist among the generality of writers of German books and the generality of German critics, and, in this respect, the socialist and the bourgeois press are tarred with the same brush.

But a true poet will find nothing more distasteful to him than being on a friendly footing with that sort of stereotyped criticism, that unimpressionable critical mill. Indeed, he finds delight in drawing its fire, and he would much rather be spat upon and flayed by it than patted benevolently on the back. But the authentic critic, even when an avowed antagonist, he will meet in the spirit of true craft-fellowship. To be accepted or diagnosed by a consecrated critic is like being physically examined by a good physician. How different from listening to a charlatan's babbling! One may feel nervous, one may even

feel hurt, but at least one has the satisfaction of being taken seriously, even if the diagnosis is nothing but a veiled death-sentence. In one's heart of hearts one never really accepts death-sentences.

Parley Between Poet and Critic

Poet.—I insist: there was a time in Germany when criticism carried greater weight than it carries to-day.

Critic.—Will you say when?

Poet.—Gladly. I need only mention Solger's essay on Goethe's "Elective Affinities" and Grimm's criticism or Arnim's "Berthold." These are superb examples of creative criticism. The spirit from which they sprang is rarely found to-day.

Critic.—And what is that spirit?

Poet.—The spirit of deference. Be honest about it: Can you maintain there is any criticism to-day of the high level of those examples?

Critic.—I am not sure. Times have changed. May I ask you a question: Will you say that we have any creative work to-day to rank with "Elective Affinities" or Arnim's work?

Poet.—Ah! You think then: so art, so criticism! You think that if we had authentic creativeness, we should have authentic criticism along with it. Plausible enough.

Critic.—Yes, that is my point.

Poet.—May I ask if you are familiar with Solger's and Grimm's compositions?

Critic.—Frankly, no.

Poet.—But you are familiar with the "Elective Affinities" and "Berthold"?

Critic.—The "Elective Affinities," yes, of course. "Berthold," no.

Poet.—Yet you believe that "Berthold" is superior to our contemporary work?

Critic.—Yes, I do believe so, out of respect for Arnim, and still more out of respect for the creative power the German spirit possessed in those days.

Poet.—Why, then, do you never read Arnim and all the other authentic poets of that period? Why do you devote your life to a literature you yourself consider inferior? Why don't you say to your readers: "Look, this is the work of real poets: leave this modern trash alone and read Goethe, Arnim, Novalis!"

Critic.—That's not my job. Who knows? I may not do it for the same reason that you fail to write as wrote the author of "Elective Affinities."

Poet.—Not bad at all! But how would you account for Germany's producing such poets at that particular period? Their work was so much supply without demand, for certainly no one had asked for it. Neither "Elective Affinities" nor "Berthold" was read by their contemporaries, nor is one or the other much read to-day.

Critic.—People did not bother much about creative writing at that period, nor do they now. That is the sort of a nation we are. Perhaps all other nations are the same. There had been books in plenty in Goethe's day, pleasant and entertaining books, and they got read. So there are to-day. The pleasant and entertaining books are being read and criticized; they are not taken seriously by reader or critic, but they supply a want. The entertaining author and the critic are read and paid—and forgotten.

Poet.—And the real books?

Critic.—It is rumoured they are written for eternity. Time is therefore under no obligation to notice them.

Poet.—You should have been a politician.

Critic.—Quite so. That was indeed my intention. I should have best liked to enter foreign politics. But when I joined the editorial staff, there was no political vacancy, and so they gave me the literary page.

HERMANN HESSE

The Choice of Subject So Called

" Choice of subject " is a catch-word freely used by critics, and literally indispensable to some. The routine critic, to the extent he is also a journalist, finds himself daily confronted with a welter of material from outside. He envies the poet his seeming freedom to create, if nothing else. Moreover, it is the press critic's almost exclusive business to deal with the literature of entertainment, with pseudo-literature. A clever novelist can, of course, quite abritrarily and common-sensibly choose his material, although even in his case the freedom is much restricted. The novelist or literary entertainer is certainly free to choose his setting,—following the ephemeral fashion he may lay the scene of his new novel at the South Pole or in Egypt; the background chosen may be politics or sport; and he is free likewise to discuss topics, social, moral or legal. But even the cleverest performer in literary make-believe cannot prevent the personation of one particular life behind his up-to-date facade—a life that conforms to his innermost inescapable and unalterable conceptions. He cannot overcome a preference for certain characters and situations, and an indifference to others. Even the cheapest pot-boiler will reveal a soul—the author's soul—and even the wretchedest of writers, one utterly incapable of drawing a single character, incapable of clearly following up a single human situation, will hit on one that he had never planned : always the job will reveal the ego.

In sincere imaginative writing there is no such thing as the choice of subject. This subject—that is, the protagonists and the characteristic problems presented—is never chosen by the writer: it is in itself the basic matter of the creative work, the poet's vision and spiritual experience. The writer may shut his eyes to the vision, he may flee the vital problem; from inability or love of comfort, he may deliberately shirk the use of sincerely

experienced material. But " choose " his material he cannot. Never can he make it appear that the theme he considered both suitable and desirable on purely national or purely artistic grounds has come to him as an act of grace from on high, that it has not been cleverly concocted, but sincerely experienced within. Even great imaginative writers have sometimes tried to choose their subject-matter, hoped to order about their creative faculties. The results of such attempts may be interesting and instructive to fellow-craftsmen, but as imaginative creations they are still-born.

Briefly: if one were to ask the author of an imaginative composition, " Would you not have done better to have chosen another subject ? " it would be as if a doctor were to say to a sufferer from pneumonia, " Oh, if you had only chosen a cold in the head instead! "

The So-Called Escape into Art

One often hears it said, " The artist must not make his art an escape from life."

What does that mean ? And why shouldn't the artist do it ?

Is not art, from the artist's way of looking at it, precisely an attempt to compensate for life's shortcomings, to realize in illusion, at least, wishes that are unrealizable, to satisfy by imaginative creation demands that cannot be satisfied in reality—in short, to sublimate spiritually the unassimilable reality ?

And why is this stupid taboo to be imposed on the artist alone ? Why does one not require of statesmen, physicians, prize-fighters, and swimming champions, that they should obligingly compose their intimate difficulties before taking refuge in the tasks and pleasures of their particular sport or calling ?

It would seem to be an axiom among would-be critics that " life " is somehow more difficult than art.

Just look at all those too numerous artists who perpe-

tually, and so successfully, seek refuge from art in life, who paint such wretched pictures, write such wretched books, but who are such charming people, excellent hosts, good fathers, noble patriots!

No, indeed! Once a man has set his heart on being an artist, I had rather he took his stand and fought his fight upon the field where lie the problems of his craft. There may be truth (though perhaps only half-truth) in the assumption that all perfection in a poet's work must be paid for by sacrifices in his private life. The assumption may, indeed, be ingenuous. It is foolish to say that art springs from affluence, from happiness, contentment and harmony. When every other human activity originates in necessity and hardship, why should art alone be an exception?

The So-Called Escape into the Past

Another "escape" decidedly in disfavour among routine critics is the so-called escape into the past. Whenever an imaginative writer produces something totally different from fashion or sporting reports, whenever he moves from current events to general human problems, whenever he goes in quest of some historic period or of some super-historic poetic timelessness, immediately the objection is raised that he flees from the present. And so Goethe "escaped" to Götz and Iphigenia when he might well have enlightened us regarding the problems of the Frankfort and Weimar patricians.

The Psychology of the Half-Educated

The cases of most complete atavism frequently assume the guise of progress and modernity. So in contemporary literary criticism, anti-spiritual and barbaric currents lurk behind the armour of psycho-analysis.

Need I now make my obeisance to Freud and his achievement? Need I concede to Freud's genius the right to study the world's geniuses after his own fashion?

Need I remind the reader that at a time when hostility to Freud's teachings was much greater than it is to-day, I championed his cause? And must I now seriously ask the reader not to construe as an attack on Freud and his psychological and psycho-therapeutic work my inveighing against and my finding laughable the abuse of Freud's fundamental concepts by dull critics and turn-coat philologists?

Side by side with the spread and evolution of the Freudian school which, inch by inch, has gradually won a well-merited and all but universal acclaim, both as a method of psychology and as a cure of neuroses; side by side with the spread of Freud's teaching among the masses and the ever increasing infiltration of his theory and terminology into other cultural spheres, there has grown up an odious and pernicious by-product: I mean the pseudo-Freudian psychology of the half-educated, as well as that type of amateurish literary criticism which inquires into works of literature in the manner Freud employs in his investigations of dreams and other unconscious mental content.

The result is that, medically and psychologically, untrained literati contrive, not only to declare the poet Lenau insane—which of course is no sort of a discovery—but to reduce his noblest work and the noblest achievements of other poets to one common denominator with the dreams and fancies of every kind of lunatic. They analyse, on the basis of his available writings, a writer's complexes and pet images, and diagnose him as belonging to one category or another of neurotics. Masterpieces are being interpreted by deduction, as one would Mrs. Jones's agoraphobia or Mrs. Smith's nervous stomach disorders. With a vindictiveness, characteristic of the vulgar regarding genius, attention is systematically diverted from the poet's works in themselves and concentrated upon the mental conditions of which they are supposed to be mere symptoms. Analysis lapses into

the grossest errors of a rationalizing and moralizing biography, and leaves behind a heap of ruins strewn with the gory and filthy remains of truncated great poetic creations. All this is undertaken for no other purpose apparently than to show that even Goethe and Hölderlin were mere men after all, and " Faust " or " Heinrich von Ofterdingen " nothing but prettily stylized masquerades of humdrum minds with humdrum impulses.

The veil of oblivion is drawn over what constitutes those works' great achievement, and what is most distinctive in human attainments is converted back again into unformed matter. Nothing is made of the still noteworthy phenomenon that out of the very same substance from which the neurotic Mr. Jones had brought forth no more than a nervous belly-ache, a rare individual here and there has fashioned superb works of art. The phenomenal, the creative, the unique, the priceless, the irretrievable, are blinked entirely; only the inchoate, the primary matter is noticed. Surely, there should be no need to enter upon such numerous and toilsome researches in order to learn that the poet's material experiences are much the same as those of the rest of mankind. What we most like to know about, namely, that most astounding of all wonders that now and again will, in one single creative individual, transform the daily dozen of experiences into cosmic drama, life's routine into a shining miracle,—of that not a word is uttered! Of that one steers clear! This is also one of the sins against Freud, whose genius and rare faculty for finely shaded differentiations are a thorn in the flesh of his disciples, who, on the contrary, delight in standardization. The concept of sublimation, which Freud originated, has been long forgotten by his truant pupils who have decamped into literature.

Whatever value such analysis of imaginative writers may possess (there might at a pinch be something to be said for it, if not because it directly favours the understanding of works of art, at least on the score of ancillary

illumination), it can be only extremely small and extremely questionable. Whoever has had experience of psycho-analysis, himself the subject or practising it on others, or sharing in it as the confidant of another, knows what time, patience and pains it requires, and with what cunning and stubbornness the essential first causes, the origins of the repressions, hide from the analyst. He knows also that, in order to penetrate to those original causes, a patient listening in on the unguarded revelations of the unconscious, a prudent spying on dreams, erroneous actions, etc., etc., are indispensable. Were a patient to say to his analyst, " My dear sir, I have no time or patience for all these consultations, but couldn't I give you this bundle of papers containing a report of my dreams, desires and fancies, so far as I have written them down, some of them in verse? Take this material and unravel what you need from it,"—how the doctor would laugh at his patient's simplicity! A neurotic may of course also write poems and paint pictures, and the analyst may wish to see them and make proper use of them—but to deduce from them a person's unconscious spiritual life and mental history, must appear to an analyst a most ingenious and amateurish presumption.

And so we find that those pseudo-literary interpreters do nothing better than delude their still less literary readers, with the idea that it is indeed quite possible to construct an analysis out of such documents. The patient is dead, a test of accuracy is not to be feared, and so the yarn is spun. The result might be amusing if some clever literary gentleman were to analyse in turn these seemingly analytic interpretations and point out the very simple impulses which feed the zeal of the sham psychologists.

For myself, I do not believe that Freud takes the literature of his spurious pupils at all seriously. I do not believe that any serious practitioner or investigator of the psycho-analytic school reads their essays and pamph-

lets. All the same, that the leaders of psycho-analysis should refuse to countenance all amateurish activity is desirable. The evil is not that these seemingly penetrating revelations concerning geniuses of the past, these seemingly keen-edged expositions of works of art, appear in books and pamphlets, that a new type of literature has arisen which, although not widely read, yields laurels to their ambitious authors. The disagreeable thing about it is that these swaggering analysts have taught the journalistic critic of letters a new method whereby his task is simplified and by which, in the guise of an illusory science, the way has been made smoother for him. Let me detect in a writer I dislike traces of complexes and neurotic complications, and nothing is easier for me than to denounce him to the world as a psychopathic case. Naturally, sooner or later this hobby-horse will be ridden to death. One day the point will be reached when the word " pathological " will lose its present meaning. The point will be reached when the applicability of relativity to health and disease will be discovered, and it will be learned that to-day's disease may be to-morrow's health, and that keeping well is not always the most fallible symptom of health. That a man endowed with a noble spirit and a delicately sensitive mind, a man of transcendent value and transcendent gifts, may find it an affliction and a horror to live amid the present conventions of good and evil, of beauty and ugliness,—even that truth may one day dawn upon us. When that day comes, Hölderlin and Nietzsche will revert from the status of psychopaths to that of geniuses, and it will be recognized that, without having gained or accomplished anything in the interval, we now stand again precisely where we stood before the advent of psycho-analysis, and that we must resolve to pursue the sciences that deal with the human mind with the aid of their own means and methods, if they are to reach their fulness of being.

(Translated from the German by E. W. T.)

Woodcut, *by Dane Chanase*

H. E. BATES

THE MOWER

In the midday heat of June day a farm-boy was riding down a deserted meadow-lane, straddling a fat white pony. The blossoms of hawthorn had shrivelled to brown on the tall hedges flanking the lane and wild pink and white roses were beginning to open like stars among the thick green leaves. The air was heavy with the scent of early summer, the odour of the dying hawthorn-bloom, the perfume of the dog-roses, the breath of ripening grass.

The boy had taken off his jacket and had hooked it over the straw victual-bag hanging from the saddle. There were bottles of beer in the bag and the jacket shaded them from the heat of the sun. The pony moved at walking-pace and the boy rode cautiously, never letting it break into a trot. As though it was necessary to be careful with the beer, he sometimes halted the pony and touched the necks of the bottles with his fingers. The bottle-necks were cool, but the cloth of his jacket was burning against his hand.

He presently steered the pony through a white gate leading from the lane to a meadow beyond. The gate was standing open and he rode the pony straight across the curving swathes of hay which lay drying in the sun. It was a field of seven or eight acres and a third of the grass had already been mown. The hay was crisp and dry under the pony's feet and the flowers that had been growing in the grass lay white and shrivelled in the sunshine.

Over on the far side of the field a man was mowing and a woman was turning the rows of grass with a hay-rake. The figure of the man was nondescript and dark and the woman was dressed in a white blouse and an old green skirt that had faded to the yellowish colour of the grass the man was mowing. The boy rode the pony towards them. The sunshine blazed down fierce and perpendicular and there was no shade in the field except for the shadow of an ash-tree in one corner and a group of willows by a cattle-pond in another.

Everywhere was silent and the soft sound of the pony's feet in the hay and the droning of bees in the flowers among the uncut grass seemed to deepen the silence.

The woman straightened her back, and leaning on her rake, shaded her face with her hand and looked across at the boy as she heard him coming. The man went on mowing, swinging the scythe slowly and methodically, his back towards her.

The woman was dark and good-looking, with a sleek swarthy face and very high, soft red cheek-bones, like a gipsy, and a long pig-tail of thick black hair which she wore twisted over her head like a snake coiled up asleep. She herself was rather like a snake also, her long body slim and supple, her black eyes liquid and bright. The boy rode up to her and dismounted. She dropped her rake and held the pony's head and ran her fingers up and down its nose while he slipped from the saddle.

"Can he come?" she said.

The boy had not time to answer before the man approached, wiping the sweat from his face and neck with a dirty red handkerchief. His face was broad and thick-lipped and ponderous, his eyes were grey and simple, and the skin of his face and neck and hands was dried and tawny as an Indian's with sun and weather. He was about forty, and he walked with a slight stoop of his shoulders and a limp of his left leg, very slowly and deliberately.

" See him ? " he said to the boy.

" He was up there when I got the beer, " the boy said.

" In The Dragon ? What did he say ? "

" He said he'd come. "

The woman ceased stroking the pony's nose and looked up.

" He said that yersterday, " she said.

" Ah! but you can't talk to him. He's got to have his own way, " said the man. " Was he drunk ? " he asked.

" I don't think so, " said the boy. " He was drunk yesterday. "

The man wiped his neck impatiently and made a sound of disgust and then took out his watch. " Half the day gone—and a damn wonder if he comes, " he muttered.

" Oh! if Ponto says he'll come, " said the woman slowly, " he'll come. He'll come all right. "

" How do you know ? He does things just when he thinks he will—and not until. "

" Oh! He'll come if he says he'll come, " she said.

The boy began to lead the pony across the field towards the ash-tree. The woman stood aside for him and then kicked her rake on a heap of hay and followed him.

The sun had crossed the zenith. The man went back to his scythe and slipped his whetstone from his pocket and laid it carefully on the mown grass. As he put on his jacket he turned and gazed at the white gate of the field. He could see no one there and he followed the woman and the boy across the field to the ash-tree.

Under the ash-tree the boy was tethering the horse in the shade and the woman was unpacking bread and cold potatoes and a meat pie. The boy had finished tethering the horse as the man came up and he was covering over the bottles of beer with a heap of hay. The sight of the beer reminded the man of something.

" You told him the beer was for him ? " he asked.

" He asked me whose it was and I told him what you said, " the boy replied.

" That's all right. "

He began to unfold the sack in which the blade of his scythe had been wrapped. He spread out the sack slowly and carefully on the grass at the foot of the ash trunk and let his squat body sink down upon it heavily. The boy and the woman seated themselves on the grass at his side. He unhooked the heavy soldier's knife hanging from his belt, and unclasped it and wiped it on his trouser's knee. The woman sliced the pie. The man took his plateful of pie and bread and potatoes on his knee, and spitting his sucking-pebble from his mouth began spearing the food with the point of his knife, eating ravenously. When he did not eat with his knife he ate with his fingers, grunting and belching happily. The woman finished serving the pie, and sucking a smear of gravy from her long fingers, began to eat too.

During the eating no one spoke. The three people stared at the half-mown field. The curves of the scythed grass were beginning to whiten in the blazing sunshine. The heat shimmered and danced above the earth in the distance in little waves.

Before long the man wiped his plate with a piece of bread and swilled down his food with long drinks of cold tea from a blue can. When he had finished drinking, his head lolled back against the ash-tree and he closed his eyes. The boy lay flat on his belly, reading a sporting paper while he ate. The air was stifling and warm even under the ash-tree, and there was no sound in the noon stillness, except the clink of the horse's bit as it pulled off the young green leaves of the hawthorn hedge.

But suddenly the woman sat up a little and the drowsy look on her face began to clear away. A figure of a man had appeared at the white gate and was walking across the field. He walked with a kind of swaggering uncertainty and now and then he stopped and took up a hand-

ful of mown grass and dropped it again. He was carrying a scythe on his shoulder.

She watched him intently as he skirted the standing grass and came towards the ash-tree. He halted at last within the shade of the tree and took a long look at the expanse of grass, thick with buttercups and tall bull-daisies, scattered everywhere like a white and yellow mass of stars.

" By Christ, " he muttered softly.

His voice was jocular and tipsy. The woman stood up.

" What's the matter, Ponto ? " she said.

" This all he's cut ? "

" That's all. "

" By Christ. "

He laid this scythe on the grass in disgust. He was a tall, thin, black-haired fellow, about thirty, lean and supple as a stoat; his sharp, dark-brown eyes were filled with a roving expression, half dissolute and half cunning; the light in them was sombre with drinking. His soft red lips were full and pouting, and there was something about his face altogether conceited, easy-going and devilish. He had a curious habit of looking at things with one eye half-closed in a kind of sleepy wink that was marvellously knowing and attractive. He was wearing a dark slouch hat which he had tilted back from his forehead and which gave him an air of being a little wild but sublimely happy.

Suddenly he grinned at the woman and walked over to where the man lay sleeping. He bent down and put his mouth close to his face.

" Hey, your old hoss's bolted! " he shouted.

The man woke with a start.

" Your old hoss's bolted! "

" What's that ? Where did you spring from ? "

" Get up, y' old sleepy guts. I wanna get this grass knocked down afore dark. "

The man got to his feet.

" Knock this lot down afore dark ? "

" Yes, my old beauty. When I mow I do mow, I do. " He smiled and wagged his head. " Me and my old dad used to mow twenty-acre fields afore dark—and start with the dew on. Twenty-acre fields. You don't know what mowin' is. "

He began to take off his jacket. He was slightly unsteady on his feet and the jacket bothered him as he pulled it off and he swore softly. He was wearing a blue-and-white shirt and a pair of dark moleskin trousers held up by a wide belt of plaited leather thongs. His whetstone rested in a leather scoket hanging from the belt. He spat on his hands and slipped the whetstone from the socket and picked up his scythe and with easy, careless rhythmical swings began to whet the long blade. The woman gazed at the stroke of his arm and listened to the sharp ring of the stone against the blade with a look of unconscious admiration and pleasure on her face. The blade of the scythe was very long, tapering and slender, and it shone like silver in the freckles of sunlight coming through the ash leaves. He ceased sharpening the blade and took a swing at a tuft of bull-daisies. The blade cut the stalks crisply and the white flowers fell evenly together, like a fallen nosegay. His swing was beautiful and with the scythe in his hand the balance of his body seemed to become perfect and he himself suddenly sober, dignified, and composed.

" Know what my old dad used to say ? " he said.

" No. "

" Drink afore you start. "

" Fetch a bottle of beer for Ponto, " said the man to the boy at once. " I got plenty of beer. The boy went up on the way and fetched it. "

" That's a good job. You can't mow without beer. "

" That's right. "

" My old man used to drink twenty pints a day.

God's truth. Twenty pints a day. He was a bloody champion. You can't mow without beer."

The woman came up with a bottle of beer in her hand. Ponto took it from her mechanically, hardly looking at her. He uncorked the bottle, covered the white froth with his mouth and drank eagerly, the muscles of his neck rippling like those of a horse. He drank all the beer at one draught and threw the empty bottle into the hedge, scaring the pony.

"Whoa! damn you!" he shouted.

The pony tossed his head and quietened again. Ponto wiped his lips and taking a step or two towards the boy, aimed the point of the scythe jocularly at his backside. The boy ran off and Ponto grinned tipsily at the woman.

"You goin' to turn the rows?" he said.

"Yes," she said.

He looked her up and down, from the arch of her hips to the clear shape of the breasts in her blouse and the coil of her black pig-tail. Her husband was walking across the field to fetch his scythe. She smiled drowsily at Ponto and he smiled in return.

"I thought you'd come," she said softly.

His smile broadened and he stretched out his hand and let his fingers run down her bare brown throat. She quivered and breathed quickly and laughed softly in return. His eyes rested on her face with mysterious admiration and delight and he seemed suddenly very pleased about something.

"Good old Anna," he said softly.

He walked past her and crossed the field to the expanse of unmown grass. He winked solemnly and his fingers ran lightly against her thigh as he passed her.

The woman followed him out into the sunshine and took up her rake and began to turn the rows that had been cut since early morning. When she glanced up again the men were mowing. They seemed to be mowing at the same even, methodical pace, but Ponto was

already ahead. He swung his scythe with a long light caressing sweep, smoothly and masterfully, as though his limbs had been born to mow. The grass was shaved off very close to the earth and was laid in a tidy swathe that curved gently behind him like a thick rope. On the backward stroke the grass and the buttercups and the bull-daisies were pressed gently backwards, bent in readiness to meet the forward swing that came through the grass with a soft swishing sound like the sound of indrawn breath.

The boy came and raked in the row next to the woman. Together they turned the rows and the men mowed in silence for a long time. Every time the woman looked up she looked at Ponto. He was always ahead of her husband and he mowed with a kind of lusty insistence, as though he were intent on mowing the whole field before darkness fell. Her husband mowed in a stiff, awkward fashion, always limping and often whetting his scythe. The boy had taken some beer to Ponto, who often stopped to drink. She would catch the flash of the bottle tilted up in the brilliant sunshine and she would look at him meditatively, as though remembering something.

As the afternoon went on, Ponto mowed far ahead of her husband, working across the field towards the pond and the willows. He began at last to mow a narrow space of grass behind the pond. She saw the swing of his bare arms through the branches and then lost them again.

Suddenly he appeared and waved a bottle and shouted something.

" I'll go, " she said to the boy.

She dropped her rake and walked over to the ash-tree and found a bottle of beer. The flies were tormenting the horse and she broke off an ash-bough and slipped it in the bridle. The sun seemed hotter than ever as she crossed the field with the beer and the earth was cracked and dry under her feet. She picked up a stalk of butter-

cups and swung it against her skirt. The scent of the freshly mown grass was strong and sweet in the sunshine. She carried the beer close by her side, in the shadow.

Ponto was mowing a stretch of grass thirty or forty yards wide behind the pond. The grass was richer and taller than in the rest of the field and the single swathe he had cut lay as thick as corn.

She sat down on the bank of the pond under a willow until he had finished his bout of mowing. She had come up silently and he was mowing with his back towards her and it was not until he turned that he knew she was there.

He laid his scythe in the grass and came sidling up to her. His face was drenched in sweat and in his mouth was a stalk of totter-grass and the dark red seeds trembled as he walked. He looked at Anna with a kind of sleepy surprise.

" Good old Anna, " he said.

" You did want beer ? " she said.

He smiled and sat down at her side.

She too smiled with a flash of her black eyes. He took the bottle from her hand and put one hand on her knee and caressed it gently. She watched the hand with a smile of strange, wicked, ironical amusement. He put the bottle between his knees and unscrewed the stopper.

" Drink, " he said softly.

She drank and gave him the bottle.

" Haven't seen you for ages, " she murmured.

He shrugged his shoulders and took a long drink. His hand was still on her knee and as she played idly with the stalk of buttercups, her dark face concealed its rising passion in a look of wonderful preoccupation, as though she had forgotten him completely. He wetted his lips with his tongue and ran his hand swiftly and caressingly from her knees to her waist. Her body was stiff for one moment and then it relaxed and sank back-

wards into the long grass. She shut her eyes and slipped into his embrace like a snake, her face blissfully happy, her hand still clasping the stalk of buttercups, her whole body trembling.

