XMAS DOUBLE NUMBER

COTERIE

NINA HAMNETT

Nos. 6 & 7

Winter, 1920-21

COTERIE *A Quarterly*

ART, PROSE, AND POETRY

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NINA HAMNETT

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J. RUBCZAK

COTERIE, Winter, 1920–21, Nos. 6 and 7

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For Publishers' Lists see pages 121–124.

EDITORIAL

I. "Of COTERIE: No. 5 (Henderson's. 2*s.* 6*d.*), we can only say (adapting a well-known line from a prize poem), 'It is not better; it is much the same.' The word 'coterie' signifies 'a set of persons associated by exclusive interests,' and the ineffectiveness of this quarterly is due to the individualism of its contributors, several of whom possess considerable talent and originality. This autumn number is superficially marred by certain tedious and silly contributions; but it is also suffering from a more deep-seated malady, namely, its lack of collective significance. Such ephemeral publications are of no value unless they express a coherent group-movement, and COTERIE is the loosely-edited miscellany of a group which is united only by an orange paper cover decorated with a fake-Beardsley design.

"Reading the poems in COTERIE, one remembers the plague of verse-publication which continues like an everlasting Spanish influenza epidemic. Of these verse-writers, not one in a thousand seems to have any consciousness of the essential solitude of his craft. For the mind of the poet should be a solitary region, where he seeks for the quintessence of his human experience, through a gradual process of incubation and fusion of ideas. The lyrical expression of those ideas should be spontaneous and effortless. And spontaneity is a rare blossoming which cannot be forced into flower by intellectual and emotional hot-house culture." "*Daily Herald*," *Nov. 24th*, 1920.

II. "It is, in any event, bad enough to have conscientiously to 'knife' people, particularly if we know them, and, above all, if we like them; but it is especially uncomfortable to do it whilst compulsorily hidden behind a dark curtain sustained by the hands of an editor."

Editorial Notes, "*London Mercury*," *Nov.* 1920.

III. Of COTERIE, No. 5: "It is a pity so much paper should be wasted on so much rubbish." *Literary Intelligence*, "*London Mercury*," *Nov.* 1920.

IV. Of COTERIE, No. 5: "That enterprising quarterly."

"*Manchester Guardian*," *Oct. 9th*, 1920.

V. Of COTERIE, No. 5: "A good number of this 'independent' quarterly magazine." "*Times Literary Supplement*," *Oct. 28th*, 1920.

COTERIE has now been in existence for over a year and a half. Relying for success rather upon inherent quality than upon a preliminary campaign of publicity, it has gradually attained, by the merit of its vital and sincere originality, the favour of all readers whose critical flair is not warped by malice or rusted with ineptitude. It has not needed six thousand

mercurial circulars to establish its reputation; nor is it aided by attachment to a wealthy press.

It will be observed, however, from the prefatory documents above that, in the present conditions governing the production of English literature, an æsthetic quarterly written by volunteers rather than by pressmen cannot hope, despite the obvious sincerity and accomplishment of its expression, to escape the irrelevant invective of crustacean criticasters or the dull malice of philistine sciolists. Perhaps, therefore, since COTERIE has hitherto abstained from the contemporary and traditional foible of prefacing each number with a heavy declaration of editorial policy, it may be allowed for once to depart from its custom by disposing, with an efficient brevity, of a few of the critical inanities with which it has been assailed.

First, then, as to the *Daily Herald*. It may seem needless to dilate on the puerility of the attempt to make capital out of the title of COTERIE; that attempt is as absurd as it would be to demand that the *Herald* should consist of nothing but announcements, that the *Athenæum* should contain nothing but erudition, that the *Mercury* should exhibit wit and vivacity. The attempt is, however, consistent with the falsity of logic which distorts the whole critique. For no common intelligence can fail to see that it is despicably illogical to insist in the second paragraph that the poet is essentially individual when in the first paragraph the essential individualism of the poets in COTERIE is denounced as a grave fault. It is indeed incredible that one and the same mind could have written those two mutually repugnant paragraphs unless biassed by the most obstinate prejudice or benighted by the most impenetrable stupidity.

Were the *Herald* representative of labour one might well anticipate with horror the advent of the Soviet bureaucracy they desire, when creative literature would be racked upon a procrustean formalism and jaundiced with the anæmia of a flat and sullen uniformity.

Something of the same cultural Prussianism appears in the criticisms of the *Mercury*. It is a pity that these renegades from

the fraternity of letters should so betray the solidarity of culture. It is not by perpetuating the barrel organs of Georgian poetry that the race of Helicon shall be renewed. Nor is English literature in general likely to rebuild its Parthenon out of the accumulated rubble of a sombre academicism. But it is clear that the anonymous author of the chancrous acrimony which passes for criticism in the *Mercury's* notice of COTERIE No. 5 has read no further than the table of contents. Bound by the dubious honour of a partisan to mention the two contributors who have also appeared in the *Mercury*, he makes no mention of the admirable poem of Gerald Gould, whom he had taken pains to mention in the preceding paragraph as a contributor to the *Venturer*. Nor would the ingenuous reader of the *Mercury* gather from their remarks that H. J. Massingham, Edmund Blunden, Robert Nichols, and T. S. Eliot are mutual contributors to both journals. Still less, without an intimate knowledge of personalities in contemporary letters, could they divine the depth of personal animosity which underlies the *Mercury's* apparently purely critical resentment.

So much for the rectitude and delicacy of contemporary criticism. As far as we are aware COTERIE was noticed in the *Mercury* for the first time in November, 1920, though COTERIE was in existence more than six months before the mountainous parturition of that journal was announced with such elaborate and lavish advertisement. We may assume that the rivalry of COTERIE is beginning to arouse trepidation as the fact gains recognition that COTERIE is the only periodical of standing in contemporary literature which contains nothing but work of creative imagination.

To those whose criticisms of COTERIE have been the criticisms of gentlemen we are very grateful. Others we would remind of the urbane canon of Horace—

'. . . Licuit semperque licebit
Signatum praesente nota procudere nummum.'

"CHOP AND CHANGE"

Characters

KING HENRY VIII — ANN BOLEYN
QUEEN KATHERINE — THE KING'S BARBER

KING HENRY VIII. *and* QUEEN KATHERINE *are seated at breakfast (barons of beef—hams—beer) a Page or two in attendance.*

HENRY. This is intolerable. Where is the Cardinal, boy? Am I to be expected to sit here at breakfast with nothing to do but talk to the Queen, without the morning's news of what is happening in the Kingdom?

QUEEN. Am I so dull for you, my liege?

HENRY. Well, damn it, I've spent the night with you. If I'd had anything to say to you, or you'd had anything to say to me, it would have been said long ago.

QUEEN. There was a time when you could always find something to say to me.

HENRY. Well, well, I suppose there was. And where is Boleyn? Boleyn's a mighty attractive young woman, I find. Upon my word, Madam, I think I bear with you because you have Boleyn about you. Where's Boleyn?

Enter ANN BOLEYN, *debonnaire—pats back hair.*

ANN. I am here, your Majesty—[*turning to* QUEEN]. Your pardon, Madam, that I am late. I broke the lace of my corselet.

HENRY. Madam! Madam! Have a care; such matters are not mentioned in this country. I pray you do not learn from her Majesty the license of Spain. [*She curtseys apologetically.*] If you were not good to look on you would not be pardoned for saying such things, though, for that matter, if you were not good-looking it would not matter if you said them.

QUEEN. Your Majesty is pleased to be complimentary to my lady-in-waiting.

HENRY. I am. I am very pleased to be complimentary to her. Upon my soul she is a fine wench. If I were not married to you, Madam—and when I come to think of it, why should I be married to you longer than I feel inclined? Am I not King?

QUEEN. Surely, my liege. And am I not your Queen?

HENRY. Ay, there's the rub—but there is no reason why you should continue to be, is there?

QUEEN. Do you not love me a little even now? I pray you leave us, Ann, and pages.

HENRY. Nay, don't go, Mistress Boleyn.

ANN. I am the Queen's servant, your Majesty—I obey her.

HENRY. If you're hers, you're mine the more. Stay.

QUEEN. Go, Ann. You should know better, Hal, than to interfere in household matters.

[ANN *goes*, HENRY *calling after her.*

QUEEN. Do you not love me still, a little, Hal?

HENRY. When you cross me like this? No. Most of the time I suppose I do in a sort of way; but I want a change.

QUEEN. The change you want has a name, I think. I think her name is Ann.

HENRY. You have the right there. I have taken a great fancy to that Ann of yours.

QUEEN. Well, Hal, since you must have your change and are the King, I must not be jealous. Complaisance is a quality in Queens.

HENRY. Madam, what do you imply? That I, King of England, should take a paramour. Your Spanish morals will not do in English Courts! Besides, can you see me wandering the corridors at night in a shift?

QUEEN. But, Henry, what did you imply, then?

HENRY. Why, that—h'm, well—you should die and I should make Boleyn Queen.

QUEEN. Die! But I am not ill!

HENRY. You're stupid, Kate. Am I not King, with power of life and death?

QUEEN. You mean you would have me put to death?

HENRY. Yes—why not? Am I not King? And what is the good of being King if I can't have what I want?

QUEEN. Oh, Hal! You didn't mean it? What have I done?

HENRY. Well, I'm not at all sure that you aren't guilty of high treason. You're betraying me to the devil. You have that devilish attractive creature about you and then suggest that I should take her for a mistress. I'm not at all sure that that isn't high treason.

QUEEN. Hal, Hal, you don't mean it, my dear.

HENRY. Where's that fellow Wolsey—I must have a talk to him about this. Upon my soul, it's a good idea. What's the good of being King if you can't have the Queen you want?

QUEEN. But Hal, you wanted me once!

HENRY. Ay! But that's a very different thing. A King should have what he wants, not what he once wanted. You've had a jolly good time, you know; now you can pay me back by going out of the way quietly. I'm going to see Wolsey about it. [*Exit* HENRY.

QUEEN *weeps noisily.* *Enter* BOLEYN.

BOLEYN. What ails you, Madam?

QUEEN. Oh! Henry's going to cut my head off and marry you!

BOLEYN. Me? Marry me!

QUEEN. Yes; but he's going to cut my head off.

ANN. And marry me. Madam, he doesn't mean it. He's never shown any interest at all in me.

QUEEN. He says he wants a change—oh, oh. He'll probably cut your head off too, soon, to marry some one else.

ANN. Oh! do you think so? I think I could manage him.

QUEEN. Oh, do you, you vixen!—you supplanter! And how do you think you'd do it, pray?

ANN. Well, it seems he's in love with me.

QUEEN. And he was with me once—he said so only to-day; and he was crazy about me—only quite a short time ago it seems.

ANN. It can't have been very serious or he would not be tired of you now.

QUEEN. Of course it was serious. You ask Lord Somerset. He was a great friend of Henry's then, and he knew—oh, he's dead, though!

ANN. Yes, and where's his head, I ask you? Chopped off!

QUEEN. Why, that just proves how changeable he is. I believe he's very fond of me still, and just has a sort of infatuation for you.

ANN. He wants to marry me, anyhow.

QUEEN. But he may be fond of me for all that.

ANN. He wouldn't want to have you executed if he was.

QUEEN. Oh, don't talk about it! Won't you help me, Ann?

ANN. How can I? Do you expect me to scald my face or something to put him off? And even if I did, his eye's got the roving habit now; he'd find some one else he fancied.

QUEEN. But, my dear, doesn't it just prove that he'd treat you in the same way? His eyes would start roving again in a bit, and then where would you be?

Enter the COURT BARBER. *He bows profoundly.*

QUEEN. Well, what is it?

BARBER. I have orders to come to trim His Majesty's beard.

QUEEN. In the breakfast-room?

BARBER. His Majesty said that I might be required to trim your Majesty's hair at the back.

QUEEN. I never said anything about it. I don't need it, thank you.

BARBER. His Majesty said something about baring the back of your Majesty's neck. [*The* QUEEN *and* BOLEYN *shriek.*

QUEEN. The brute!

ANN. I won't have him called a brute.

QUEEN. You shut up, Ann. You're not Queen yet. I pray you, good Barber, say nothing of all this again.

[*She gives him a gold piece.*

BARBER. I have heard nothing, Madam. But can I be of service? If any one knows what is at the back of the King's head it should be I.

QUEEN [*wrings her hands*]. I don't know. I don't know.

ANN. His Majesty wants to make me Queen, barber, and finds Madam in the way.

QUEEN. And talks of cutting my head off. He's gone to see the Cardinal about it. I hope the Cardinal has a pitiful heart.

BARBER. I should not count upon that, Madam, but on the Cardinal having wit enough to know that it would be a very unpopular act, and might embroil us with your nephew the Emperor. He will realise that this country's interests and yours are one in this matter.

ANN. And what about my interests? I have rather a fancy for being Queen.

QUEEN. And more than a fancy for Henry too, I hope, Ann. I should hate him to marry any one who didn't love him.

BARBER. Madam, what about divorce?

QUEEN. Divorce? But I haven't done anything, and Henry hasn't either—has he, Ann?

ANN. Madam, pray don't insult me.

QUEEN. Well, there you are, barber—you can't have a divorce without one of you being naughty, can you?

BARBER. You've no idea how easily that sort of thing is arranged, ladies. I think your Majesty will have to seek Lady Ann's aid to secure that it is divorce and not destruction that leads her to the throne.

QUEEN. I don't want her help. I'd rather die.

BARBER. Your Majesty may have used that expression out of familiarity with the expression rather than with death. Even when the neck is bared by gentle hands . . .

[*The* QUEEN *screams.*

ANN. I shall be very glad to help.

BARBER. You must tell his Majesty that you would hesitate to marry a Blue Beard for fear of your own safety. He will

threaten to cut your head off if you don't marry him. But in his present frame of mind if your ladyship could see your way to titillate his fancy, so to speak, while encouraging him to remain virtuous in regard to you, I think you could secure much.

ANN. Am I supposed to know it's me he's after?

BARBER. I think it would be wise to give him the opportunity of indicating that himself.

QUEEN. I don't like it, you know—I don't, I don't.

BARBER. Your Majesty means——

QUEEN. Oh, well, I don't like any of it, of course—but I mean this divorce business. Ann, go and find Wolsey and get him away from the King if you can. I want to talk to him.

[*Exit* ANN.

BARBER. Your Majesty must realise that all this will turn not upon some great matter, but upon some trifle.

QUEEN. What do you mean?

BARBER. Your Majesty sees that his Majesty is prepared to embroil England in a continental war just because he fancies the Lady Ann. Your Majesty must think of some trifling matter to turn his Majesty's thoughts to divorce rather than execution.

QUEEN. Can you suggest anything?

BARBER. Could his Majesty be reminded that it would be a shame to cut your beautiful hair?

QUEEN. He has no soul for beauty—only an eye for it.

BARBER. Miss no opportunity then, Madam, of pleasing his eye, and flattering his taste in all respects. His Majesty's figure leads me to believe that he has tastes if not taste.

QUEEN. But it so terrible that I have to gain my life appealing to his stomach.

BARBER. Rather to his palate, Madam. And I assure you—I who have cut hair and trimmed beards in the loftiest circles for many years, that it is very, very small matters which alter destinies.

Enter HENRY. *He goes to a chair and sits down.* BARBER *encloses him in a wrap and starts trimming his beard.*

HENRY. Where the devil is that fellow Wolsey now? I've been looking all over for him.

QUEEN. Henry, dear, Ann and I have found a way out.

HENRY. Out of what?

QUEEN. Out of having my head cut off.

HENRY. My dear, what a way to put it!

QUEEN. Well, it's true, isn't it?

HENRY. Well, well, let us hear it. But none of those scandalous suggestions about Ann.

QUEEN. Don't you think that murder is more wicked than immorality?

HENRY. Murder, my dear! Who talked of murder?

QUEEN. It would be murder to have me executed for nothing, dear.

HENRY. Rubbish! An execution isn't murder, never; and it won't be for nothing. I've pointed out to you that you're betraying me to the devil, which is certainly high treason. And, anyhow, this is a respectable Court, and I'll not have a reputation for—er—philandering—getting about.

QUEEN. We think a divorce would be the best plan.

HENRY [*starting violently*]. Divorce! [*Turning to* BARBER] Varlet, you've cut my neck.

QUEEN. And how do you like having your neck cut, Henry?

HENRY. Don't keep on about that, Katherine. Divorce, you suggested? I don't like the idea—it's not very respectable, to my mind.

QUEEN. Don't you think you might forget your respectability for once, Henry? For my sake.

HENRY. What do you mean? Me? Never.

QUEEN. Well, anyhow, if the respectable people, like the Clergy and the Universities perhaps, and Cardinal Wolsey——

HENRY. Wolsey isn't respectable, he's a statesman and beneath respectability.

QUEEN. And you're a King, dear, and should be above it. But if they all agreed, don't you think you could save my life?

HENRY. Divorce takes such a long time.

QUEEN. Not in the case of kings, darling. It could be put through very quickly. And my execution would be very unpopular.

HENRY. Not a bit of it. England likes me. They know I'm a sportsman, and they'd think me very sporting and racy to give them a new Queen when I felt like it. And if I told them that you had wanted me to take a mistress they'd want your head twice over.

QUEEN. And there's my nephew, the Emperor. He'd make row enough, and he is very powerful abroad, and might get up a league against us.

HENRY. I don't care.

QUEEN. They might put your Majesty to a great deal of expense.

HENRY. The devil!—so they might. And funds are none too plentiful just now. Well, I will let you know in half an hour. Go away and send Lady Ann to me. [*Exit* QUEEN.] What do you think about this business, varlet?