Presently across the field came the sound of a scythe being sharpened. She whispered something quickly and struggled and Ponto got to his feet. She sat up and buttoned the neck of her blouse. She was flushed and panting and her eyes rested on Ponto with a soft, almost beseeching look of adoration.

Ponto walked away to his scythe and picked it up and began mowing again. He mowed smoothly and with a sort of aloof indifference as though nothing had happened, and she let him mow for five or six paces before she too stood up.

" Ponto, " she whispered.

" Eh ? "

" I'll come back, " she said.

She remained for a moment in an attitude of expectancy, but he did not speak or cease the swing of his arms, and very slowly she turned away and went back across the field.

She walked back to where she had left her rake. She picked up the rake and began to turn the swathes of hay again, following the boy. She worked for a long time without looking up. When at last she lifted her head and looked over towards the pond, she saw that Ponto had ceased mowing behind the pond and was cutting the grass in the open field again. He was mowing with the same easy, powerful insistence and with the same beautiful swaggering rhythm of his body, as though he could never grow tired.

They worked steadily on and the sun began to swing round behind the ash-tree and the heat began to lessen and twilight began to fall. While the two men were mowing side by side on the last strip of grass, the woman began to pack the victual-bags and put the saddle on

the horse under the ash-tree.

She was strapping the girth of the saddle when she heard feet in the grass and a voice said softly,

"Any more beer?"

She turned and saw Ponto. A bottle of beer was left in the bag and she brought it out for him. He began drinking and while he was drinking she gazed at him with rapt admiration, as though she had been mysteriously attracted out of herself by the sight of his subtle, conceited, devilish face, the memory of his embrace by the pond and the beautiful untiring motion of his arms swinging the scythe throughout the afternoon. There was something altogether trustful, foolish and abandoned about her, as though she were sublimely eager to do whatever he asked.

"Think you'll finish?" she said in a whisper.

"Easy."

He corked the beer and they stood looking at each other. He looked at her with a kind of careless, condescending stare, half smiling. She stood perfectly still, her eyes filled with half-happy, half-frightened submissiveness.

He suddenly wiped the beer from his lips with the back of his hand and put out his arm and caught her waist and tried to kiss her.

"Not now," she said desperately. "Not now. He'll see. Afterwards. He'll see."

He gave her a sort of half-pitying smile and shrugged his shoulders and walked away across the field without a word.

"Afterwards," she called in a whisper.

She went on packing the victual-bags, the expression on her face lost and expectant. The outlines of the field and the figures of the mowers became softer and darker in the twilight. The evening air was warm and heavy with the scent of the hay.

The men ceased mowing at last. The boy had gone

home and the woman led the horse across the field to where the men were waiting. Her husband was tying the sack about the blade of his scythe. She looked at Ponto with a dark, significant flash of her eyes, but he took no notice.

" You'd better finish the beer, " she said.

He took the bottle and drank to the dregs and then hurled the bottle across the field. She tried to catch his eye, but he was already walking away over the field, as though he had never seen her.

She followed him with her husband and the horse. They came to the gate of the field and Ponto was waiting. A look of anticipation and joy shot up in her eyes.

" Why should I damn well walk ? " said Ponto. " Eh ? Why should I damn well walk up this lane when I can sit on your old hoss ? Lemme get up. "

He laid his scythe in the grass and while the woman held the horse he climbed into the saddle.

" Give us me scythe, " he asked. " I can carry that. Whoa! mare, damn you! "

She picked up the scythe and gave it to him and he put it over his shoulder. She let her hand touch his knee and fixed her eyes on him with a look of inquiring eagerness, but he suddenly urged the horse forward and began to ride away up the lane.

She followed her husband out of the field. He shut the gate and looked back over the darkening field at the long swathes of hay lying pale yellow in the dusk. He seemed pleased and he called to Ponto :

" I don't know what the Hanover we should ha' done without you, Ponto. "

Ponto waved his rein-hand with sublime conceit.

" That's nothing, " he called back. " Me and my old dad used to mow forty-acre fields afore dark. God damn it, that's nothing. All in the day's work. "

He seized the rein again and tugged it and the horse broke into a trot, Ponto bumping the saddle and swear-

ing and shouting as he went up the lane.

The woman followed him with her husband. He walked slowly, limping, and now and then she walked on a few paces ahead, as though trying to catch up with the retreating horse. Sometimes the horse would slow down into a walk and she would come almost to within speaking distance of Ponto, but each time the horse would break into a fresh trot and leave her as far behind again. The lane was dusky with twilight and Ponto burst into a song about a girl and sailor.

" Hark at him, " said the husband. " He's a tartar. He's a tartar. "

The rollicking voice seemed to echo over the fields with soft, deliberate mocking. The woman did not speak : but as she listened her dark face was filled with the conflicting expression of many emotions, exasperation, perplexity, jealousy, longing, hope, anger.

W. J. TURNER

PURSUIT OF PSYCHE

THE FIRST CANTO (TELLS OF PRIMITIVE WOMAN)

She had no mirror when the world was new
Therefore she was not. Until in a pool
Hung wind-secluded, darker than the moon
Witch-of-the-caves her countenance. She knew
Instantly herself and terrified withdrew
Like a scared animal. Ages ere the appetite cool
Into imagination, ere memory maroon
Passion into a mirror in the wood!

The hunter who raped her she never forgave
And her blood sprang against his blood.
In the heart of her child lying stunned
Her unwillingness gathering in a heaped-up flood
Of unattraction hung heavily its wave.
Rise again O silver Moon
Over the dark barrow of desire,
Over the grass-swollen hillside!

Multitudes of faces under the roots of the grass
Have faded into the whiteness of chalk,
Myriads of nights into the darkness of the past;
But still the isolation of the heart
Deepened, and the Moon more lovely in her walk
Among the fields and under caves. She was
Heavy with weight of blood set apart,
The sun dreaming in her womb.

W. J. TURNER

Imago—*mother of the sun;*
Here is the secret of all desire,
Remote, remote, still art thou too near,
Withdraw thyself—high above the body, that white hill;
High above the blood, that sea of fire.
Withdrawn out of the forest see the Hunter appear
Imagined, *the lover, the ghostly one,*
He who is to come.

A man drawing upon a cave wall
The scallop, diminutive smell of the sea,
Haunting his nostrils, and the memory in his ear
Where sound carved itself into a second shell.
Beholding the lineaments of his face
Awareness within thee took a fall
Deeper, glowing like a jewel at the bottom of a well
Which hands cannot touch.

Men came who did not rape thee on sight
But dwelt apart in the dark islands of taboo,
Carving thee into a fetish of wood,
Garlanding thee with flowers in a secret place,
Praying for the illumination of a far-off light
And visionary mood
When suddenly they might see the face
Of lust's dark body.

Looking out from the islands of taboo
Imagination discovered thy hands
And the extremities of thy limbs.
Thy beauty carved by the eyes of inhibited desire
A form stands
Sculptured from space, a body which men woo,
Flower from the sensual mire,
Touch become sight.

W. J. TURNER

Now Thou has spotted the body of the leopard
Blown the mottled butterfly upon the stone,
The purple-drunken orchid thou hast lifted up in the shadow
of the forest,
Silhouetted the tree against the sky;
In the amethyst of evening thou hast come out alone,
Like a pearl fished from the sea;
Thou art the memory of the sun
In the dark arms of night.

After copulation the woman withdrew
Into the deep silence of the forest
When there was no sound but the shaking of maiden-hair
In the shadow of a stone—
A trembling of distant water!
Collected like the ebony of an intense light
Thou sitting aware
In her motionless body.

"Let me be separate from thee,
Thou deep silence," sculptured the Harp of Desire.
This was the beginning of song
And sweet carved music of the lyre;
"Let me withdraw and depart
Far away, O far, far, far!"
Upon the mountains of night thou shalt find Day
Solitary!

MEYER LEVIN

THE SOLD SIN

A Frightful Tale of the Power of the Maharasha, and of the Terrible Sin Done by the Two Partners from Austria.

In Austria there lived two young men, Schmoel and Meir, who were partners in buying and selling. They were not only united in business, but were close friends; one believed as the other believed, and they took their pleasures together. Meir was a year older than Schmoel, and was very honest in business; but Schmoel was soft-hearted and could never refuse any one anything that was asked of him.

They learned that deep in Russia there lived a duchess who had a storehouse filled with linen that could be bought cheap. So the partners set out for Russia.

When they came to the village of the Duchess, they sent in word to her, saying that they wished to buy linen, and she sent her steward out to them to make a price and sell them the goods. When the man had sold the linen, he took the bag of gold which the partners paid him and brought it to the Duchess.

"What sort of people were they, who bought the linen?" she said.

"They were two Jews from Austria."

"I have never seen any Jews," said the Duchess. "What are they like?"

"They are like all other people," said her servant.

Then the Duchess said: "I want to see them."

So the servant went out to the two young men and brought them before the Duchess.

Of the partners, Schmoel was exceedingly handsome, his face shone and his eyes sparkled, and his person was altogether pleasing. When the Duchess saw him, she became inflamed with desire, she could not take her eyes from him. Then she called him to her to speak with him, and as he could speak Russian very well, they soon were chattering like old friends.

In short, the Duchess became sick with love for him, and she did not know what to do.

At last the other partner said: "We have a great distance to travel, we must load the goods on wagons and start on our way."

"I will get wagons for you," said the Duchess.

She called her steward and spoke to him, and he went out and presently he returned saying that there were not enough carts in the village.

"That is what I feared," said the Duchess. "One of you will have to go to the next village to secure more wagons." And she said to Schmoel, whom she desired, "You can stay here and begin to load the linen on to those wagons that we have."

Then Meir departed.

"I must begin to load the carts," said Schmoel, and he went to the storehouse. Under the first bale of goods he found the bag of gold which he had paid to the Duchess. He took the money and went quickly into the house to seek her.

"The money is yours," she said. "I have enough gold."

"Then you will not sell the linen?"

"I have enough linen," she said. "The linen is yours."

Then she made him understand what it was that was lacking her. Schmoel was soft-hearted, and could never refuse any one what they asked of him. And as the Duchess was not old, and her person was pleasing and

warm, his evil spirit soon overcame him, and he remained with her.

In the morning he went out to put the linen on the wagons; then his partner returned with more carts, and helped him to finish loading, and then they started for home.

But as they rode along, the young man's better spirit began to overtake him. He became more and more sorry that he had yielded and done evil, and the sin that he had committed became heavy on him. He was no longer gay with his friend, but rode silently by his side. When they stopped for their meals, he ate little, and he drank no wine. He sat at the table without uttering a word.

Then Meir began to ask Schmoel what was troubling him. At first Schmoel answered him with excuses. But his partner understood that it could not be a little thing that had made Schmoel so unhappy, so he questioned him when they rode, and while they ate, and when they slept, until Schmoel said, " I will tell you. I have sinned with a gentile woman."

Then he told his partner the whole story of what he had done with the Duchess, and he showed his partner the sack of money that she had returned to him.

Then Meir joked with him, and told him not to take the matter so deeply into his heart. " You have sinned," he said, " but you can do good for your evil. Give the money to the poor, do penance, and your sin will not be held against you."

" It is easy for you to speak lightly," said Schmoel. " You have not sinned, and you are sure of your share in the future world. What if I should die before I have had time to atone for my sin? What if I should die to-morrow?"

He would not be comforted, but became even more gloomy, and passed his days in despair and his nights in terror.

At last Meir said to him, " I will tell you what I will do.

I will take your sin on myself. What will you pay me to take your sin?"

Schmoel did not wish his friend to suffer for his sin. But Meir continued to laugh and said, "It is not a great thing, it is nothing, you will see how quickly I shall be rid of it!"

So at last Schmoel said: "Take all the money, and take my share of the goods, and take my sin with it!"

"Good," said Meir, and smiled.

That evening when they stopped at a tavern they asked for legal paper. "Write," said Meir to Schmoel, "write the nature of the sin."

Then Schmoel wrote, "I have sinned one night with a gentile woman. For this she paid me a sack of gold." And he signed his name.

Then Meir wrote, "I will take over the sin of Schmoel. For the sack of gold and for his share of the linen I take his sin upon myself." And he signed his name to the contract.

"You have sold your sin, dearly," said Meir, and he took the sack of gold.

Then they gave each other their hands in agreement, and when they had finished, they ate and they drank, and were good companions again.

The partners returned to their village in Austria, where Meir sold the linen for a very high price. With the gold he had received with Schmoel's sin, and with the money he got for both shares of the linen, he became a rich man. He built himself a great house and went to live in it.

Schmoel married and had children. When Schmoel went to visit his partner, Meir would show him all the fine rooms of the great house, and he would bring out costly wine for them to drink, and he would laugh at Schmoel for his folly.

But it so happened that Meir did not live long to enjoy his riches. He became sick and died.

He arrived in the other world, and there he stood for judgement, while his sins and his good deeds were measured against each other. " There remains one sin standing against you," he was told. " You have sinned with a gentile woman."

Meir searched his earthly memory. " No," he said. " I never did such a thing."

Then the angels reminded him. " You bought the sin from your partner."

Meir remembered and laughed. " Must I be punished for my partner's weakness?" he said.

" You bought the sin."

" True," he said, " I bought the sin. But I did it only so that he would not worry himself to death."

Just then there came a growling and the sound of the scraping of iron wings. The evil one, Satan, was there, and Satan cried angrily, " What are you arguing about? He is mine!"

But Meir fell on his knees and wept and pleaded of the angels. " If I had known the sin was truly mine," he said, " I would have done penance for it, I would have cleared myself of its taint. But now I am dead I can do no more good. I am already dead and my partner is still alive. Do not make me suffer for his fault!"

He pleaded and begged and cried until the angels could listen to him no longer. " Let him go back to earth," they said, " and seek a trial of judgement with his partner. Then it will be determined to which of them the sin belongs."

Satan was angry, and shook his wings over the shrinking soul of Meir, and Meir could feel his soul dissolving into dust. But in that moment Satan was gone; Meir's soul rose again, and went down to earth.

Meir came to Schmoel in a dream and said, " I must have a trial of law with you!"

" What do you want!" cried Schmoel. " You took

over my sin, we made a contract! There is nothing for the torah to judge between us!"

Meir went away.

During the day Schmoel was troubled. He could think of nothing but the pleading of the soul of his dead partner. He was soft-hearted, and he thought, "It was I who sinned. The sin is really mine."

That night he lay waiting. He wanted to talk to the soul of his partner. Yet he knew that the soul of Meir could not come to him until he was asleep. He closed his eyes and tried his best to fall asleep. He prayed to Heaven for sleep. But he could not fall asleep. All that night, the soul of Meir floated about Schmoel's room, waiting. And Meir was terribly afraid that the Enemy would come and take him into hell. Every instant, when he heard the scraping of the leaves of the trees against one another, Meir thought he heard the iron wings of Satan. Again and again he approached his partner Schmoel. But all night long Schmoel lay awake, and Meir could not speak with him.

On the third night Schmoel was sick with worrying for his friend. His eyes were become red with grief, he had not eaten for two days, and he was so weak that he fell into a deep slumber. At once Meir came to him and said,

"Let us have judgement between us."

"I am willing," said Schmoel. "Let us go."

In the next instant Schmoel, felt his soul leaving his body, and he cried out, "Where are you taking me!"

Meir said, "Come up above to judgement!"

With all his strength Schmoel clung to his soul, for he knew that if he went with Meir to judgement in the world above, then he might never come back to live on earth. "I cannot go with you there," he said. "I have a wife and children."

And Meir said, "I cannot be judged on earth."

Then they did not know what to do. Night after night Meir came to Schmoel begging him for judgement.

Every day, Schmoel became weaker, until at last it seemed he was dying.

At that time the great Rabbi Maharasha, blessed be his memory, lived in Austria. The sick man thought of him, and begged to be carried to him. "Before I die," he said to the Maharasha, "I want to tell you what has happened to me." Then he told the Rabbi the whole story of the sin he had traded to his partner. "Can I be saved from death?" he said.

The Rabbi answered, "Go home. When he comes to you again, say to him that the Torah was given for this world only, and that if he wants to have a judgement of law with you he must have the trial in this nether world. If he will not come with you to me for judgement, say to him that I shall put a seal against him, so that he will not be able to come to disturb you any more."

That night the dead man came to Schmoel, and Schmoel told him what the Rabbi had said.

"Then let it be so," agreed Meir. "We will go before the Rabbi."

"I want to be well," said Schmoel. "Wait one month, then I shall be well again, and we will go to the Rabbi."

"I will wait," said the dead man.

At the end of the month Schmoel went to the Maharasha and said, "The time has come for the judgement of Torah between myself and my dead partner Meir."

The Maharasha sent for the elders of the congregation. Soon all of the important people of the village, the wealthy men, the scholars, the leaders of the community began to gather and to take their places in the synagogue. Many of them had dealt with the two partners. No one remembered a bad deed against either of them, for they had been honest in all of their dealings.

But now the elders shook their heads. "In all their lives," they said, "they were never known to quarrel. And now at last they come to a judgement of law."

The townsfolk came running when they heard that the partners Meir and Schmoel were come to trial, and soon the synagogue was filled.

The Maharasha called the shamas and said to him: " Let us make a separate place where the dead man may come in." So they took heavy draperies and hung them against one corner of the room, that the soul of Meir might stand there.

" Now," said the Maharasha to the shamas, " go to the cemetery and find out the grave of Meir. Tell him that everything is ready for the judgment of law."

The shamas returned. All of the townsfolk looked where the draperies hung. Some whispered that the draperies had rustled.

The Maharasha said to Schmoel: "Are you ready for the judgment of the Torah?"

And Schmoel said, "'I am ready," and he laid before the Maharasha the contract on which both of the partners had signed their names.

Then the Maharasha turned to the dark corner and said, " Dead man, are you ready for the judgement of the Torah?"

And the voice of the dead man cried, "I am ready!"

" Let Schmoel speak," said the Maharasha.

Schmoel spoke. " It is true that I committed the sin. But when I had committed the sin I was filled with sorrow, and I would have suffered every punishment in order to raise the sin from myself. But when you bought the sin I thought I was rid of it, and so I no longer thought of doing penance. If you had let me alone with my sin I would have given all the money in alms to the poor, I would have helped orphans get married, I would have helped build new synagogues, I would have done penance so long that my sin would have by now been taken from me, and I would be free and clean. But since I thought

the sin was yours, I did not feel its uncleanness on me; then why must I suffer for it now?"

The townspeople turned, one to whisper to another, saying, "He is right." But suddenly a ghastly silence fell among them. The voice of the dead man was speaking.

"I did not think one could really buy a sin," he said. "I saw you worrying yourself to death, and so to make things lighter for you I said I would buy your sin. I did it only to lighten your heart. And if I owe you some money that you gave me with the sin, why I will tell my heirs to return it to you, and leave me in peace!"

Then Schmoel spoke again, and Meir spoke, and one spoke and the other spoke until at last they both became still.

The Rabbi took the contract in his hand and said, "The judgement is so: A bargain remains a bargain."

And the whole congregation cried with him, "It is so!"

But over their words rose a terrible shriek from the dead man. "Woe is me!" Then a scraping as of iron was heard, and the draperies in the dark corner swayed and whirled as if in struggle with a great wind.

"One word more!" shrieked the dead man. "I am dead and can no longer do penance. You are living, you may still atone for the sin. Take it from me!"

Voices from among the people cried: "Have pity on him! Help him!"

Then the Maharasha said, "The judgement of the Torah, according to law, is as I have spoken. But you, Schmoel, can do as you want to do."

Schmoel, who had a soft heart, answered, "Holy Rabbi, we were partners all our lives. Let me take my share of the sin. I will try to atone for it in the days that are left me on earth."

The Rabbi said, " Dead man, you will be punished in the other world while he atones in this world. When he has atoned for the sin, you too will be free!"

When the Rabbi had spoken these words, a whirl of smoke and dust rose in the synagogue. Nothing more was heard.

RABBI ISRAEL AND THE SORCERER

A Marvellous Story of the Struggle between Rabbi Israel and the Paritz who was a Sorcerer, Telling how Rabbi Israel Conquered.

Once, when he was riding on a journey, Rabbi Israel, the Master of the Holy Name, passed by a certain tavern. As soon as the wagon had gone beyond the inn, although the sun was still strong in the sky, the Baal Shem Tov said, " We will stop at that place to-night."

The horses were turned round, the wagon drove into the spacious yard by the tavern, the Master descended, and went straight up to the house.

It looked to be a prosperous inn serving the village of a good Paritz whose lands were fat and whose peasants drank well.

" Let us enter," said Rabbi Israel. In the first room they saw a long table on which there stood a great many bottles of fine wine. No one was in the room.

" It smells of a feast," said Reb Wolf.

" We are just in time to celebrate a circumcision," said the Master.

They went into the next room, and saw another table, covered by a fine white cloth, and on this table were plates of roasted chicken, cakes, and all sorts of delicacies. On a wide chair behind the table lay an embroidered coverlet, and linen ready for the circumcision. And there was no one in this room.

In the third room they found the innkeeper sitting beside a small coffin. The innkeeper sat with his head bowed in his great thick hands. He stared into the tiny coffin. The coffin was empty.

The Baal Shem Tov said : " It seems you are preparing a feast for to-night, my friend."

The innkeeper sighed.

" Is the child your son ?" said the Baal Shem Tov.

The innkeeper heavily nodded his head.

" Your only son ? "

" My third son, and my only son," said the innkeeper. " And with this one it will be as with the others."

" But this is a feast-day for you," said the Baal Shem Tov. " You should be merry! Let me help at the circumcision; let me be the one to hold the child on my arms, while it is offered for the rite."

" Willingly, master! " said the innkeeper, for he saw that he spoke to a holy man. " It will be a great honour," he said. But his voice was without joy.

He looked into the coffin, and said, " Twice before I have had a son. Each time, on the night of the circumcision, we found the child dead. With this one it will be as with the others."

" Have you any enemies ? " said the Master.

" They are all good people about here," said the innkeeper.

" Do you owe your Paritz money ?"

" The Paritz is a fine nobleman, and very generous. Each time I have a *briss*, he sends me bottles of rare wine out of his own cellars, and he himself comes to the feast, and watches the circumcision. See, to-day he has already sent many bottles of good wine. No, I have no enemies. If only I could have a son who would live, I should be very happy."

" Do not hold the circumcision to-night," said the Baal Shem Tov, " but to-morrow night. Now take me to see your son."

The landlord took the Master up a stairway, they went along a hall, and they came to a heavy door. The door was locked with four great locks. These the innkeeper unfastened, he opened the door. The room was dark.

In the centre of the darkness they saw the shape of a little old grandmother sitting rocking a wooden cradle. When she heard the people coming into the room, she spread her arms in fright over the cradle.

"I have brought a holy man," said the innkeeper. Then she arose, and allowed them to approach the child.

The face of the child was covered by a prayer-shawl.

"Why is the face of the child hidden?" said the Baal Shem Tov.

"That no evil eye may fall upon it," said the innkeeper. Then he lifted away the talith, and in the light that straemed through the cracks of the wall they saw the face of a beautiful child.

"He will be a learned rabbi," said the Master.

The hands of the innkeeper trembled, and he said, "May God grant that it be so."

Then Rabbi Israel said to him, "I will tell you what to do, and you must do everything exactly as I say. Take the talith from the face of the child, though you may leave it over his breast. Take away the darkness. Put candles in the room, and keep them lighted. Then call two young students of the Torah, and set them to watch here by your son throughout the entire night. They must watch that the candles are not extinguished. Let the students take a sack, and hang the sack with its mouth open behind the head of the child. If anything falls into the sack, they must close and bind it quickly. One of them will watch the sack, and the other will run and call me."

As the Master ordered, so was done. The circumcision was put off until the next day. Soon night came, and all those in the tavern went to sleep. Only, in the room where the child slept many candles burned, and two students sat by the cradle, studying the Torah.

Many hours passed. It was deep in the night.

Then a wind seemed to come from all round them, creeping through the crevices of the walls. It made no sound, but it came into the room from all sides, chill as a

moonlit stone, and the room became clammy as the inside of a cave. The lights sank fainting, the flames fell and struggled to rise, and fell, and grew ghostly pale. The two students leaped up and hovered over the cradle. With their hands they shielded the two candles that burned by the head of the child. And the face of the infant boy shone steadily with beauty and with wisdom.

The students bent anxiously over the cradle of the child; they did not notice that a cat had come into the room. Silent, smooth as the wind, it glided beside the wall. Its eyes were white and glassy and chill as ice, yet as smoke rises from ice, so lines of blue fire flowed from the eyes of the cat. The eyes shone whiter than the flames of the candles, but they were not as white as the radiant face of the sleeping infant who was already filled with the light of coming wisdom and holiness.

The cat crept all round the room, turning always nearer to the child in the cradle, and its twisted way was as the path of a wind on sand. Then it came near to the cradle, and behind the cradle it stood crouched ready to spring. Its glossy sides sunk and stretched with its breathing, otherwise it was motionless. The flames of the candles shrank low like backs beaten under whips.

The cat sprang.

But when its eyes encountered the light on the face of the sleeping child, it was as if it had been stricken backward in mid-air, it fell heavily into the open sack.

The students started at the thud. Instantly they remembered the command of the Master. One of them seized the mouth of the sack, twisted it tight and tied it close. The other ran and called the Baal Shem Tow.

The cat rolled and struggled and clawed in the sack. Again and again it leaped up and fell back. Winds whirled in the room. The candle-lights were whipped high one instant, and shrank quivering the next.

But when the Baal Shem Tov came into the chamber, the lights rose and flamed steadily. The cat ceased to

jump, and lay in a twitching heap at the bottom of the sack.

The Baal Shem Tov felt the sack, and he began to laugh softly. " Bring me a stick," he said.

They ran and brought him a heavy stick. Then he took the stick and began to beat the cat in the bag. The cat howled, and the Baal Shem Tov laughed, and danced with the stick, and belaboured the sack with all his might. The innkeeper came running.

" Here, dance a little at your son's feast! " said the Baal Shem Tov, and he handed the stick to the innkeeper, and the innkeeper went at the sack and beat it with all his might.

What was in the sack ceased to struggle and jump, it lay still.

The Baal Shem Tov said, " Open the window. "

Then he unbound the sack, and he went to the window and shook out the sack, and they all heard the cat fall to the ground. It crept away on its belly.

The next day the innkeeper made a greater feast than he had ever made before. He celebrated the circumcision of his son. Musicians came, and all the Jewish families for miles round came, and the peasants came and drank and sang and danced.

The Baal Shem Tov was the godfather; he held the child on his arms while it was circumcised.

But in the midst of the feasting, the innkeeper said, " It is strange that the Paritz has not come to the tavern. At all the other times, he came himself to wish the child good luck."

Then Yashka, a peasant who worked in the castle of the Paritz, said, " The Paritz is sick to-day."

The Baal Shem Tov laughed softly, but the innkeeper did not notice his laughter. The innkeeper said to his wife, " We will send a honeycake to the Paritz, and tell him of the *briss* of our son."

So they took a great honeycake and wrapped it in a fine

white cloth. The Baal Shem Tov said to the innkeeper, " Do me a favour. Let me carry the cake to the Paritz."

" With all my heart," said the innkeeper, and he entrusted the present to the Master.

The Master came to the dwelling of the Paritz. He was led into a large hall, where there was a great fine bed, and on the bed lay the Paritz. His arms were all covered with bandages, and the flesh of his face was blue.

" I have brought you a honeycake, your honour," said the Baal Shem Tov, and he came to the side of the bed.

Then they looked into each other's eyes. The eyes of the Paritz became white and cold and glinted like pieces of ice. The Baal Shem Tov laughed a low soft laugh.

Then the Paritz said, " Well, you gave me a good beating."

Rabbi Isreal became stern and said, " He is a good innkeeper and serves you well. You have no right to persecute him."

" He is a Jew," said the Paritz.

" From now on," said the Baal Shem Tov, " know that he is protected by a power greater than yours."

" Your power is not greater than my sorcery," said the Paritz. " Last night you caught me unawares. Come into open strife with me. Come to a test of strength, and I will show you who is more powerful."

" If I defeat you," said the Baal Shem Tov, " you will put aside your sorcery for ever, you will hold no more traffic with demons, you will stay locked in your own place, and leave my people in peace."

" If I defeat you," said the Paritz, " I will destroy you altogether!"

Then the Baal Shem Tov said, " I shall go now. In a month's time you will be well, then I shall return and hold a contest with you."

When a month had passed, the Baal Shem Tov, accompanied by nine of his students, came to the castle of the Paritz.

" I am ready," said Rabbi Israel.

Then the Paritz ordered his courtyard to be prepared for the terrible contest. A great platform was built for him, a furnace was built upon it, and all his dark engines of destruction were set by the furnace.

" I will stand on the naked earth," said the Baal Shem Tov. He chose a place for himself, facing the platform of the sorcerer. He made a great circle on the earth. Within that circle he made a smaller circle. And within the smaller circle he stationed himself, surrounded by his students.

All the peasants from the surrounding country, for a distance of many miles, came to see the Jew who would stand against the Paritz. The courtyard was filled with people, and the roofs of the houses of the village were covered with people.

But the few Jews who lived in that place shrank in their houses, and prayed.

Then the Paritz began his terrible works of wonder.

He brewed a powerful fire within his furnace, then he opened the door of the furnace, and out of it came a charge of wild beasts: lions and tigers without number leaped from the furnace and prowled about the wide circle made by the Master. But the Baal Shem Tov called out a tiny prayer, and the beasts shrank as from a wall of fire.

Then the Paritz conjured out of the air a second charge of beasts, whose bodies were covered with iron scales and whose heads were armed on all sides with tusks. They flew against the circle of the master. The outer circle wavered and bent.

" Quick, repeat the prayer! מהרהר בחשבה!" said the Baal Shem Tov to his students. With one voice they repeated the call, while Rabbi Israel made a cabbalistic sign upon the beasts. Then the circle did not break, but became a circle of knives, and the beasts shrank back, and faded into the air.

The Paritz laughed and said, "I have only begun." He called up a third army of beasts more horrible than the second, and he called up a fourth army; wave upon wave, his horrors came and charged against the circle of the Master; they snarled, they roared, they tore the ground until clods flew all about the heads of the Baal Shem Tov and his students; they stamped and bellowed and raged; they vanished and reappeared in greater number. But they did not pierce the circle.

When night came the Paritz said, "I have not finished." He called up the beasts of the night. The forest was pierced with white staring glassy eyes, was filled with chill clammy winds, with shrill long whistling sounds, from under the earth came groanings, and the ground heaved as when innumerable dead try to break from their graves, and the air resounded with the clanking of loose bones.

The Baal Shem Tov cried out a name, and all was still, and day came.

On the second day and the second night the sorcerer continued his battle, but on the third day be began to feel his weariness, his strength was going from him, and he saw that the Baal Shem Tov and his students still stood sturdy and untouched. Then the Paritz went into his furnace and summoned Satan to him. Together they stood in the flames, and together they worked with all their powers to bring up their final strength in a great attack that would consume the Master.

The Sorcerer came out of the furnace. Then the earth broke open into a great black gap that was filled with crawling things, that was like a festered wound. And out of that hole there heaved a swarm of wild swine. Endless as the waves of the sea they came in numbers spewed up from that hole, and out of the maw of each boar there flamed a charge of fire.

Enraged, they burst against the circle of the Master. They broke the first ring, their fire burned the earth, they swarmed all around the Master and his nine students, who

were clustered within their last retreat. Then the beasts attacked the last circle of the Master. Their flames ate into its borders, and its borders gave way bending.

The Master raised high his arms. His students separated from about him, they stood back and looked upon his face, and they saw that his face was charged with the terrible light of heaven. His face was bathed in pure white fire that was stronger and more consuming than all the fire of all the armies of evil.

Then the Master opened his mouth to utter the Holy Name, and as his mouth formed the Word, and the Word went forward, the fire dried on the mouths of the beasts, their bodies faded into nothingness, the wound in the earth closed and was healed, and the forest was transformed by peace.

Then the Paritz came down from his place. He fell on his knees outside the circle of the Master, and he said, " Your power is greater than mine. Look on me, and annihilate me with a glance of your eye."

" I will not destroy you," said the Baal Shem Tov. " Stand up."

The Paritz arose.

" Raise your eyes," said the Baal Shem Tov.

The Paritz lifted his eyes to the sky.

Then all who were assembled there saw two eagles come swiftly flying, each of them swooped downward, and each of them reached with his beak, and so the two eagles took out the two evil eyes of the Paritz.

RUTH PEACOCK

CAREER

there are many ways now of being a young man
not so simple as ploughing a field
spading a black patch
strung thick with earthworms
Or making love
a procession of lace handkerchiefs
swept up from lawns
floors
checkerboards

I would be finding a new way
to bend water making a fan of it
to chill the desert
brand cattle break horses with
the pulse of the knee
Spring nights would catch me
horning new timber down salmon-rivers
my breath at lonely corners linger all night
with whisky-singing
sun cracking whips upon my skin of hard man
speech running sweet
raw
high through the hay

my blood crouched to winter
gnawed like a dry bone winter
on other cities other nights as dark as royal

RUTH PEACOCK

HUNT

the buckhounds went on under the rain
with the wet fern swinging lace over their eyes
and their skins hanging like crumpled velvet

the bucks shod with leaves like silk sandals
danced on chop-sticks over the suey of red lizards
white stalks
and caterpillars

the gentlemen slapped with their crop-butts at their
clean leather

Now the gentlemen turn back out of the high dripping world
to fires that repeat themselves in the copper and the tiles
on the hearth
in the andirons and the whisky glasses

with the throats of the buckhounds sunk over their insteps
and the hound teets bruised blue on the fine floor

Drawing, *by Michael Baxte*

LUDWIG LEWISOHN

WHITMAN*

Walt Whitman—most strange and difficult figure in all our letters, and perhaps the greatest, certainly the most far-reaching, far echoing poetic voice. Rightly did he ask in his own day : " Do you call those genteel little creatures American poets ? " And if our poets, taking the word in its widest and proper sense of creative spirits, are no longer all " genteel little creatures "—it is due not least to his powerful and permanently valid example.

So much being obviously true, it is time now in an instructed age to inquire why all, or nearly all, commentary on Whitman, is characterized by either a faint sliminess or a furtive dulness, or by such downright misinterpretations and little white extenuating lies as André Gide points out with bitter amusement as existing in the amiable biography of the poet by the late Léon Bazalgette. This inquiry will, moreover, lead us beyond its original purpose. It will illustrate and account for many of the marks of Whitman's style; it will throw light upon the quality of his sociological theories; it will once and for all silence the recurrent and foolish question of why Whitman, desirous above all else of being a folk poet, has never been accepted by the folk, but finds his prophets and proclaimers from decade to decade among the febrile and the effeminate.

The secret is, of course, an open secret. But open secrets are more corrupting than closed ones. They lead to whispering and snickers and furtiveness, and withdraw

* From a survey of American literature which will be published in New York by Messrs. Harper and Brothers.

the personality or the subject in question from rational discussion and solid interpretation. I purpose, then, in regard to Walt Whitman to sweep away once and for all the miasma that clouds and dims all discussion of him and his work. He was a homosexual of the most pronounced and aggressive type.

Nor has there ever been any good reason to doubt it. Considering his place and time, the Calamus poems are of an amazing outspokenness. Consciously or not he probably counted on the fact that none but those similarly constituted would dare to understand. In addition he created a legend of himself, including the myth of the New Orleans lady and his children by her, as an escape and defence. And this, too, was natural, since social groups demand not only certain norms of behaviour, but of constitution. There were always those, however, like John Addington Symonds and Edward Carpenter, who understood him thoroughly, and since the publication of the letters to Peter Doyle in 1897, any doubts left by the poems were, of course, destroyed.

But the poems, in truth, leave no doubt, and I shall not even trouble my readers with references to the scientific monographs on Whitman's abnormal constitution that exist in several languages. He announces frankly that the Calamus poems proceed in " paths untrodden ", that they represent an escape " from all the standards hitherto published " in being songs " of manly attachment. " They are. They make the matter, despite half-hearted disclaimers here and there, sudden slight accesses of prudence as at the end of "Earth, my Likeness," as plain as words can make it without direct obscenity.

The poems contain the homosexual's atavistic subconscious memories of the men's house in primitive societies projected upon the present social structure, and his hopes for it, which are so profoundly mingled with much communistic sentiment : " I believe the main purport of these States is to found a superb friendship,

exalté, previously unknown... waiting latent in all men"; they contain the usual appeal to Socrates and the common fancy about Christ; they contain the usual symbols and subterfuges, but also idealistically tinged homo-erotic carnalities unparallelled, so far as I know, in any modern language. To the slightly instructed in analytical psychology, the one poem " Whoever You are holding Me now in Hand, " with its curious " Lilliputian "* fantasy, which throws some doubt on Whitman's robust aggressiveness even as a homosexual, tells the whole story and reveals the man's nature and appetences.

Nor did this thread of self-revelation ever thereafter disappear from his work. However hidden or elusive, this expression of his special nature does not cease. He takes final leave of the world in " Old Age Echoes, " with that central confession on his lips.

I look composedly upon nature, drink day and night the joys of life, and await death with perfect equanimity,
Because of my tender and boundless love for him I love and because of his boundless love for me.

We are now at once in a better position to understand the esoteric character of Whitman's reputation and the fact that the democratic masses whom he celebrated have passed him by. The instinct that bade them do so was no unhealthy one. It needs neither knowledge of morbid psychology nor analytical insight to receive fairly constantly from Whitman's work, and from the records of his life, a slightly repellent impression. One has to conquer this impression before his great qualities can be disengaged and enjoyed. One can take pleasure not even in his own or others' account of his services as a nurse and wound-dresser during the war. There is too much false festiveness and coyness and posturing and embracing. One is not at all surprised after that at the anecdotes

* I borrow this term from Dr. S. Ferenczi's acute solution of the Swift " mystery " in his address before the New York Society for Clinical Psychiatry, given Dec. 9, 1926.

concerning street-car conductors nor at Peter Doyle, nor yet at the disorder and sordidness and sordid quarrels of those last years in the Mickle Street house in Camden, which extended beyond his death. No wonder that the guardians of Horace Traubel's adolescence warned him against " the lecherous old man. " There spoke the voice of the people.

It was, alas, quite correct in the perception if not in the precise definition which it expressed. Whitman must have been a very dreadful person indeed. And this was a real misfortune to American literature, since this dreadful person happened to be a man of authentic genius.

The second element that has kept Whitman from more general appreciation is his form. The Whitman coteries and fellowships and his direct imitators have expressed a surprise at this, which only reveals the perverse ignorance of the sophisticated. Wherever the folk sings, whether in Negro spiritual or in Cowboy ballad or in sailor chantey or in Old World folk-song, it sings *in time*. Note the scientific precision of common speech! It sings in time, and its pleasure is derived from the heightened consciousness of time which can be gained only by dividing time, beating time, or, in other words, by creating rhythm. The stamping of feet and the clapping of hands, the systole and diastole of breath, and in all likelihood physiological processes obscurer and more vital, served to accompany that primitive singing voice or chorus, which inevitably arranged its words, too, in time, in rhythm-groups, in metre. Thus it is evident that the most elaborate patterns made of regular or recurrent rhythm-groups, such as the feet of classical prosody, are more primitive and more natural than those " numbers freed of law " which, quite mistakenly by the way, the ultra-sophisticated Horace attributed to Pindar. Prose, as every schoolboy used to know, is a very late art compared to verse. All primitive poetry is in fixed verse. A form that is neither verse nor prose is a late and learned invention.

As a poet of democracy, then, Whitman presented himself as a person of peculiar and perverse moral atmosphere, using as its means of expression a form as remote as possible from all tradition and normal instinct. Had that first edition of the " Leaves of Grass " been published in 1855, as of course it was not, with all the trumpeting of a modern best-seller, readers would still have preferred the romantic anthropology and jejune style of " Hiawatha, " published in the same year. And in a profoundly human, if not in a literary sense, they would have been in that year quite within their rights.

I shall not enter upon any strict inquiry into the origin or sources of Whitman's form. Ossian, the supposed lawlessness of classical Hebrew poetry, as translation exhibits it, blank-verse, perhaps the experiments of Southey and Shelley—all these, or any of them, would have sufficed to justify Whitman in his impatience with the discipline of verse and in his historically false but otherwise rather gallant notion that a true American poetry ought to break with all traditions of form as well as of substance. He, in fact, had occasional hankerings after rhythms and measures that hummed in his ears. Thus he begins " A Boston Ballad " :

To get betimes in Boston town
I rose this morning early,

and " Song of the Broad-Axe " thus :

Weapon shapely, *naked*, *wan*,
Head from the mother's bowels drawn,

and " Song of the Universal " in this stately fashion :

Come, *said the Muse*,
Sing me a song no poet yet has chanted,
Sing me the universal.

But he lacked both patience and desire, and perhaps the ability, to continue with the indicated rhythms. But it is not a little curious to observe how many of his lines, and these not the least beautiful, have the habit of falling into metrical structures of which he was probably not

wholly conscious. Among these lines may be found the Galliambic metre :

As a father to his going
takes his children along with him,

and dactylic measures :

Now we have met, we have looked, we are safe,

and trochaic ones :

Here the frailest leaves of me and yet my strongest lasting,

and hexameters :

We found our own, O my soul, in the calm and cool of the daybreak,

and shapelier pentameters :

Shooting in pulses of fire ceaseless to vivify all.

Iambic rhythms necessarily abound, as in :

Night of south winds—night of the large few stars,
Still nodding night—mad naked summer night,

or as in :

Thou who hast slept all night upon the storm,
Waking renew'd on thy prodigious pinions.

And there are beautifully wrought alexandrines, such as :

Singing with open mouths their strong melodious songs,

and :

Or the brown land and the blue sea for maps and charts.

I am seeking in no wise to depreciate the form that Whitman invented as his medium of expression. It is a genuine form; it is in his hands, if not in the hands of his disciples, a frequently great and noble form. I am seeking to point out that it was, of all conceivable forms, the least calculated " to teach the average man the glory of his daily walk and trade, " because it could not in the very nature of things reach that average man's ear, and that even Whitman, its inventor and only great practitioner, slipped back constantly despite himself into those rhythmic melodies that are so profoundly rooted in the nature of literature and of mankind itself.

No, Whitman's audience was restricted from the beginning and is not likely ever to be a very large one. Nor has he been hitherto well served by his critics and interpreters. Sullen contemptuousness about him has alternated with rapture. And the rapture has been worst of all, since, as in the case of Oscar Wilde, it proceeded far too often from a special and a morbid interest. Lately literary scholarship has turned its attention to Whitman. The results have not been happy. The facts about his life have been discovered and not frankly communicated; the appreciation of his work has been dull and formal. Thus at this late date a well-balanced word yet waits to be spoken.

He was, at least from this point of view, worthy of celebrating the life and death of Lincoln, in that, at his most lucid, he had a magnificent insight into the meaning, into the genuine hopes and inevitable dangers of the democratic experiment. How archaic that sounds to-day! But the wave of black reaction that, following the World War, engulfed first Europe, and then gradually rolled its evil waters westward, may recede, even as that other wave of tyranny and terror, following a great and disastrous war, receded first in the year 1830, next in the year 1848, and the words of Whitman, which to too many ears will seem mere literature to-day, will again assume their true character as life and practical wisdom. He desired them to have that character, for he shared with Emerson the exact knowledge of the creative spirit in the modern world : " The priest departs, the divine literatus comes. " But his ideas which form the background of his work and correct the impression left by his more undisciplined dythyrambs are to be found in the unjustly neglected prose of the " Democratic Vistas. "

Here he defines the purpose of democracy as helping man ultimately to " become a law, and series of laws unto himself"; and of government " to train communities... beginning with individuals and ending there again, to

rule themselves." Here, too, he makes it evident that he has no romantic notion of the natural goodness of the masses of mankind, and no very high opinion of the naturalness of their rights, but, "leaving the rest to sentimentalists," takes his stand for freedom and flexibility, variety of character and experience, despite the "appalling dangers of universal suffrage," as the only ultimately safe and possible way of life.

He is not blind to the fact that "society in these states is cankered, crude, superstitious and rotten." He likened the lust for material success to "the magician's serpent in the fable which ate up all the other serpents." He asked the crucial question : "Is there a great moral and religious civilization—the only justification of a great material one?" But his remedy for the evils he saw was more democracy, not less, an extension, not a restriction, of freedom, a full and happy chance for that democratic experiment from which he hoped well-being, moral and intellectual liberties, and at last creative spirits of a wealth and stature and character different from "those genteel little creatures" who called themselves American poets in his day.

The "Democratic Vistas" should be read before the poems, as both ideological background, I may repeat, and as corrective. For, wholly devoid as Whitman was of sureness of taste—witness his painfully shoddy use of French words—he let himself go in the poems with an unheard-of looseness of speech and of ideational logic. He is in the same poem noble and trivial, sagacious and foolish, capable of high concentration of speech and of the loosest babble. Moreover the "Democratic Vistas" have shadow, and the chief fault of the poems is their continuous glare. So much optimism calls forth the sharpest reaction, so much *fortissimo* makes one long for silence, so much indefiniteness of speech drives the reader to the extreme of demanding dry precision.

That is the trouble with the poems, that they have no

depth of colour, no density except at rare moments; their mercilessly luminous expanse wears out the eye. Not till the shadow of the tragic falls across a page, do we have severity or depth of tone. " Leaves of Grass " must be read in fragments and exists as literature only in fragments. A continuous reading of the book is one of the most enervating of literary experiences. The endless and repetitious pageant passes by, and though one admits the motive and reason of it to be one of the finest and most humane in all literature, a weariness sets in that after a while breeds rebellion and disgust. The parts, certain parts of Whitman's work, are not less than great; the whole is unendurable.

But how great the fragments, in truth, are, and how one is tempted, reading them again, to retract the quite necessary negative view of his work as a whole. In almost the same breath he writes :

All truths wait in all things

and :

Logic and sermons never convince,
The damp of the night drives deeper into my soul,

and :

I am the man, I suffer'd, I was there,

which is one of the great lines of all poetry, and :

Agonies are one of my changes of garments,
I do not ask the wounded person how he feels, I myself become the wounded person,
My hurts turn livid upon me as I lean on a cane and observe.

Out of these four quotations could be developed the exact nature of the messianic character, and also of the creative spirit in literature and of the modern necessary ultimate identity of the two. Equally deep and quite literally inspiring are the highest expressions of his individualism and of his desire to have all men share that heroic selfhood :

None but are accepted, none but shall be dear to me.

But the self that men are asked to assume is indeed heroic, for :

My call is the call of battle, I nourish active rebellion,
He going with me must go well-arm'd,
He going with me goes often with spare diet, poverty, angry enemies, desertions.

And this tonic note recurs again and again, and finds another perfect expression many years later in " Autumn Rivulets " :

For I am the sworn poet of every dauntless rebel the world over
And he going with me leaves peace and routine behind him
And stakes his life to be lost at any moment.

In apparent contradiction to this theme is Whitman's theme of universal acceptance, which is almost Russian in its chaotic levelling impulse. But this type of communistic passion is, as I have suggested before, often due to an abnormal channeling of erotic impulses. It is evidently so in Whitman. There is something coldly orgiastic about his long list of those who shall be equal to him and to any and to the best. But it is never long before he returns to his tonic note of individualism, of a democracy composed of freely consenting and varied personalities.

Produce great Persons, the rest follows...
Piety and conformity to them that like,
Peace, obesity, allegiance to them that like,
I am he who tauntingly compels men, women, nations,
Crying : Leap from your seats and contend for your lives!

And once more :

I swear nothing is good to me now that ignores individuals,
The American compact is altogether with individuals,
The only government is that which makes minute of individuals,
The whole theory of the universe is directed unerringly to one single individual—namely to You.

How fine and generous and tonic that strain is, how necessary and noble this call to individualism, and yet how futile and how insufficient it has proved itself to be in the years that have passed since Whitman's chief utterances! For from one point of view this singling out of the individual, any individual, and making of him the centre of things, is but the traditional Protestant doctrine of the preciousness of the salvation of each soul and of the responsibility of each soul to God. From another point of view—and this is by far the more potent and visible—Whitman's call to unshackled freedom has been accepted by groups of each younger generation since himself, who have liberated themselves from "piety and conformity," merely for the sake of liberation, but have never found other and newer objects to which to attach their love and loyalty. For Whitman and with him many others have failed to make the Nietzschean distinction between freedom *from* and freedom *for!* To detach oneself from a galling yoke is of supreme importance, if the light of a new ideal is already above the horizon. Otherwise the end is apt to be mere chaos. All thinking is a choosing among thoughts; all action is a selecting of a certain action among all possible ones. Every choice involves exclusion and hence the affirmation of a principle of choice. Life when sane in the higher sense is always guided. But Whitman proposes no new principle of guidance. And that is still another reason why he has failed as a poet by the very test which he so magnanimously proposed :

> The proof of a poet shall be sternly deferr'd till his country absorbs him as affectionately as he has absorbed it.

He had, as a matter of fact, deeper and serener moments than the doctrinal and declamatory ones even at their finest—moments of purely creative insight. In such moments he wrote :

> *And I will show that whatever happens to anybody it may be turned to beautiful results,*

and :

Do not call the tortoise unworthy because she is not something else,

and :

Whoever degrades another degrades me,

and :

There is to me something profoundly affecting in large masses of men following the lead of those who do not believe in men;

and the well-known hymnic dytyrambs, of which the finest, as well as the most perfectly sustained, are probably "Out Of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking" and "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd." Nor are there lacking simpler and more precisely wrought passages, such as the lovely idyll of his mother and the "Indian Woman," which forms the sixth section of "The Sleepers." There would be more of these to be singled out if Whitman, granting him of course, his style and manner, had had within him any certainty of touch. But he was not only essentially unlettered, but strangely insensitive and uncritical. He can write as only Emerson had written in " Days "—in a pure, eternal fashion :

Amid a transparent clear belt of ether yet left in the east,
Ascends large and calm the lord-star Jupiter,
And nigh at hand, only a very little above,
Swim the delicate sisters the Pleiades.

And he can write :

Eclaircisse the myths Asiatic, the primitive fables,

which brings the blush of vicarious shame to the reader's cheek,

or :

Yet O my soul supreme!
Knowst thou the joy of pensive thoughts? etc. etc.,

which is close to mere drivel.

America, in brief, has had to pay a heavy price for her most highly endowed poet being an unlettered man as well as a man of hopelessly eccentric personality. Nor

has this common man's voice, for reasons sufficiently clear, been able to reach the common people whom he loved, nor do those more recent monitions concerning the uses of freedom, which beat upon our hearts and consciences, permit the thoughtful and the responsible to give him that adherence which in the early years of this century seemed to be so completely his. Yet unforgettable when all deductions have been made, especially in view of what our literature was up to his time, and unforgettable together with Lincoln in view of the evil authoritarian sophistries of recent years, must be not only the chanter of those great hymnic passages, but the man who profoundly and truly never despaired of liberty, who believed with all his morbid heart that " whoever walks a furlong without sympathy, walks to his own funeral drest in his shroud, " and who was dedicated without wavering or falseness to " the good old cause, the great idea, the progress and freedom of the race. "

PAULINE LEADER

AUNT MARY LOUISE'S LOVER

Aunt Mary Louise was more than twice the age of Mary Louise, but when they walked out on Monument Avenue, Mary Louise walked as gravely as the Aunt. Aunt Mary Louise was very tall and very slender and dressed always in black,fine stuff falling to her ankles; the impression was that, although the black dresses might have been arranged in various styles, they were all the same. A white net, fashion of a bygone day, covered her throat, although it was unnecessary. Aunt Mary Louise's throat was as firm as Mary Louise's.

Mary Louise and the Aunt looked curiously alike, for all that their ages were so far apart. Mary Louise had the Aunt's white pointed face, cheeks faintly hollow, eyes of a faint blueness, the same short nose, the same delicately pursed mouth. Her dresses, too, although they were of different colours, seemed to be arranged in the same style all the time. They fitted her body, almost as tall as the Aunt's, in the same virginal way.

Aunt Mary Louise and Mary Louise were French in a town of first generation Americans. Old French, Monument Avenue said respectfully beneath its breath. They had an air that kept people—even the Monument Avenuers who had money and leisure, a New York home in the winter, and considered themselves emancipated from the struggle of everything first generation-y; even they were kept at a distance. The Aunt was very polite to them, but she seldom visited or received visitors. It

was subtly understood after awhile among Monument Avenue households, that the Aunt and Mary Louise really did not need or want any one.

They were very devoted to each other. Mary Louise, although she had gone to the town high-school, had made no friendships among the young people. They did not understand her and she did not understand them. So that after almost twenty years in the town they had only one friend: the Father of the Catholic church.

He had tried to introduce the Aunt to other members of the church when she had first come to town with Mary Louise, but she had ever so politely evaded him. Still, she and the Father felt a mutual respect when he understood at last that Aunt Mary Louise preferred to be alone with the child to whom she gave all her time, although their friendship did not progress further than delicate fragmentary intercourse. Sometimes, the Father wondered if he knew so much about the Aunt's life after all. He seemed to know a great deal, then he asked himself if he knew more than that there was an Aunt Mary Louise and a Mary Louise, who attended church regularly and were always quiet, whether he saw them in their drawing-room or in a pew of his church. He knew that Mary Louise was the child of a brother. The mother had died at its birth, and the father, crazed with agony, had gone away to lose himself, giving the child to his sister to be brought up. The Aunt had been unhappy at home and had come here with the child, so that she might be alone. She had not been more than twenty-five then, but the Father could not remember that she had changed any since, either spiritually or physically. So much he knew of the facts, but what of the inner life of the two? It distressed him that they apparently did not care to confide in him.