BARBER. A royal execution would be a fine sight for the people, your Majesty.

HENRY. Yes, so it would.

BARBER. And I suppose there would be many would come.

HENRY. Of course.

BARBER. Even of those who would be sorry that the Queen should die.

HENRY. Do you think so?

BARBER. All would be sorry that she should die, for she is a beautiful and good Queen. But many would come, for all that.

HENRY. How's that?

BARBER. Some people like to hear all about unpleasant things, Sire. Some even like to be made unhappy, and there are those who never miss a chance of—saving your Majesty's presence—having their stomach well turned.

HENRY. You're a disgusting fellow.

BARBER. Pardon, Sire. I had not thought one so powerful would retain a power to feel disgusted.

HENRY. Why on earth not?

BARBER. The exercise of power generally has disgusting results for some one—but perhaps they are not seen by the powerful.

HENRY. You're talking rubbish. Power is a splendid thing and most enjoyable.

BARBER. Your Majesty is right, but the exercise of it is perhaps less so than the pleasure of having it and refraining from exercising it.

HENRY. What do you know about it?

BARBER. Your Majesty does not, perhaps, realise that with a couple of snips with my scissors I could make your Majesty look ridiculous—with one slip of my razor I could let in another King. But I refrain.

HENRY. It would cost you your life!

BARBER. That is perhaps why I refrain, your Majesty.

HENRY. I should think so!

BARBER. But it pleases me to feel my power and yet not use it. Used, the power is gone.

HENRY. Yours would be, I can promise you.

BARBER. The power to do again is so much less than the power to do.

HENRY. There's something in that.

BARBER. If you execute the Queen, Sire, there will be no pleasure in your power to execute any one in the kingdom, for you will have executed the highest!

HENRY. Huh!—you're on her side, are you? Damn it! every one's on her side, I think. Get out! My beard will do well enough—I shan't kiss any one to-day, I'm afraid. The Queen doesn't attract me, and I mustn't kiss Ann while Katherine is Queen.

[*Exit* BARBER—HENRY *rises and surveys his fat presence.*

Enter ANN.

ANN. You sent for me, Sire.

HENRY. I am displeased with you, Lady Ann.

ANN [*caressingly*]. Oh, Sire, I could not bear your displeasure.

HENRY. Well, well, child, perhaps displeasure was too strong a term in the mouth of a King. But you should not have disobeyed me this morning, and left the room when I bade you stay.

ANN. But it is her Majesty whom I was appointed to serve, and I thought I ought to obey her.

HENRY. You were only *appointed* to serve *her*, you were *born* to serve your King.

ANN. I rejoice in my birth, Sire—but it was a difficult choice for one so young and inexperienced to have to make on a sudden, and you will forgive me, Sire, if I say that, living as I do in such close proximity to the Queen, it seemed wiser to obey her. Her Majesty can make it very unpleasant at times for those very close to her.

HENRY. That's just it. That's just it. I had had to make a very awkward communication to her, very awkward, and I was afraid she might want to argue about it. Your departure put me into a very great difficulty. In fact I had to leave her lest she should pursue the subject, which I desired should be considered settled.

ANN. But, your Majesty.

HENRY. Call me "Henry," Ann.

ANN. Call you Henry, Sire? What right have I to call you Henry?

HENRY. Well, perhaps it is premature, but it seems so cold that you should call me "Sire" and "Your Majesty." I'll tell you what; call me "Henry the Eighth," that will be a good compromise until you can call me Henry.

ANN. I do not understand your meaning, Sire.

HENRY. Ah, Ann, my dear, it is perhaps very improper that I should speak to you while the Queen is still the Queen. But she is shortly to be either executed or divorced—I am not quite sure which yet—and then, my Ann, you and I will be married, and you can call me "Henry" or "Hal," or even "Darling" or "Old Pudge." Meantime, you can call me Henry the Eighth, and look upon me as a suitor for your hand.

ANN. Oh, Sire—I mean, oh, Henry the Eighth! Do you mean you love me?

HENRY. Not while the Queen is Queen you know, but if she wasn't I should.

ANN. And are you going to marry me?

HENRY. When the Queen is dead, for I think divorce would be too slow and doubtful.

ANN. Oh, Henry.

HENRY. Not Henry, Lady Ann. We must remember that I am still a married man—Henry the Eighth.

ANN. But you don't really mean to have the Queen executed?

HENRY. Yes, I think so. I don't see any other way that is certain.

ANN. Poor Queen.

HENRY. It's no good considering people's feelings like that. We people in high stations have to think of the greatest good of the greatest number, you know—and you and I are two, and the Queen is only one.

ANN. But you know I can't help thinking what I should feel like in her place.

HENRY. You shall very soon know, Lady Ann. You will very soon be in her place.

ANN (*gives a scream*). Oh, Henry the Eighth, you don't mean what I mean—I meant in her position about execution.

HENRY. Oh, I see. Well, of course, that isn't the sort of thing that happens often, you know.

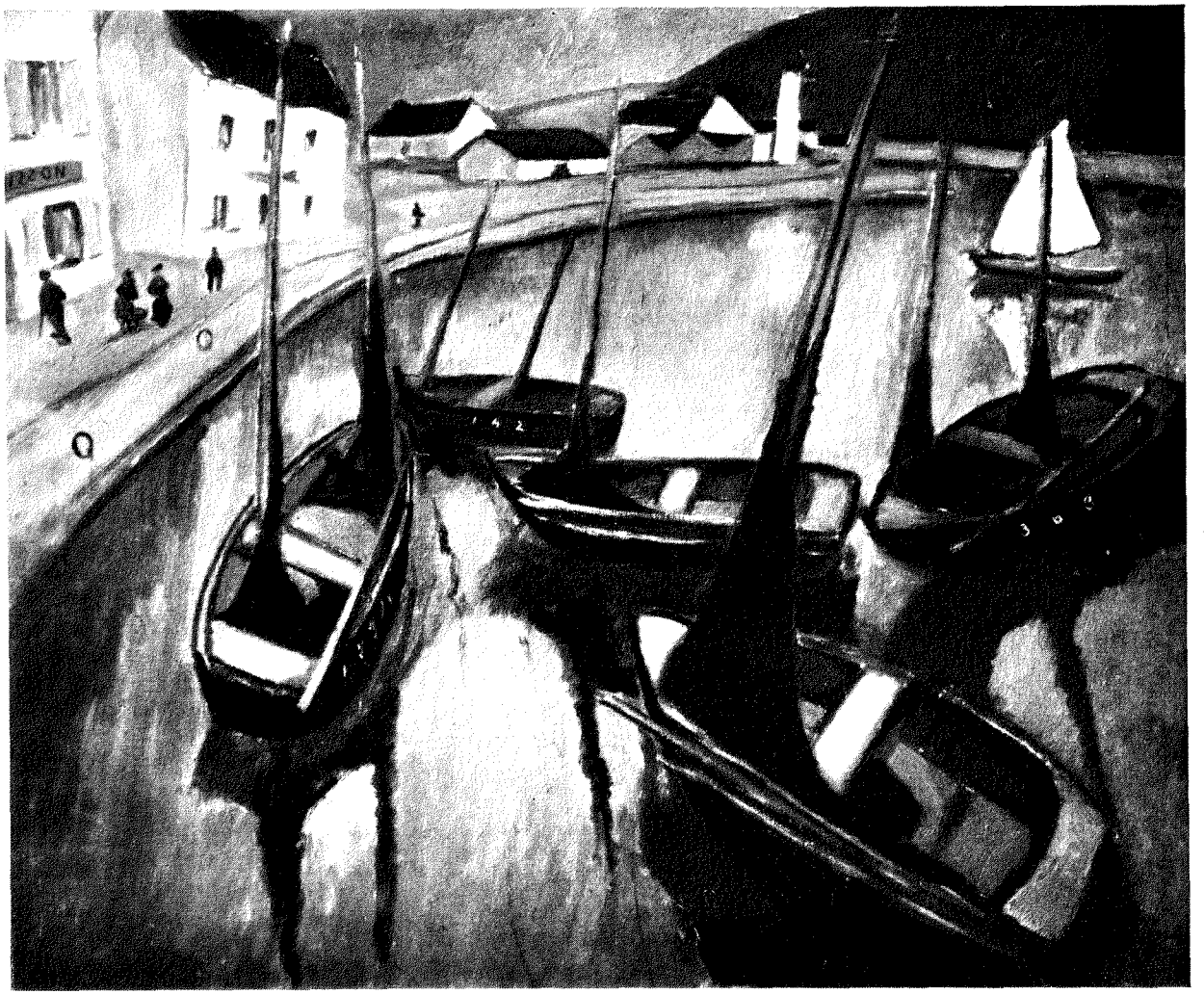
ANN. But if it happens once, it may happen again, and in a few years you may be wanting to cut *my* head off.

HENRY. Oh, no—I—er—you see—even now when I can't love you because I'm a married man, I feel as though when once I could start I should love you for ever.

ANN. But I'm so frightened that you wouldn't—that you'd get tired of me and cut my head off. I don't think I dare marry quite such a masterful man.

[*She makes eyes as she says this.*

J. RUBCZAK



J. RUBCZAK

HENRY [*preening himself*]. Yes, I am masterful. But you must marry me, you know. You'll like being mastered; women always do.

ANN. But not to that extent, dear. May I call you dear?

HENRY. I don't think you ought to, you know. After all, Katherine isn't dead yet.

ANN. Oh, Henry the Eighth, you are terrible in your power! No, I daren't marry you.

HENRY. Eh! What!

ANN. I simply daren't marry you. I should feel my head loose on my shoulders every time you were crabby at breakfast.

HENRY. You've got to marry me.

ANN. I daren't.

HENRY. You'll have your head cut off if you don't.

ANN [*screams*]. Oh—Henry, you are terrible—I'm going to faint. Catch me! [*She drops into his arms.*

HENRY. Tut, tut. This sort of thing won't do, you know. You're going to be the bride of a strong man and a King, and you must not be squeamish. Besides—think if you were seen in my arms like this!

ANN. But you frighten me. Oh, you frighten me so! Cannot you be merciful in your great strength?

HENRY. Mercy would be a pleasure to me as a private individual, but I must think of the interests of the State.

ANN. But does it matter to the State whether you divorce the Queen or execute her?

HENRY. Of course it does. It's very bad for the State that I should be disturbed in mind and temper, and I shall be that until I've got this business over. Besides—I *am* the State.

ANN. Wouldn't you hate it if I were your wife and frightened of you?

HENRY. I should prefer you to be a little frightened of me, I think. I don't believe in this equality between spouses, especially when one of them is a king.

ANN. Oh, a little frightened! But what if I were terrified,

and shivered at a cross look, and fainted at a word. And oh! I should be terrified, terrified, all the time.

[*She clutches him tighter.*

HENRY. Come now, that will do, dear. You're upsetting me very much. It is very disturbing to have you in my arms like this. And if any one came in we should be misunderstood.

ANN. Can't I kiss you? Just once?

HENRY. I don't think you ought to.

ANN. Oh, just once! [*She kisses him, then takes herself out of his arms and falls on one knee.*] Oh, my Henry the Eighth, grant me one boon. I long for your love and to be your Queen, but I am afraid—afraid of you. Show me that you can be merciful. Promise never to execute me, and as a pledge divorce the Queen instead of executing her.

HENRY. It takes too long.

ANN. It could be hurried.

HENRY. Well, go and tell her that if she can get a divorce fixed up within a week she shall save her head.

ANN. And your promise for my head, my love.

HENRY. Don't call me "your love" like that, Ann. It sounds very nice to me, but it would be thought most improper by any one else who heard you.

ANN. But about my head.

HENRY. Oh, you're safe enough. Now away and tell the Queen what I say—she'll want every minute she can get.

[*Exit* ANN, *and re-enter* QUEEN, *excited.*

QUEEN. Are you no longer King?

HENRY. No longer King? What does this mean?

QUEEN. The Papal Legate has been here.

HENRY. Well, did he say I was no longer King here, the rascal?

QUEEN. What he said did amount to that.

HENRY. What *did* he say? Quick.

QUEEN. I hardly like to tell you. Your Majesty might find offence in my utterance of the words.

HENRY. Nonsense—tell me what he says.

QUEEN. He says the Pope will not allow you to do a certain thing.

HENRY. And what won't the Pope allow? Does he forbid me to execute you?

QUEEN. He forbids a less serious thing than that: he forbids you to divorce me.

HENRY. Oh, that! I suppose that's his affair.

QUEEN. His affair! His affair to say what the King of England must or must not do?

HENRY. Well, I suppose it's a kind of religious matter, isn't it—divorce?

QUEEN. What if it were? Is a foreigner to say what the laws of England shall be? He wouldn't if I were King!

HENRY. Is it a question of the laws of England, think you?

QUEEN. Of course it is. Are marriage laws the same in England as in France? or in Spain? Did you marry me by England's laws or Pope's? Is England part of the Pope's kingdom, and is England's King his vassal?

HENRY. There's a lot in what you say. It is somewhat presumptuous perhaps.

QUEEN. *Somewhat!* Are you not a strong King? Are you a weakling who will let a foreign potentate increase his rights in your kingdom? I think he takes you for one.

HENRY. Takes me for a weakling! Takes Henry for a weak King! I will defy him—I'll follow none but the English laws!

QUEEN. That's my old Henry up again—the strong man, the firm ruler.

HENRY. I'll show him. Where is that Legate? Has he gone?

QUEEN. Don't trouble about him, he's only a minión. Don't send for him. Send him away to Rome, with a message that you are a defender of England's faith, and need no messenger from Rome to say what you may or may not do!

HENRY. I will. How should he know what England's laws are and what Henry may or may not do.

QUEEN. Let us be avenged. Let us make the Legate co-respondent in the divorce!

HENRY. What!

QUEEN. Why not?

HENRY. The world shall never believe that you were immoral, or, for that matter, that you could be unfaithful to *me.*

QUEEN. Well, the laws of England will want some reason for a divorce.

HENRY. There's that marriage of yours to my brother, you know.

QUEEN. That couldn't be a reason.

HENRY. We'll see. Let's ask Wolsey. [*Stamps for* PAGE.] Page, fetch the Cardinal. And we'll send for the learnedest men in Oxford and Cambridge, and Parliament shall meet—my faithful Parliament.

QUEEN. Can't you make the laws of England, Henry? I don't want to lose my head on some technical point.

HENRY. Look here, it must be dinner-time, Kate.

QUEEN. In five minutes dinner will be served.

HENRY. Dinner's very late to-day.

QUEEN. It will be ready at the usual hour. For me, I'm not hungry—you've made me too anxious.

HENRY. All this fuss has given me an appetite. [*Shouts.*] Page! [*Enter* PAGE.] Fetch me a cup of sack and have some bitter herbs squeezed into it. [*Exit* PAGE.] Upon my soul, Kate, you're causing me a lot of worry—a lot of worry. I hope you appreciate the extent to which I'm trying to meet your wishes.

QUEEN. I suppose I ought to be feeling grateful for your thought for me, Henry, but I can't help feeling that you are thinking chiefly of yourself.

HENRY. I am nothing of the sort. I am thinking chiefly of Ann. And that's natural and proper. She's young and innocent, you know, and one must consider her interests.

QUEEN. What an unselfish man you are, Henry.

Enter ANN.

QUEEN. Lady Ann, here is his Majesty thinking so much of your interests that he really cannot think of mine at all.

HENRY. I don't think it quite proper that these things should be said to Ann while the Queen is still the Queen. We must preserve appearances.

QUEEN. Can your Majesty not get this idea out of your head? It is only a passing whim, you know, and will cause you an infinity of trouble, and your kingdom, too.

ANN. I'm much obliged to your Majesty. Only a passing whim, am I? We'll see about that.

HENRY. Lady Ann, Lady Ann! I beg you, I beg you! If you talk of being Queen like that while her Majesty still occupies that position you will give great occasion to gossips!

ANN. Oh, Henry!

HENRY. Henry the Eighth, please! [*Enter* PAGE *bearing cup.* HENRY *quaffs deeply.*] Ah, that's better. What is for dinner to-day, Kate?

QUEEN. There is carp fried in honey and butter, a capon, and a brace of wild duck, a boar's head, and your Majesty's favourite pudding.

HENRY [*excitedly*]. You mean plum duff.

QUEEN. Yes.

HENRY. My *dear* Kate. You are an admirable woman. [*Suddenly*]: Is this a bribe? Are you trying to get round me?

QUEEN. Certainly not, Hal. It is so easy to warm up; you always have it on washing-day.

HENRY. I wish we had a washing-day every day.

QUEEN. I don't.

HENRY. You are an admirable woman, my love. If I spare your life and divorce you instead, will you stay on as housekeeper?

QUEEN. It would create scandal, Sire.

ANN. I shouldn't like it a bit. I couldn't give *her* orders, you know, and I shouldn't be mistress in my own kitchens.

QUEEN. I should prefer not to take the post, Hal.

HENRY. Well, when are we going to settle this business, eh? I must get it settled.

QUEEN. Hal, whenever you have this favourite pudding of yours you get the nightmare.

HENRY. Oh, I don't think it's the pudding, dear.

QUEEN. Oh, yes, it is. And you know it is too, only you won't give up the pudding. Well, I know what your nightmares will be if you have my head cut off. You will dream of me. You will see axe-blades flashing. You will be amongst them, and they will frighten you, and then you will see me lying there. You will see my feet, and your eyes will travel over my dress to my shoulders, and then you will start—for, Henry, there will be no head. And you will wake sweating and trembling.