Once he had dreamed that the Aunt and Mary Louise were one person. The morning after, he asked himself why he could have thought such a thing—even in a dream.

His dreams had always been as rational as his physical waking existence. Was it because the Aunt's face was so like Mary Louise's or was it that Mary Louise's was so like the Aunt's? Mary Louise, whose emotions were as grave and monotonous and barely handled as the white gloves she never wore more than once before they went to the laundry. Or was it of the Aunt he was thinking? Mary Louise, after all, was a young girl; she was waiting for the lover who was to awaken her. It could be seen in her face, but whose face, exactly, was before his mind's eye? Was the Aunt also waiting? The Father had believed, at first that the Aunt had had a tragic love affair in her youth. But the Aunt's face had not attained that peacefulness that comes with the years following a youthful tragedy. It was not peaceful. Neither was it sad. It was nothingness; an emptiness waiting to be filled, like Mary Louise's. And the Aunt's face was so sure in its waiting. That was what puzzled the Father. What was the Aunt waiting for? Surely not a lover, like Mary Louise? The Father relinquished the dream for parish duties, deciding that he was making a mystery where none was.

That afternoon was the one when he took tea with Aunt Mary Louise and Mary Louise in their drawing-room. As he watched their faces, so similar, the dream of the night recurred. Almost it was like another dream, the drawing-room softly lit, the three of them, their slenderness, his own fat substantialness, his sing-song voice that was like a drone talking about the gladiolas outside the drawing-room windows. Feeling as if he were being cast under a spell, the Father's drone became sharper.

"It seems selfish to keep all this beauty to oneself," he said. "No one on the hill has such a garden or such gladiolas."

"We could throw open the gardens to the people for

a day. It would be something to remember when we are in France."

"You are going to France?" the Father asked, forgetting the gladiolas.

"When I was just the age of Mary Louise, my father and mother took me there for a year. I have never forgotten it."

"Mary Louise is glad?" the Father asked.

"Oh, yes, Father," the girl's voice was no louder than a breath. Or was it the Aunt speaking? The Father mentally shook himself and returned to the sane, obvious gladiolas.

The result of the talk was that the gardens were thrown open for two days. People came—people who worked, and people who had stopped working and were trying to be as graceful with their leisure as the Aunt. They came more out of curiosity to see the Aunt, who was almost a legend, than from any desire to see the flowers. The Aunt understood this perfectly, and so did the Father.

A week later the Aunt and Mary Louise left for France. They were gone a year. Once every month the Father received a letter from the Aunt. Her written words with their delicate precise formations were so like her spoken ones issuing from delicate precise lip formations that it was hard to understand that this was a letter and not herself.

They had not remained long in Paris; they were motoring through Provincial France. Paris had changed much, but the provinces were the same: some former villages were now thriving cities, but essentially all was the same. Even the Aunt's reactions were the same, the Father saw; she too had remained essentially the same since that time when she had been taken over the traditional tour of France by her parents as she was now taking Mary Louise.

One day they appeared again on Monument Avenue,

their white pointed faces a bit more white and pointed. And waiting, ever patiently waiting. More than ever the Father felt that sense of waiting in their faces.

It was the dress that did it. Mary Louise's dress from Paris. The Aunt still wore her black things, but Mary Louise had blossomed out. The new dresses from Paris made Monument Avenue sit up. For the first time Mary Louise acquired an identity of her own instead of being merely an outline beside the Aunt. It was remarked now that she had beautiful legs and feet and that her body was rounded and soft as well as tall. In the new dresses one did not notice her tallness.

One day Mrs. Malcolm took the liberty of calling on the Aunt. They were neighbours, Mrs. Malcolm said. She had taken a house on Monument Avenue and intended spending her summers in it. Mr. Malcolm was still in the city, but her son Robert was with her. Might she bring Robert with her the next time she called? Or perhaps the Aunt and Mary Louise would have tea with her? They had a fine tennis court, and Robert and Mary Louise could have many games on it.

The Aunt and Mary Louise returned the visit.

" Mary Louise and Robert make a fine looking couple," Mrs. Malcolm said to the Aunt over the tea-cups, as they watched the young people toss balls to each other.

" Tennis is as good as anything, " Mrs. Malcolm laughed.

" We must go, " said the Aunt, finally.

" May I call soon ? " asked Robert shaking hands with the Aunt and Mary Louise.

Because the mother repels me is no reason why I should discriminate against the son.... The Aunt hoped that Mrs. Malcolm and Robert would come over for tea soon.

Mary Louise and Robert smiled behind the elders. Where had Mary Louise learned to smile that way?

Robert came often to see the Aunt and Mary Louise. He had somewhere acquired the pure French the Aunt

had taught the young girl, and the three held long self-possessed conversations in that language. Or rather it was the Aunt and Robert who talked, but Mary Louise did not feel left out.

Mary Louise and Robert became lovers. They would marry soon. People said it would be very sad for the Aunt to be left alone. The Father came over and talked to her about it. She could relinquish Mary Louise without fear of harm coming to her. Robert would be as tender as the Aunt had been. She must not be sad. It was the law of life. The Father left her with the strange thought that Aunt Mary Louise had not been listening.

They should have grown to look less like each other, the Father thought a little peevishly. He did not like mysteries. If only everything was as the road to God, so straight and clear one could not lose one's way The Aunt should have been left behind with her waiting. Instead, her face was as radiant as the girl's. As if she too had found her lover at last. She is happy because Mary Louise is, the Father thought. But he was not satisfied.

Aunt Mary Louise watched the lovers. She felt a little remote from their happiness, but not sad. She knew that they did not consciously mean to shut her out. It was the law of life, as the Father had said.

There were no longer the three of them talking together; Robert came to the house every day, but it was Mary Louise whom he came to see. Often he took her away for long walks and drives. Even the " movies." Marie Louise was growing to act and look like every other young girl. It was not often now that the Aunt and Mary Louise were seen walking together on Monument Avenue.

Then Aunt Mary Louise felt her remoteness leaving. She began to listen as eagerly as Mary Louise for Robert's

footsteps. After the boy had greeted the Aunt, he and Mary Louise would go into the sun-parlour, while the Aunt remained in the drawing-room pretending to read. But it began to seem, now, as if Robert stayed in the drawing-room with her, talking in the language she loved. Robert would be seated opposite her. She could see him clearly, although everything except his voice and his beautifully shaped head were somehow unimportant to her.

It was she whom Robert came to see, or perhaps there were two Roberts, the one who came into the drawing-room to see only her, and the other who went into the sun-parlour with Mary Louise.

It was in this way that Aunt Mary Louise was not left behind with her waiting as it should have been.

Aunt Mary Louise told Robert many things. She had never been lonely, but Robert had an identity that Mary Louise had never seemed to possess for her. It was about Mary Louise that she wanted to talk to Robert after he had been coming to the drawing-room for several weeks. She had not been conscious that she wanted to talk about Mary Louise to any one, but now she must talk to Robert to explain as clearly as she could what she had not told even the Father. Her whole life seemed now a preparation for this twilight moment with Robert when she might tell him about Mary Louise. She wanted to tell Robert that Mary Louise was her own child, but that she could never think so, could never bring herself to realize that Mary Louise had come forth from her own body. Not even the actual birth had made it real. She loved Mary Louise dearly, but she wanted to explain to Robert for whom she had been waiting so many years, why she was Aunt Mary Louise and not Mary Louise's mother.

She opened her mind and brought out pictures of twenty years ago for Robert to see. Mary Louise's father. She had gone walking as usual in the woods of her parents' country estate to get away from people whose

ways she did not understand. She had no desire for social life or marriage. She had wanted to be a nun, but her people, worldly people, had not comprehended. Perhaps it was for the best that they had not allowed her to follow her own desires. She had since discovered that she was not religious in the true sacrificial meaning of the word. She was not very interested in other people. She felt no desire to aid them. Religion was an old dream committed to paper for her. Where she had finally found peace for herself was in the pictures and poems by the mystics. They could make articulate, and yet not repellantly clear, her own visions.

She was not afraid to walk alone here among these trees and wild vegetation. There was a man who looked after the small game to protect them from the hunters. She had seen him several times during her walks and had spoken to him. He seemed well-educated. Now after all these years she could not say anything about his appearance. In fact, she could not remember ever observing his features distinctly. He had not been with them long and immediately afterward he had gone away.

That day she had chanced upon him and he had fallen into step beside her. He had walked beside her as an equal. They had stopped a moment to watch a sprinting doe. He had turned his head from the doe and put his hands on her shoulders very gently and lightly. His eyes came nearer to her own; his body and mouth coming down hard on hers had yet been curiously gentle and light. It was as if he understood her dream and was taking care not to break its shell. She had not struggled away from his body, so gentle and light. That would have indeed broken her dream.

Afterwards, in her father's house, those few minutes with the man seemed to have had no reality. She tried to recall them, in an effort to assure herself that they had indeed happened to her. And she had failed. If Mary Louise's father had had no reality for her, how then could

she feel that Mary Louise was her own daughter? No one, no one except Robert, had ever broken into her dream.

She had told her parents later. She had made them realize that there was nothing to be done. When Mary Louise was born, she had come here to live, and as the years went by she had seemed to grow farther and farther away from Mary Louise, although physically no contact could have been closer. But for days at a time she had not been conscious of her. Then on other days she had forgotten her own self, and there had been just Mary Louise moving about the house, and *she* had been Mary Louise. Mary Louise was so like her!

After that confession to Robert, he seemed to become less real to Aunt Mary Louise. Sometimes he failed to come into the drawing-room; there was only one pair of footsteps, and these went directly to Mary Louise in the sun-parlour. But Aunt Mary Louise's face did not lose its radiance. Aunt Mary Louise had found her lover, and once found he could never be lost.

A. L. ROWSE

NECK OF LAND

Over the hill's neck
King of the land I walk
Under the moon.
Those are the eyes that follow me,
But in vain, but vain
        as the thunder of the sea,
        the grateful folds of the cliffs.
If a foot should stumble,
There would be an end perhaps :
The long silver leagues of surf
Leap up to receive me.
Into what hands then would I commend the spirit?

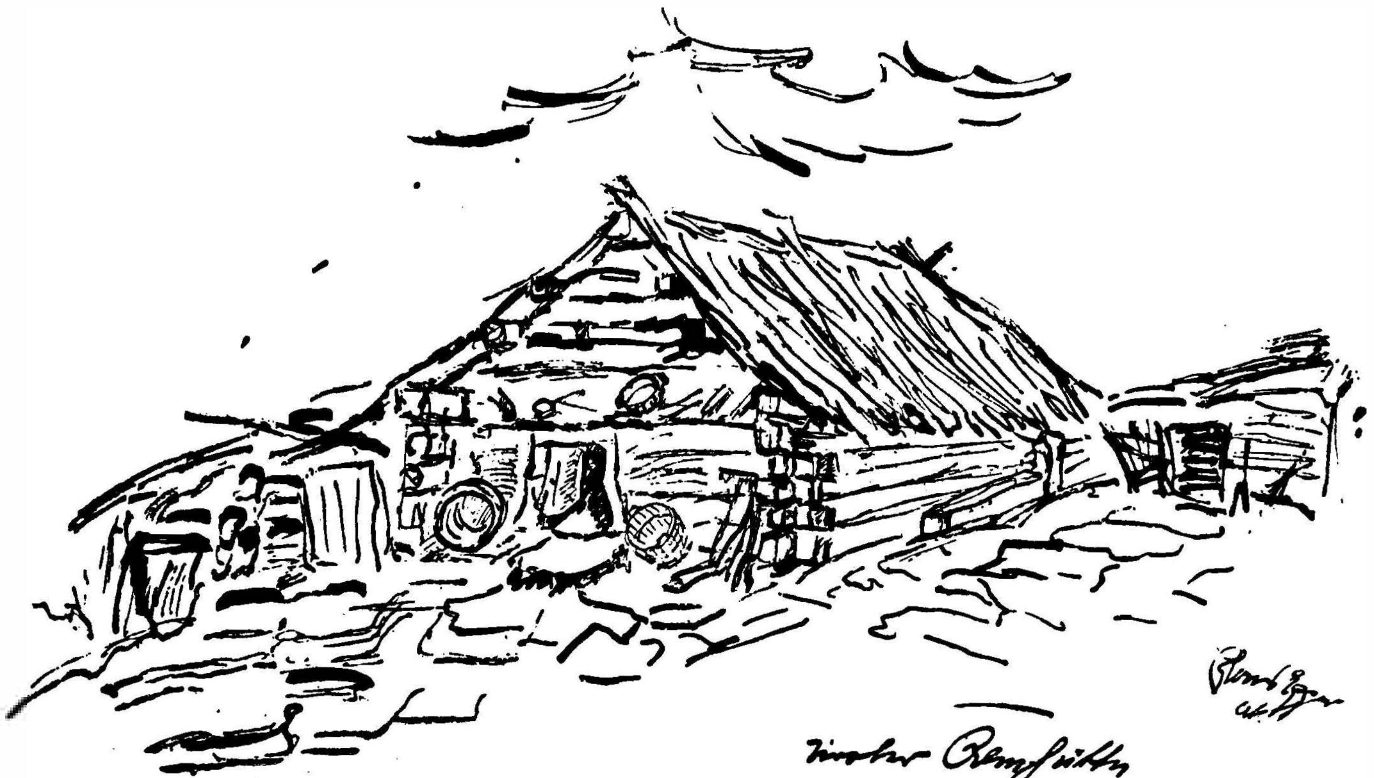
Hurt by no possible thought,
Wounded by undreamed-of ends,
This is my will that speaks.

A dumb beast sheltering under a wall,
A broken gate, the faces of drowned men
Turned upwards to the innocent surface of the sea,
A lonely heron fishing in a creek,
The labouring spirit of the woods,
A roof that the wind sings through :
These would be greater content,
Less sinister than
This bruised reed

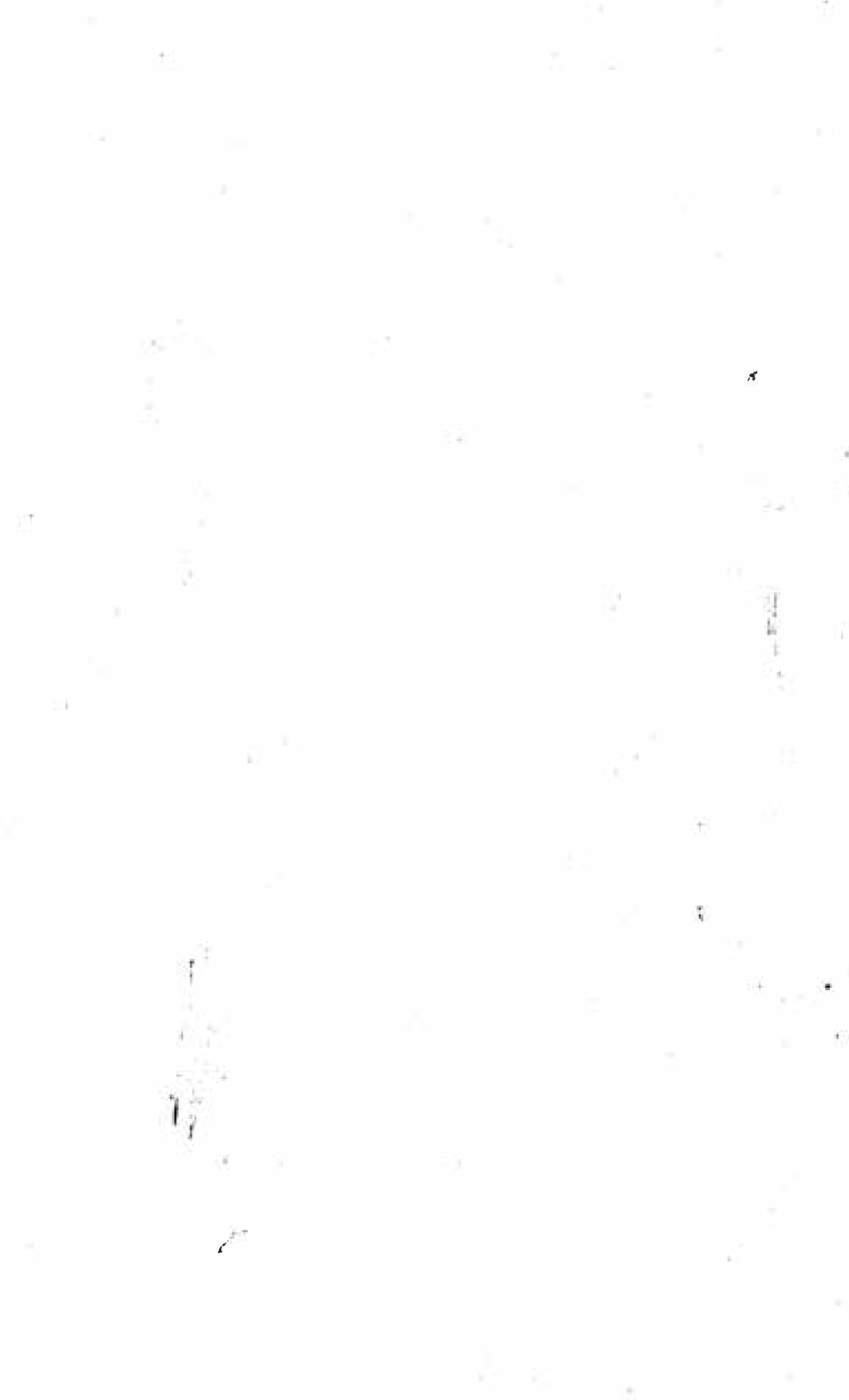
A. L. ROWSE

DREAM

The dream begins to stir again
In the hollow caverns of the winter mind,
In the secret places of the worn brain.
(Life is impossible because quotidian.)
Now in the Wittenberg Platz, on a summer noon,
The open balconies yawn to the sudden sun,
The trees gleaming in the little wind,
And lights brush the brave geraniums on the stall.
These fragments have I shored up against the ruin
That time will bring upon us and upon this love.
But time that ruins also heals
And perhaps will lay a finger to console; or *so you say,*
As if this should be for consolation
In the cold gradations of decay.
What are these soft autumnal leaves
That come drifting across my tired eyes
Drifting, nor cease to beat
With slow insistent concatenation
Upon the brain?
For all is not yet dull
Under the different skull,
Although innumerable webs are woven
To net the vanishing dream.



Drawing, *by Hans Eggar*



NORMAN MACLEOD

BLOOD OF A BODY

This is a story out of a simple progression.

They called him Chilluns because they brought him to the promised land. Saharas and sunsets like the Blood of the Lamb, rain-washed with atmosphere. The mountains were gemset with halos from a living Christ, and the snow of clouds hung miraculously between the pulsing desert and the skies.

" Independent as a hog on ice. " He had read it.

Molecules of thought were superman weary. And his brain was a red, pulsating tangle from adolescence.

He remembered twenty years of life and all the girls he had wanted to caress but had never spoken to. The other worlds.

Now he was hard and fortified with Nietzsche. And this was the promised land.

Down in the old part of town (the Mexicans), he took a fog-green room enclosed with a barrage of nightmare wall-paper. And his books and unformed philosophies maintained a stolid front in an alien aura. He was ensconced within his personality. Like a suit of clothes to fit a catalogue of circumstances.

And the prostitutes careening past his window, scarlet flames of their copyrighted colours against his dusky window-panes. The air of the dusty street yellow as fine tequila. And the faint aroma of opium. He needed corn liquor to liberate him from his fear of

documented disease (the books of his step-father, a doctor in Montana, that he had read as a child).

He leaned against the wall and time passed.

Jesus.

He put the gallon jug between him and the wall and with the sure succession of his drinking, the room receded and was lost in space. He liked the jazz. It tingled in his spine to the bottom of his brain. Anything to drown the nasal music that the Mexicans were singing, making him dizzily sad and arrogantly morbid.

For Chilluns was a writer and adolescent sensitive. Nothing that he ever wrote, but life. It was like Evelyn Scott in Far Brazil. Sent poems to an editor and the editor told her that she not lived. And spoke highly of the same ones after they had appeared in some anthology.

Jesus.

And Chilluns was a writer.

Fog-weary did not the haze of life obscure his brain? If he could only penetrate to clear air until the world and he himself were like a shimmering plain at sunset, his thought inevitabilities pointing their arms of indication like Joshua trees. As patent.

Nothing would ever occur within his brain.

Unless he could rinse himself in some girl's body. Clearing the inhibitions like the sun the desert. Until his mind gave smoke mirages to the sky. For truth was the explanation of falsified imagination. Chilluns stirred uneasily and the room shifted like the world beneath an airplane.

This could not go on for ever. He must come to terms with some woman. They were all around on this man's street. He must be washed in the blood of a body.

He staggered into the street, closing the door behind him. The dust rose up and choked his brain.

A face stared up at him like a headlight out of night.

Jesus.

He would have to go back into his room where the sun would not beat down upon his forehead.

Blood of the Lamb....

The nightmare wall-paper hedged him around and he fell upon his face.

HERBERT READ

" LE TEMPS RETROUVÉ "

The limbs remember blood and fire.
A hurt that's done may in the mind
Sink and lose identity;

For the mind has reasons of its own
For covering with an eyeless mask
Marks of mortality.

The limbs remember fire and joy
And flesh to flesh is benison
Of only entity;

But the mind has reasons of its own
For circumventing life and love's
Sodality.

JACK WOODFORD

THE QUALITY OF MERCY

Martin Drake looked into the corridor. A guard was pacing up and down. Farther down the tier of cells a man was singing the *Prisoner's Song* over and over again, insanely, in a dull monotone. Martin regretted that he could not get at the man. Since he was to die to-morrow anyway, they couldn't soak him any more of a rap than they had already given him. ...And what a swell story it would make. " Condemned Murderer Slays Cell-mate. " He'd be on the front page of every paper in the state. He could foresee what intricate discussions the editorial writers would have concerning the deed. What law is there, they would ask, to punish a man already condemned to be executed, for murdering a cell-mate? The editorial writers would say there is no law; and then the city editor would send a cub out to interview clergymen, and they would say that there was a Higher Law than the... but, what the hell; what was the use of getting on the front pages in a state where there wasn't a newspaper worth the powder to blow it to hell? Martin cursed his fate, and his bad judgement which predicated it for the ten thousandth time. In the first place, since he had to take it on the lam, why in hell couldn't he have picked out a first class place like Chi— instead of coming out to this lousy middle-western——! And, being on the lam, and in strange, unfriendly territory, why did he have to get mixed up in——!

If it had happened in New York now. Jez! They *had* newspapers in New York. ...And, even without

jack, he'd uv got a break, because the tabs would have made it front page stuff—with a swell sex angle on it, like there was—and some lawyer, seeing the publicity possible, would uv defended him for nothing.

But the idea of being already condemned to die in the morning, and hence beyond——! Hell, he could not only bump off that hop head who kept singing the *Prisoner's Song*, but he could bump off that flat-foot guard; bump off anybody that came near him, and what could anybody do about it? The idea expanded momentarily. It absorbed his mind, to the exclusion of all else, and for this reason it encouraged him. It was the only idea he had conceived since being put into one of the death-cells that *had* absorbed his thought, and driven out those other thoughts that were threatening to keep him from going to the chair in such a way as to force the newspapers to comment upon his guts. The more he thought of the chair——! And in a lousy, tenth-rate state where they might not have sufficient power; where maybe they'd *have* to fry him for half an hour, like they had that poor devil in——!

He concentrated on the new notion. Maybe he couldn't kill nobody, at that. But he could do something else. If he took a last punch at that judge, for instance... if there was any way to get the judge within——! And then the idea burst effulgent, splendid, perfect. Martin all but shouted for joy. The Governor. The Governor. That pious son of a——! This was the capital of the state. The Governor's mansion wasn't more than a few blocks down the street. The lousy——who'd refused to consider a plea for——! The Governor! If he could just bust the pious louse on the nose before——! Then they could fry him for half an hour and he'd chuckle at them. The Governor. Holy Jez! It was front page stuff. The A. P. and the I. N. S. would pick it up.

" New York Gangster Punches Governor's Nose Before Going To Chair. "

He got up and strode back and forth across his cell, recalling what his tenth-rate lawyer had told him about the Governor. A pious louse! That was the lawyer's exact way of——! An elder or a deacon, or whatever it was they called the crooks who——in churches! A governor in a church! What a laugh. And the lawyer had said he was a drunkard of parts. The Governor. He was a reform governor. Elected on a reform ticket. Swell. Martin had met reformers before. Suddenly Martin called the stalking death-watch. The pasty-faced, epicene guard came to the cell door hopefully. Martin wasn't a bad-looking boy, at twenty-two.

" Listen, buddy, " Martin whined. " I been thinking.... It got to go to-morrow. Maybe there is something to this here now Hereafter stuff. I wanna square myself—see? But I ain't trusting none of you guys—see? I been in stir before. I know what youse guys are. And I ain't trusting no district attorney neither—see? Nor no judge. I slipped both breeds dough many's the time. But this here now Governor Edwards.... Even my mouth-piece tells me he's a right guy, even if he was hard on me. He goes to church and all that. I ain't never been to church, but I know them that goes is decent; and even if I ain't decent myself, I got respect for 'em. You can tell the warden I got a big pay-off to spill; but I ain't rattling no cup till I see the Governor himself... see; nobody else listens in when I squeal but the Governor himself. When I squawk there'll be a lot of hot dough stacked in safety deposit boxes around this state get back where it came from—get me? But I ain't takin' no chances on no dicks, or phoney lawyers or judges—I know all them guys by heart. I'd rather let the dough rot where it is than let that district attorney that framed me over the bumping off

of that skirt, and that lousy judge that helped him, get hold of it. The Governor only—see? And you ain't got no clouts in this state I ain't taken in N. Y. Don't think youse guys can make me squawk no other way."

The guard hurried to the night superintendent's office; there was a colloquy. The guard was all for putting the clouts on him; the guard got a kick out of watching the clouts put on anybody—especially a nice-looking young guy like him. But the night superintendent had sufficient brains to stain very delicate litmus paper.

"You couldn't clout nothing out of that guy," he objected. "He's been through the mill in N. Y. He could take anything; and, besides, we can't have him all marked up for the big show to-morrow."

"I know somethin' wouldn't leave a mark," the guard insisted, "and yet——" He was almost panting eagerness.