HENRY. Don't, Kate, don't.

QUEEN. Week after week, perhaps night after night. For Lady Ann may not have strength to limit your consumption of plum duff. You will wake shaking. And all because you aren't King in your own kingdom.

HENRY. But I'm not quite sure that it's altogether respectable to defy the Pope.

QUEEN. I'm sure that it's not respectable to wake up in bed beside your Queen trembling at a dream of the Queen you have killed in order to replace her.

HENRY. There is much in what you say.

ANN. I should simply hate it if you woke me up that way. I'm not sure I shan't have nightmares myself if you cut her head off.

QUEEN. And all because the Pope is to have command over you.

PAGE *enters.*

PAGE. Dinner is served, Sire.

HENRY. Come on, Kate — take my arm. We'll not say another word about your head. The plum duff has saved you. You shall be divorced instead.

CURTAIN.

ROY CAMPBELL

CANAL

THE trees, stuffed full of shadow, held the foul
Mist up like rags, and on the savage air
Shook forth no bat to harp the gale. The owl
Glared ember-eyed out of their drab despair.
And she the night had brought me, in the mired
Way bared her shivering flesh, like a white flake
Crumbling in that huge night—so cold and tired
I could not kiss her sullen eyes awake.

That squalid hour, had we been wise enough
We should have cast our wasted bodies down
The bank, amid the dark corrupted stuff,
And taken on its darkness like a crown:
But that, in fear of Night more vast and chill,
We huddled from the water, and were still.

THE HEAD

WHEN tigers meet at night and fall
To revels in remote Bengal,

And owls remark with no dismay
The burnt-out cinders of the day:

Bedouins, hunched upon the sands,
Will scowl and press their mighty hands

Across their eyes, deep pits of sin,
To keep the moon from peering in.

For when the moon goes mad at night,
A darkness comes upon the sight,

And huge ungainly monsters creep
Out of the corners of our sleep—

Hippogriff and Basilisk
Sniff about the trees, and whisk

Stiff tails, or cough with ghostly din
Around the tents we shiver in,

While the moon from shadow spills
His fiery broth upon the hills...

John-the-Baptist of the skies!
Head, that has no hair nor eyes,

That speaks no word, and keeps no tryst
With any fair necrophilist,

But holds inevitable sway
Until the crash of Judgment Day,

And knows how then, to lunar hymns
Ascending whitenesses of limbs

Will streak the night, and he will roam
Across waste land and rolling foam,

Pocked with craters, veiled in mist,
By all the dead Salomes kissed.

THE SLEEPERS

I HAVE laughed through the night of lust
And wanton revel. Comes the day,
And towsled in their secret hay,
The shy nymphs sleep, with white legs thrust

Deep in that rustling sweetness. There
They have forgotten me, and lie
Blue-lidded in their languor, by
Cool streams and mossy boulders where

The stiff shrunk grass curls crisp and low.
They are too chaste, alas, to join
The tipsy wars of lip and loin,
They go not where the mænads go.

But in their chastity unclean,
Blind to their dreams, they know not how
Their souls steal forth to tryst, and now
Tumble with fauns upon the green.

WILFRID ROWLAND CHILDE

HYMN TO THE EARTH

O DEAR green earth, who art the only rest,
Apart from God, our truant spirits know,
Fold us yet closer to thy perfect breast,
And unto us all thy secret wisdom show:
When, weary of seeking Love in the Inane,
We turn our footsteps back from the cold horns,
Whose crystals are not reached by jagged pain,
Nor whiteness of vast unconsoling morns,
To thee, to thee alone our souls we turn;
Before thine altars let us quiet burn...

He whom we seek is also here amid
Rivers that steal through tangled grass like hair,
Each heavy tree that forms a pyramid
Of rocking life lifted in radiant air,
Each wise and sullen field, whose swelling curves
Hide secret meanings subtle as the grave;
Deep voices haunt the fragrant-breathing turves,
Winds flood the hollow highlands like a cave;
The solitary upland gauntly stretched
Up amid skies her far-off runes has fetched

From sunset's russet rims that rib the dark
With slowly dying fires from the clay,
That moistens with dawn's dimness dewy-stark
Her trembling veil of glass betwixt the day,
Throned in her faery palace wrought with gold,
And night soft-fading with his drowsy stars:
Green are those hours and slender, rare with cold;
At such a tingling time it seems the bars
Betwixt the real and the dream grow thin:
Almost to very Love we seem to win...

I would be glad with swallows as they glide
On plumes that skim and slide o'er summer's grass;
They slip like skiffs that dart across the tide,
And suddenly twist and tremble and repass,
And go up the sharp brightness on curved wings,
With sickled beauty carving the calm air;
Then down again they dip, each faery flings
Her arrowy body swift-urged everywhere,
Stabbing the heart with a sudden delight of seeing
One creature perfectly fulfil its being!...

Deep in the dim penumbra of tall trees,
When soft gray mists suffuse slow summer-days,
Almost I would go down upon my knees
Amid the shadowy silence of those ways;
The tranced campanulas in clumps adream
Lift the slim turrets of their violet bells:
Rippling and rustling rolls the runnel-stream
Its silvery threads down dense and hollowed dells;
The sky is deeply dappled, as though a few
Wide-scattered plumes of jays had shed their blue...

This all thy sombre and cloistral temple is,
O Mother Hertha, here thy veilèd shrine
Guards its unspeakable strange mysteries,
The tables of most humble bread and wine;
The fragrant bedstraw breathes her yellow soul
Forth on thy glancing winds, most birds are dumb,
Soft gentle perfumes o'er brown hayfields roll,
Strange fancies round my brooding spirit come,
Silence like iron clamps the low mild skies,
And nodding mists from drooping roses rise...

GRAND PASSION

HEART
hot water laid on.
Brain
central heating.

Sunset
night
closer closer
mouth oh mouth.

Magnetic South
Bradshaw A B C
paysage
wagons-lit.

Farther father.

On the other hand
'I know a land
where bloom the
orange trees.'

Letters and a lock of hair
always these always these
and the ghosts
of A B C's.

POST MORTEM

ON slab of marble Love lies bleeding.
Analysis, with hairy paws,
Diagnoses over-feeding,
Death from an unnatural cause.

Thus all is done, but to remember.
Poor bantling of unhappy birth,
So soon in spring to meet December,
Lust unto dust, and mirth to earth!

Did you expect? The child was pampered,
Too burningly the roses glowed.
Did you expect? When nothing hampered,
The full clepsydra overflowed.

Our passion jerked in syncopation
The heart's indifferent gramaphone.
We had the sea, the sky's carnation,
And distant sirens making moan.

But now the doctor ends autopsy,
And tired, too tired to smile or sigh,
Thinks me a bully, you a mopsy,

Good-bye at last! At last, good-bye!

COWBOY BACCHANALE

To Lily Ückermann

NOW at last the dogies sleep,
And the cowboys' day is done,
O'er the plain the coyotes creep
And the eagle climbs the sun.

Now the quirts to lilies change,
Bronchos now to dolphins turn,
Cowboys on the ocean range,
While the constellations burn.

Java with its perfumes calls,
Cathay lures them with its peace,
Bombay with black marble halls;
But the cowboys call for Greece.

Still the dolphins bear them on,
Past the land of hieroglyphs,
Past the stones of Babylon,
Past the Cretans in their skiffs.

Now to Greece at last they come,
Land and join the waiting dance,
Bacchus beats upon his drum,
Dryads stab them with their glance.

And the cowboys whirl in joy,
Good-bye dogies! Good-bye toil!
White-breast girl to red-shirt boy
Stamping on Hellenic soil.

Wine and laughter till the dawn,
Cocktails from Olympic bars:
But the veil of day is drawn,
Cowboys vanish with the stars.

Back they go to Idaho,
For the dawn calls up their force,
Dances are but winds that blow;
Now each cowboy mounts his horse,

And the day begins again,
Coyotes to their homes take flight,
And the sun above the plain
Shrieks its blasphemies to night.

GODFREY ELTON

I.—FARCICAL RHYME

ADDRESSED TO A GENTLEMAN WHO OBSERVED THAT

"The representative under a modern parliamentary constitution is invariably a man of enterprise far above the average."

AND it was ever thus. The twelve
Sat down to sup in Lent.
Eleven stayed. Iscariot
Went forth to represent.

II.—WAR GRAVES.

O golden lads, O lovers, here lie we
To keep the world safe for plutocracy.

III.—AFTERMATH.

War is like hail. It lays the flowers flat.
Fall hail—there lives no beauty after that.
Then sun again, the devastations cease,
And slugs and worms creep out, to win the peace.

IV.—WAR GRAVES.

Tell the professors, you that pass us by,
They taught Political Economy,
And here, obedient to its laws, we lie.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

THE STAR

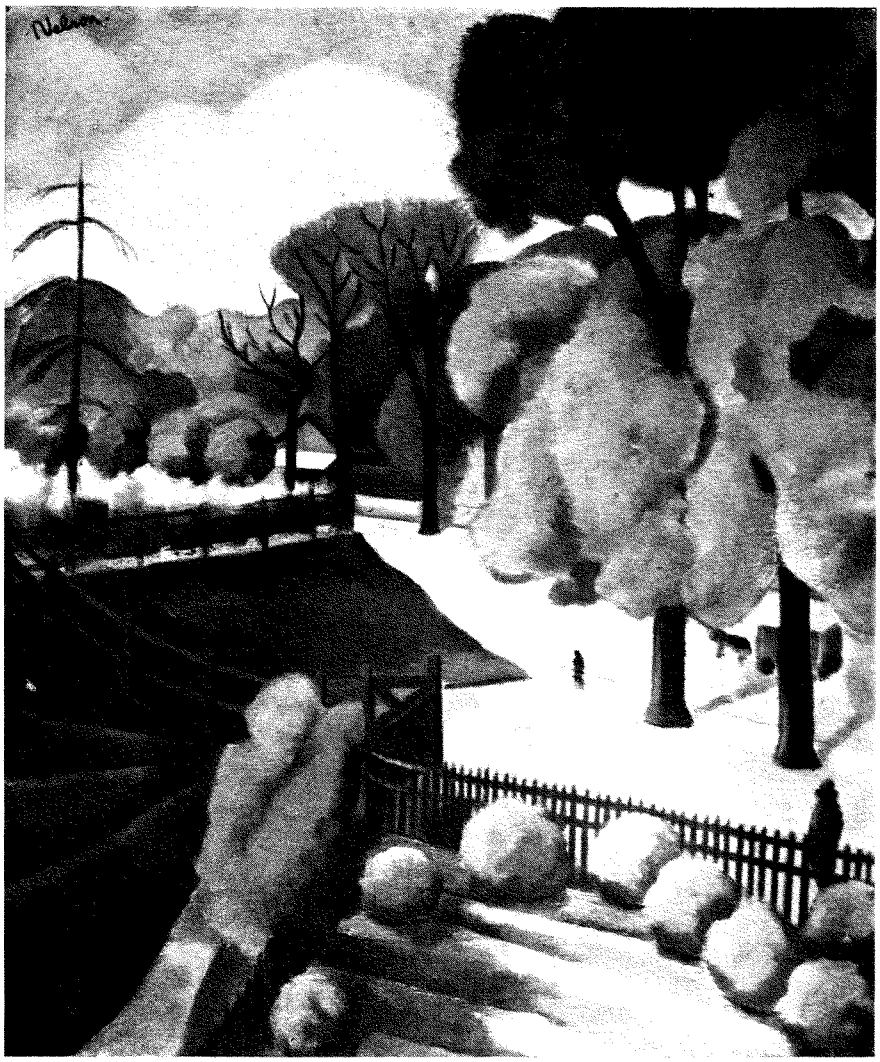
THERE was a star which watched upon my birth;
The great blue peaks were shrouded,
The sea was merged in haze, but, far apart,
There shone a single star.
And it burned steadily,
Watching through the night in silence;
It hung above the dusk
Whence I secretly came forth.

The peaks in the morning
Had thundered for creation—
The green sea had risen,
And swept clean the strand.
Now the wide earth was silent,
And silent the horizon;
When, between the ninth wave and the land,
I was brought forth.

There was a star which watched upon my coming,
I put forth my hand to seize it;
And, instantly the sky
Broke, and was ribbed with light;
Lightning ran down the peaks and smote the narrow valleys,
Wandering blue flames flickered about the coastline,
The mountains danced in scarlet,
The earth roared with deep joy.

There is a single star that burns to-night far in the lonely heavens:—
The sea is hidden beneath it;

NELSON



MENDJIZKY

PORTRAIT DE JEUNE FILLE

The mountains drew their capes of grey wool closely about
their shoulders;
There is no breath of wind.
Only the thought of One coming
Over the oceans in silence,
Wandering under a darker star
Than that which saw my birth.

WHO WILL MARK

WHO will mark the long moon-dial, swinging,
Of its shadow on the cloister-lawn?
Who will hear what in the silent dawn-hour
Shadowy drooping branches speak to it?

FRANK HARRIS

AKBAR: THE "MIGHTIEST"

The Story of the Soul of a World Conqueror

IN the heart of Asia, in the great temple of Samarkand, are three tombs: one to Timour, the first of the Mughal Conquerors who overran Asia; one to Akbar, his descendant, who as a youth won India and established an empire, and one to Akbar's master and counsellor, Abulfazl. Akbar's tomb, erected by himself, is quite a small and insignificant one, and there the Conqueror rests quietly enough these three hundred years and more now at the feet of his teacher. The simple grandeur of the great sarcophagi, the humility of the invincible Emperor, quickened my curiosity, first awakened by the name given to him of "Akbar," which means the "Mightiest" or "Highest," and is generally used as an attribute of God. Was he really a great man? Who gave him the astounding title? How came it to stick to him? Why was he the only conqueror in recorded time whose empire endured for centuries after his death?

Samarkand, too, interested me. It is one of the oldest cities in the world: even the stones of the strong houses are eaten into by the centuries and coloured with the patine of time, and its chief citizens are tanners now and goldsmiths as they were two thousand years before Christ, when it was called Marcanda. But again and again I left the bazaars and dark shops—with their silk praying-rugs that take a generation to weave, and barbaric jewels, sky-blue turquoise large as filberts, carved amethysts as big as hens' eggs, and sapphires sold by the ounce—to return to the Temple.

One day, in an Armenian's den in the bazaar, I found a Crusader's sword, and a suit of chain armour that must have belonged to one of the knights who followed St. Louis to the Holy Land. The owner of the shop talked the Levantine jargon, which is based on modern Greek, and so I could make

myself fairly understood. In his cautious way, he took a polite interest in me, as a customer, and when I explained to him that I was interested in the cathedral and especially in Akbar and his life, he told me he would send a compatriot of his to the caravansary, a learned Sunni, who would give me all the information on the subject I could desire.

The next day I found a Sufi waiting for me, who looked the priestly part, whatever his practice may have been. He was of middle height, yet impressive by reason of impassivity. The slow quiet ways of the immemorial East seemed to have moulded his gentle, deferential manners. I have never seen so expressive a face that changed so little. It was of the purest Persian type: a narrow oval, the features almost perfectly regular, though the nose was slightly long and beaked, the eyes long, too, and dark brown, almost the black-brown of strong coffee; he might have been anywhere between thirty and forty-five. He introduced himself as having been sent to me by the merchant, and placed himself at my disposal. I told him that what I wanted to know was the story of Akbar—how he came to power, why he built himself a small tomb at the feet of his Teacher? Was there any reason for his humility, any spiritual significance in it? Had he no woman in his life, but only a man-friend?—a host of questions.

The Sufi bowed and told me he would do his best to answer me: would I care to hear the popular story? I responded eagerly that was just what I wanted. Then he was afraid his knowledge of Greek might be insufficient: would I mind if now and then he availed himself of a dictionary? And he pulled a little, shabby, dog-eared booklet out of his pocket, which was issued in Leipzig, and contained words in Persian, Hindu, and modern Greek.

I assured him I was chiefly curious about Akbar himself. Did the great fighter really become a sort of religious teacher and put forth a new religion? He assured me he would tell me everything, as it had been told to him when a boy. I thanked him—that was what I desired.

Every one knows, he began, that Akbar's real name was Jelàl-ed-Din Muhammad. He was born at Amarkot, in 1542, when his father was fleeing to Persia from Delhi. In 1555, when the boy was thirteen years of age, his father died. Jelàl gave the control of his kingdon to Bairam Khan as regent, and occupied himself with games and physical exercises. Bairam Khan set to work to subdue the provinces that had revolted from Jelàl's father. He carried out his work with such relentless cruelty that his name became a byword from the banks of the Ganges to the Caspian: he brought peace, it was said, the peace of death!

When Jelàl was about eighteen, he had his first trial, and it influenced the whole of his after life. Up to this time he had given himself to sports and poetry and thought little about governing. He was the most enthusiastic polo player of his day, and one story told about him depicts his strength of body and impetuous intensity of character better than pages of description. He was surprised once by nightfall in the middle of a close game; he resolved to go on until he had gained the victory. Accordingly he had balls made of palás wood that burns a long time, and with these fiery balls he continued the game till his side had won. I always see Akbar, in my mind, galloping furiously in the dark after a ball of fire—that seems to me symbolic of the intense spirit of the young conqueror. When he was sixteen or seventeen, he began to listen to criticisms of Bairam Khan. He even made some pertinent suggestions; and the Minister-General, jealous of his power, looked him out a lovely girl and persuaded him to take her to wife. With the cunning of the East, Bairam Khan knew that the best way to lead Princes was with such silken strings.

A year or two later the King was poisoned and came near death; only recovered indeed because he took violent emetics on his own initiative before the Doctor had time to come to his assistance. Who were the culprits? The King knew intuitively. "There must be a conspiracy between two" he said: between the chief cook who alone prepared his food and his wife who

had cajoled him into eating it without waiting to have it tasted. He had the chief cook before him, and in five minutes wrung the truth out of him and found that his suspicions were correct. His dismissal of the wretch was equivalent to a sentence of death: the culprit was strangled before he left the ante-chamber. While that was going on Jelàl strove to compose his spirit by writing a sonnet, but he could hardly please himself even with the first verse.

He could not shirk the question: What was to be done with the girl? At length Jelàl called her before him and asked her simply why she had conspired with the cook? What had he done to make her hate him?

The girl shrugged her shoulders disdainfully and kept silent.

"Do you love cooks better than kings?" asked the monarch at last; and the girl burst forth:

"We women love those who love us and care for us. When did you ever care for any one but yourself? You think more of winning a chaugan game than of winning love. A woman to you is a plaything: how can you expect love when you never give it?"

The King was shaken with surprise and doubt. After all, the girl was right enough and what she said was true. He had always treated her as an instrument of pleasure. Why should he expect gratitude and affection from her?

What was he to do with her? . . . this woman he had loved and trusted?

He was utterly at a loss till a thought struck him. In spite of his diabolic cruelty or because of it, Bairam Khan had been successful in life. He had conquered provinces, and subdued cities, he should know how to deal with a faithless woman. So Bairam Khan was summoned to the Presence and asked by the King for his advice. The old warrior pronounced himself decisively.

"A great ruler should be beloved by his friends," he said, "and feared by all the rest of the world. The Emperor Jelàl is already beloved by all who know him. He must make

himself feared so that whoever in the future dares to think of revolt should have the cold of death in his nostrils. The girl should be hung up in public and sliced to death with a tulwar. That was the most lingering and most painful death that could be inflicted on a woman. It might be so managed," he concluded, " by beginning with the hands and going on to the feet that the agony would be prolonged for more than an hour. The Emperor himself should preside at the ceremony."

The young monarch heard him to the end attentively, and then :

" What would the pain of the woman profit me ? " he asked sharply.

Bairam Khan answered : " The punishment of the wrong-doer is the protection of the powerful."

The young King stared at him. " The powerful don't need protection," he said, and after a pause added in a loud, severe voice :

" You have taught me, Bairam Khan, that what men say about you and your cruelty is true. Hitherto I have lived for my pleasures and left the care of my Kingdom to you. Now I'll take the rule into my own hands and allow you to make the Holy Pilgrimage." (This was practically an order to Bairam Khan to make that pilgrimage to Mecca which ensures salvation.) And the young King with that generosity which was always a marked trait in his character added :

" A suitable jaghír out of the parganás of Hindustan shall be assigned for your maintenance and transmitted to you regularly."

Thus dismissed, Bairam Khan stood stock still for a moment and then salaamed till his forehead rested on the floor before he rose and backed out of the hall.

Jelàl then called the defiant girl before him again. " You can keep the jewels," he said, " and all the other gifts my love bestowed upon you." The girl glanced aside indifferently as if she had not heard. " I cannot punish where I have loved," the King went on slowly, " nor give you pain who have given me pleasure."

The girl looked at him still in suspicion, unconvinced.

"What are your gifts to me?" she snapped. "I shall be killed before I leave the palace."

And the King answered: "You shall go in peace still keeping the name and honour of the King's chosen."

On hearing this the girl cried aloud: "The King is indeed the King!" and, falling on her knees, bowed herself before him.

And the King continued: "One of these days I shall come to Agra and there build you a house and you shall live in it and speak to me freely."

And the woman looked long at him as if seeking to divine his meaning, and then turned and left the Court without a word and went to live in Agra. And from her the King learned many things only known to women . . .

When the rule was taken away from Bairam Khan he rebelled, but was quickly broken in battle by the King, and then as quickly forgiven and sent on his way to Mecca. On the point of embarking he was stabbed in the back by one he had wronged, and died with all his sins unpardoned. Jelàl continued the promised jaghír to his children . . .

Ten years later the young King had overrun all India north of the Deccan and subdued it, spreading his fame the while from Delhi to the Dardanelles, indeed from end to end of the civilised world as the civilised world then was. Men began to wonder at him, and his constant successes awed them: some even passed from praise to adoration, calling him "Akbar"; but he would not use the name. Didn't deserve it, he said; his victories had all been easy . . .

It was after he had subdued Kashmir that the crowning trial of his life took place. The King of distant Khandesh had sent an embassy to him congratulating him on his conquests, and according to custom the Emperor sent him back a firman, thanking him and saying that he would take one of his daughters to wife as pledge of enduring amity.

The King replied that he felt himself greatly honoured by the

proposal, and with the letter dispatched his youngest daughter with a great retinue and many gifts. She turned out to be a beautiful girl, as those Northern women sometimes are; but very proud: the Emperor being only thirty-two at the time fell to desire of her at the first meeting. Strange to say, she held aloof from him, would not go into the Hareem even as a queen, and was not to be won by prayers or promises.

When the King in a moment of passion threatened to take her by force, she plainly told him he could take her body, perhaps, but her spirit and her heart were her own and he would never gain them by violence.

The King then tried to win her by gifts and kindness, by rich jewels and great shows staged in her honour, shows in which hundreds of wild beasts fought for days, such shows as had never been seen before in the world. The girl was flattered and pleased in spite of herself. One combat in especial interested her. When she saw a pair of wild stallions fighting with superb pride and fierceness she cried out with delight and admiration. For the wild desert horses fought standing up on their hind legs, striking with their front feet and ever seeking with open mouth to seize the adversary by the crest and hurl him to the earth. This conflict pleased the girl much more than the deadlier, bloodier strugglings of tigers and bulls which the Emperor staged for her amusement.

But when it came to love-making she withdrew into herself and again and again denied the monarch, now passionately, now sullenly.

One day the King threatened to send her back home, and she retorted that nothing would please her better, and when he questioned her further, she confessed boldly that one of the young nobles about her father's Court had attracted her. It appeared that the courtship had not gone beyond glances: the girl admitting ruefully that her father would never allow her to marry a mere subject, as he believed himself to be directly descended from God. This new and unexpected difficulty

enraged the Emperor: he was at a loss, too, irritated by his own indecision and fear of taking a wrong step.

Fortunately good counsel was at hand. An Arab named Mubárak, whose ancestors had settled in Rajputana, was renowned for wisdom, and as his two sons grew to manhood they became famous as having inherited their father's genius. Shaik Faizi, the elder, was known everywhere as a doctor and poet; he had composed many books and won popularity by always attending the poor for nothing. His younger brother Abulfazl was an even greater man. When only fifteen years old his learning was the wonder of the district, and by twenty he had begun to teach in the mosques. The Persian proverb says that no tree grows very high which comes to maturity quickly; but Abulfazl was an exception to this rule. Jelàl induced him to abandon his intention of giving himself up wholly to a life of meditation at twenty-three, and took him into his own suite. Though eleven years older than Abulfazl, the King grew to respect him more and more and their intimacy developed into a mutual understanding and affection. At his wits' end to know how to win his proud wife, Jelàl turned to Abulfazl.

"In love and war," he said, "no one should ask for counsel. But in this absurd difficulty I'd like to know whether anyone can find a way where I see no sure outlet."

After some time for thought, Abulfazl told him there were many ways and they all reached the goal—with time.

"I'm faint with desire," cried the King, "wild with impatience."

"Is she wonderful in beauty, or in mind, or in character?" asked Abulfazl.

"In all!" exclaimed the King; "she's without a peer in the world."

Abulfazl smiled: "The madness of love speaks through you. Such desire is mere ignorance. Enjoy her once and the glamour will be gone."

"But the joy will be mine," cried the King, "and the

memory. The illusion of love and desire are the chiefest pleasures in life. Bare us of them and what would life be worth?"

"More than you would believe now," said Abulfazl; "but what is her real power over you?"

The King thought in silence. "Her courage," he replied, "and, to tell you the truth, her disdain of me and of course her loveliness."

"It is a great opportunity," said Abulfazl, "to win the great fight with one blow. The only course worthy of my lord is that he should conquer himself and subdue his passion."

"Impossible," cried the King, "she is in my blood, in my brain, in my heart. If I don't win her, I shall have lost the world."

"So it seems to you now," rejoined Abulfazl, smiling, "and were you any one else I would advise you to go into Persia far away from her and there give yourself up to other beauties and lose all memory even of this one woman; but my lord should take the high way. If you can conquer such a passion you can do anything. It is not the food that gives the pleasure, but the appetite. Restraint will increase your desire, and any new girl will seem wonderful to you."

"Do you know what you are advising?" asked the King, turning on him with hard eyes.

Abulfazl nodded his head.

With one movement Jelàl was on his feet.

"So be it," he said, quietly, after a pause. "If you have made a mistake, you shall be impaled. If by following your advice I lose my joy of life and my delight in living, I shall see you die with pleasure; but if you are right and by conquering myself I win content, you shall be master in my kingdom and I shall be second to you."

"You would not be my master," replied Abulfazl, quietly, "if you could thus punish your best friend."

"I am my own best friend," retorted the King, gloomily; "but love is surely a madness, and there may be some wisdom in your counsel."

For a month the King went in and out and paid no attention to the girl or to Abulfazl. He then started off suddenly to Agra and when he returned he sent for Abulfazl again.

"You were right in one thing," he said, "and wrong in another: fasting sharpens appetite amazingly, but you were wrong when you said any dish would give pleasure. I want nothing but this one women: no other can tempt me, and I am mad with longing for her."

"I have thought, too, while my lord was absent," said Abulfazl: "it may be that the Princess is indeed the King's complement and meant for him. In that case seek her out, get to know her soul and body and give her time and occasion to know you. As you are greater than she is, she will be drawn to you—that's the law; the greater draws the less; besides, she is already curious about you. She will love you. In this way you may both win love and make love your servant."

The King broke in: "The woman at Agra told me to hide my desire and make the girl fear she had lost me. Women, she said, all want what they can't have or what is above them."

"All men too," said Abulfazl, meeting the King's eyes and smiling as he spoke, for he saw that the master was again at one with him, "the woman's counsel is wise, wiser perhaps than mine."

Jelàl then began what he always afterwards called his "discipline," combining the advice of Abulfazl and that of his divorced wife.

It was a long struggle and only a few incidents in it were decisive. Each day the woman was told to attend the King while he gave judgments in the Great Hall. Now and again in difficult cases he would ask her advice, but he seldom took it, and soon the girl had to admit to herself that the monarch knew life and men better than she did. But just when she was getting impatient under cumulative evidence of her inferiority, the King with fine wit took care to praise her for some mental quality or grace of spirit she did not possess, and this appreciation made her eager for more.

In spite of his passion Jelàl pretended to take only a mild interest in her and showed himself always engrossed in affairs of state. Still the girl would sometimes smile to herself as if she saw through his acting. But when she let her eyes rest on his, or encouraged him by smile and word and he would turn away to talk to some Minister, she would grow thoughtful and the women of the hareem said her temper was not so even as it used to be.

As soon as the woman at Agra learned that the King had aroused the girl's interest and made her doubt her empire over him, she advised him to send for her lover and offer to marry them and the King consented, for the counsel pleased him. He himself had noticed from time to time an uncertain humility in the girl's manner and in her eyes a sort of appeal. Others noticed that she had begun to drape her tall figure after the fashion of the women in the hareem and now swathed herself so closely that her shape could be seen through the soft stuffs just as if she had been coming from the bath.

It was in this mood that the lover of her girlhood appeared to her. Half unconsciously she had idealised him and exaggerated his charm to herself and now she saw that the attraction he had had for her had disappeared, and to her consternation she realised that he was much more concerned to win the Emperor's favour than her love; he seemed to her paltry and immature; yet she could not bear to admit her mistake to the great King. What was to be done? She resolved to carry it through.

In full court the King came to her, leading the Khandesh noble: "Here, lady," he said, "is one who loves you and your father consents to your marriage."

"Only if Akbar wishes it," added the unfortunate youth, bowing low.

As the girl flushed with anger at her suitor's obsequiousness, the King turned away and shortly afterwards left the Palace.

Next day the girl heard that he had gone again to Agra and the women of the hareem assured her that he had gone back to his first wife, for men only visited women for one thing. It was

noticed that the girl seldom spoke to her betrothed, and when the King returned she prayed him to see her.

Schooled by the woman of Agra, the King replied he would surely see her as soon as he had concluded some urgent business, and he kept her waiting nearly a week. By this time the girl had grown sick with fear lest she had lost the monarch's love. When she was admitted to his presence she could only cry:

"My lord, my lord."

"What can I do to pleasure you?" asked the King. "Will you be married to your compatriot at once?"

The girl saw that his eyes were laughing and took it that he despised her.

"As the King does not want me," she retorted proudly, "I wish to be sent back to my father."

"But you said you didn't want the King," persisted the monarch, "and you loved this young man. Why have you changed?"

"I was young," she said, gulping down the lump in her throat, "and knew no better."

"And now?" asked the King.

"There is only one man in the world for me," she said, "and that is the King," and she lifted her eyes to his and gave herself in the look.

Though his heart thrilled with joy, the King kept his control: "Go to the hareem," he said, "and wait for me." And she turned, glowing, and went like a child.

In the hareem the King found her another woman; after he had convinced her of his love she broke into praises of his looks and strength, and when he said that there were many handsomer and stronger men she wouldn't listen, but covered his mouth with her hand and declared that there was no one in the world like him and that he was the most splendid man in the Court though he was only a little taller than the average.

Because she was very fair, with skin like ivory and eyes as blue as sapphires, she praised his black eyes and hair and his loud, deep voice and even the small wart on the left side

of his nose; he was her god, the Most High—"Akbar," she exclaimed, and she would never call him by any other name.

But when he told her he would have to earn it first and thus recalled to his ambitions made ready to leave her, he found another woman still.

"You shall not go," she cried boldly, "the cook's mistress at Agra calls, you shall not go."

And when he said that he went to Agra for counsel and not for love, for the woman was cunning and had taught him much, she wouldn't have it.

"You shall not see her," she panted, "not yet, not till you know me better, promise, not till I give you leave!"

She was so imperious in her pleading that the King promised and caressed her, and then she burst into tears and said he might go if he liked; but it would break her heart and she was very unhappy and—her tears set off her beauty better than her pleading or her pride, and her quick changes of mood charmed the King, who could not help showing his astonishment. He had thought her proud and reserved at first, he said, and at that she burst out laughing, saying love was a magician and fashioned a woman to her lord's desire.

"But you did not love me at first," he said; "it was only by feigning indifference and holding off that I won you."

At that she looked up at him from the divan, smiling. "It was the wise Abulfazl, was it not, who gave Akbar that counsel?" And she said this though she knew in her heart the counsel came from the woman at Agra, but she would not keep her memory alive by making mention of her.

The King was astonished by her intuition.

"How did you guess," he asked, "that I went to him for counsel?"

She pouted and said carelessly:

"If I had not loved Akbar from the beginning, no holding off would have won me."

"But if you loved me why did you plague me so at first by pretending coldness and aversion?"

"Because I loved," she said. "I saw that all things came to Akbar too easily and so I held away, though when he took me in his strong arms and kissed me in spite of my resistance I almost yielded."

"Akbar blamed himself afterwards for forcing you," said the monarch.

Again, unexpectedly, she laughed aloud:

"You child," she cried, "you child! you would never have tasted my lips had I not let you; the resistance like the coldness was all feigned. There! I've given my secret away. We women are all traitors to ourselves!"

In wonder the King exclaimed:

"I believe you know more about women than even the woman I have called 'wise' at Agra!"

The smile left her face and a change came over her: "All women know women," she said, "but she is a vile creature fit only for the bazaar."

"Why do you say that?" asked the King, and the girl responded: "If anyone killed my lover I would never forgive him, never. When he put his hands on me I should feel the blood sticking on them: hate would be in my heart for him, and I'd curse him by day and by night."

"He was only a cook," said Akbar.

But the girl wouldn't have it.

"If I had stooped to my lover, still more would I have felt his loss: it is our sacrifices for you that endear you to us!"

Suddenly the King turned on her for he was curious:

"Why did you resolve all at once to yield to me?"

She answered quietly:

"When Akbar brought that man here and offered me to him before the Court, my heart was as water lest I had lost my lord's love: I had had enough of the struggle, or"—and she took his head in her hands and kissed his mouth—"I wanted you—" and she sighed in content.

This first communion with his love showed the King that the instinct of his desire had been right and that he had an extra-

ordinary mistress ; as changeful as the sky in the monsoon and charming with all the gaiety and liveliness of girlhood : but he was soon to find that she was more.

Almost from the first day she made up to Abulfazl and not only won his admiration and affection, but found out from him quickly sides of the King's character which she might otherwise have been years in discovering. From this counsellor she learned that the deepest motive in the King was his ambition, and not ambition merely to conquer, or even to consolidate his empire, but to grow spiritually, to become wiser and better than any man on earth ; her lover was indeed a King of Kings.

She even found out from Abulfazl without his knowing it the true explanation of the kindness shown to the woman at Agra.

" The King doesn't keep her now for counsel," he said, " but to remind him of what he first learned by forgiving. He wishes now that he had forgiven the cook. I believe," he added, " that if the cook had lived, the King would long ago have sent him to his love at Agra."