"Nix," the night superintendent objected. "He might have a bum heart and kick off under it; and some lousy wise guy might yell for an autopsy and give us hell. I'll call the chief, and put it up to him. If he wants to call the Governor, it's jake with me; and if he don't it's jake." The guard went off disappointedly to inform Martin of what was going on.

When the Governor heard that the tough egg from N. Y. had got religion, his simple soul was overjoyed. He went to the penitentiary and took his Bible with him. The same Bible out of which his mother had read to him, while he was seated at her knee, years ago.

When he walked into the condemned-cell block, Martin was amazed. The old goat looked a lot like his old man. Suddenly Martin was conscious of the fact that *he* looked something like the Governor. The resemblance was not one that any one would have found striking; but there was something of the same cast

of countenance, shape of head, set of the eyes, colour, expression.

"My poor boy," the Governor purred; "I am sorry that I had to deny your plea. But duty is stern, sometimes; and one must do what he thinks is the best, not alone for individuals, but for society as a whole."

"Sure, I gotcha," Martin sniffled, in his best Salvation Army manner; the manner in which he appealed to the kind hearts of societies of ladies who messed around court-rooms to fool with the cases of good-looking young men in difficulties with the unreasoning, blind, revengeful law.

"Would you like to have me read to you from out of my mother's Bible?" the Governor asked.

"Naw," Martin told him; and then through a dim association of symbols; the Bible (his mother had often read to *him* out of one), the slight resemblance of the Governor to his father (his father had been a politician too), came the bursting in Martin's brain of the largest idea he had ever had.

"Listen, Governor," he said, leaning close and whispering: "I ain't asking you not to burn me; I know that ain't any use. And I ain't asking you to believe me. I'm just telling you something. The reason I took it on the lam for this state when I got hot in N. Y. was that I was born here. An' you can believe it or not, just as you like, you're my father. My mother told——"

In a blistering rage the Governor fled the cell block. Back at the Executive Mansion, he called Jerry Flynn, state legislator, who had gotten him out of many things before. Jerry arrived on the fly. They went into executive session in the Governor's private room, with a bottle of bourbon before them on the table, and the Bible dejectedly off to one side.

"He can't do nothing," Jerry urged. "What can he do? Even if he told people; even if the newspapers printed it, and they wouldn't, nobody'd believe it.

There's no proof. But why didn't you ask him for the details ? "

" I didn't want to be seen talking to him that long. I wanted to get away from him. I didn't want to have nothing to do with him. He gives me the creeps. The lousy——*does* look like me. "

" Do you think he really *is* your son ? "

" I don't know. "

" Well, why didn't you ask him about his mother ? "

" What for ? Do you think I can remember every good-for-nothing woman who led me astray when I was young and foolish ? "

" Well, what are you going to do about it ? "

" I'm going to pardon him, and claim that he was framed, and see that he goes back to N. Y. Let them hang him for something there; it won't be on my soul, anyway. "

" Your what ? " asked Jerry, reaching for the bottle.

" You can grin all you like, " the Governor said; " but there *is* something... something... and do you think I want to die with the blood of one of my own sons on my hands ? "

" But the papers will—— "

" That's what I got you here for; you got to take care of them. "

" It'll be hard, " Jerry warned.

" You got to do it somehow. "

" Oh, all right, I suppose I can, " Jerry grouched. He poured out two glasses while the Governor hunted for a pardon blank.

H. J. GRISEWOOD

RIGOR

(1)

The walls had slacked their stiffening and fell prone
Slipped off unheard.
Each block crouching low under the humpy green.
And cowering still, now from klaxon conch,
They grate through share a skewing interdict.

Their mortared straps slid silk on skin to floor.
Mules tore this formless fabric scurrying
To bear and seat the face before the light
Where fingers quickly fard the furrows
Slap away the mournful messengers.

And now no grass grown ruck to mourn
The silly sheep bound away to the hills.

(2)

No bat-jays shriek the buckling floors
Of public halls
The splitting concrete cores, its own anserine cackle,
Shivers through a steel shell and shews a gooseflesh skin.
In any case their mates are all hid underground
Not in the silent caves
Where rails no longer gleam
And where from shoddy ribbed and sweated roof
Street pus has dropped and caked on to rigid stair.

(This wound was seen by a few eyes
Who tugged their fleecy bodies to the hills. Good tegs.)

But stacked in pits provided by the state
Stones of exact but still unmeasured weight
Press into lovely breasts and spill live food.

(3)

And now each strut and stress of steel
Stridulates in ecstasy.
Gripped membranes hum with pent up leaping granules.
Concrete phalanges quiver to support
Their giggling toppling clown of girdered masonry.

At once they all stoop down
And roar in agony of dissolution
Tearing dishevelled heads that shew
Attic pots and blocks of plaster grapes
Oestrous for their shingly beds
Hurl to lath-choking rents.

Their partnered opposites
Curve their white flat fronts
Wrench out of nature
Hidden rust proof rods.

And then made monstrous with a sudden bulge
Pout out their new made bellies to abort
Each an oblivious trickling of dust
And groan as cows calving dead.

Falling steeples jab the graveyard earth
Plough up the twitching flesh yet fresh and wet
But soon seared and done hard in the curling sun.
The reek creeps along the rocky street
Where in a hush the crash of cornice
Gaps a row of maisonnettes.

No wet ooze left to flood all flat
Dearth of wet bakes the cracknel earth
Dried stickle dead backs on a graph ground
Biltong heaped with iron in a held hard groin-wreck.

(4)

Man fleecy in a greasy shift
Howl away in the hills
Working the clacking tongue
Spit in the sand
Shake sudor from your fleece
Rear up and gather
Even a little fungus from a pit.

There is order
Look at it.

And then come down, number and sort
And succour the stones to packs
Lick into round shapes and all about dash juice.

T. O. BEACHCROFT

JOEY'S LAW CASE

With pegs in her mouth and her stout red arms stretched above her head, Mrs. Plowman was busy hanging her washing on the line. It was a windy day, and as she struggled with the last billowing white sheet, she became aware that her next-door neighbour was watching her. Mrs. Plowman pushed the last peg into position and turned round.

"Good-morning, Mary," said the other woman, coming to the fence.

"Good-morning, Lou." Mrs. Plowman spoke a little shortly. She was not sure that she wanted a chat this morning. She couldn't abide other people shoving their oar in, and talking about her family. That was one reason, perhaps, why Mrs. Plowman's line of washing, which ended in the garden, always began in the scullery, or even in the kitchen. There were some things you ought to be allowed to keep to yourself.

"I see your Joey's home again," remarked Lou.

"That's right," said Mrs. Plowman, "'e's been at 'ome since last week."

"Since last week," said Lou reflectively, "I only noticed yesterday as 'e was about."

She waited hopefully, and finding Mrs. Plowman did not offer further details, added, "And left 'is wife behind too? Seems a pity 'e don't get on with her a bit better. I was saying to my 'usband only last night it seemed such a shame on you and Mr. Plowman."

"Well, Lou," said Mrs. Plowman, "there's two ways

of looking at everything, ain't there? To tell you honest, I'm glad to 'ave Joey away from her."

"Reelly," said Lou, "You don't think she's——" Her voice trailed off suggestively.

" I don't think anything beyond what my own eyes and sense can tell me; and that's something. " Mrs. Plowman collected the unused clothes-pegs; then, hoisting the empty basket on her hip with one arm, she came slowly over to the fence. Perhaps it would be best after all to tell Lou her own mind about it, since people were bound to gas.

"Yes," said Mrs. Plowman, "that girl Gracie ain't no good. She won't never make Joey a good wife, and often I've felt like praying as he could be rid of her, I have really. The first time as I ever saw her I had my suspicions. "

" Your Joey was in the Guards Regiment then, wasn't 'e? "

" Yes, 'e was. And I wish 'e could 'ave stayed there. They won't 'ave them married below a certain age—and Joey was only twenty-one then. Well, 'e brings Gracie along 'ome one day and when I sees the girl I ses to myself, 'We'll be in for a peck 'o trouble with you my lady. ' "

" How was that, then? "

" Well, " said Mrs. Plowman, warming to her subject, "as soon as ever I clapped eyes on her, I ses to myself, 'Ullo, my gal, you look a bit uncanny.' I haven't been a married woman these five-and-twenty years without knowing what *that* look means. ' Well, come along in and take your coat off, ' I told her, and then as soon as she done that, I took a good look at her, and I thought to myself, '*Well*, Miss Gracie, if you ain't six months gone, *I* never 'ad one. ' "

" And you've 'ad ten. "

" Indeed, I 'ave, " replied Mrs. Plowman with gusto. " Well, that was a nice sort of start if yer like. Not

that I was judging her fer that, Lou; it ain't the first time that's 'appened and it won't be the last neither. But Mr. Plowman was upset if ever a man was. 'Don't you talk so, Dad,' I told him, 'it's as much your son's fault as it is 'ers anyhow, and the sooner Joey marries 'er and gets a room now the better; or we'll 'ave 'er falling to bits in my front parlour one 'o these days. ' I wouldn't 'ave it put off, not another week. "

" Well, you surprise me, Mary, " said Lou. " I'd no idea. Though I must say I thought the marriage was all rather quick and quiet. I did mention that to my 'usband. "

" I didn't mean you to 'ave no idea either," said Mrs. Plowman, "but since that's not the end of it by a long chalk, I'm telling you wot reelly 'appened. "

Lou nodded and made sympathetic noises with her tongue. " That Gracie always seemed a nice enough girl to me, " she said. "A nicely spoken girl I mean. "

" Too nicely spoken, if you ask me. That soft tongue of hers would talk any one round. Oh, yes, I know what you mean well enough, Lou. Gracie talks like a lady. I'm quite aware of that. And she fancies 'erself a bit too; that's just 'arf the trouble, she fancies she's too good for Joey. She's nothing but fag-smoking and drooping round. She was brought up to be a typist, and had a job in some office once, but what's the use of dwelling on that now? She wasn't too good for my Joey, when she felt like having a fling and wanted him for her fancy man. And she wasn't too good for him when she'd got herself into a mess and had a nice fright and wanted a husband, neither. Wot's the sense of playing the lady now? If only 'e'd never *started* with 'er!"

Mrs. Plowman sighed heavily and looked round the yard. It seemed to her suddenly to be looking its worst; grey, damp and ugly. She was always fighting for her family and they were always defeating her own

efforts for their happiness in one way or another.

"And what's' appened to Gracie now?" asked Lou.

"Just what I always 'oped would 'appen. She's left 'im and gone off to her people, and good riddance too. That's why I don't want people to go saying it's a pity they can't get on and why don't Joey take 'er back and all the rest of it. 'E's too weak; that's his trouble."

Mrs. Plowman, returning to the kitchen, found Joey sitting by the fire. He was studying some piece of paper. He was doing piece work for a painter just now, and this being the winter, things were slack. To look at him you would not have said Joey was weak. He was a hulking young fellow, well set up and schooled by drill. Like his mother's, his face was red and plump, but just now it looked lifeless and depressed.

" What 'ave you got there? " said Mrs. Plowman, looking over his shoulder and seeing a bright pink form.

"It's a summons, Mum."

"A summons! Good 'eavens, whatever for? Now, Joey, this is something as you 'aven't been straight with me about. What 'ave you been doing? "

" It's not me, " said Joey.

Hastily taking the pink paper from him, she sat down and glanced through it. At the top she found the words, " Petty Sessions. " The next thing that caught her eye was " In the King's name. " In spite of the puzzle of legal phrasing, there was no mistaking what it meant. It was a summons to Joey to appear at the court at Aldershot for desertion of his wife.

" I don't see it. I don't see it, " she muttered again and again. " It isn't right. It's been her doing all along. And then they summons you as if you'd been doing something wrong. What 'ave you done to be summonsed, I should like to know? "

Joey shook his head.

" She must 'ave been stuffing then up with some lies

or other. You can't tell what she might 'ave said."

"Well, its downright wicked," Mrs. Plowman went on, " after we've been so unscrupulous to do the right thing. Doesn't that go for nothing?"

Mrs. Plowman had to hurry away. She had a busy day in front of her. She had a busy day every day. In addition to her own large household, she had a regular morning place, and gave help on two or three evenings a week at another.

Mrs. Plowman was always ready to make any effort for the welfare of her family. And these efforts had meant hard work and more hard work. But here was a problem that hard work would not dispose of. A law case; Joey summoned before the magistrates because they'd said he had deserted his wife. And just when she thought that, by her forbearing and care to do the right thing, she'd saved him from all the unhappiness of his foolish wrong-doing with Gracie. How could work put it straight this time?

And when she got home that night, she found worse news still. Joey had had a letter from a lawyer, acting for Gracie; this letter told them it would be far better for them to settle the whole case out of court, and named a weekly sum, which Joey should pay to Gracie for her maintenance. The whole family, the girls and all of them, thrashed it out time and again, till the alarum clock in the crowded little kitchen showed two in the morning.

"If you ask me," Mr. Plowman kept saying, "the only thing is to pay and 'ave done with it all. No Plowman's never been in the courts yet. That's what we got to think of. "

"That's not sense, Dad," said Mrs. Plowman, "we've just got to fight it. Why, it's as much as Joey makes in a week's work. Is the boy to have that 'anging round 'is neck all 'is life? "

"It's no good," said Joey, "what can I do against a proper lawyer? I'm bound to lose."

"Now that's silly talk," said his mother, "and quite enough of it. Come on, off to bed, you girls and all of you; its two o'clock."

Mrs. Plowman slept uneasily, and when she woke it was with a heavy reluctance. But she had a plan.

"Now Joey," she said, after the last breakfast had been hastily eaten and the last of the family bundled out of the house. "You come and talk to me, while I wash up these things."

While Mrs Plowman tied on her apron, Joey leaned against the draining-board and fetched a deep sigh.

"What you've got to find, Joey," she said, "is someone 'as knows about the law and that. What's the use of us conversing away, when we don't reelly know nothing about it? If that Gracie 'as got a lawyer putting her up to all the flim-flam, then you ought to have one too, didn't you?"

"How can I?"

"Well, you remember that young Mrs. Carvyll as I use ter do for last year. Well, I was very good friends with 'er and young Mr. Carvyll was a lawyer and very clever at it too, I believe. I'm just goin' to ask her if Mr. Carvyll will 'elp you."

"But 'ow can I go dragging 'im all down to Aldershot? No, it ain't no good, Mum."

"No, but you can 'ave a talk with Mr. Carvyll one evening, can't you? And 'e could tell you what we're playing at, because I'm perplexed if I know."

And Mrs. Plowman was as good as her word. Snatching half an hour from her place, she panted round to Mrs. Carvyll. When she arrived home after her family had finished tea, she told Joey he was to go and see Mr. Carvyll at 8.30.

"I don't know what I can say to him," said Joey, "I shan't know 'ow to begin or nothing."

"Oh, go and tell that to your grannie," said his mother. So an hour later, with many fumblings and misgivings, Joey found himself in the Carvylls' sitting-room. His huge red hands fingered his hat. He shuffled before Mr. Carvyll, fourteen stone of melancholy awkwardness. Mr. Carvyll, assured and small, was not a whit older than Joey.

"Good-evening, Plowman," he said, "have a chair. Now, I'm sure we shall be able to straighten things out for you. First of all, let's see the summons they sent you."

Joey groped in his pocket and by the time he had found the summons, Mr Carvyll had produced a quart bottle of beer and poured out two large glasses.

" Cheero! " said Mr Carvyll.

" Good 'ealth, sir, " said Joey, and after a draught, smacked his lips and began to feel more happy.

" This is simply a summons to appear at the court at Aldershot, " said Mr. Carvyll. " Your wife apparently claims that you have deserted her—and you have to go and prove that that isn't true. What she wants to get out of it is a separation order from the magistrates, for you to pay her money to support her."

Joey nodded his head.

" But the truth is that she left you after you had made her a perfectly good home. Now do you happen to have written her a letter since she went away, saying the home was still there if she chose to come back ? "

" Yes, sir, " said Joey, " my mother said I'd better do that. "

" Very wise, " said Mr. Carvyll. " Now I wonder if you could remember the date on which you wrote and posted that. "

" Well, now. It must 'a been the Thursday after the Monday as she gone. That was the first evening I went round to our place. "

Mr. Carvyll began to make notes, and after he had put

more questions of the kind to Joey, he read him out the points one by one; there were five or six of them.

"You're all right," he said. "There's your case, and as far as I can see, it can't go wrong. Take this piece of paper and keep it."

Joey took the sheet and studied it. Everything was labelled, headed and numbered clearly and neatly. All the dates were written in. The whole thing was as plain as a pike-staff. Joey was amazed that Mr. Carvyll could have managed to make that neat little table in half-an-hour out of the tangle of happenings, which he had never seen plainly himself. He began to feel that with a man like this behind him he was safe.

"Now," said Mr. Carvyll, "I expect you feel all at sea about what will happen in court. So I'll tell you as much as I can about it, and exactly what you've got to do.

"When your case opens, your wife's lawyer will get up and make a speech. And when he's speaking, your job is to sit tight. He'll make you out to be the hell of a dirty dog; that's what he is there for."

Joey grinned.

"But whatever he says, say nothing; your turn comes later."

"Oh, I 'as to make a speech after that?"

"You wait a bit, and I'll tell you. After your wife's lawyer has finished running you down, he'll put your wife in the box, and begin asking her questions. But of course he'll only ask her the questions she wants to be asked. But don't you worry about that. When that's over, you begin."

"What do I'ave to do?"

"You've got to say, 'I want to examine the witness.' "

"Well," said Joey, "I am glad I come to see you. I'm learning a thing or two."

"Then your wife goes back into the box. Well, don't get excited. Don't shout at her. Keep absolutely calm."

"And I just asks 'er the questions as suits me?"

"That's the idea. Have the bit of paper I gave you ready, and just ask her the simplest questions you can to bring out those points."

" And then do I go into the box myself? "

" Well, you can if you like; but you aren't much of a speechifier, are you? "

" I ain't too fluid. "

" Well, what I should like, would be to have you call a witness to tell the story for you. How about Mrs. Plowman—she knows all about it, of course? "

" That's right, sir. "

" Well, make her go with you, and just let her go into the box and tell the story herself. She'd do that all right, wouldn't she? "

" I reckon she'd do it splendid. "

" Well, there you are. I know her, that's why I thought of it. And by the way, there's just one more question I meant to ask you. Since your wife left you, have you any idea that she's been with another man? "

" Well, since you ask it, Mr. Carvyll, yes. She'd left a letter from a man behind, and there's been another been returned to our address as she wrote him 'erself, which is both, well *love* letters I should call 'em. "

Mr. Carvyll nodded.

" That just settles it, " he said. " If you like to bring that into your questions, the court may decide she's got no claim on you at all. "

After Joey had gone, Mrs. Carvyll said to her husband, " I do hope it will be all right. It'll mean so much to Mrs. Plowman. "

There followed for Mrs. Plowman days of agonizing doubt. As she scrubbed, as she cooked, when she went to the pictures, even when she was bully-ragging one of her girls for not wearing warm enough clothes, questions ground and ground their way through her mind. " Will it be all right for Joey? Will he get rid of that good-

for-nothing wife of his and be happy again ? " How she hated all the talk and gossip that was going on : people judging Joey, and saying there were two sides to every tale. If only people hadn't got to keep shoving their oars in!

She could not gather much from Joey about his visit to Mr. Carvyll. She saw at least that it had given him some assurance. And she thanked heaven she was to go with him and speak for him. Oh, dear, if only it were over and Joey all right.

At last the day came, and Mrs. Plowman and Joey were sitting together in an early morning train to Aldershot. Both were silent, Joey studying his paper of notes all the way. Mrs. Plowman shivered from time to time and drew her old brown coat closer round her. At Aldershot they found their way through a grey drizzle to the court bruildings.

"Where do we go now ?" said Joey.

"I'll ask that bobby," said Mrs. Plowman, and showed the policeman the summons.

"Round the corner, ma," he said, "and through the yard."

They crossed a rain-soaked gravel-yard and came to the court-room. Again they stood about, looking at the various doors marked, " Witnesses, " " Press, " " Magistrates only. " A number of people were passing in and out, but no one took any notice of them.

" Well, what's the good of standing about getting wet ? " said Mrs. Plowman, " I'm going in 'ere. "

She pushed through the witnesses' door, Joey following doubtfully.

At the entrance an official met them and led them into the court-room itself. Mrs. Plowman had to sit in a different place from Joey, but she was sufficiently near to look at him and nod from time to time. Her eyes wandered round the discoloured walls and saw layers of grime. Those were the justices, she thought, sitting

behind their raised bench at the end of the room; and that one raised higher than the other in a sort of box must be the chief magistrate. Looking farther round the court room, she saw Gracie sitting at a table with her solicitor. There was a thin middle-aged lady in spectacles also at the table, talking earnestly to Gracie.

" 'Oo's that? " she whispered to a policeman standing near her. " Is she a lady solicitor or something? "

" Bless you, no, " said the officer, " that's Miss Sykes, the court missionary. "

Mrs. Plowman now met Gracie's eyes. The girl, whose face was made up and who had a borrowed fur on, gave her a bold hard stare, without so much as nodding. The lady with the spectacles joined in the stare; no question that Gracie had got round her all right, artful little serpent. But even as Mrs. Plowman was thinking what she'd like to say to her if she had the chance, she saw the case had opened. She leaned forward, straining to catch every word.

Now Gracie's solicitor was speaking. She could hardly believe her ears, when Gracie went in to the box to answer his questions. It was shameful the way he twisted everything round and made even the truth sound wrong. Even the visits that Gracie and Joey were always paying to her house, and the help she'd given them were made to sound as if Joey had been unwilling to make a home of his own.

At last the lawyer finished, and after collecting his papers, he sat back with a satisfied air, as if the business were now entirely over. There was a slight hum of conversation; the magistrates were making one or two notes. Joey sat very still, and as Mrs. Plowman watched him, her heart thumped in her throat. An usher motioned him forward.

As Joey stood up, you could feel a fresh stirring of interest in the court. How could this big, rough-looking young fellow manage his own case?

" I wish to examine the witness, " he said in a very low voice.

Gracie was recalled, and the court became silent and attentive. Joey stood with his sheet of notes in his hand, the notes Mr. Carvyll had written out for him. His first questions could hardly be heard, his voice was a bit shaky, but soon he took courage. At every question Mrs. Plowman saw he was gaining ground; the tissue of half-truth told by Gracie and her solicitor was crumbling away. Mrs. Plowman was no longer anxious. She would never forget this scene. Her Joey so quiet and honest, speaking there before the whole room with every one following. And this was her doing. It was his old mother at the back of him, who had found the plan and seen him through. He'd never have done it alone.

" There's just two more questions, " said Joey, " Did you on the 10th April, before you left, 'ave any letter from a man ? "

" A letter from a man ? " echoed Gracie. " Well, yes, I may have had one that day. "

" Is this it ? "

" Yes, I believe, it is. "

" Will you read that out, please ? "

Gracie took the letter, and looked imploringly round. At once the lawyer jumped up and made as if to take the letter from her.

" Really, sir, " he said, " I protest against this. Quite beside the point surely—— "

" Not at all, " said the magistrate sharply, " we must hear it. "

But Gracie had had enough. She covered her face in her hands and burst into noisy sobbing.

" Kindly read the letter for her, Mr. Edwards, " the magistrate asked, and the solicitor with a bad grace stood up. He glanced through the letter hastily, snorted, and read :

"My dearest little girl——"

A hush fell on the court, and one after another sex-charged, blatant phrases were heard. After a few sentences the lawyer too had had his fill. He flung the letter down on the table, called out angrily, "This is preposterous," and sat down.

He then threw his papers into his bag, shut it with a loud snap, and turned his back on his client.

"Are there any more letters?" the chairman asked.

"Yes, one other, sir," said Joey, "but I'd as soon not 'ave it read out."

"Quite right, Mr. Plowman, kindly hand it up."

The letter was passed along the Bench. Joey now asked if he might call another witness. Mrs. Plowman found herself on her legs confronting the court.

She was not in the least nervous, as she saw the rows of faces turn towards her. She had not spoken at Dad's chapel meetings for nothing. Joey, she thought, had been almost too bashful and quiet, but she'd show the people she wasn't afraid to let her voice be heard on her son's behalf.

"Well, sir," said Mrs. Plowman, and at her first words people took a good look at her. "I'm harsked to tell the court my story of my son's marriage. I suppose you'll be saying, as I'm Mr. Joseph Plowman's mother, I'll think 'e can't do nothing that's not perfect in my eyes. Well, I don't say 'e's perfect. No one's perfect as I ever met, but it's a funny thing as I come all the way from London to speak for him, and the railway fare means something to me, and neither of 'is wife's parents can't come in to court to say a good word for 'er, although they live in this very town. That strikes me as funny."

"Mrs. Plowman," said the magistrate, "you must stick to facts. Don't put in your opinions."

"Well, that's the fact, sir, as I sees it," said Mrs. Plowman heartily. "Now it's been said, I fancy, as when

my son first got married 'e made no effort to provide a proper 'ome, and they had to live in my 'ouse. But no one didn't mention *why* that happened. The truth was that the very first time as I saw Gracie, she ought to 'ave been married six months already. And it was my doing they fixed it up the very next week, all for 'er good, before the furniture was bought or we'd found a room. That's why there was those few months before the 'ome was set up, but I got the bills in my bag now, and you can see we was buying pots and pans and furniture from that very week. And meanwhile the baby was born in my 'ouse and I 'ad to turn out a good lodger."

After Mrs. Plowman had spoken for some minutes in this vein, and was getting into her stride, the justices thanked her and said they had heard enough evidence.

There was a buzz of conversation round the court-room. The lay Bench conferred together, and presently the chairman rapped on his desk.

"There can be no doubt in the mind of any one who has heard the evidence," he said, "that Mrs. Plowman left her husband of her own free will, when he was supporting her properly. No fault lies with him and no separation order will therefore be granted. It is also my opinion from the evidence heard that no claim for maintenance could be granted by this court."

Here was triumph! Mrs. Plowman, laughing all over her face, jumped up and took Joey's arm and patted him on the back. She'd ridded him of that good-for-nothing drab for ever. Together they went out of the court-room and found sunshine sparkling on the wet ground outside.

"I say, Mum," said Joey, "I must speak a word or two to Gracie. I can't go without saying good-bye."

"That's right," said Mrs. Plowman. "Tell 'er we 'aven't got no ill will towards 'er. See that tea-shop across the road, I'm going in there and we'll have some dinner."

She sat down at one of the glass-topped tables, and placed her bag in front of her. She had put aside two or three shillings for a good dinner. If things went wrong, they'd need it, she had thought, and if things went right, they'd deserve it.