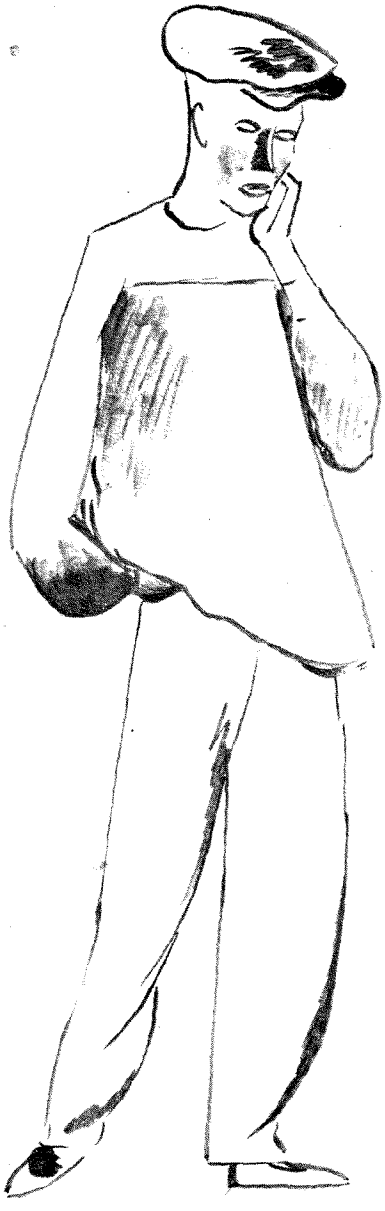
At that the girl gasped ; for such magnanimity was beyond her. But she had learned the chief lesson, that Akbar, like all great and generous natures, was to be moved by an appeal to the highest much more easily than by tempting the animal in him or by urging his own self-interest. And with this key in her hands and her woman's intuition that everything is to be done with a man by praise, she became a real companion to her lord and an inspiring helpmate. She pleaded for the gentler virtues, and Akbar having already begun to realise that a great man should have a good deal of the woman in him, was ready to listen to whatever was wise in what she said and to profit by the new insight.

And here the Sufi stopped as if he had come to the end of the story : but I was too interested in Akbar to let him off so easily.

" You have told me half the tale," I began, " and have told it fairly well for a learned man ; but you have left the more

ETHELBERT WHITE

ZAVADO



important part unexplained. I understand now why 'Akbar' honoured Abulfazl and why men honoured Akbar; but I don't see yet why Abulfazl wrote Akbar's deeds and words and showed such unfeigned admiration of his master."

"Jelàl was not called 'Akbar' for nothing," replied the Sufi: "he was the first Conqueror whose empire survived him, and it survived because it was built on sympathy and not on suspicion, on love and freedom and not on fear and hate."

"What do you mean exactly?" I asked.

"Previous conquerors," he said, "held down each province they subdued by a standing army. Akbar not only allowed each province to govern itself: but gave the peoples greater freedom than they had had before, while insisting on complete religious toleration. Personal ambition even found scope and security under his rule. That was why his empire lasted till the white traders conquered Hindustan two hundred years later."

And again the Sufi paused.

"You have yet to tell me," I persisted, "when and why he took the name of 'Akbar': was it pride or——?"

"The best Mussulmans," said the Sufi, "blame him for taking the divine attribute—'The Highest,' but if ever a man deserved it, he did. His mind was never at rest. When there were no more foes to conquer, he invited to his Court Lamas from Tibet and Padres from Goa, and was the first to declare that Jesus was not only a great prophet, as Muhammed had said; but greater than Muhammed himself, the greatest of all. Jesus and Muhammed, he used often to say, were like stars in the heaven and greater and brighter luminaries would yet come to throw radiance on the ways of men. He even went so far," and the Sufi whispered the words as if in dread of some eavesdropper, "as to assert that every man might be Muhammed and Jesus besides being himself, for he too had come from God as they had come."

"Interesting," I said, "and so Akbar lived and died as a god, 'happy ever after.'"

"No, no," cried the Sufi, with Eastern wisdom; "happiness

is not for wise men or great: Akbar was tried beyond the ordinary. His two favourite sons drank themselves to death, and the son who ultimately succeeded him in the Empire revolted against him and got his friend Abulfazl murdered. That grief and disappointment changed all life for Akbar. What good was vengeance and what profit was there in anger when he knew by a sort of instinct that wild envy and jealousy had induced his son to kill a better man than himself?

"Akbar saw he might as well forgive his son, for nothing he could do would bring Abulfazl back to life, or put light again in those kindly hazel eyes which were always warm with love for him.

"The murder of Abulfazl, who was too gentle to have any enemies, brought the nothingness of life very close to Akbar. From the afternoon when the sad news reached him, he resolved to live as if every day were to be his last; that marked his conversion to the ideal life . . .

"In maturity he had been gross of body as strong men often are who carry the appetites of youth into middle age; but after this Akbar became an ascetic and lived mainly on fruit."

"Did he ever take the title of Akbar himself?" I interjected.

"It was given to him very early," explained the Sufi, "by many when he was only thirty; but he never took it himself till after Abulfazl's death. We can see how he came to it," the Sufi added, as if in apology, "for he was always frank and sincere as a child. His studies of various prophets had taught him that they were all alike in some qualities, and recognising in himself in later life the same characteristics of gentleness and lovingkindness, he came to believe that he, too, was divine, and sent by God as his Vicegerent on earth, or Khalifah."

"Very interesting," I could not help interjecting; "did he, then, speak of himself as the Khalifah?"

"He did," replied the Sufi, solemnly, "and in this conviction he put forth a new creed, Din-i-Ilahi: 'The Divine Faith'—which contained the best in a dozen religions, and so long as he lived it was adopted throughout the Empire."

" You amaze me," I cried; " what was this new religion ? "

" Akbar," replied the Sufi, slowly, " took the ceremonies of it from the Parsees and the spirit from Jesus, and he built the Ibadat-Khana or palace-temple at Fatepur-Sikri for men of learning and genius; and there he gathered about him prophets from Persia and painters from Francia; and allotted pensions to writers and saints and men of talent of all kinds, and his fame spread abroad throughout the world. All over his Empire he built roads and founded schools, for there was peace in his time, though men said he had 'forgotten how to punish.' . . ."

" But was his religion followed ? " I asked, in amazement. " Had he any converts ? "

" Myriads of disciples and hakim," replied the Sufi, " for in love of his wife he took Muhammed's heaven into his gospel, and said that perfect happiness was only to be found in the love of woman . . ."

" What was his end ? " I asked.

" Alas ! alas ! " exclaimed the Sufi, " it came all too soon: he worked too vehemently (always galloping in the dark after that flaming ball), so that he died worn out when he was only a little over sixty; but he had the consciousness of having lived a great life and left a noble example. Some of us still believe," added the Sufi, as if speaking to himself, " that he was indeed a son of God, the true Khalifah, and the faith he set forth was worthy of the name he gave it—The Divine.

" Towards the end of his life, though he always passed much of his time in the hareem, it was for counsel chiefly, and there I dare to say he was happy, for he would have no other companion but his wife, the King's daughter, though she was childless, and she was at his side when the darkness took him."

RUSSELL GREEN

GULLIVER

... WHAT was the good of these ludicrous agonisms? He could not persuade them to accept his sentimental philosophy of roseate mutual servitude. The doctrine of reciprocal concentration fell on stony ground, on a wilderness of wastrels. They preferred to pursue the tinsel erethism of dances and theatres and random coquetries and discreet promiscuities. Aimless variation and deliberate superficiality were the basis of their ephemeral and unmeaning existence. Their honour stood rooted in the dishonour of egotism. Their ethics were the ethics of social prostitution.

And yet their cliques were torn by internecine jealousies; even among the thieves of love ... Life to them was one vast fugue of premeditated frivolity, an endless flight from the tormenting possibility of reflection, which might clash them against impregnable black cliffs of doubt and ignorance, shoot them into negation like unchristened babes precipitated into purgatory. Ever at their drumming feasts lurked behind the chair a skeleton, the inconceivable, subconscious horror of thought and emotion. Only in the globular sanctuary of their artificial fire could these moths hide from the suspected reality of the surrounding dark.

"My God!" growled Gulliver to his confidants, "they are appalling, these modern barbarians! What's love to them? It's all out of fashion. They believe in temporary contracts,—in love redeemable at par in 1925—in short-date bonds. I tell 'em that if they idealise their real, they'll realise their ideal. But, God help them, they haven't got any ideal. A man has got money or he hasn't; he is amusing or dull; he's a good friend—whatever that means, generally more than it ought—or he is not. And that's all. That's as far as they get! Wife? Hus-

band? Lover? Tenderness? Romance? Never heard the words! Don't know what they mean,—unless 'husband' means the last refuge of the prostitute, 'wife' a confession of failure, 'lover' a mediæval order. As for 'tenderness,' 'romance,' and all that, their hard crude practical little minds regard it as,—well, honestly, I don't believe they've ever heard of it. If they had they wouldn't think of it. They might almost have taken a vow never to think and never to feel. Those who have no emotions generally have honour; those who have no honour generally have emotions; but, by God, these people have got neither!"

"You expect too much!" consoled his confidants.

And then he dined out with them; saw them through a glass brightly, in softer colours overlaying the monochrome of their former nullity. Their women still remained the same, exacting enormous toll for the fickle pleasure of their company. Still they retained their neutrality—never said "Go away," even if they never said, "Come to me." But the men seemed more human. Their humour was unfailing, their wit sometimes surprising. They were well groomed, unconsciously optimistic, not too cynical, fairly tolerant. They almost justified the creed of superficialism. They had encamped at birth on that point at which some philosophers had arrived only in late life after arduous travel,—to live for the day, to shun the hereditary curse of emotion.

In such reactions of tolerance his denunciation seemed a personal insularity. Perhaps he did not know them well enough. And after all, he would think, here we are entrapped in bodies in a corner of infinity. For God's sake, my boy, lift yourself out of your individual rut. There've been good sound men who chose the surface when they found the depths too dark and the immensities too baffling. True, these people have never considered an alternative; but you ought to congratulate them. They've never had the inclination or the power to look higher than Richmond Hill; but that's their good fortune! What have *you* get, anyhow, from all this turbid emotion, these rampant

romanticisms? Heartache and curses and sorrow. They'd never do you a bad turn. They'd bring you grapes and flowers if you were ill,—if they knew your address. They wouldn't try to find it, of course; but what do you expect? Was the world made for you? Do you expect to make man in your own image? You psychological Narcissus! Have another liqueur brandy and forget yourself and all this. Merge your absurd complaints into the crowd consciousness! Lose yourself in the social mass! "But when I'm alone?" Don't *be* alone! You can always find the friend of an evening, sometimes even the bride of a night. Do you expect to find a combination of Griselda and Aspasia to attach herself to you like a slave and bring your breakfast to bed every day in a furnished flat for ever and ever? Eh?—to sprinkle tea-leaves on carpets and buy your collars and grill a steak?

"Ah, yes! but if I spend every evening with a friend how can I do any work? Where shall I get time for reading and thinking?" Damn you! I see, you want an oriental houri! You don't want a mature western personality! You want a shadow, an echo! You want domesticity on tap, to be turned on and off as you desire, like constant hot water. You ought to know that you can't get heat and constancy at one and the same time. You're crying for the moon, and the sooner you realise that the better!

So the debate went on and there was no end.

Sometimes he would chance to meet one who ballasted the suburban versatility with a patience of spirit and a tenderness of heart worthy of a better cause, one whose sense of equity, in the very midst of a skilful aimless unscrupulous exploitation of her suburban cavaliers, almost amounted to loyalty and fidelity, to monogamy in theory if not in practice. And Gulliver would preach his honest dull old sermons as if he were a Puritan divine arresting for a minute the polite attention of a congregation of Royalists. And she would listen with a courteous agnosticism and the forbearance of admiration to his strange evangel, then wallow back into the grooves of her traditions,—methodically

follow a schedule of sociabilities imposed upon her a week in advance through telephone and letter by a horde of suburban males. So it was with Fenella of a distant suburb when he hoped he might develop that latent worth and exorcise that superficial versatility. He offered himself in a sincere and passional surrender, in all the ecstatic humility of love. He asked only for concentration in return. He secured affection indeed; but the narrow practicality of the cynical modernist and the unimaginative complacency of the suburban philistine drowned his phosphorescent idealism in their stagnant depths.

Beginning in intense sympathy with his paschal suffering and in aggressive abhorrence of his persecutors, she too gradually took advantage of his unworldly nature, until at last she attained a triumphant display of womanly delicacy in borrowing from him over lunch a stamp for an envelope, in which before his eyes she carefully enclosed a letter to another lover, whom she addressed as "Dearest"; as she had never addressed Gulliver even in response to scores of passionate and lyrical letters. And yet she had given herself to Gulliver. Blandly reproached with her duplicity, she apologised with the remark that she did not expect her friends to take her endearments at their face value. And with unfailing chivalry he assured her that she was born a thousand years in advance of her age, that he was old-fashioned, that emotion was a relic of our animal ancestry; love and jealousy and fear and the instinct of possession,—which is the root of love, wherein the spiritual survival of the edacious amœba still sought to fold itself around objects of desire, to concoct them into itself, to incorporate them by peptic annihilation,—all these were relics of prehistoric barbarism. And all, he assured her, would one day fade from the placid mind of the dispassionate superman, yielding place to the pure and polite promiscuity of impeccable demigods. With a scathing suavity he predicted the advent of a carnal pantheism; the ultimate unanimism of the body must develop out of the now increasing unanimism of the human spirit; and the time would come when the only love that the community could know would express

itself in the physical corroborree of a multitudinous embrace, when all Lilliput would sleep together without fear and without reproach in a communal bed, several square miles in area,—a magnification of a Bedouin tent with roof and floor only two feet apart, like endless galleries of a white coal mine but without walls,—millions of nude philosophers linked in passionate friendship—the gregarious senility of the human race. "And in that day, my dear," he concluded, "you will be in your element; but I am glad to think I shall be dead!"

"Your picture is imaginative," she criticised, "but not pleasing."

"No!" he smiled. This philosophical raillery seemed more effective than to cry, "Good God! you faithless little beast!" For, two hours later, she came and apologised—but not, so he discovered at lunch the next day, for her versatility but only for "being in a bad temper" and for pretending that she was "booked" every night of the week when really she had reserved Thursday night for him. There they went again!—these suburban demivierges! Apparently such versatility meant nothing to her! She would strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! Still in a spirit of avuncular badinage he whimsically likened her to a cannibal king who while apologising for his omission to announce the foul feast with the customary ceremony of three blasts on a trumpet and a rumble of tomtoms, wore an expression of deep perplexity when reproved for the nature of his food. Gulliver had seen the fatal word "Dearest" on the letter as she folded it up. He had remarked on it, inquiring—what might well have been inferred—whether it was addressed to another man. She had admitted it. Yet that act had not appeared to her even as a display of bad taste, still less as matter for apology.

So Gulliver retreated into the city of refuge on the hills of detachment. He reminded himself that he had no claim on her. The ease and speed of his conquest implied her versatility. It had not—God pity his vanity!—implied his superiority. Clearly to her he was no better than her nameless, innumerable

cavaliers. And perhaps space and time confirmed her judgment! Very well, very well! So be it! He would howl with the wolves, beat the realists at their own game. After all, though she might not have written in such terms to him, she had acted them. Was not that enough?—something to be going on with,—a temporary shelter,—any port in a storm,—at least, better than nothing, better than the great void. Better any sort of comfortable contact than that eternal cold insulation. The electric circuit of life and love must run to earth somewhere. And she had a sweet body. Even something to kiss—God! *there* was a depth! There was the festering abyss of compromise! If he would descend to that, how could he pretend to have any more principle than she?

She was out for her own hand. Well, so would he be.

And the next day he gave her a book as an acceptance at once of her apology and of the higher unprinciple for which she stood.

So did Eve destroy again a potential paradise...

G. H. JOHNSTONE

NAIVE

TELL me, Mind, reveal to me,
How this paradox may be;
That now I wander in desire,
Frothing, bold, for heat of fire
From the sun, for pricking smells,
Black forges, moulding mimic hells,
Onion, wine-shop, peasant grime,
Or for nipping snow and rime;
Let the wind strike rudely, rain
Flog my cheek; a hurricane
Is brother to my strident mood;
Cheese, familiar songs and blood,
Shouts, country cloths, all these are good.
But this the rub, how towards night,
Or when alone in broken light,
If trees shake with a silver turn,
Or on high walls flames jump and burn,
How then I'm changed; and seem to wear
Mantles that trail; emotions rare
And heavy with innate sleep, draw out
My unresisting soul; then doubt,
Soft discords, thoughts of future, lulled
By formless suasions; flowers pulled
Without intention from their stem,
So that I gaze surprised at them;
A lamp just lit; an evening framed
In trees or window; nothing named,
But much shared inwardly; closed rooms;
Noises from capacious wombs
Of galleries and arcades; a book
Bound preciously, that someone took,

And left on a green garden-seat;
Bats, autumn wreckage; tender meat
At austere meals, with little wine,
These are the pleasures that are mine.

Mind, tell me which is best, and see
If Heart will sanction your decree.

P. M. JONES

THE STREET ARTIST

I CAME upon him suddenly, seated on the pavement beside his drawings, with his cap between his knees. He said nothing. He did not move. But his eyes came to meet me out of the dusk, hovered before me a moment and haunted me after I had passed. They were black, lustrous and vacant like the eyes of an animal. Yet they were strangely human. Perhaps there was a glimmer of expectancy in them, as though my approach had recalled them from infinite vistas of contemplation to the duty of fixing those who passed with a look of intelligent appeal. But any expression of that sort had been too vague and involuntary to have impressed me at the time. What I was conscious of, as I looked into them, was a curious sense of mystery: they seemed full of the mystery not of vision, but of unfathomable vacancy.