While she was deciding whether to have some nice fried fish or a good steak-and-kidney pudding, she could hardly help chuckling aloud. How splendid it was! She fell to thinking of Joey as a baby, as a little boy; the first day he went off to work at the factory; then as a fine young guardsman. And now he was hers again.

Joey came back and they ordered steak-and-kidney and cups of tea. After she'd finished, Mrs. Plowman pushed her chair back and said, " Well, Joey, what did you say to Gracie ?"

"Well, I 'ad a bit of a talk to 'er, and there was a lady with 'er, the court missionary."

"Oh, yes, and what 'ad she got to say, I wonder ? "

"She said I ought to do a merciful act and take Gracie back. Gracie says 'er parents won't 'ave 'er at 'ome after all this, and she's got nowhere to go at all. "

"Well, that ain't our fault."

"Well, this lady kept on saying 'ow can you leave a poor girl with nowhere to go, and it's your duty to take 'er back, she says; and if she done wrong once, the right thing was to give 'er another chance to do better; and she was sure she'd make me a good wife, and I ought not to be too judgin' and to show a Christian spirit and all that."

"Well, I like that. So you told 'er to mind 'er own business."

Joey stared at the table as he answered slowly, " No, I didn't. I told 'er I would."

"What ! You never mean to tell me as that court missionary persuaded you to take 'er back ?"

"Well, what could I do, Mum ? There was Gracie crying away and saying there was nothing for 'er but the

streets, and this lady going on and on at me telling me it was my duty. I done it for the best. It's no good being angry with me."

Mrs. Plowman clenched her fists in her lap as her face went crimson.

"It's no good being nor doin' nothing," she said. And after a pause she went on. " I'd like to show that missionary busybody some Christian spirit. What the 'ell does she know about our family affairs? Can't I manage them myself?"

It was enough to break your heart, really it was. The whole box of bricks had been knocked down again. No sooner did her good sense and scheming get one of the family out of trouble than they went and put themselves right into it again.

And all the way back in the train Joey didn't dare say a word. But Mrs. Plowman talked a great deal. Again and again Joey heard her saying, "Always shoving their oar in. Why will they shove their blasted oar in?"

R. L. MÉGROZ

CONRAD'S CRAFTSMANSHIP

Most people will agree with me that Joseph Conrad the story-teller fully succeeds in creating another world, one more intensely real than the world of our limited individual experience. But in the making of great fiction there are smaller gifts equally essential. In this region of technical efficiency, what can be said for Conrad?

The reader's first demand is that the story should interest. Its doing so is dependent upon credibility, and this may be achieved in various ways, indeed *must* be achieved in various ways, because of the enormous scope of fiction in theme, mood and characterization. I have often regretted that Mr. E. M. Forster, in his helpful *Aspects of the Novel*, allowed his insight to stop short at the statement that the final test of the author's success is his ability to "bounce" us into belief. Yet the phrase does insist upon the story-teller's freedom to pitch any yarn he likes, so long as he can gain the reader's assent. A moment's consideration will establish the distinction between "truth" and "true to life," but it is advisable to begin by admitting the importance of truth to life.

Credibility in fiction is no doubt a relative quality, but after making all allowances for individual differences of response by readers, it remains obvious that the will to believe is gained by a mixture of fantasy and realism. The fantasy, the dream-like motive, which gives vitality to fairy tales, is the guts of fiction, and if the reader's emotional assent is gained in this way, the most im-

probable story can be made "true" to him with but a smattering of "truth to life" or realism. The less effective is the fantasy, the more important becomes the fringe of realistic details.

The events in a story need not be probable, or even credible. Could anything be more improbable than the events of Mr. H. G. Wells's *First Men in the Moon*, Henry James's *Sense of the Past*, G. K. Chesterton's *Napoleon of Notting Hill*, Walter de la Mare's *Memoirs of a Midget*, and Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights?* In their diverse ways the authors of these novels "bounce" us by vivid and recognizable detail as well as by the suasion of fantasy. Conrad's most improbable stories are never so improbable as any one of them. One reason for this is the "fidelity to the truth of my own sensations," which he imposed upon himself as a guiding rule of craftsmanship. For all his profound sense of mystery and fear, or rather because of it, Conrad resolutely turned away from all suggestions of supernatural agencies. There is not even a ghost, not one poor ghost, in his fiction, for the apparition of the husband she had just murdered, which appeared to the poor demented woman in *The Idiots*, is presented as a natural freak of imagination, and the author even explains it away beforehand by letting us see the face of one of her idiot children, who looked round the boulder against which she was crouching. The mere suggestion of a reviewer that *The Shadow Line* was a story of the supernatural roused Conrad in his "Author's Note" to a denunciation of such "manufactured things," which, by its emphasis, confirms our belief that his avoidance of the supernatural was partly an expression of his thrilling awareness of sufficiently awful realities on our own plane. Conrad's Polish childhood was one long lesson in the fearfulness of a universe indifferent, if not positively antagonistic, to the human heart.

If Conrad avoids the extreme of improbability, his

work as a whole nevertheless consists of an unusually large proportion of improbable stories, and this accounts for the importance of his prevailing realism. Luckily he could reinforce his potent fantasy with an extraordinarily rich store of vivid impressions and a penetrating intelligence which selected the convincing essentials. Conrad's fiction can be characterized by its combination of improbability and observed facts, autobiographically true to his own experience. The improbability belongs to the fantasy, so that on both counts Conrad is an exceptionally personal writer, and exceptionally convincing. Compare *The Inn of the Two Witches* with Wilkie Collins's *A Terribly Strange Bed.* Collins's story has enthralled many readers, mainly because of the appeal to fear fantasies of childhood, though Collins also wrote well; but he did not write so well (which partly means not so intelligently) as Conrad in *The Inn of the Two Witches*, which endures longer in the memory. The background of fear is deepened by richer realism and more suggestive language. The potency of the language involves style, and Conrad's efficiency as a writer must be limited by the quality of his style. There are special reasons for paying attention to this before examining more closely his management of other technical devices, like plot and characterization.

Because Conrad did not learn English until he was a young man, there has been a tendency on the part of English critics to explain the limitations of his popularity by his inadequate command of his adopted language. Truly there seems something miraculous in a Pole, brought up in Poland, and learning French in childhood, next mixing with French people, and then, after the age of 20, beginning to learn English from bargees, and ultimately developing into one of the masters of English fiction. Two considerations help to make the miracle credible. One is the impetuosity of Conrad's intelligence, which impelled him to study English with the ardour

which made him master seamanship. And all the surplus intelligence which could not be absorbed by seamanship found scope in the study of writing. The impetuosity came from the initial fantastic desire to escape from an oppressed Poland, and the tragic gloom of his childhood, into a wider freedom. But anyhow Conrad was a born writer. His father, Apollo Korzeniowski, was a journalist, a translator of poets, and a poet, as well as leader of the Polish revolt against Russia. Several of Conrad's paternal ancestors were imaginative raconteurs, apt to romanticize their own past, which went back to the " death or glory " days of Napoleon.

So much may be said to minimize the miracle, and emphasize the judgement that no more misleading criticism of Conrad is possible than that which sets out the various kinds of grammatical error and clumsiness of syntax in his prose as if these explained anything essential to the character of his work or its limited popularity. Regarding the English public's slowness to grant popular success to great novelists, it is enough to mention Meredith and Hardy. As to style, most of the greater English novelists are inferior to Conrad as prose writers. If this appears extravagant, let the reader search the ranks of the great novelists to discover those whose books could yield an anthology of prose as rich and diverse as Conrad's. Nearly all will be found to fail in such a test. Dickens, Thackeray, Scott, Defoe, Fielding, and Miss Jane, are right out of the competition, and their names suggest that for comparisons we have to look to the novelists who were also poets, either actually in verse—Hardy or Meredith, or Walter de la Mare or D. H. Lawrence in our own day—or potentially like Mr. H. G. Wells. Otherwise the requisite richness has to be sought in a few peaks belonging to writers who did nothing else comparable, the writers of *Wuthering Heights* and *Moby Dick*, for instance.

To avoid appearing to dodge the evidence for the

prosecution, I may well note Conrad's most common faults of style. The substitution of " shall " for " will, " in spite of revision for the Collected Editions, is still noticeable, and there are other Gallicisms, in the use, for instance, of an unwanted article : " a certain information " (*Arrow of Gold*, p. 96) *; in the use of a verb instead of a participle : " without succeeding to break the circle of my arms " (*A Smile of Fortune*, p. 70). A more frequent and irritating Gallicism is the unusual extension of the adjectival phrase, exemplified in " a smile... upon his lips of an old fighter with a leonine face " (*Nostromo*, p. 20). Similar in effect is the frequent omission of the relative; e. g., "for the purpose of meeting his engineer-in-chief" (who was) " engaged in the final survey of the road " (*Nostromo*, p. 39), and, causing confusion : " She had come off in the cargo lighter, " (which was) " full of notabilities, " (who were) " sitting under the flutter of gay flags " (*Nostromo*, p. 35). Occasionally the omission of a preposition is due to carelessness. In the following example a needed " which " is also omitted : " These thoughts that for so many years, in a mental solitude more barren than a waterless desert, " (which) " no living voice had ever combatted, commented " (on), " or approved " (*The Secret Agent*, p. 45). A word may be slightly wrong idiomatically, as in, " For they were exactly dissimilar " (*Chance*, p. 32). Exactly opposite means something; exactly dissimilar only means dissimilar. An exceptionally careless passage is the following, with its truly surprising abundance of " theres " :

> " Upon my word ", she said, " there was a time that " (when) " they thought I could carry him off., away from them all—beyond them all. Verily, I am not very proud of their fears. There

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(*) Page numbers refer to the uniform edition published by J. M. Dent & Sons, London, and the Concord edition published by Doubleday, Doran & Co., New York.

was nothing reckless there worthy of a great passion. There was nothing sad there worthy of a great tenderness." (*The Arrow of Gold,* p. 102,)

Incidentally, note that Conrad very rarely puts such high falutin' male language into a woman's mouth. His women usually do not talk a lot, but they generally talk (and always behave) like real women.

The Arrow of Gold comes next after *Nostromo* in the abundance of verbal flaws. *Nostromo* is the only story where the minor faults of style more than negligibly interfere with the reader's interest. Conrad's struggle with his heavy task is reflected in the unusual frequency of faults in the writing which might easily have been rectified by a competent editor (who would, however, probably have had to fight Conrad!). The faults occur most frequently before the main story is well under way which makes them all the more discouraging to the reader. The worst mistakes are merely clumsy and faulty turns of phrase, except in two instances where awkward construction and the careless use of the same pronoun for a different person forces the reader to go back a paragraph if he is to understand whom it is the author is talking about.

All these faults seem much less important when they are met with in the context than brought out and assembled like this, and they are, as a matter of fact, a small item to set against the triumphs of the prose and of the narrative. In between some of the errors in *Nostromo* occur beautiful descriptive passages, though not so fine as the later comparable passages in the same crowded tale, or the best of the descriptive and dramatic passages in the other books.

The rhetorical poet in Conrad never runs away with the novelist, as he does in Thomas Hardy and Ronald Ross, to mention two who similarly enrich the novel with a sublime natural background. But Hardy's definition of his own artistic aim, quoted by Mr.

McDowall in a new study *—"to intensify the expression of things, so that the heart and inner meaning is vividly visible "—applies beautifully to Conrad's. More than " visible " one might say—" felt, " as a *frisson* of apprehension coming from the fringes of the clearly seen object, and also as a liberation of some exalted certitude already existing in the soul of the reader.

Where Conrad's style does exhibit a rhetorical fault, the cause is not an exaggeration of the image, as in Hardy, or of statement, as in Meredith (whose affected wittiness weakens the reader's will to believe), but in an occasional failure to join up the edges of poetic passages with the connecting passages of narrative and dialogue. This is more noticeable in the early work, especially *An Outcast of the Islands*, where words are often used less potently and economically than they are in Conrad's mature period. It does occur also in *Nostromo* but : the effect there is toned down, almost into continuity, by Conrad's device of presenting objects, including views of scenery, as they are observed by a character. Several people in *Nostromo* gaze up from the moil of their passing concerns in Sulaco to survey those blue and snowclad mountains which dominate and guard the plain.

Even in *The Rescue*, which is more carefully worked over, at least once in Part I the transition from human presences and their little affairs, to detached lyrical description of their surroundings, is too noticeable, too sudden; and I think that Conrad made a great mistake (encouraged, I believe, by Mr. Hueffer, now Mr. Ford, his collaborator in *Romance*) in beginning the book with two passages of description and history, instead of with the vivid scene on the deck of Lingard's brig, which was admired by Mr. Edward Garnett when he read the opening of the story in its original form. Generally however, description becomes an inseparable element of the drama,

*. *Thomas Hardy : a Critical Study*, by Arthur McDowall (Faber & Faber 1931).

notwithstanding its abundance in this novel. It enfolds the dynamic action with reminders of the inhuman beauty of nature. There is a frightening loveliness in those visions of the eternal stars, night after night, the glitter of the placid and unvisited seas, the relentless brilliance of the sky's cope, which seems to press the islands flat upon the burnished waters. As in *Freya of the Seven Isles*, the natural light and calm are a contrast to the excruciating darkness of human agony and defeated hopes. Just one observation may be thrown in here, and that is regarding the dramatic value (generally ironic) of Conrad's verbal felicities. The brooding sage seems to join hands with the lyrical poet of courage and integrity. The effect entitles such fiction to a share of the glory of poetry. It belongs to what seem to be the touches of pure description as well as to the obviously reflective eloquence. Jukes's sight of the inside of the Nan-Shan's engine room in *Typhoon*, for instance. One comes to realize afterwards how the metaphorical figure is implicitly a comment, for the ship's life has been preserved by the pouring of the vital energy of the engineers and stokers into the gaping maws of the furnaces, in order that a head of steam shall be maintained : " Somebody in there moaned with pain, and somebody else could be seen crouching over what seemed the prone body of a dead man; a lusty voice blasphemed; and the glow under each fire-door was like a pool of flaming blood radiating quietly in a velvety blackness. "

To return to my main theme—Conrad's stories, except *Nostromo*, are usually quite simple, but they assume some of the complexity of life through the narrator's methods. Even *Nostromo*, essentially, is simple, for the central fantasy is that of Conrad's favourite type of hero, the perfect adventurer, a man of action endowed with the ideals and some of the intelligence of the introspective dreamer.

In the simplest type of story the fantasy is unfolded

through a succession of events, but the more important creations of fiction require the vehicle of character and a fuller intellectual background of realism for their richer content of wisdom and beauty. Let us call the intellectual contribution, the variety of objects and detail, the means of extending the story, and the characterization the means of deepening it. The range of objects and backgrounds, and externals of people—in short, of impressions—in Conrad's work is exceptionally wide, but in no single book does it approach the extension achieved in *Nostromo*, in which the numerous loose ends are all skilfully tucked in before the end. The effect of unity is achieved through the characters, whose various mental worlds differ greatly (compare, for instance old Viola's and Charles Gould's). By showing us so much of the inside of his characters' minds, Conrad extends the intellectual range of the novel. He imposes a sense of unity upon the varied material by placing his important and differing characters in dramatic relations to one another. But for the importance of the characterization, the shape of the plot could be much simpler, in spite of such a range of impressions as we find in *Nostromo.* But the deepening of atmosphere through individual characters imposes the necessity of departing from the time order.

The breaking up of the succession of events, which characterizes the basic fairy tale, was not a device invented by Conrad. His frequent mirror-inside-mirror presentment of a story was used freely and constantly by Balzac, and in a cruder form, not imposed by the need of arousing psychological interest, it is the device of *The Thousand and One Nights.* Boccaccio knew all about it. So did Flaubert, but with Balzac's concern for the psychological theme. Conrad's innovation was to depart from the time order as a means of " bouncing " us. His method reaches its extreme when it is used with the device of telling the story through several narrators, as in *Chance.*

In *Chance* Conrad rather overdoes it, because Marlowe has to repeat at impossible length Powell's version of what happened in the Ferndale, and the narrator then repeats Marlowe's story. But the effect of piecing the story together as it concerns a succession of persons helps enormously in making us believe it.

It is important to recognize that when a story has to go back in time to pick up extra phases of experience the logical time order is not abandoned. There can be no story without progression in time, a sequence of events moving in the direction of past to future. It is only Mr. J. W. Dunne who can habitually think backwards, from future to present! But as soon as the tenor of the chief characters' minds becomes of greater consequence than a satisfying answer to the crude curiosity of "What happened next?", then begins to operate an order that interrupts the progression of events. This alternative order is of course the association of ideas in the imaginations of the chief characters. Hence the story keeps going back in time in obedience to the imaginative demands of certain characters. But it has to move forward again and rejoin the main stream of interest. All movements of the plot must be forward in time. There are merely interruptions. If the progression is interrupted too frequently—as it is, I think, in Proust's work—the story loses its momentum and begins to disintegrate. The plot, which should be a kind of framework for the form, or skeleton for the body, crumbles away, and in doing so ceases to support the richest possible content of wisdom and beauty of which literature is capable. Drama is essential to a display of the writer's richest intuitions, and a progression of events is essential to drama. Finally, what happens in Joyce's *Ulysses?* Is it not deprived of its fullest power by assymetrical proportions? In movement it is at times extremely rapid, but the idea-associations clustering round the vital characters keep no proportion with the

story. And the swift movements are violently interrupted until by the time we follow Mrs. Bloom's day-dream, the unity of the story has almost completely vanished. That final rushing movement shakes the book to pieces. The increase of satisfaction gained at the end is quantitative instead of qualitative. I mean that the book is not more than the sum of its parts; but a creative story completed ought to convey more than the sum of its parts. The triumph of dynamic unity achieved through diversity of material belongs to all Conrad's important stories.

JOHN COURNOS

PETER'S STORY

" Yes, I have a wife," repeated Peter, after a pause. " To be sure, there's nothing strange in that...."

" No...," said Henry, seeing Peter pause again, and wondering what was coming.

" Some medieval monk has said that a woman is a rope to drag a man into hell.... Well, I'm a charitable man, and I won't go as far as that...."

" No...."

" No... I must admit I actually never got farther than purgatory."

Henry laughed. After his transports, Peter proved unexpectedly droll.

" She's a good woman, according to her lights... a very good woman, indeed.... Goes to church regularly, attends the Sacred Sewing Circle, works for the Mission to Supply African Savages with Bowler Hats... well, you know the sort of thing! In my young foolish days, I used to be interested in this sort of thing myself. That was how I came to meet her!... As I say, I was young then—and she had wonderful golden hair—clear down to the waist too!"

" The rope to drag man into hell...," said Henry, jocularly.

" Ha, ha, ha!" Peter put his head clear back, causing his Adam's apple to project in a point, and laughed in a series of guffaws. "That's a good one!" Then, again growing earnest, he went on : " I didn't think so in those days, of course! I thought it was heaven to lose myself in that hair. I thought her the most beautiful woman alive, and I married her. We went to Margate

for our honeymoon.... God, they call it a honeymoon! A rose under any other name would smell as sweet. She was a good woman, and laid great store by virtue. 'It wouldn't be decent,' she said, 'to lie with me but to have a child... for we'd be living in sin as much as if you'd picked up with a common street tart!' 'But, woman!' said I. 'Now, Peter,' said she, 'we're wed before the Lord and are man and wife in spirit, and you can come to me sometimes until I know I am with child.... After that, you must let me alone...!' 'But, woman!' said I. 'Tut, tut!' said she. 'Aren't you glad you aren't wed to one of those wanton creatures who's never happy unless her man is bellying her?' "

Again, Henry couldn't resist laughing. " Certainly, she wasn't for dragging you into hell, then!"

" Ah, sir, as to that, she had her own way!" Peter said ambiguously. " But the joke was, in a sense, on her. You see, the Lord hadn't blessed us with a child. So once every month I had my way with her...."

He paused once more until the visitor had had another laugh; then resumed :

" This went on for a year or two, and she never letting a chance go by to tell me how distasteful I was to her, and how it was my fault she wasn't a mother with a prattling babe in her arms! She said 'twas her dream to see a little one running about the house, and I was a horrid man not be give her her heart's desire.... To tell you the truth, in the circumstances, it was getting pretty distasteful to me too, and after a bit I let her pretty much alone. For I'm not the man to take a woman against her will, be she my wife or no.... Then she changed her tactics, and said I didn't love her, or I wouldn't have kept away from her as I did. There's no satisfying the dears, is there?"

The question evoked a nod of the head, and Peter went on :

" Well, sir, would you believe it, she went on nagging

me about a child and what a vile man I was not to produce one out of a cocked hat. I got rather fed up with it in time, as you may suppose, and one day she drove me into a rage. I'm a very patient man, as a rule...."

"Too patient, I should say, Peter!"

"I suppose I am.... Well, I calmed down and, thinking matters over, and seeing that it was all the same one way or the other, I made a deliberate proposition to Lily which nearly bowled her over! Said I to her: if she was so hipped on having a child, why not go out into the street and pick up some hefty, healthy man, and see if she'd have any better luck than she'd had with me. But she only reviled me, called me names, said I was a horrible cad and poltroon to suggest such a thing to a poor honest woman who all her life's kept straight...."

"God!..." broke from Henry. "You did that? You are a strange man, Peter!"

"Only a reasonable Christian man," answered Peter softly. "After all the poor woman, I thought, really wanted a child badly. And again I thought: Perhaps she would change as soon as she had one!... And it might be my fault she hadn't one.... 'Lily my dear,' said I to her, after she had insulted me to her heart's content, 'Lily my dear, I'm not a cad, nor a poltroon, nor a dirty swine, nor a nincompoop, nor any of the things you've seen fit to call me. I'm an honest Christian, with the fear of the Lord in my heart—at least, I try to be! I don't want you to do anything you don't want to do. But I've been thinking: it isn't right you shouldn't have a child if you want one so badly. It's every woman's right to be a mother, if that's her inclination. And I don't know, nor do you, if it's my fault we haven't a babe or yours. And there's only one way to find out, and have your heart's desire, if the Lord has meant you to have it. I'm in dead earnest, Lily. Go, find a good hefty man, and get your child!' She'd been crying, and she suddenly stopped, and looked at me with wide eyes.

'And you mean you'll father the baby and bring it up?' 'Of course,' said I. 'And you'll never hold it against me?' 'Never!' 'And you'll be as good to the baby as though it were your own?' 'Of course I shall!' Well, would you believe it, sir, she laughed straight into my face, and said, 'You're even a bigger fool, Peter, than I thought!' "

Henry laughed so heartily at this that Peter presently joined him.

" Forgive me, Peter. But if you don't mind my saying so, it's all so absurd, and your wife must be even a stranger woman than you are a man!"

" Yes, it's a strange story, sir," Peter agreed. " But I repeat, I was in dead earnest. And I couldn't make her out. Woman are surely very strange beings. It's a fact, they are! Yes...."

" Well, what happened then?"

" Then I said to her: 'Perhaps I am a fool. But what's the odds if I enjoy my folly!.. 'And forgive me, Thorley, if I didn't think of you when I said that! "

" Of me?" Henry's voice expressed astonishment. He didn't know whether to feel displeased or not. It somehow didn't sound flattering. Still, he couldn't feel angry at the droll little man who but a little while ago expressed spiritual rapture worthy of a prophet and had almost succeeded in conveying the same mood to him.

" Yes, of you.... You see, I said to myself, What's a fool in this life? A fool before men may be a wise man before God! Was Thorley a fool when, before a whole school, he'd offered to take a caning intended for some one else, and was in consequence forced to leave school? And I could not but think : Yes, before men he was a fool, yet he was wiser than they all put together! 'Twas wrong, perhaps, but I enjoyed my own magnanimity. Oh, yes, I did! And hated myself for it, too!...

" Well, to go on with my story... When I said that to her, she laughed and said, 'You know, I may take you

up on it at that!' 'Go ahead,' said I, 'and the best of luck to you!' And she went into hysterics, perfect hysterics, sir. Bless me, if she didn't! I thought she'd lost her wits, sir. 'Pon my word, I did! First she laughed, then she cried, then she laughed again. Like one gone daft. I begged her to stop. Then she stalked out of the room, still laughing and crying. God, I thought she...."

"You mean...." But Henry paused, for he did not know how to formulate his question. He looked closely at Peter. Was the little man an idiot, a lunatic?

Peter, as if reading the visitor's thoughts, went on:

"I dare say you think me mad. Well, I ask you, who's mad in this life, and who isn't?" (Henry suddenly recalled that this was almost an echo of the words he had once spoken to Elaine.) "I did nothing more than try and be a Christian. Would it have been more sane on my part if I had beaten her?" He waited for a reply.

"I honestly couldn't say so."

"No. I thought you'd agree with me... Did not the Lord say, 'Resist not evil'?... Now either what the Lord said is right or it is wrong. If right, we ought to follow Him. If wrong, we ought to cut Him out of our books! Isn't that so?"

Henry could not but agree with this line of reasoning, and he nodded his head.

"Yet what position do men take with regard to this? They profess to believe in Christ, yet think any Christian act ridiculous! Isn't that so?"

Again Henry nodded.

"Yet," Peter went on, "they keep His name on their books! Who's mad, I ask you, they or I?... Consider all the lawyers who inhabit this Inn, many of them good husbands and good fathers, and good fellows too, according to their lights. They go into Court always to prove the other fellow in the wrong, and nine times out of ten the fellow who's got the worse case but the better

brains gets the decision! But on Sunday they go to church and listen to the preacher read the Sermon on the Mount or some foolish parable...."

"How do you reconcile your Christian position with being a solicitor?" Henry suddenly thought to ask.

"I don't!... Father insisted on my taking up the law. And I did it before I realized what I was in for. But I may tell you that I take no case until I'm satisfied it's a just one, and when the client is poor I relinquish my fees.... And sometimes I reward some poor widow out of my own pocket.... And so I am generally known as a crank, as one with a bee in his bonnet.... But no one thinks to call me simply a Christian!"

"No, you are not mad!" Henry spoke his thought aloud. "But you were telling me about your wife."

"So I was.... Where was I? Oh, yes, I remember.... Well, after that outburst, things were quiet in the family for some time, and I was congratulating myself on taking the right course. The subject of our conversation was not mentioned again, and I thought she was beginning to see reason. Then one day, two or three months afterward, she came to me and said quietly: 'I've done it, Peter.' 'Done what?' I asked, not having the least notion of what was coming. 'You know,' she said. 'You yourself told me to do it.' Then, all of a sudden, it dawned on me. 'You mean you're going to have a baby...,' I said, trying to appear calm. 'I don't know as to that,' said she. 'It happened only a fortnight ago.' 'A fortnight ago?' I repeated her last phrase, while I tried to let my mind go back a fortnight and recall what happened about that time and whom we had seen then. But she read my thoughts—she had a perfectly uncanny knack for that—for she said, 'You needn't fret your brain over-much, Peter. It was Tom!' 'Tom?...' I asked. Well, I tell you the truth, sir, I was surprised, and I was shocked too. Tom, you see, is my own brother, a younger brother, and a vicar in the church, with a wife

and children of his own. And I had been playing him up to Lily as an upright, upstanding man!

" 'Yes, it was Tom,' she said, 'and it happened when he and Jenny came up for a week-end. And let me tell you, Peter, I wasn't the wicked seducing female, either. 'Twas he that started it, getting me off into a corner and telling me how much he loved me, and what a mistake it was for me to be married to you and for him to be married to Jenny!' 'You lie!' I said, for it was a blow to me—I mean it being Tom—greater even than her going with him. But she only laughed, and said I was even a greater fool then she once said I was.... I was bound to agree with her, of course; and now there was nothing to do but to wait for the outcome. I was trying to see the bright side of things. And then—and then—a wild hope sprang in my heart. For I remembered speaking to Tom about Lily and how she would be a happy woman if she had a baby. I thought, perhaps, seeing how matters stood, he—well, you know—it was foolish of me, of course, to entertain such a hope. But if human nature is a bad thing sometimes, it is also a part of human nature to clutch at straws. She took good care to disillusion me.... I had one hope left, that she might be really happy now...." He paused, and looked meditatively into the fire.

" Well ?... "

" But she wasn't! "

" I didn't think she would! "

" No.... You see, a month passed. Nothing! A second month passed. Still nothing!... Then she went for me in all her fury. There's no accounting, sir, for women.... For now she said I was responsible for leading her into sin, and that it was for that God wouldn't give her a child....

" What was one to say after that ? What was one to do ?... I was calm enough, and I racked my brain.... Then the humour of it struck me, and I said quietly to

her : 'Enough of that nonsense, Lily. You took it for granted that I was sterile, not you. Now you've had your chance, and you've come off without a baby. Facts are facts, and it's no use kicking against them. Now, if you like, I'll go out and pick up with some woman, and see if I can't do any better——'

" But surely, Peter, you wouldn't——"

" Of course not!" Peter laughed. " It was all by way of a joke.... Indeed, I went on to say to her that it was against my principles too! But if I produced a child and brought it home, I wanted it understood that I was to be let alone for the rest of my days! Man, you should have seen the storm burst!

" 'You miserable sinner,' she said, 'so it's women you're now wanting to run after! As if it isn't enough that you drove your own wife into sin! As if it weren't enough that you got your own brother to tempt her! And now, wicked man, you must be going off yourself to chase some dirty petticoat!'

" She went on like that for a bit, then calmed down. Then, all of a sudden, she started laughing like one gone out of her wits, and, putting her face close to mine, she said: 'Besides, Peter, you'll never know if you're a real man or not, for a woman that will let you, a married man, do that to her, will as like as not let other men do the same, and you'll never know if the child's your own or some other pestiferous male's!...'

" She's like that, sir, always for putting me in the wrong. But by now I was used to her. So I just shrugged my shoulders and said, 'Very well, Lily, only don't you hereafter blame me for not having a child in the house! I can't produce miracles, can I? I can't manage a baby out of a hat, can I?' After that, she started weeping, and heaven knows how long she wept... I was almost sorry for her. Perhaps I was wrong—to be sorry for her, I mean—but it breaks my heart to see a woman cry, and she cried like one in deep grief. I

thought she'd repented of the way she acted, and I did my best to cheer her up.... This lasted into the night....

" Next morning she was still asleep when I started for the office. On the way I was thinking how I could make her happy, and I was silently praying that something might happen that very day by which I could make her happy. I was in a blind alley, and there seemed to be no way out.... And still I prayed and I prayed....

" Then something happened which seemed like an answer to my prayer. At the office—indeed, in this very room—I found a poor woman waiting, and with her was a little boy. Five he was then, a little charming fellow with pale cheeks and bright hungry eyes blue as blue, and innocent as a child's eyes can be... a sweet little fellow...."

Henry, eagerly listening, thought he detected a faint tremor in Peter's voice which had grown wistful and tender; it touched in the listener some inner chord and brought a tiny tear which lingered in one of his eyes and wouldn't fall. " What's the matter with me ? " thought Henry, who was rarely moved by raw sentiment.

" The woman, who was about fifty and very poor—she had walked in with her charge all the way from Elephant and Castle—had a long story to tell. This was the gist of it. She had had for a next-door neighbour a man and his wife who did not live happily. The man, who was about thirty, was feckless and shiftless, and he made a living of sorts by doing odd jobs. He spent much of this time in pubs. There were always sounds of wrangling when he was at home. It was a constant source of worry to the good neighbours, for he beat his wife, and heart-rending cries often came from the house. There were many expostulations, but no one could do anything. In this country a man can do anything to his wife short of murdering her—only then does the law take matters into its hands. But while he's killing her, the law does nothing! Well, one day the wife took sick

and after a long lingering, she died. No one knew exactly what had been the matter with her. And as she did not die from actual blows, there was no way in which the husband could be apprehended.

"After the poor woman's death, the husband went from bad to worse, and the neighbours got worried because he was apparently maltreating Billy—that was the youngster's name. They remonstrated with him, but he retorted that the child was not his, that his wife had misbehaved with some one, and that there was no reason at all why he should be looking after him. In the end he all but ejected Billy from the house, and the old woman brought him along to see if there weren't some legal means by which the father could be forced to take care of the boy. Though heaven alone knows how the best law in the world could force a scoundrel to take care of anybody!

"I looked at the boy, and my heart was seized with compassion. Such a charming youngster, and doomed to such a life! Ah, sir, I've been always moved by the innocent suffering of young life. Why, why? I've often asked myself the question, and it's always thrown me into despair....

"Then, suddenly, a strange thought sprang into my head. Was it a thought? No. It was not a thought. It was an impulse, a wild impulse. I am sure it must have come from the heart. I remember that I felt a sudden exhilaration, and I knew that my morning's silent prayer had been answered. I tell you, sir, I felt drunken with excitement. You'll think me mad when I tell you...."

"Of course not!" Henry protested. "I knew right along what was coming."

"Yes, sir, I said to myself, 'This is my chance. God Himself sent it to me. Why not adopt the boy and take him home?' I liked the little chap, and I thought he'd make Lily happy....

" Of course, there were legal formalities to go through with. I saw the father at once, and he was quite willing. But when he saw my eagerness, he thought he'd make capital of it. And he actually suggested that I present him with five quid in return for goods received. 'Very well, sir,' said I, 'only you must sign a paper relinquishing all rights to Billy.' He had then the cheek to suggest that if he did that he ought to have ten! That made me rather hot under the collar, and I said quite firmly that he'd take five or nothing, and that if he refused my offer I'd be obliged to take legal action to prevent cruelty to the boy. 'All right, Governor, I'll take five!' And I closed the bargain then and there.

" Well, I took my new son to a tailor's, then to the haberdasher's and bootmaker's, and had him rigged out from head to foot, until he looked quite presentable, and feeling pleased with the morning's work, brought him home to Lily, for once in my life expecting her to share my enthusiasm.... After all, she had yapped so much about a child, that I had some right to expect it...."

Peter paused to wipe the perspiration which had been gathering about his brow, for the memory of the experience apparently troubled him.

" And she wasn't enthusiastic!" said Henry, sympathetically, taking advantage of the pause.

" No, she wasn't! And it's a fact!" replied Peter emphatically. " 'I'd have much preferred a girl,' was the first thing she said. To say I was flabbergasted is putting it mildly indeed.... I ought to have known, I suppose...."

" You are too trusting, Peter, and men will always take advantage of you!"

" Bless you, no!" protested Peter. " You can't take advantage of a man that's trying to do what is right. For you see no matter what happens, you go on doing what is right just the same...."

" But that's defying experience!" said Henry.

" By all means! The only way man shall ever make a better world, sir, will be by defying experience! "

" You're a brave man! " cried Henry, moved by an impulse of admiration for the little man whom nothing could daunt.

" Not at all, sir.... It was very hard at first. For, after all, one is only human, as the saying goes. But afterwards doing the right thing, or what one thinks is the right thing, becomes second nature. It's different with you! You got your instinct for right by birth."

" No, no! " Henry vigorously protested. " In any case, it's much more wonderful to achieve things by one's own efforts. And you've done it!... But I am anxious to hear you go on with your story."

" So I shall, though I don't know why I'm doing it. I've never told it to a soul, and maybe I'm telling it to you because you're the only soul I know that would understand and wouldn't call me a fool.... As to my wife, she positively hated the boy and made it clear too.... As for me, I grew to love Billy as though he were my own, and he grew mighty fond of me too.... Lily seeing me so fond of the boy, went on harping on the depravity of males and what a trial it was to her to have to put up with a boy when her heart had been always set on a girl...."

" What a termagant!... Gad, there's something to be said for a ducking-stool! " Henry couldn't help exclaiming.

" Wait till you hear what's coming! "

" Nothing more, surely! "

" Well, would you believe it, sir? One evening I returned home to find that I had a d-daughter. Yes, sir, a daughter! "

" Great Jehoshophat! "

" Lily had picked her up at the Foundling Home.... Introduced her to me with the words that it was only right that she have something to comfort her too! I am

not a malicious man, but heaven forgive me if she didn't pick up the most devilish little creature she could lay her hands on. I don't like saying such a thing about a child, but Minnie, young as she was—she was but five —was the devil incarnate!"

"What a woman!" Henry whistled.

"Yes, sir-r-ree! I do believe Lily brought her home to plague me—and Billy—Billy had become the apple of my eye.... I was particularly sorry for Billy, as you can imagine. Poor Billy! He had no business to attend to like me, and I was away most of the time and couldn't protect him. And Minnie was the sort that would torment a cat! The little devil found enough ways to torment Billy. I was mighty glad, I can tell you, when Billy became old enough to go to school. Even then—whew! How the poor kid did look forward to my coming home! How his eyes shone when I put my head within the doorway! I was as good as a father to him—that I was! And I didn't hide my pride in him. I wish to God I had!...

"I was glad of the day when I could send him away to a preparatory school—a boarding establishment. It was comforting to know that he was away from Minnie and that house, and that he was well cared for where he was, though I missed him, sir, more than I can ever tell you!

"Then—at the end of the first term—he came home from the holidays, a fine strapping boy, and he fonder of me than ever before, and I of him. We confided in each other. We told each other our hopes, our troubles, our wishes... though rarely with a spoken word, but merely with a look, which was quite enough. There was that complete sympathy, sometimes established between human beings, a sympathy so perfect as to render words unnecessary. And we found infinite comfort in it...."

Peter's voice quavered. The memory seemed to stir

his innermost depths. He made a visible effort to control his emotions, and appeared to succeed.

" Then the terrible thing happened, sir.... It was evening. I went out to pay a call somewhere. When an hour or two later I returned, I found my poor boy suffering the most terrible agony. A kerosene lamp had been upset, and his clothes had caught fire.... It happened but ten minutes before I returned—exactly how I was never to know the whole truth. But I gathered that Billy was reading when Minnie ran into the room and annoyed him. He defended himself from her, and either he or she—it doesn't matter which—moved an arm, upsetting the lamp, which fell into his lap. At least, that was the version I got from the little witch, and you may depend on it that it must have been much worse. Billy never spoke a word....

" Well, to make the story short, sir, the poor kid was taken to the hospital, and after two days of the most fearful agony, died in my arms....

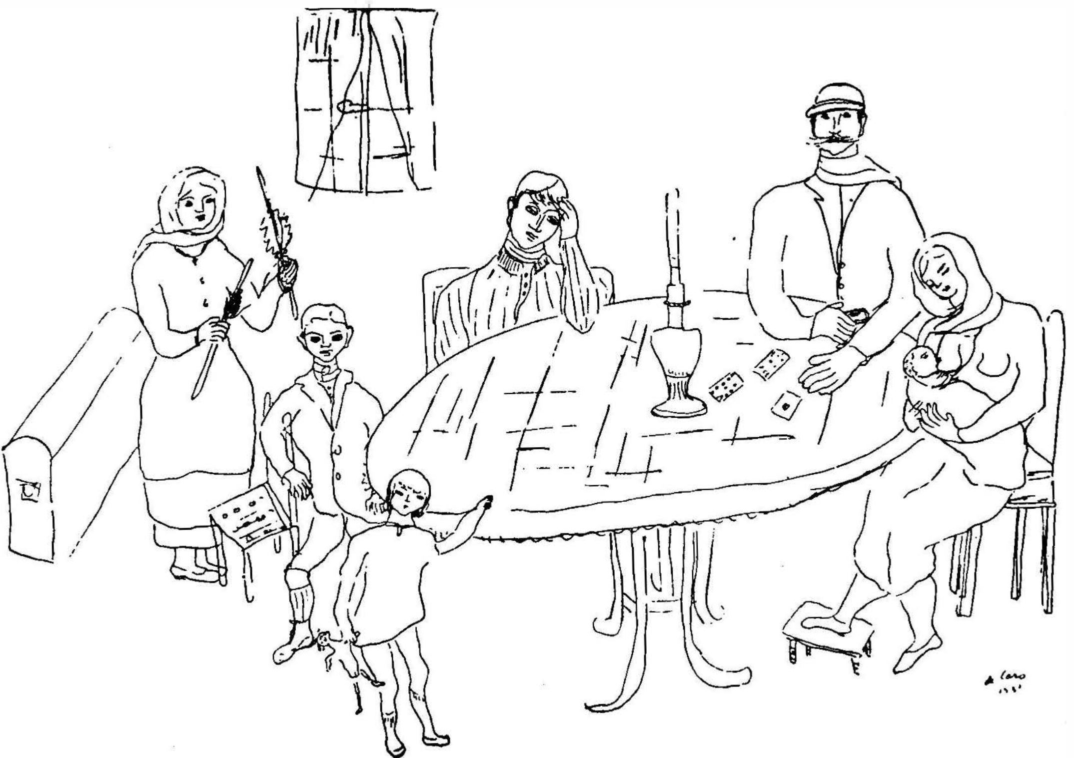
" This happened barely six months ago...."

There was a pause, and Henry did not at once try to break it. At last, seeing that Peter's face had grown calmer, he ventured :

" I take it you did not go on living with the amiable pair ?"

" No. They're still living where they were. But I've left them. I send them enough money to keep them going. And my own cot is here. This is my house, and never has it had a welcomer guest than yourself! "

" And never shall it have a braver host," added Henry. " Amen! "



Drawing, *by de Caro*

HECTOR RELLA

CAESAR AND THE BLIND MEN

The blind men on fourteenth street are real
Who hears them tapping tapping?
Their tapping canes are drops of water on stone
When a penny sings in the desert
How shall they tell the poison from the pure?

Wall-street at midnight, through the deep shadow
Brutus, Ford and Morgan flee; On the Treasury steps
Caesar jerks a ligament and lies still.
The swirl of paper on the empty street
Settles in an obscure dirty corner.

But this is a busy street where the people are a tabloid
A year old. Look, the pictures have faded
In the seeping rain : which is the gangster, which is
The famous whore, where is the pain the laughter ? Soft my
Their heads are full of dust and memory only [friend
Above the mouldering stand metropolitan rafters.
Their anonymity is wrenched to-day
To new distortion. Listen, this is the hour
The rain has stopped the sun has set the wind has fallen
The newsboy cries through the evening, "Antony's dead!"
The gutter trickles past the clock
The elevated thunders down the sky.

HAROLD LOEB

I. — CIMEX LECTULARIUS*

He took several closely-written sheets from his pocket. The morning after his first night on Fifth Street, having nothing to do, as his job did not start till the next day, and frayed by thoughts that had cut into each of his vanities, Eluard had marched to the Public Library in a desperate effort to regain self-possession. Having negotiated the order cards and found the reading-room, he had sat down before three encyclopaedias and three special pamphlets, and made elaborate notes on the subject then uppermost in his mind.

He now picked up the sheets with considerable interest. At the time he had been so distracted that his sentences might have been the work of some one else. He read :

" A cosmopolitan, blood-sucking, wingless, depressed, nocturnal bug (*Cimex Lectularius*) of rusty red colour and vile odour, infecting houses and especially beds. "

He had set out, as he remembered, to discover what he could concerning his little visitors. Gratitude had impelled him. Their kindly intrusion had deflected the downward drift of his mind. As he had lain in his armchair through the night, dozing at times to wake with a start because of his position, his depression had gradually lifted. To be assaulted by such notorious

*Fragments from a forthcoming novel, *Come Away*.

pests in the first hours of his flight! Old Jehovah himself must have once more interfered in the affairs of man. Like Pharaoh, he had been singled out for punishment. His sins, also, were worthy of a divine intervention. Perhaps toads would rain from the ceiling at dawn. It would be inexcusable of him to continue holding the little pests in abhorrence. Was not their arrival even opportune and complimentary? He had hoped, by learning more about them, and so getting better acquainted, to transform his purely instinctive antipathy into at least a reasonable tolerance. Such, he believed, was one of the most valuable uses to which knowledge could be put. An object, stripped of mystery, was hard to hate or fear.

" The insect is broad, two and a half lines in length, blunt and covered with fine brown hairs. Its parasitic life has caused degeneracy, until now the species has acquired a very flat body capable of hiding and living in the cracks between boards, and has completely lost its wings. On the other hand, it has gained the power of resisting great cold and of fasting indefinitely so that it survives long intervals between tenants in a house."

If that, Eluard observed, was degeneracy, what should the boasted progress of man be called? Man, too, had learned to live in crevices and had lost his fur. He too resisted extreme cold. Of course he had not learned to fast, but that was because he had improved on the bed bug's commissarial system by stabilizing his food supply. Now if *Cimex* could somehow ensure that favourite beds be always occupied at dinner time, there would be no choice between the respective life modes of bug and human.

" The cockroach is the natural enemy of the bed bug. "

Man, Eluard reflected, is more fortunate. He has no natural enemy worthy of his... nails? Tigers, bugs,

snakes, even virulent microbes, were confined to minor provinces. Of course the Roman Empire had felt secure during the centuries the germs of its downfall were hatching. Man's security might not be so firmly founded as he believed. As for the cockroach, it must be a most gruesome enemy. Eluard imagined the pursuit of bed bug colonists down some labyrinthine wall crack, all ages in confusion fleeing, with the fetid breath of the hairy slithery roach warming their tails.

" The parasite hides by day in walls, floors and furniture, frequenting beds especially, simply because there it gets its living at night. "

Practical minded, rather than dreamer type—Eluard observed.

" The head of the insect is short and broad with a pair of prominent compound eyes and two antennae, each being four-segmented, the first being short and not reaching beyond the front of the head. The mouth consists of a three-parted proboscis which can be thrust through the skin like a hollow needle and then becomes a blood pump. "

Too specialized, was Eluard's criticism; man's mouth was adapted to more varied uses.

" This rostrum or proboscis runs backwards from the front part of the head to between the bases of the first pair of legs. The abdomen is narrower in the male, the terminal segment projecting so as to make the end of the abdomen much less round than it is in the female. The orifice of the Organ of Berlese lies on the underside of the fourth segment of the abdomen. Stink glands, two in number, open by two separate orifices in the underside of the thorax between the bases of the third pair of legs. Their purpose, supposedly to afford protection from enemies by making the animals distasteful, is not completely successful. Mice seem to enjoy their flavour. "

Another proof, Eluard thought, that one man's meat

is another man's stink.

"The female lays eggs throughout the spring and summer, the generations succeeding each other as long as the temperature is warm enough. About 250 eggs is the average yield, dropped in batches of fifty. The eggs are oval and white. The buglets hatch in ten days, escaping by pushing off a lid at one end of the shell. Quickly the baby extrudes from its superannuated coverlet, a minute creature, semi-transparent, with red eyes. Given the chance, it feeds at once and sips the blood of a human being with even more gusto than mammalia tap their mother's teats.

"The parents accept no responsibility for their children after the eggs are deposited. Among bugs only one exception to this rule is known. *Acanthosoma Griseum*, British, shows affection and care for its offspring. It has been to conduct its family of thirty or forty little angels as a hen conducts her chicks, showing uneasiness when threatened with danger and standing by instead of attempting to escape."

Eluard wondered if the worry of tending so large a brood did not neutralize the happiness *Acanthosoma* derived from her affectionate nature. The question led him into a consideration of affection itself. As he understood the matter, the emotion called love arose in response to one of several biological needs. In other words, it was a trick of nature to further the propagation and care of offspring in certain of her families. In lower species, nature was profligate and took her chances. As the order of life became more complicated, the scale higher, she turned parsimonious. Towards the top of the evolutionary ladder, offspring were produced in such limited numbers that it became important for each individual to reach full stature and produce descendants in its turn. Wherefore nature, imaginative as always, invented the illusion love. Consequently the spectacle of an *Acanthosoma* sacrificing its own safety in order to

protect its two score of tiny *Acanthosomae* could be observed by any one with the necessary assiduity. Eluard suspected that *Cimex Lectularius*, though less poetic, was the more practical and, as a result, less afflicted with moods. Bed bugs had only themselves to worry about.

"This insect is believed to have come from India, perhaps by way of the returning Crusaders."

Probably in a Holy Relic, thought Eluard.

It was unknown in Strasbourg until the eleventh century. Shakespeare had probably not heard of its existence, for the word "bug" to him still meant "hobgoblin", a relic of which usage survives in the word "bogey-man." In 1634, Thomas Moufet published a Latin treatise containing an account of the alarm caused by the appearance of the bed bug in 1583 among some ladies of noble family at Mortlake. As late as 1730 the parasite was rarely seen inland. The refugee Huguenots were blamed for bringing it to London. America eventually received it from ships in which certain adventurous stowaways had doubtless crossed. By now the bug has settled in all parts of the world, although it is not known to travel by either of the most recent modes of transportation.

"In the old days humanity got a certain consolation when assaulted by this nocturnal enemy from the belief that its bite was an antidote to the venom of snakes. This power is no longer credited. However, in compensation, man has discovered weapons of offence which hold the bug comparatively at bay. By fumigating with brimstone or blowing insect-powder into the crevices where the bug lazily spends his leisure hours, life can be made so uncomfortable that the insect will leave the neighbourhood. An even more effective remedy is painting the cracks with corrosive sublimate dissolved in alcohol."

Eluard remembered feeling, at this point, that debunk-

ing the bed bug had served his purpose. Thereafter he would face them equably. Perhaps he might even capture a pair, place them in a glass bottle and find out for himself how long they could survive without nourishment. Not being a Yogi, he had also taken certain measures of a practical nature. Though mind was, in a sense, supreme over matter, a physical antidote would be likely to relieve his more complicated faculties of certain unwelcome responsibilities and release them for meditations of a more gratifying nature. He had purchased a dollar's worth of corrosive sublimate on his way home.

There was much, he felt, to be said for the Occident, after all. An Oriental could so adjust his mind that close association with the pests would not be disagreeable. An Occidental annihilated the bug by the best available method. Appreciative of both points of view, he felt free to utilize both remedies : corrosive sublimate and meditation. Thus the world was gained, at least for a time. The lesson should be remembered.

He read further :

" Bed Bugs first broke into English letters in 1730. John Southall, in an appreciative mood, wrote: 'With the Sting they penetrate and wound our Skins and then (though the Wound is so small as to be almost imperceptible) they thence by Suction extract their most delicious Food, our Blood.' Also 'A Bug's Body is shaped and shelled; and the Shell is as transparent and finely striped as the most beautiful amphibious Turtle.' "

As Eluard had noticed that unless the bug was distended with blood, its looks were quite uninteresting, he concluded that the author must have observed an exceptionally well-groomed specimen immediately after it had enjoyed a good feed. Evidently inner content, even among bed bugs, is immediately expressed by significant form.

" The species, though limited emotionally, seems to possess considerable intelligence and a certain discriminatory taste. An individual has been observed to travel fifty yards for a choice morsel, while another was watched during a perilous journey, out of a window, along a water pipe, and then into the adjacent building through another window, all for a change in diet. It is also very exacting as to just where in the epidermis it drinks. Often it recoils after a taste and tries other spots before settling down to quaff the foamy brew. A certain female was observed while she punched nine holes before the flavour suited her fastidious palate. In adults satiety is reached in three to four minutes. The children are more easily satisfied. After the repast the bug shows no disposition to feed again for some days, differing thus from fleas which will indulge themselves twice and even oftener during the course of twenty-four hours. Bed bugs grow amorous after a good meal."

Doubtless, Eluard reflected, because their sex appeal depended on looks alone. Only when replete were they not dowdy.

" In the act of pairing the male's intromittent organ is introduced, not into the genital opening of the female, but into the copulatory pouch, called the Organ of Berlese "—after the celebrated Italian entomologist who was the first man, Eluard interpolated, to investigate it.

Inspired curiosity, he murmured, often led to immortal fame. So long as bed bugs make love, so long will the name of Berlese be acclaimed.

He became gradually conscious that some one had approached from the rear and had for some time been looking over his shoulder.

Slowly he slid his arm across the sheet, feeling as he had years before at school when caught reading a novel in study hour. Why hadn't Hildebrand returned? How could he wash suitcases without water? A series of

excuses explaining his idleness flitted through his mind. He became for the moment a little boy in a blue serge suit and turned-down collar.

Then his eyes picked up a pair of suede shoes beside the puddle. The new embarrassment was greater than the former. He started to laugh as his glance travelled up two graceful legs, a skirt, small black and white check, efficient hand holding a mechanical pencil; cream-coloured blouse between tailored coat, necklace of coloured beads, firm chin supporting large delicately curved lips beneath the straightest blue eyes he had ever encountered, even on a street crossing.

His laugh spluttered. For a moment—it seemed very long—they looked soberly into each other's eyes. Then she began to laugh.

Her laughter was a stream of water. As it struck the fenders, hood, wheels, body of his muddy, bedraggled soul, the parts instantaneously leaped forth all shiny and resplendent. The great store filled with singing birds. He wanted to dance. Gaiety poured through the revolving doors.

II. — FRAGMENT

"I never thought of that," said Eluard, glad to escape. Talk seemed suddenly futile, all talk, words, verbal communications. He went over to the bowl into which the gin had been poured and the oranges squeezed. Just a cup or two remained. He filled her glass. " I want to get out of here, " she said, " I'm tired. "

The figures wavering round them had become grotesque. He too wanted to get out of it. As a formal farewell would be premature, he led her toward his apartment without further ceremony. No one was in the dark room. Having turned on the lamp, he rolled the doors to. Dimmed shouts and laughter embroidered the stillness. He sank contentedly into his chair and looked

for her. She had thrown herself on the bed.