The singularity of the beggar's appearance, as well as the absence of any positive appeal, touched my sentiment. I was aware of a mild surge of emotions, in which genuine strains of pity and curiosity were involved in the desire to indulge in an act of charity for reasons not purely altruistic. It was a familiar state of feelings. But having found that the habit of yielding to its obvious suggestion was going to mean real self-denial, I had allowed a stray sentence from a Poor-law report to convince me that indiscriminate charity was iniquitous waste of money. And now, for quite a long time, I had stamped on every nascent desire to be liberal at street corners, or in answer to shuffling knocks at the front door.

But to-night things were different. I felt an odd interest in this beggar. Besides, had I not resisted for at least five years? And may not virtue sometimes reward itself? Assuring myself that the coin in my pocket was a penny—not a florin, I returned

some distance and dropped it into the cap. I believe the beggar made a vague gesture of acknowledgment, but my attention had again veered round to myself. Within me the still small voice of the uncharitable text was making a cynical protest against my apostasy: "If the shadows were not so thick, you'ld have seen him grin, the scoundrel!—and so much wealthier than you!" Anxious to avoid further casuistry, I hastened towards the thoroughfare and its absorbing uproar.

* * * * *

An hour later I returned. Night had fallen, and it was bitterly cold. A green globe, suspended in the darkness, shed a lugubrious halo about the face of the beggar and the white patches of his drawings. Red, green and yellow lamps glided by, showing up segments of pipe-clayed tyre and trailing daggers of light—topaz, emerald and ruby—along the polished mirror of the road. Footsteps came and went, wistfully claiming a moment's identity before their echoes succumbed to the promiscuous undertone out of which they had emerged. The beggar noticed none of these things. With his shoulders barely touching the stout railings that loomed above him like the bars of a prison window, he sat erect, in an hieratic posture, staring into the darkness as he had stared into the dusk.

There was something pathetic yet serene in his appearance. His forehead was creased and contracted as with habitual consternation. His blank intent gaze gave an impression of ineffectual courage or baffled enterprise. And his whole attitude of attention was so rigid and desperate as to suggest that all his powers of vision and comprehension were absorbed in a futile effort to cope with the vast negation of an inscrutable void. But to the bleak malevolence of his surroundings and to bodily discomforts he seemed as superbly indifferent as an idol of stone.

An irresistible longing to plumb the inanity of his mood made me stop in front of him. Question after question rose to my lips. But I knew that if my conjectures were correct, he would have no answer for any of them. Here, I said to myself, is

one who, for the present, has neither consciousness nor vision, experience nor emotion ;—unless indeed he feels a sort of sub-conscious triumph at having escaped the misery which the retention of any of these things would have meant for him. And I felt drawn to him like a bark to the vortex . . .

I must have spoken, for suddenly the naïve, far-reaching gaze on which mine was fixed became turbid and confused, as if involved in a struggle to adjust itself to something immediate, minute, contemptible, something of an entirely different order from that to which it was accustomed. Like a sleeper half-awakened to the consciousness of a painful reality which he still thinks remote, the beggar mumbled a feeble protest and then relapsed into silence. I did not address him again, but stood watching the anguish of intelligence fade out of his eyes till it was quite gone.

Then a bizarre change swept over them. They seemed to reflect a flight through subterranean labyrinths, as though they were the eyes of a soul escaping down subtle spirals and tunnellings in the earth's core, the smooth, sinuous surfaces of which threw gleams of mobile ebony into their brilliant depths. Gradually the eyes dilated, and the sombre majesty that flooded them suggested vistas of basalt opening upon leagues of brooding Quiet. Finally the strange expression I had first noticed returned to glaze them with its seal of vacant mystery and abysmal calm . . .

Somewhere in the darkness a horse stumbled heavily and was brought to its feet with a jerk and a lash. Always the noise of traffic rose and fell, restless in its weariness like the sea after a storm. These sounds and a few others—footsteps that flagged and quickened and flagged again, the shriek of a train recommencing its monotonous tour—spoke of the harassed fatigue of the great city. Yet here, in the midst of it all, was a centre of complete indifference, a core of absolute quiet, about which revolved—whirling and grinding in vain—the modern Ixion wheel whereon the bodies of the millions are broken.

A sudden impulse to vent my admiration of one who could

so effectively slip the toils of circumstance was abruptly checked. One of those inconvenient schisms in personality to which I am inordinately prone had supervened. "The sly old impostor!" muttered a voice which I could scarcely credit with belonging to me. "The sly old impostor! plunged in the unpurchasable *volupté* of the Void, . . . with your last copper in his well-filled cap!"

It was the long-suppressed *sotto voce* of outraged prudence. And its revenge was complete. In a flash of invincible logic it had exposed the lucky rascal at the expense of the impecunious philanthropist—who turned tail a second time and fled ignominiously into the night.

ANNA G. KEOWN

ABDUL, HAVING CAUGHT FAINT ECHOES OF ELFIN MUSIC, BECOMES DISSATISFIED WITH MORTAL THINGS

I

NOW Pirriwhit, from some unperished bough
Has flung the mesh which Time nor Rhyme shall sever
Across that place men call the Gulf of Never,
Giving, for pallid "when," triumphant "now."
The crested Pirriwhit!
In cloudy fields the silver-flower has set
Her hollow tongue to such metallic singing
That all the storm-exalted winds are ringing
Her wiry tune beneath th' encircling net.
The wicked silver-flower.
This sleepy heart is heavy since the tread
Of elfin things has crossed its dreamless portal,
Heavy with mortal dread of things immortal,
Of fairy-flutes, half-heard, and long blown dead
Exquisite voices.
Still hearts do store no dreams of riches spent,
No pale reminders of the profitless bought.
Surely 'twere better to be dead than bent
A thousand ways upon the rack of thought!
Vain Pirriwhit, and wicked silver-flower!

II

Voices in wayside and wood . . .
Why do they steal my soul?
I might keep it and carry it whole
But for voices in wayside and wood.

What shall be whole or unchanged
When their singing has passed my heart's door,
When their whispers have prick't the green floor
Of an earth that grows elfin and changed?
Voices in wayside and wood . . .
Why do they steal my soul?
I might keep it and carry it whole
But for voices in wayside and wood.

FROM MY WINDOW

THE next-door lady with the toque
Is thirty, I surmise.
And Beauty in the shyest way
Peeps from her amber eyes.
And quiet is in her complete,
She goes so softly down the street.

In her green garden, to and fro
I often hear her sing
With soft, low note, as though her throat
Fears its own carolling.
She doesn't sing like other folk—
The next-door lady with the toque.

Oh! ponderous husband! Portly owl!
Why did she marry thee?
So pleasureless, so measureless
In pompous gravity.
And how, oh! how, didst thou beguile
That lovely frightened little smile?

On summer evenings, through the dusk
She flits on love-lit feet
To meet her husband coming home
Down Alexander Street.
I've seen him greet her with a scowl
The ponderous, pompous, portly owl!

Summer is dead. The Autumn sprite
With russet paint-pot shows
His handiwork. Alas! No more
My lady comes and goes.
Her windows haunt me, spectrewise
With curtainless, pathetic eyes.

Oh! pity me! Oh! pity me!
Who watch uncomforted.
She cometh not and cometh not.
I think she must be dead . . .
. . . Sitting among the angel folk
Too timid to remove her toque.

RALPH HOLBROOK KEEN

BATTLE

(*After certain very modern Poets*)

SAND-BAGS, trenches, awful stink;
Barbed wire.
Great feats of heroism;
Dug-out.
Lice, dirt, dead Frenchmen,
Tin-cans.
Indecent language, decomposing flesh,
Worms, sores, discomfort;
Beer!
And Death itself.

HAROLD MONRO

OUTSIDE EDEN

ADAM.

HOW glad I am that idle life is finished for ever.
I forbid you to loiter round the Gate. There's work for you, my woman.
I always wanted to be an honest, respectable man.
And I hated dawdling about under the trees all day
Nibbling bananas and sucking grapes. Look at that cave in the hill.
There is our future home, and you must learn to cook.
The world is a difficult place. The sooner you know that the better.

EVE.

Eden! Eden! How the sun
Is glittering on the garden still.
Adam! Adam! You are changed.
Oh the black cave; the sullen hill.

ADAM.

The cave is for you, for me the hill. Be sure you remember this.
Here in the World the beasts of the World devour and are devoured.
You'll have no more silky lions, tame leopards, and hornless bulls.
Here is my club, this tree; and you must hide in the cave.
I shall hunt for your meat. You'll find it wiser food
Than apples.

EVE.

O my lord, you're changed.
I wish I had not learnt to sin.
Morning and night I'll pray and pray:
Perhaps at last He'll let us in.

ADAM.

Shame! Shame! You are thinking once more of your peacocks and swans and goldfish.
You are an idle woman; no wife for an honest man.
If ever you try to return I'll pray to God that He kill you.
Is not our cave a good-enough home? I have longed for it all my life.
Here we can plan the world: a useful world for our sons.

EVE.

And was not Eden useful too?
Did God not plan it for his men?
How short our time was in that land.
We are not happy now as then.

ADAM.

Well. Well. Just settle down. I'll be as kind as I can.
You're only a woman after all. You need my protection. Don't cry.
Every one sooner or later must learn to know the world.
Eden was only a holiday. Now there is life, great Life.
You try to kindle a fire. I must go down to the river.
Work is the future law; work to keep one alive;
Work to forget one's life with . . .

EVE.

Work is the only law!
Dreadful law and sad.
To work, to work will be good:
To idle will be bad.

So our children will learn
The ways of evil and good.
The evil shall have no meat:
The righteous will take their food.

EVAN MORGAN

YOUTH

THE day was even hotter than usual. It was one of those days when to move was exhausting. I had retired to a shady bay and was lying with my bare feet in a pool of cool sea-water. The rocks rose high behind me, and the sea lay smooth and level before me. To my right the sand swept round in a semicircle, completing the shore of the bay, and at the back the mountains—some stern and cold, some with pine-crowned summits—formed a screen not unlike a Japanese picture. The monotonous rhythm of Arab music floated down the gentlest of breezes, mingled with the laughter and songs of the soldiers, but none was in sight.

The sun beat down upon the sand, and the sand, never immobile, kept gently unobtrusively shifting under the warm embrace. The sun was everywhere; even within the deepest shadows one could feel its sullen power. The minor pools were warm with it; the bees sang in it; the cigales chirruped, hidden among the leaves, worshipping the burning beams; wasps crawled upon the ground dozing in the heat. Here and there a gull warmed itself upon a scorching rock; diminutive lizards lay with their bellies buried in the broiling sand, amorous of the all-pervading fire. The chirps of dozing birds came from the reeds whose dead and withered stems rustled with the faintest breath, so dried and crisp they were.

High up in the blue two eagles soared, watching above the herd of goats and sheep upon the hill-side. There was that ceaseless, almost inaudible, murmur uttered by intense heat; little cracks and pops and faint rustling among dried-up grasses.

Overcome, I dozed, for the mere moving of an eyelid seemed fatiguing. I dreamed of all the beauty of the East; all the luxuriance of ancient Spain; all the love in the Songs of

Solomon; all the fragrance of Persian poetry. I dreamed of pomegranates, of figs, of sherbet, of roses, of gazelles, of tiny singing birds in cages, of plashing fountains, and of women.

And in my dream I heard voices—voices speaking in an unknown tongue. I threw out my arm to stop a fleeting shadow, and suddenly awoke. Upon the sands were six native boys, the eldest was perhaps seventeen. They were playing some game, the rules of which were secret to me. Their clothes were lying in a heap under the reeds, and, bronzed and naked, they played in the sun, leaping into the sea, over rocks, over each other. They wrestled, they rolled in the sand, they buried each other, and swam races through the filmy ripples.

Laughter filled the air—filled my heart; youth reigned supreme, tyrant over a scene of incredible beauty. Close to me the eldest lad, all sinews and muscle, was keeping two younger boys at bay with the shaft of one of the reeds, his white teeth gleaming half with joy, half with determination. It was a real battle. He slipped, fell, and the two leapt upon him. He wrestled. Three lithe bodies tumbled and twisted in the sand, and, with a splash, sought shelter in the blue reflection of the tranquil sky. The ripples licked at the rocks, the quiet images were shattered, and a cry of boyish victory arose.

I closed my eyes, and I fancied I saw the ancient Greeks playing, wrestling, dancing, exercising their limbs on the sands of Corinth, and I knew that I felt the same joy as they: the joy of youth, the joy of impeccable beauty, the joy of unfailing health, of exercise, of classic irresponsibility. I, like them, for a moment realised the perfect aesthetic pleasure given to all time in their superb statuary.

The wondrous beauty of an arm raised to strike, of a leg stretched to spring, of a head thrown back in defence, of a body taut, of a spirit young, and my soul cried "Eureka! I have found it, I have found it!"

The cry of ancient Greece; the cry of young England; the cry of Arabia; Youth eternal, slave of the eternal spirit, worshipper unconscious, but nevertheless devout, of the same

ideal; more intense the pleasure even than the pleasure of love, more beautiful, perhaps more exhilarating, more exalting. Youth was King; in the cloudless sky, like a young forehead without a wrinkle; in the level sea like the skin of a young virgin; in the smooth ageless sand, in the green reeds, the leafy trees, in the hum of the bees, the flight of the birds, in the warm rocks. In all, above all, through all, it was Youth, youth superb who cried triumphant, and I likewise cried. I cried with the poet David, "Grace is poured abroad in thy lips; therefore has God blessed thee forever."

THOMAS MOULT

FOR YOU, BRIGHT ORANGE FLOWERS . . .

FOR you, bright orange flowers of yearfall-gloams,
There is no dolour in your steady flame,
Nor yearning for a spring that no more comes,
Or summer gone as soon as summer came.
Your frailty lingers
Beneath the autumn's fingers,
Each petal spreading to their slow caress and tame,
But savage ere you know, and swift to tear and maim.

And we, whose nature heartened in the green
Light airs of May, shall be unwilting trees.
We strive to match you tho' long since have been
Our spring, our summer's golden rhapsodies.
Our courage lingers
Beneath the autumn's fingers,
Caring no more how savage-swift the winter is;
Content to catch kind music from the harshening breeze.

REGINALD RANDERSON

THE RINK WALTZ

Emphasise the waltz-time.

"NIGHT; and the moon; and the Mediterranean
murmuring faintly afar; (two, three; one, two, three)
Youth, from the shade of dim cypresses, yearningly
strums a romantic guitar . . ."

Poor old electric organ! Captive giant
Goaded by cruel prongs, you wail in pain
A sentimental waltz;—the blared,
Too metronomic rhythm wearily throbs
Ironic ecstasy; roared blasts of sound,
Distressingly sforzando, storm the roof,
Charge the green walls, the smooth and glistening floor,
And still repulsed, in wild waves froth around
The rink where, rashly precipitate,
Circling circles accelerate.

Metallic voice; swiftly.

With reckless abandon madly swing

Syncopate.

The clasping partners; girls fling
Defiant legs HIGH off the floor;
Swerve; try to summon more
Energy for the rout; eyes
Beacon eyes and arm complies
(As desperately the dancers reel)
With parted lips' unheard appeal.

With exaggerated naïvete.

Instructors cool as water glide,
Arch their backs, and lithely slide
In rings around inferiors
Parading their posteriors.

". . . Open, dear love, your conventional casement; shine
down, my most heavenly star (two, three; one, two, three)
Oh, how my heart blossoms roses etcetera,
Ah! (two, three; one, two, three) Ah!"

What whirring cataracts of wheels!
Glancing feet . . . high heels . . .
Wild, diabolic leer
Of cave-dwellers hurtling near
With palæolithic violence . . .
Whiffs of cigarette and scent,
Through the clammy air adrift,
Prick our nostrils in the swift,
Cooling gales as pairs careen
Past the barrier where we lean.

Commonplace catastrophe
Zig-zagging clumsily,
Rinking meteors collide,
Dance like cripples on a slide,
Totter, caper, trip—then crash
Horribly floorwards;—others clash
With the group;—confusion spreads.
Rinkers must not lose their heads!
Luckily Instructors leap
To the rescue of the writhing heap;
Sort the limbs out; haul the brave
To their feet; and murmuring suave
Platitudes to ease their pain
They lean to the time again . . .

Lean to the regular time again . . .
Inexorably trite refrain!
Remorseless pangs! Recurrent strain!
Deadening the senses, hammering the brain:—

"Night, and the moon; and the Mediterranean
murmuring faintly afar; (two, three; one, two, three)
Youth, from the shade of dim cypresses, yearningly
strums a romantic guitar; (two, three; one, two, three)
Open, dear love, your conventional casement; shine
down, my most heavenly star (two, three; one, two, three)
Oh, how my heart blossoms roses etcetera
Ah! . . . . . Ah!"

RONALD RICHING

THE HOUSE OF BLOOD

THERE were six windows at the front of the house, which was built in three stories; all eighteen windows were fronted with window-boxes, and they were ablaze with scarlet geraniums. The dull-red of the walls was obscured by the growth of a well-developed creeper, which, in the autumn, when the geranium petals had fallen like soft scarlet stains to the grey stone path beneath and had withered and been brushed away, enkindled a less garish flame, then extinguished itself through its own impetus, dramatically casting off its pointed leaves as though it shed large drops of blood and died wistfully.