He had always believed that sensual pleasure, to be intense, must be symbolic—must be the expression of an affection. When enjoyed for itself alone, it was like a poem in an unknown tongue, sonorous but meaningless. Yet this candle flame, this woman sleeping on his bed, or pretending to sleep, drew him deliciously, although the moth's sentiment was closer to antagonism than sympathy. " Why, " he asked under his breath, as he looked down at her, " should you be endowed with translucent skin ? It isn't fair. "

A leg was drawn up so that the left foot supported the right knee. A luminous head nestled in the crook of an elbow. Two curls, straying from the shock of glinting hair, lay in formal curves upon a cheek. Eluard moved one of them with his middle finger. The design was not improved. He pushed it back, gently.

His clothes cramped him. The sounds from the next room had diminished. Probably the party was breaking up. He removed his shoes, his coat, and loosened his collar. He wondered, would it disturb her if he sat on the bed. He could try and see. She was not disturbed.

He recalled an argument in which a friend of his had claimed that the release obtained from drink was greater than that from making love. He had contended that those individuals for whom this was true, suffered from some kind of romantic inhibition. Drink served only for the brief escape. As with other artificial stimulants, the afflatus of alcohol quickly burst, leaving only the pit, where one is so alone that it hurts, standing by to receive the shrunken spirit. Sensual pleasure, on the other hand, did not let one down. Those who claimed it did merely did not enjoy it. They mistook the depression that followed failure for a lack in the thing itself. A strange argument for him to have upheld considering his inexperience. He wondered if it was

true.

Noticing that her feet were still bound by grey shoes with a strap across the instep, he carefully undid the button, after which the shoe was easily removed. His heart, meanwhile, beat violently. Encouraged by the thought that making himself comfortable while tight garments fettered his guest was obviously discourteous, he considered what else could be done to put her at her ease. Garters, he remembered hearing, were notorious for hindering the circulation of the blood. She wore the round elastic kind about which the upper part of the stocking was furled. To remove them was a delicate task; the unflexed leg proved less difficult than the bent one underneath. However this operation, too, was successfully accomplished. Her knee, smooth as the inside of an avocado, repaid him for the effort. He could not resist tracing its soft curves with the palm of his hand, gently so that she would not be awakened. Then he drew her skirt down.

Eluard rose and walked about the room, whose walls seemed less forbidding now, its furniture more kind. He forced himself, in order to abate the excitement that shook his hands, to muse upon the effect on him of these new surroundings. In time, no doubt, the interior would become part of him, or he part of it. Close associations were seductive. One could not resist impressions endlessly repeated. He could not foretell if he would change the room, or the room change him, the more. Already he drew strength from the sombre street scene—that never twice looked quite the same—outside the window. Harmonies, relations between the planes of the houses and the lines of the pavement, were gradually becoming apparent. His mood fused for a moment with the geometrical pattern of the street lamps.

Then he pulled the shade down.

The bright reading-lamp was a stranger in the room.

He moved it over to the desk and threw his shirt upon it. Now a dim glow merged everything into a monolythic cavern wall, the interior of a budding tulip. Of course she represented the seed-bearing pistil, which all was designed to guard except himself. Beside her a narrow space invited him. Was not he, too, entitled to repose? It was good to lie close to the only object in the world that pleased every sense. Not one was discriminated against. Though her voice was still, the rhythmic stir of her breathing more than satisfied his ears. He put his arm under her head so that all of her was touching him. His free hand undid the buttons on her blouse.

So many rhapsodies had been inspired by breasts, the small, the firm, the exquisite, that the subject had a worn-out sound. Solomon's comments had never been excelled.

Her breathing, so quiet and restful when he had laid down, distracted him at this point by becoming faster, sharper, more spasmodic. Instead of a lullaby, a savage war chant was being intoned. He liked the new effect and felt the moment was propitious for making the breather even more comfortable.

With extreme caution he went about his task, never an abrupt motion, never a sudden pull, for she might—at least he did not know to the contrary—be still asleep. Fortunately his yellow comforter was folded on the foot of the bed. Soon, like a cloud upon a river, it settled over them, the soft, silk-sheathed down, lightly, warmly, pressing from above; a covering so perfect that he could not tell where satin ended, where silk began.

While his hand played as in childhood with softly curving water, his mind tried to imagine of what she was dreaming—if she were asleep. If she were, she must be dreaming... deliciously. His caresses were being returned, without fervour, but with a subtlety more satisfying. The corner of the inner surface of a

lip against his ear. A little finger advancing—no, not advancing... retreating—no, not retreating.... How fast the breathing... only the heart... whose heart?... tumult-uously beating.

If she were dreaming, it would be of that mythical one one never meets, or, if one meets one never keeps, whose gestures had the beauty seen in life only when one loves surpassingly, and then, for but a moment: to vanish one knows not where. An elusive one : for to love, the loved one must be elusive, and to love is desired by the soul not to be loved; who can descend to daily tasks, even to the grotesque; and still be in that stilled aloofness where one walks at sunset, sometimes, bathed in the song of birds. Perhaps such a lover was now in her arms, bruising her eyes with his lips, proving the perfection of her softly curving form. She must be happy, happy beyond awareness, and she would never know how happy she had been. Afterwards nothing would remain but the tingle of past ecstasy.

As if that mattered. Yet it seemed to, though memories did one little good and much harm. For how dingy ordinary living seemed in the shadow of one's memories.

Blessed were those who did not remember. Blessed were those for whom the past was but a sum of facts and figures, for whom only the present had colour, who forgot what they had felt even as the feeling passed. To them each new smile would bring delight.

Water curving warmly in the hollow of his hand, memories winding through the galleries of his mind, were both forgotten. In his arms she turned, flowing and brimming. Gone was the languor, the subtleness. Her embrace, overwhelming his isolation, merged his being in that sensation which knows no self.

He was one with a spiral of wind whipping an island, one with a ray light gilding a dust mote, one with all ecstatic movement. The water rose against the dam. In a moment the tension would be unbearable.

J. M. REEVES

FAMILY GROUP

with travel notes : Paris — Bavaria, 1930

When Constant Lidbetter, cousin to Arnold
that gassed himself in a Bloomsbury bed-sitting room,
a poet in his own right and a writer of chit-chat for the
[Bystander,
took to himself a wife and a house in Hampstead and a
[pride in the race,
it was all going to be very up-to-date and, as they say,
[happy-go-lucky,
lots of children, and books all over the floor,
arty friends, trampy holidays
and the best modern journals.

Married life is like this : it begins in the bedroom
and ends in the nursery; and so it is the nursery that counts,
" I believe in them growing up in a cheerful atmosphere.
nothing 'for the children' you understand, yet nothing
[ultra.
None of these highbrow toys but tin ones that wind up
and go bump in the night. Gulliver's Travels unexpur-
[gated,
and no pretty pictures, only the old masters, and perhaps
the simpler Impressionists.... "

Wind flowered the crocuses
and after in August the mauve crocuses
late crocuses in the Loisach valley
(these for our hands)

J. M. REEVES

Wiese
Wiese *the Germans say*
wind flowered the Wiese
leaning the lithe stems
leafless
of crocus-coloured crocuses

Wind from Mittenwald
wind from Neuschwanstein
from Hohenschwangau
and the windy chancels of the mad king's brain

" Quentin the eldest,
more than a bit mad, wants to be 'a writer like father',
teethed beautifully, took measles (German) at the right age,
when the Mona Lisa was in Aries—let me explain.
When you leave things, pictures and such, in the same
they grow forgotten. Consequently [place,
once a month they are moved round like the Signs,
you never get tired of them. You follow ? But come,
let us before bed-time visit the nursery. And if you
[would remember
no baby-language; address them in the second person,
not the third. (Shall I be clever enough ?) Quentin
will be sitting on the window-sill looking over the Heath
into the sunset; Ruth.... "
(Preserve your happy memories with a Kodiac.)

The nursery turns out to have four walls
surprisingly,
like other nurseries,
the children, surprisingly,
to have four limbs apiece.
" This is Thomas. Thomas, say how do you do. "
The Flying Scotsman bereft of Thomas founders,
well-known clubman in smash, four pages of pictures.
But I regain ground with Mary Helen,

who is her mother's favourite, lost her reserve charmingly
and her tonsils when the Servante des Bocks was over the
[linen-cupboard,
holds a perpetual tea-party in the chimney corner,
a social nature.
Quentin, his eyes receive the evening sun,
and taking many a fort,
furnish'd in warlike sort,
marcheth tow'rds Agincourt,
bottom of his class blissfullie. " Intelligent, you under-
but not in the way *they* want. " [stand,
Ruth, sweet rois of virtue and of gentilness,
has a propensity for forgetting to clean her teeth,
but is approaching the completion of the thirty-third
[chapter of her novel;
she has little sense of style, which is also attested
by her fondness for the neighbours' mongrel.
" Lastly, meet Anna, of no fixed bent; *Geburtsort* Hamp-
[stead. Time,
when the Rembrandt Warrior overlooked the Heath.
But you should sit down, make yourself at home. Thomas,
if you are good, will let you work the signals. Mary
[Helen
has invited you—at least I know she will be pleased.
[Ruth
will solicit your criticism of the first chapters of her saga.
Only Queen seems moody. (Come Sleep, and with thy
[sweet deceaving.)
I am sorry if... But however... (When you are home
to shades of underground)... I'm sorry the car isn't
My love to Laura. " [working.

This world is different, is
a world we knew and have denied.
My world had snows :
where are the snows? Last year
lunching in the Karlsplatz I fed on

honeydew—or, to be precise...
But that's all one. Die Rechnung, bitte.
My train from the Starnbergerbahnof
will take me to where the wind
unquestioned
sidles along the painted Sonnenstrasse,
wind over crocuses
crocus-coloured crocuses
I have been absent from thee
I have been absent from thee
in the Spring.

J. J. VANUD

DICTA*

Life gets the better of all devotion. Play your part, do not spare the other's attachment, and soon you find yourself alone, and astonished, wounded, by the absence of that useful—or pleasant—shadow you had foolishly taken for granted.

Being kind is an indulgence of the feelings which the oppressed can only painfully afford.

Always bear in mind that there is less difference, less of an abyss, between a Bushman or a male native of Terra del Fuego and you, than between you and the woman who is your nearest.

Charging with lowered head, anger, though the cause of many follies and disasters, has sometimes been the salvation of the angry man—and sometimes of the world.

The same can be said of fright. Fie upon such talpine passions! Let us see clearly, let us understand —then so much the worse if we must keep quiet; so much the better if we must accept and absolve.

There we have the supreme instance of the man per-

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* From a *Journal* which M. "Vanud" is arranging to publish shortly in the original French.

petually bound to the execution post : " Do not blindfold me. "

Most wealthy persons believe that, in return for their money, everything to them is due, even—and especially—what money has never bought.

To strive after being forgiven their wealth, or at least after getting it put with, is a job which would fully occupy the lives of the rich.

As regards the feelings, it is in perfect good faith that monsters of iniquity accuse the others of being unfair. No other passion fits you with such perfect blinkers as does love—or the hate which is part of love.

The misfortune of egotists is that they make all those around them suffer, when precisely their egotism, depending as it does upon their peace and comfort, requires that they shall be spared the unhappiness of others.

The lone wolves of mankind instinctively appeal to one another, hail each other as do the blind, and, like the blind, fraternize when they meet; often even they join forces. If an altogether unsociable human being exists, he must be in an asylum.

In the act of love, only the ugly woman—or she believing herself such—really gives herself. The pretty woman—or she believing herself such—is the slave of her beauty, which will but lend her and for at most a moment.

The bits of advice we give to the young, our admonishments, are usually addressed over their heads to our vanished youth. In any case, it is no more vain to

wish our dead selves to benefit by our experience than the new man now before us.

How rarely may you lie quite alone beside she whom you love. The lovers she has known and the lovers she has dreamed of are stretched out between her and you. And it is they who with your arms embrace her. The converse holds.

" Sick soul, nurse thy body. "

Here is a truth denied by a large portion of mankind, Christian Scientists or others, and they, moreover, turn it round, saying, " Sick body, nurse thy soul. " Thus they would proclaim the primacy of the moral being. I stand for the animal.

The only services rendered which can truly be placed to our credit are the services we render unawares. This is not the opinion of most benefactors, who, bless me! do not dislike renown, even when it has to be handsomely paid for.

The pity of it that we do not know how to love those whom one loves only from afar.

One may tell most persons the whole truth about themselves without making them angry, for the whole truth is too much for them to believe. And those who lose their temper have not always believed it any more than the others have.

We willingly assist others to develop their talents only on condition that they will exchange them—unconsciously or not—for ours. So many failures in business, so many bankruptcies in friendship, have no other cause : the exchange has not been possible.

The delights of being a celebrity must, I imagine, soon pall. On the other hand, one can never grow hardened to the perfidy—and less of course to their accuracy than to their spitefulness—of the shafts shot at the public man one now is.

Not to ask for more than one gives, not to give more than one receives, not to receive more than one asks for—how nice must be the measurement of the isosceles triangle which, if impeccably drawn, solves the problem of the social, and even of the moral, relations.

The greatest outrage to which you can be subjected, while alive, by those to whom you are not indifferent —either because you are or have been fond of them—is for them to behave to you as if you no longer counted, as if you were not breathing and with a heart beating, there, in front of them—you, who can feel them passing right through you.

The rich number few bold minds, still fewer the poor.

If Justice were not blind, all pity would be decrepit.

(*Translated from the French.*)

CHARLES WILLIAMS

GARETH'S SONG OF HIS SERVICE

[The Lord Gareth des Beaux-Mains was sent to serve in King Arthur's Court in the guise of a Scullion]

Ladies and lords, since I alone
have served you in the lowest place,
now am I bold before the Throne
with music for a little space
to tell the news of God his grace
as in man's lowest need 'tis shown.

According to my mother's will
wherefrom no way I chose to err,
poor offices I sought to fill,
a scullion and a scavenger,
whereof I am the interpreter
according as God gives me skill.

For while about the yards I went
upon my errand busily
to cleanse all vessels well content
for that my mother bade this be,
yet straining daily eyes to see
how the lords rode to tournament,

oft did I make a prayer to say,
that junctions free and sluices deep
and open channels God alway
might in their lovely bodies keep
and bring them in good time to sleep
and after to delightful day.

Or, they being gone to take their glee,
I seeking still my bread to earn
would think awhile how heavily
through Camelot each soul must learn
its body's lordship, and discern
with all men its equality.

White classic poets, kings in hall
of judgement, bishops singing mass,
maids lovelier than Helen, all
are brought to one uneasy pass
with beasts that feed on flesh or grass
and cousinhoods aerial.

Man, that great animal, whose brain
builds houses with himself for plan,
must needs set closet there and drain
wherein he doth his evils scan;
at tables God's food for his clan,
in beds the ending of his pain.

Without this also is no town
since Cain built Chanoch on the sod
which did his brother's slaughter own :
even Zion, that came forth from God
and since its walks by him are trod,
holds no more abbeys of renown.

Hath not that place of our Lord Love,
seeing that it is even writ
"His angels hath he charged above
with foolishness and want of wit,"
hath it not also sewers fit
and God for the latrine thereof?

Seeing its walls are wholly built
about all things that were and are,
all poverty of soul, all guilt,
all bricks of jail and lupanar,
shall not much dung its clear streets mar,
except it be in covert spilt?

For thence no evil or abuse
can into moat or ditch outflow,
nor thence may be by any sluice
into some farther world let go,
but must by labour and sore woe
rather be brought again to use.

Once also to that final pit,
on a most black and angry morn,
past gardens of sweet song and wit
and the small house where God is born;
by stairs of ignorance and scorn,
did the world go to look on it.

Therein hot furnaces they saw,
and scarrèd hands alchemical
pour and repour, as bade the law,
vitriol, blood, and bitter gall;
and heard one to another call
the work was finished without flaw....

Also great wonder was in me,
while I from pastime was forbid,
how all the body curiously
wherein the blood divine once thrid
the sacred veins from us is hid,
and all God's body's mystery.

Did our Lord in His fair body
bring a new miracle to pass,
and bid all food for strengthening be?
or was he as his mother was,
as Pilate and as Caiaphas,
and all his chosen chivalry?

Certes, to his own bloody bane
he in that vessel did consent,
that most strong crucible of pain,
to try the great experiment,
wherein all evil things were blent
with his pure life for all men's gain.

These things I needs must think upon
at labour, and right joyously
fall to each new communion;
for thus a wonder came to me,
and showed me in a mystery
how Love is everywhere to con;

who doth each gentle thought prefer
even in his comely heaven to dwell,
the scullion and the scavenger
being of him remembered well
even as the king in his high sell;
for whoso seeks love cannot err.

THE FLYING COLUMN

A SECRET RECIPE FOR REVIEWING Book-reviewing in the United States is certainly no better than it is elsewhere, and we welcome the announcement—in a pamphlet which reached us recently—that preparations are well advanced for the foundation of a semi-monthly periodical to remedy this state of affairs. It is proposed that *The American Literary Review*, when it comes into existence, shall notice at length 4,500 of the 12,000 books published each year in the United States and comment briefly on 3,000 others, shall "place special emphasis upon the whole field of non-fiction," shall "use as reviewers only those qualified by knowledge and experience in their specific fields," shall review books promptly, shall pay from four to five cents a word for contributions, shall "contain no advertising," and shall print only anonymous reviews. Equally interesting is the hope that, although refusing all advertisements, *The American Literary Review* will earn profits thanks to a sale of from 20,000 to 30,000 copies an issue. But most interesting of all perhaps are the so-called critical standards which its promoters intend it shall observe. It is largely because books should be reviewed by these alleged standards that—so the pamphlet before us asserts—a new periodical devoted entirely to book-reviewing is required. The public's demand is, we are told, indicated by the following words of Mr. Edward F. Stevens, librarian of the Pratt Institute Free Library, in a contribution made some years ago to the *Atlantic Bookshelf* :

" What the world asks for is sincerity and truth unadorned—to know that one book is intrinsically meritorious, worthy to be read and to own, and that another is unworthy and subversive, whatever its pretension to art or literary form. "

That in this new periodical the world will get what it asks for in the way of a conjunction of " sincerity and truth unadorned, " thanks to twin policies of no-adversiting and anonymity, we find especially interesting, for hitherto, while no doubt it has often been possible to obtain sincerity where a strict anonymity was assured, there has never been any guarantee that the sincerity was conjoined with truth, whether coloured or plain. The pamphlet assumes that " subjective judgements " are involved only in matters of taste, and that taste is applied only in the appraisal of imaginative literature, so that at least regarding non-fiction books

it can safely promise " objectivity. " But how can the world rely, concerning the " intrinsic meritoriousness " of any book, upon the decision of a single, even anonymous, reviewer, particularly if he is a specialist in a certain field of study and hence subject to the ills which specialists are heir to—semi-conscious malignancy towards rivals, & c. ? And how, then, is the truth to be obtained ? The pamphlet says that *The American Literary Review* will tell the truth with sincerity, and truth and sincerity it calls the future review's "critical standards." But the real critical standards are the standards whereby the truth will be elicited. About those the pamphlet is silent. Evidently the promoters of *The American Literary Review* must have a new recipe for reviewing, but is it still up their sleeve. We look forward eagerly to its revelation.

OBSTETRICAL

We have not seen Miss Mayo's new book, *Volume Two.* We are not, we trust, prudish. Our library is not restricted to works which can be read aloud in the family circle during the long winter evenings. Of Casanova's *Memoirs* and of the newly-published English translation of Restif de la Bretonne's *Autobiography*, for instance, we think as highly as does Mr. Havelock Ellis. But from one or two pages of *Mother India* which were shown to us by a friend, we ventured to infer that it was not our kind of book. And *Volume Two*, we gather, is most distinctly of the same kind. Thus we have not seen *Volume Two.* But we have glanced at the reviews. And in what the reviews say the book says there lies a question about which we should welcome medical advice (not to encourage correspondence, we had better add that we speak rhetorically). It seems, according to the reviews, that in *Volume Two* Miss Mayo denounces the child-marriages of India and that she does so because—as, according to the reviews, she says—these marriages are consummated before the child-wife's puberty and, as a result, millions—or it may be thousands—of child-wives die in childbirth every year. The question about which we should welcome medical advice is this. If a marriage is indeed consummated before the bride's puberty, how does the consummation lead to childbirth ?

FOREIGN BLOOD IN THE UNIVERSITY

In glancing one morning some time ago, at the " University News " in *The Times* — *THE Times* for the benefit of American readers—we came upon the announcement

that Mr. Herbert Read, an Assistant Keeper of the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, had been appointed Professor of Fine Art in the University of Edinburgh. Upon referring to *Who's Who*—we mean *Who's Who* tout court—we found that Mr. Read is entitled to place after his name the letters 'D.S.O.' and 'M.C.' —Distinguished Service Order and Military Cross—but, although part of his education took place at the University of Leeds, not the letters 'Ph.D.' or 'M.A.' or even 'B.A.'—in fact, no sign of academic success whatever. We at one time used to visit an old lady to whom it was only necessary to mention the name of a member of any English county family for her at once to recall all the families to which he was related—by blood and by marriage. Our acquaintance with the histories of the occupants of chairs in the universities of Great Britain is not of that order. Hence our statement must not be taken for more than it is worth. But we have never before heard of an important professorship being given to a man without a degree. In England—and that includes Scotland—the appointment of professors is a serious matter. Americans may judge by recalling that when James Anthony Froude was given a chair at Oxford, the gift came from no less a person than the Prime Minister. In Scotland, indeed, a sojourn at a university has always seemed popularly of more importance than it has in England—so much so that Aberdeen until seventy years ago had two separate universities to itself (to the proposal to unite them a local orator objected : "If a place like England can have two universities, why should Aberdeen have only one?") Accordingly, as it has been made in Scotland, Mr. Read's appointment is certainly of significance. No doubt professors of Fine Art do not grow on every bush. We understand that the post had been rendered vacant by the death of the previous holder more than a year ago. Evidently, then, it has not been easily filled. But that a holder of degrees could not have been found for it, one cannot believe. The innovation, if such it is, must be deliberate. It is the more remarkable that Mr. Read—whom we already had the pleasure of numbering among our contributors two years ago—is not only without a degree, but also has not published any general work on art. He edited *English Pottery* with Mr. Bernard Rackham, he has written *English Stained Glass*, *English Prose Style*, and *Phases of English Poetry*, he has contribued articles on art to *The Listener*, and of course he is a poet—one of the better poets—himself. That is all. This does not mean that he will not be a very good professor of Fine Art; on the contrary. But especially in America, where nowadays a university degree is deemed indispensable for almost any occupation however unacademic, his appointment may well give cause for meditation. Meanwhile we feel the University of Edinburgh is in any case to be congratulated.

THE WRITER'S BREAD

The bread-and-butter problem has never perplexed and harassed the great majority of writers more than it does to-day. At present, in capitalist countries—in Russia, no doubt, the matter is much simplified—a man without independent means who wishes to devote himself to authorship has practically only four courses open to him. Either he may find himself a patron or he may marry a rich wife or he may try to live by writing or, finally, he may seek a livelihood in some occupation distinct from his writing. All four courses are almost equally difficult and unsatisfactory. The finding of a patron has certainly become increasingly difficult ever since the advent of Dr. Johnson and apparently it never was satisfactory. To marry a rich wife is equivalent to marrying one's patron and has, it appears, all the disadvantages one would expect accordingly. To the secretary of a millionaire who had lately died, a man remarked the other day : "You must have had some trying moments. Millionaires are terrible people to live with. I know, for my wife is one." Besides, the rich wife may not be found, or when she is found, the writer may be married already. To trying to live by one's writing Coleridge was vigorously opposed, and one may take it that he had reason. In any case, for many writers—and they are not always failures in every sense of the word—living by one's pen is a sheer impossibility. There remains, to solve the writer's economic problem, the course of taking a job distinct from one's writing. No doubt there are still to-day a number of sinecures going, but to obtain one a writer has first to secure influence, and securing it requires peculiar gifts and is anyhow as exhausting as navvy work. Moreover, there are far from enough sinecures to go round. Then, if the writer takes on a job which is not a sinecure, he is likely to have no time left in which to write and—what requires more time still—to think about writing. What is a fellow to do? Especially as a writer, with his superior tastes, needs more money than other men. It happened that the other day the Aerial Columnist was walking up the Boulevard Raspail—not a furlong from the offices of THIS QUARTER—when on a hoarding he saw a number of identical large bills. "Grand Meeting of the Unemployed," said the heading in letters four inches high. Underneath was another line in large type : "At Our Meeting We Must Decide on Steps to Secure the Granting of the Following Demands." And these were the ***Revendications*** in question : "1. Payment of an Unemployment Allowance equal to One's Wages when in Employment; 2. Suspension of Payments of Rent during Unemployment; 3. Free Travel in the Tramway-cars, Metro, and Railway Trains." As soon as there is a prospect of all these demands being granted, the writer's bread-and-butter problem will be solved. He will only have to join a non-writing trade union and then fall out of work.

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There will be published in subsequent issues of THIS QUARTER:

Poems, by *E. E. Cummings*, *Emanuel Eisenberg*, *Ruth Peacock*, *J. M. Reeves*.

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There Was a Man, a story by *V. F. Calverton*.

Confessions, by *August W. Derleth*.

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Little Pancho, by *Achilles Holt*.

Where Henry James Never Entered, an essay by *Ludwig Lewisohn*.

Strange Episode in West-End Hotel, a fantasy by *Hamish Miles*.

Porta di Roma, a story by *G. F. Noxon*.

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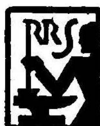

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THE FROG, a play by Virgil Geddes, 1926, out of print.

THE CASE of MR. CRUMP by Ludwig Lewisohn 1926. Limited and signed edition of 500 copies Mencken, Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, Dr Krutch. Van Doren, Sisley Huddleston and... Prof. Sigm. Freud agree in pronouncing this novel one of the great stories of our time. A small number remain undistributed,—a ruling of the U. S. Post Office Department in Washington having banned the book from the mails. Originally issued at $10.00, it is said to be fetching $50.00 in America. Paris booksellers are selling the available copies.

THE CHEESE GIRL IN NEW BENCH, by Agatha Itchwyrth, 1927; out of print.

THE VOICE OF FIRE, a long-short story by Manuel Komroff, with engravings by Polia Chentoff, 1927. Reviewing the book at length, The New York Times Book Review said: *The*

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FIRST FRUITS, poems by Thelma Spear, with an introduction by Ludwig Lewisohn, 1927. For private circulation only.

IMAGINARY LETTERS, by Mary Butts, with copper plate engravings from the original drawings by Jean Cocteau. This is a story in a sequence of letters, of an ultra-modern (or is it as ancient as the hills ?) love, and it is the first book not written by himself that Cocteau consented to illustrate.—$3.00, 12s.6d. or 70 francs. Edition limited to 250 copies.

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