Garfield called it the house of blood: Garfield was a cynic: he referred to his aunt's house in this way not only because of its outward atmosphere—scarlet tulips were predominant round the lawn in spring—but because from the bloodless ruler of the demesne emanated an overwhelming dread calculated to destroy all the finer attributes of the senses. Perhaps Garfield was not really a cynic, merely so bitter that he verged on insanity.

He was languidly regarding the geraniums as they spread in an uncompromising possessive growth in eighteen three-foot lines across the house, from his wicker chair on the lawn; in one hand he held a text-book on Roman law, his first finger inserted between the leaves at the page he had been reading; with the other he swung gently the tortoise-shell spectacles he had removed from the bridge of his nose: half lulled into a morbid resignation, he voiced his musings in a weary monotone.

"How infuriatingly trim and stiff it all is," he muttered, "and how unnatural. Oh, you geraniums, why can't you nod in the breeze—or do something. What artificial things geraniums are."

"What are artificial, Garfield?" inquired a colourless voice behind him.

Miss Lovell had swept noiselessly across the lawn while he was speaking, and now drew a second chair into position, so that she could conveniently regard her nephew.

Garfield turned wearily, for he was accustomed to such unexpected intrusions on his privacy, and regarded the slim, graceful woman near him. He was horribly fascinated by the exquisite taste of her costume—that relentless figure dressed in black, and wearing a large hat which was given startling distinction by the chic position of a scarlet rose that served to emphasise the paleness of her lips and cheek.

"Geraniums," he answered wearily.

Miss Lovell had composed herself instantly on taking her seat, and now it seemed as though she had been sitting there during the whole afternoon.

"Geraniums have always flowered in our window-boxes," she rejoined in clear dispassionate tones which were so fine and well-modulated as to be almost unimpeachable. "One might say it is a tradition of the Lovell family."

"Oh, is that why they're here?" commented her nephew.

"And you are a Lovell," pursued the lady as though she triumphantly uttered a condemnation.

Garfield turned to her again. She seemed, he thought, almost beautiful with her easy superficial grace, her awful composure, and her utter alienation from the world he and all other normal people enjoyed.

"But I think I am a Garfield," he said.

Miss Lovell paused before replying, but her tone was as even as before: "You bear your mother's surname as your Christian appellation, but it is usual in our family to find the Lovell blood predominant."

"Blood!" muttered Garfield in a shocked tone. Suddenly he felt sick.

It was impossible to defy Miss Lovell: she carried all her insinuations, her subtle innuendoes, even her unexpressed opinions, with serene confidence behind her inscrutable veil, and her strongest opponents acquiesced in her decisions through utter

terror. Garfield knew of only one person who dared to differ with her—his friend Hamilton Jones; and he, only because his strength and grace could match hers upon occasion. Miss Lovell admired Jones, but was a little jealous of him; she hoped one day to number him among her conquests; so that he found himself accorded a phenomenal welcome whenever he visited the house.

He was expected that day for tea, and Miss Lovell rose to renew her toilet against taking up her position behind the tea-tray.

Garfield remained gazing at the grass ahead of him, in an attitude expressive, almost, of annihilation, and even when Hamilton had taken possession of the vacant chair he could not stir himself without prodigious effort.

At last when he broke the silence which Jones had not disturbed, he spoke in the weak tones of a hopeless invalid.

"Well, Hamilton, I'm sorry; I'm even more morose than usual. What was London looking like?"

"Didn't see much of it," replied Jones. "What have you been doing all day?"

"Messing about with my kit, mostly. It was returned to-day."

"Mine arrived too, but I've not had time to look over it yet. It's in a rotten mess, I suppose?"

"Mine? Oh, yes—well, I don't know; it appears to be correct, as far as my own possessions are concerned, but they've kindly enclosed gear that doesn't belong to me; for one thing, there's a service revolver."

"Really? Have you sent it back yet?

"No; nor do I intend to. I shall keep it."

Jones regarded him curiously. "Why?" he asked quietly.

"Because—it might be useful," Garfield replied casually.

"But surely——" began Jones, growing more agitated than was his wont, but Garfield interrupted imperiously: "Jones, don't raise arguments——", then, finishing weakly, relapsed into

his former moody silence. Jones cursed his impetuous lapse, and didn't speak again.

The atmosphere became yet more oppressive: the house more intensely sinister. Garfield reached up his arms painfully, his face was contorted with despair; he spoke as though the world's burdens lay heavily upon his shoulders: "Dear God! . . ."

"Jones, Jones," he said, "why am I doomed like this? I am a victim; my life-blood is being irrevocably absorbed by that woman, and I haven't the power or the strength to resist. What *can* I do? what is it possible to do?"

Hamilton's fingers closed into the palm of his hand as he strove to repress a sigh—or was it a gasp of exasperation? He couldn't tell; it was all so ludicrous, so preposterous; but what could he do save urge upon his friend the disastrous consequences of forgoing his personality, and the urgent necessity of collecting his forces and making a stand against the insurgent enemy . . .

Miss Lovell herself heralded tea with a gracious smile to Jones.

"Garfield," she remarked, as she wielded the teapot, in the tone of one who makes polite conversation, "Garfield has been objecting on the principle of artificiality to the geraniums in our window-boxes. I wonder, what is your opinion, Mr. Jones?"

"I think," he said, directing his gaze levelly at hers, "that geraniums under most circumstances are splendidly formal, but scarcely graceful or artistic."

"Ah! 'splendidly formal,'" commented Miss Lovell, caressingly; "I think that an admirable description. They are, perhaps, my favourite flower, and it is pleasant to hear such an apt phrase applied to them by an impartial judge." She smiled slightly—and Garfield also smiled.

"You are to be envied," he said in an unmistakable imitation of his aunt's voice, but with a touch of asperity which strangely contrasted with the rest of his assumed style, "at least I envy you, Jones, your shrewd powers of discernment and adaptability to circumstances."

KISLING

KISLING

His words were probably chosen at random, but he feared to miss his cue, and they served to convey to his audience a new note in his speech, a departure from his general phase of life that should have been portentous and warning. Certainly they had the effect of considerably perturbing his aunt, and perplexing his friend, to whom the warning was most apparent, and who mistrusted the possible lines on which this new defence might develop: he said little during the remainder of his stay, and although Miss Lovell talked variously, she obviously felt the lack of harmony that such a discord had produced.

She did not urge Hamilton to prolong his visit, but when he was at the point of departure, Garfield took his arm and asked if he would return for cigars after dinner. "I don't feel safe, somehow," he hazarded, "I can't feel certain of anything to-day," so Hamilton promised and went away.

Garfield abruptly sat down on the Chesterfield in the hall; he took up his text-book on Roman law, opened it where a piece of grass marked the pages, but stared dreamily at his boots instead of reading.

He did not look at his aunt when she came in and sat beside him; she, however, once more assumed her pose of having been with him from when he first sat down, and, looking out of the window, began to speak.

"Apropos of the geraniums, Garfield—oh, I wouldn't disturb your studies, but I noticed that you held your book upside down—I want to express my opinion on your career. Mr. Jones seemed to suggest that what you object to in geraniums is their lack of artistic attributes. But surely one isn't able to consider such details—or, at least, to attach any importance to them—if one is going to make a successful lawyer! Do you think, Garfield, that you are quite likely to meet with success in your—profession?"

Garfield smiled grimly. "My tutor is not exactly discouraging: and really I fail to perceive the connection between my private personal opinions and my success as a barrister. Men in that profession may even have recourse to brutal hard-

ness when occasion demands, and yet—be quite humane in private life."

Miss Lovell smiled reprovingly. "Ah, yes, I was coming to that point," she replied, very gently. "Of course, with a Lovell it is different. In our family we have no room for sentimentality."

"Do you mean by that," burst out Garfield, "that artists like——"

"My dear nephew!" interrupted Miss Lovell, as sharply as it was possible for her to speak: "I am not prepared to enter into a dissertation on the merits of men to whom that term may or may not be applicable. I only state an old family truth. Lovells—have always respected their traditions."

The senses of nausea and of intense irritation conflicted in Garfield's brain, so that he was undecided as to whether he would precipitate his tome of law at his blood-relation and himself into the garden, or whether he should emit one soul-wrung moan and abandon himself to his fate! Meanwhile he remained inert: then Miss Lovell made the greatest miscalculation of her life; she imagined she had subdued him, and proceeded to make an astounding utterance.

"You may as well know, I think, of your position in life from to-morrow onwards—I have not forgotten that to-morrow you attain to your majority, although, as I have said, we Lovells do not pander to sentimentality. This moment seems to me most propitious, because you appear to question my authority. To-morrow you not only enter into possession of this house and the diminished grounds, but you also inherit *all* the wealth which appertains to the family, and which is my own source of income as well as yours: so that, after to-night, I am, technically" (the slightest stress was laid on the word) "no longer able to maintain any position here."

Miss Lovell imagined that she had already subdued her nephew, and that it needed only this statement to complete her triumph which should leave her in undisputed possession of that which she had governed so relentlessly hitherto. She smiled in

gentle confidence, as though it were a concession on her part to listen to the formal consent.

Garfield rose deliberately, then before walking away turned to regard her with a new expression on his face; he seemed to have grown older, stronger, and there was, unmistakably, contempt in his glance. He spoke drily. "I am glad to know that," he said, and left her.

Miss Lovell gasped incoherently, wildly. It was impossible, incredible, that she should be flaunted, faced with the prospect of destitution, forced to realise that she was living on charity!

Garfield half recognised these factors in the case, but he felt no relief, nor did he know the joy of newly gained power. He had grown too morose, his moroseness had developed into insanity too much, to force such realisations of untrammelled liberty upon his consciousness with any sudden force, but slowly the new vision of life which he had never conceived took possession of his mind, absorbed his thoughts; and as a sudden shock, he became aware while he dressed for dinner of his complete mastery, the enormity of his sudden conquest; and before he left his room he conceived the inspiration of a forcible method of illustrating his power, but he was undecided as to the manner in which he should introduce it.

The occasion presented itself when there remained nothing but two crystal vases of gypsophila, dessert plates and cutlery, and a large silver dish piled high with fruit on the table.

Until the servants had left the room, Miss Lovell had spoken little, but as she dissected a green fig and admired its orange centre, she began her sally with her usual composure.

"I have decided, Garfield," she commenced, "to dismiss the male servants and in future to employ only women."

Her nephew glared dully: "I object to that proceeding," he remarked.

Miss Lovell raised her eyebrows in frank amusement.

"Unfortunately," she answered with some irony, "I have already told Stephen and Bradwell that I can dispense with their services at the end of the month."

Garfield leant across the table; he recognised his opportunity: "But I cannot," he said in the same bewildered monotone, "and I shall counteract your orders."

Miss Lovell almost lost her temper. "Indeed, Garfield," she remonstrated, "I beg you will accord me due respect . . ." Then suddenly found herself confronted with a revolver.

"Silence, you cursed vampire," Garfield demanded. "Can't you see you're beaten at your own game? Do you think I'm such a fool as to bow to your wretched governance any longer, even if you do remain here on sufferance?" He was growing somewhat wild, and Miss Lovell, who was speechless, decided that since her nephew was evidently homicidally inclined, it would be wise to summon assistance; to that end she rose slowly, but Garfield also stood up, and as she moved towards the bell, he approached her, still with the revolver pointed at her.

He had only intended to show his power, but now that he found she expected an attack on her life, why should he not try it—yes, he would kill her.

"You have gone too far at last," he spluttered with a fiendish joy; by this time he was within a yard of her; "and now you're going—going somewhere else—ever so far away," and he laughed uproariously as his trigger-finger tightened.

Then Miss Lovell found herself stirred to desperation: she struck his outstretched arm away from her and towards himself, and the motion hastened the pressing of the trigger, which occurred when the revolver was pointing to his breast.

The report which followed deafened her for a moment; then she saw her nephew lying on the floor with a wound from which poured blood on to the whiteness of his shirt-front and the gypsophila, which had in some way been flung to the ground; the door burst open, and Hamilton Jones ran forward.

It was he who conveyed his friend to his bed, issued directions to the household, and who attended on the invalid during the ensuing period of unconsciousness and delirium; and it was he whom Garfield found by his side when he finally regained his

senses. At length, with some pain, the Lovell heir commenced his interrogations.

"What does the world know about this affair?" he asked.

"Exactly what I told them," came the steady reply. "That you were displaying your new revolver and accidentally shot yourself—and that I saw it."

"Thank you, Jones. What of—my aunt?"

"She waited until the doctor pronounced you to be out of danger, then went off abroad somewhere as companion to a wealthy old lady."

Garfield smiled joyously for a few moments as he turned over this humorous piece of news in his mind.

"How long before term begins?" he asked wearily.

"Three weeks."

"Good! I want to let this place on a ninety-nine years' lease before then," he commented in a dry tone, then fell silent once more. After a time he spoke again; it was clear that he had completely recovered his mental balance, and that what had passed was in the nature of an hallucination rather than a tangible occurrence.

"Tell me, Jones," he said, "it will be the October term?"

"Yes," answered his friend; "why?"

"Oh, I thought it would be—only I couldn't remember whether it was geraniums or creeper that had caused it all—I only saw blood."

EDGELL RICKWORD

A DEAD MISTRESS

THERE are no worms nor gaping flies
Shall find this body strange to touch,
But in a nonchalant despite
Patter across the stately thighs,
And near the fallen buttocks find
Morsels to tease their sullen mind;
And its essential fragrance such
As beetles feel across the night.

This is the end of being fair
And generous of delight. The arms,
That closed another world than this
And laid ways to new regions bare,
Are now the roads that ants intent
On dull domestic errands went;
And the damp hair the bindweed harms,
And on the belly blind things kiss.

DOROTHY M. ROBERTS

BLEA TARN

DUSK on your silver-grey water is a silent bird holding long shadows under brown drooping wings. From the blue Langdale heights it has journeyed, over heathland and grey stumbling fell-land where quiet winds sway the wild juniper.

All sunlight goes out of your singing as larchwoods grow deeper, and waking owls cry through the shadow. Now dusk wings enfold your grey water—they plunge and lift slowly along your slow waves.

Your voice that has lost the sun's singing is a lonely voice, cold and wind-shaken. You sigh as a bare forest sighs when northern winds shake the brown branches. You tell of grey winter and wind-haunted night—you tell of old sorrows . . .

Dusk on your silver-grey water is a silent bird holding long shadows under brown drooping wings. Now all the green larchwoods are shrouded—your red reeds are hidden away. Only white rocks at your waves' edge gleam faintly, as they stoop to your long secret story.

URBAN DIALOGUE

"HUSH! Hush! You seem to forget I have a reputation!"

"Forget it too!"

"I have a splendid memory."

"And a divine figure."

"But that belongs to my reputation."

"Your figure not your own——?"

"How dare you, sir! Of course it is my own!"

"May I borrow it? You shall have it back."

"What do you want it for?"

"To make a copy."

"A copy?"

"Yes—in miniature."

"A slow business, surely?"

"So so. It depends when the work starts."

"But must it be done all at once?"

"Ultimately, yes. But I am willing to begin by instalments."

"You realise that the design is copyright?"

"Perfectly. I am prepared to pay."

"In kind?"

"However you choose."

She thought for a few seconds. Then reflectively:

"I want some gloves," she said.

* * * *

Two days later he called about four o'clock. She was in the long, scented drawing-room. The lamps were unlit and against the lilac dusk her hair glimmered eerily.

"Your gloves," he said courteously.

"How thoughtful of you! They are a perfect shade."

"They are to match your eyes."

"And the price?"

"The copyright of your hands."

"Here they are."

"I must study them carefully."

"Both at once?"

"One in each."

"You are tickling!"

"The scent is unfamiliar to me."

"A special soap of my own. Is your investigation finished?"

"It only remains for me to set an imprint on them."

And he kissed the pointed finger-tip with lingering respect.

* * * *

They met in Bond Street. The sunshine laughed on the house-fronts. Every passer-by was newly and gaily clad.

"I am shopping. And you?"

"Hunting for copyrights."

"Happy man! There is one yonder that does not look expensive."

"I collect diamonds, not paste. Money is no object."

"Not even twenty guineas?"

"In this window, I imagine? I thought so. The one with the blue plume? Delicious. It is yours."

"When will you come?"

"This evening, if you are alone."

"I shall look for you at ten o'clock. You will expect a receipt, of course. In kind. Will a plait do?"

"No indeed. Not even a ribbon. Flowing loose."

"Good-day, then. Or rather, au revoir."

"One moment. I have seen some charming shoes."

"You are observant."

"Merely persevering."

"The size?"

"Perfect. They are the smallest made."

"Oh dear, I have a hole in my stocking!"

"That is easily remedied."

"What a beautiful cigarette-holder you have."

"The shop is next door."

* * * *

It was striking ten as he rang her bell.

"Good heavens, what a bale! Are you a delivery van?"

"Say rather the van of a delivery."

"That would be clumsy. But let me see what you have brought."

"The shoes. Are they not chic? And these stockings. Then a cigarette-holder. Then——"

"Wait! You go too fast. The stockings look rather small."

"Try them. No, it is useless over the others. That is better. No need to put them right on. Let me measure. Ah! A different soap this time. Do you wash in sections?"

"What an idea! Let me see those white things. *Really!* And you bought these in person? Brave man. And that also? And even that? Indeed you deserve to prosper."

"If I may venture—that particular one looks to me a trifle short . . ."

"Upon my word! In a boudoir too!"

"I am at your disposal."

"You set me an example! Please do not move. I will go and see how they fit."

"I await your verdict. Stop! You forgot the cigarette-holder."

"It is delicious."

"It has been between your lips."

"Be careful! You crush those lovely things."

"Loveliness should thrive on crushing."

She slipped to the door and vanished.

* * —— * *

Five minutes later the house telephone, hanging by the fireplace, whistled softly. He took up the receiver with elegant indifference.

"They do beautifully," whispered a voice.

"And the other——? Is it not too short?"

"For some occasions perhaps. But——," here the whisper wavered into ghostly laughter—'not for quite all . . . To-night for instance . . ."

Replacing the receiver, he walked quickly out of the room and up the stairs.

FOUR TRANSLATIONS BY PAUL SELVER

OTAKAR BREZINA

THUS SANG THE WATERS . . .

BETWIXT two fires, sun and earth, spell-bound we rove through ages.
From life's thirsty roots we mounted to ethereal stems,
To splendour of blossoms, clenched in throes of grievous yearning,
Through streams of nummulite oceans, dimness of ancient diluvial forests,
Kingdoms of bygone creation gigantic,
Caverns, where man, secret brother of beasts, earth's coming deliverer,
Slaked in us fire of his blood, curse-beset,
Burning eternally, unquenchable.

In stars of morning dew we quivered upon battlefields,
In rivers of tears we fierily flowed over judgment-places,
To life's quickening rhythms we chanted in marble cities
Beneath triumphal bridges and with buffet of waves in our oceans
In mocking pathos we thundered the epic of earths
Buried amid ages. With fire's glowing leavens
We fermented into ethereal glaciers of cloudy mountain-ranges,
Above the golden sun's hidden lair at his setting,
Like airy mirages, recoiling through distances of cosmos
From a giant world more resplendent.
The rainbow we conjured in weeping of waterfalls and beneath oceans' starry mirrors
We concealed age-old contest of our unnumbered creatures

Mute and relentless, illumining the black depths with lightning-flashes.
Like alluring serpent-orbs we glinted in treacherous eddies
Upon scaly rivers, but like unto graveyards of myriad graves
In grief-ridden gulfs we poured as oblivion,
And with words of a hallowing prayer we fervently whispered
Above magical simmer of balm-laden fountains, in thousand-fold guise.

Before the despairer's glances our delicate billows are opened
As numberless lips, eternally moving in frenzy
Stunned by the blow of sudden, horror-laden knowledge.
But conquerors read our hidden wisdom from their heights
Out of the silvery chart blazing to them from depths, as lines upon night's hand
And as on a coin, the inscription's glittering imprint proclaiming the value;
Unto them speak life's joyful secrets in our thousand pathways,
Which from all mountain-peaks pour to a single sea
And from multiple strains of our springs, river-courses and oceans,
They hear the chant of a single kindly power,
Which in numberless changes seeks earth's true countenance.

And lo! Before their glance the severed throes of a myriad hands
Stiffen to a single gigantic spirit-hand, begirding earth,
Which in a sculptor's splendid and tragical gesture,
Kneading the ball of his tractable clay,
Transforms the secret of things as prompted by his vision's magnificence
In torturing pangs of creation
Never assuaged.

"*The Hands*" (1901).

ANTONIN SOVA

Bizarre Dream

I spake unto her: "There is naught that we can await from this Life,
Naught from this Earth, and naught from this Heaven and naught from these Saints.
Loathsome to me are To-days where the Past hurls mocking echoes,
Come thou with me, most precious, I wot of another World, revealed to my spirit."

And I spake: "Sever thyself from all and we will depart (as though it were naught)
When thy mother sleeps and thy father is in the tavern and when the city reeks of mire.
On tiptoe . . . I will fling away weapons, those that in fever I seized on
For shielding of my head and thine . . . thus . . . now I reject them for ever.

"Thus beside me, fused with my sorrow and passion and terror and ecstasy,
Shalt thou go. But ward off memory of cowering mortals,
These vermin with venerably outworn statutes,
Thou must abandon old Earth, thou must rend all bonds asunder."

Though she wept and her lips were aquiver, (waveringly) she girded herself towards nightfall,
Yet she came, but tarried at every step, sobbing she hearkened awhile
To her mother's breathing, when doors clattered,—she remembered companions of old
And dancing-halls and the springtide evening by the river near native forests . . .

'Ah!" quoth I; "not thus may'st thou go with ballast of accursed memories.
They are but marshy vapours, upon which our souls have thriven.
Forget not evil that the world was contriving against thee, what tears thou hast shed;
Forget not wounds from accursed hands, and laughter of them that defile,

Or that from youth they arrayed thee as a puppet for pastime of men,
For domestic lust of gluttons and lecherous bodies of burgesses.
Forget not how they craved that thy soul should be Weakness, Weakness,
That under the savour of sin it might seek Christ and Mary.

Wilt thou not forget? . . ." Long we fared together. Days and nights passed by,
Over mountains we stride, and shun the dwellings of mortals.
Yonder where mistletoe clings to the pine-trees, yonder where the moon hangs in the darkness,
Yonder is goodliest faring, yonder are loftiest dreams and most lavish of blossom.

"Wherefore now weepest thou? Believest thou not in New Life upon Other Worlds?"
That she should weep not, when I led her across fallow-lands, forests, over waters,
Beneath the silvery glimmer of evening I began to speak falsely
Of Legends of beauty to be and unknown regions of foreboding.

And thus did we fare. And lighted on vessels . . . That was a sorrowful Ocean
And a Land for marvelling, a city with lights that were drab and pallid,
And sightless windows, and towers with pinnacles in the clouds;
And I led her to the vessel and craved to be borne into Unknown Worlds.

Thereon was only a steersman knew, with a thousand fiery promptings
Meseemed that he guided the vessel, but his name I knew not,
Whether it was Fate-Avenger or Fate-Redeemer,
He uttered with never a word, but deeply inclined him earthward.

Thereon was only the old steersman, known to me from perplexing apparitions;
Through space of unconscious beauty we journeyed with glowing horizon.
Ha! I was mirthful, seeing her take heart after so lengthy a span,
And urged him to journey like lightning, securely remote from mortals.

And we journeyed and journeyed . . . the air full of cinnabar vapours
Grew chill of a sudden and gray (I perceived the old steersman had duped us),
Only his docile eyes of wisdom glittered with uncertain lustre, betokening ill,
When earthwards he bowed him and spake, "Forthwith we achieve our goal.

"There is the Land," he spake thereupon with malign craft in his smile,
And pointed to a pale streak which lifelessly emerged from clouds.
"Thou liest, dog! Yonder is the selfsame mortal again," I screamed in my fury,
"Cranes I behold on the shores, windows of houses glittering in the sunshine.

Thou art one of that human rabble, confess, thou basilisk,
I will slay thee, thou dog, thou Evil incarnate, cozening huckster!"

He bowed him with chattering teeth. Thereupon the pale streak of earth again vanished,
And again on the distant path from the world of mortals we journeyed.

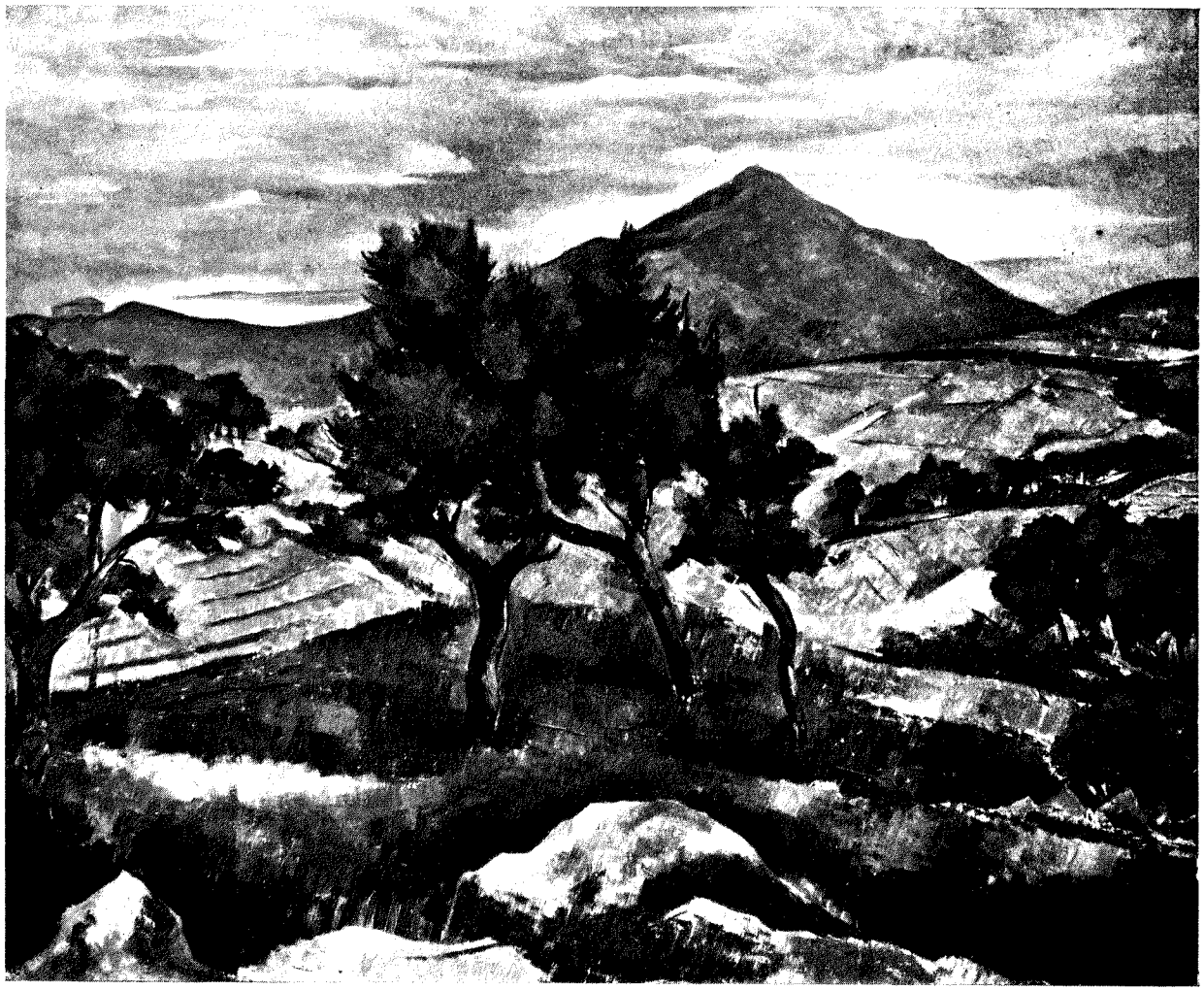
Days passed and horror of fruitless waiting clung to our hearts.
We sat us down in embrace and she wept, whispering of bygone days.
"Knowest thou how, in summer, twilight slumbered above warm pastures,
Silvery light was aquiver above stillness of secret footpaths?"

"Dost thou see, thou dog, again she remembers?" I cried. Evil of portent
Was the old man's muteness by his compass (his hardihood allured me to murder).
"Again she weeps, dog, journey swiftly where beneath conscience there is dawning,
And where there is gladness and music and fragrance of blood-red blossoms."

Days passed and nights grew dim. I beheld: her tresses had whitened,
Haply with dread, as the waves battered the sides of the mouldering vessel.
"Dost thou see how her tresses have whitened?" I cried in despair. "Dost thou see, thou accursed old man?
Even me hast thou deceived; I trust thee not, nay, I trust thee not."

And I slew him with a ferocious blow, the dissembling demon.
The deck rumbled with the fall, and the creak of the rigging was as laughter.
"Now he shall no more deceive us by return to the accursed Earth.
He knew not Worlds of Revelation . . . Shall we die? Ah! to live thus . . .

RENÉ DUREY



RENÉ DUREY

Oh, vainly thou pleadest, never shall I return to Earth—nay,
I return not,
Having destroyed thy youth, thy happiness and hope for the
Land of increase . . .
And having destroyed thy soul by tarrying for the light which
cometh not,
No more shall I return to the Earth which I curse, the cradle
of Evil.

Naught remains but to wait, or to perish in frenzied embrace
Upon the deserted vessel amid an ocean greenishly lifeless . . .
But yet weep not, I shall swerve not for thy sake, firm is my
will,
And happiness it is to perish afar from the squalor of Earth . . ."

"*Overmastered Sorrows*" (1897).

J. S. MACHAR

Tractate on Patriotism

That nook of earth wherein I grew and lived
Through childhood, boyhood, and my years of youth
With all sweet folly of first love, with all
First pangs, deceit and misery of it;
That one white township in the vale of Elbe
With dusky forests on the far horizon,
With its old castle, with its wild-grown park,
Its placid market-square, its church, that shaped
Outlandishly, peers forth with huddled tower
Across the country-side; billowy fields;
Avenued paths; the agony of God
Where cross-roads meet, the meadow-lands that flank
Calm streams; our cherished hamlets round about,—
That nook of earth is all for which I crave

In the shrill streets of this afflicting city.
Yet rather is it craving for the years
Of youth I lived there . . . Since the soul portrays
Fondly unto itself those places, craves
Piningly for them, while—fond thing—it harbours
A trembling hope that by returning thither
It may turn back its years of youth . . . I know
That I would likewise love another place
If I had passed elsewhere my years of youth . . .

This is my native land. Naught else. I lack
Aptness to worship that terrestrial
Concept, which diplomats have glibly framed
In their bureaus; which pedagogues to us
Imparted out of atlases; the which
Must needs, as each and all terrestrial
Concepts, to-morrow, maybe, shrivel or expand,
According as upon some battlefield,
In dreadful strife which is not our affair,
More striplings fall on that side or on this!

I have not found my pride in history,
That temple of idolaters, wherein
Dreamers devoutly cast themselves to earth,
And in a frenzy beat their breasts because
They too are Czechs: nay, even as elsewhere,
Our annals are a file of dreadful deeds
(By us accomplished and by us endured)
Of recreant men, of surging passion-throes,
Betrayals, dominations and enslavements;
And these befalling openly, became
Clear-ringing currency of daily catchwords
For tricksters of to-day, here as elsewhere.

Nor do I vaunt me of our own days. We
Than others are no whit the better . . .

We are but palterers and caitiffs; where
Power is, there do we bend our necks to it
In slavish wise; wherefore are we abased
By evil lords. Time-serving braggarts we,
Testy and witless, laughing-stocks amid
Our pride, and palsied in vain peevishness.
Felons we have, dotards and pillagers
And hucksters dealing in pure love of country,
And a mere handful of the men who are
Ever untainted and downright,—but these
All nations have elsewhere,—ye gods, is this
To be, perchance, our fountain-head of pride?

I am no patriot, nor do I love
My country, for I have none, know none, nor
See cause for loving one . . .
I am a Czech, even as I might be
A German, Turk, Gypsy or negro, if
I had been born elsewhere. My Czechdom is
The portion of my life which I do feel
Not as delight and bliss, but as a grave
And inborn fealty. My native land
Is within me alone; and this will I
Trim round at no man's beck, nor give it tinge
To match with fashion's daily whim; nor shall
They rob me of it; when above my tomb
The grass has grown, it shall go living on
In other souls,—and if, some day to be,
In them it wither, then and only then
Shall it be lifeless, as old Kollar sang.

And if I toil for it, then that is toil
For Czechdom as I feel it in myself.

And if I ever pride me on it, then
I pride me only on my life . . .

"GOLGOTHA" (1902).

PAUL SELVER

1896

SUBURBAN houses in a jaded row
Siesta underneath the August sky.
Huskily pant the trains, that to and fro
Beyond the draggled garden rumble by.
Through the long afternoon he watched, intent,
The tunnel and the cutting and the bridge,
And pondered where the moaning engines went
When they had vanished round the grassy ridge.
The weather-beaten summer-house that reeked
Of melted varnish and of parching mould,
Where the warped flooring in the swelter creaked,
Was as his castle, secret, strong and old.
For in his knickerbockered artlessness
Amid the lone aloofness of his nook,
He still knew nothing of the woes of Tess,
He still knew nothing of the Yellow Book.
And his horizon was the jaded row
Of houses underneath the empty sky.
Was he the happier? I do not know.
How strange that this should be, for he was I.

JOTTING IN LATE WINTER

THE cold, harsh angles of the city wane
Amid dusk's bluish drifts, that are bespecked
With ranks of trembling lights, whose colour-flecked
And shapeless haloes float in the soft rain.

The streets, beneath a hovering magic, change
To terraces of dream in misty blur;
Through them the quickening season's early stir,
And its first hopes with buoyant footsteps range.

O the sweet wizardry of muffled noise
And faded lines, groping on, inch by inch,
Around gaunt frontages whose shadowy poise
Blends with the sky, where timid planets flinch
From green and crimson of a shrill behest
That blinks: "Try Lipton's Tea. It is the best."

ELEGY OF THE ARGONAUTS

OUR seas are sprinkled with enchanted isles
Marked on our sober charts as girt with shoals.
But from our track they lure us with their wiles,
That promise balm and solace to our souls.

We sight their shores at bluish wane of day.
And ranks of festive lanterns we behold.
On a lagoon is mirrored their array
In rocking flecks of crimson, green and gold.

In feverish delight we disembark
On regions where new constellations gleam:
Beneath new firmaments amid whose arc
Our yearnings' fateful statutes are supreme.

The night is scented with the bloom of strange
And scented petals. Muffled chants arise
From groves where soft and beckoning shadows range:
O wondrous music of enraptured sighs!

The spell is potent, but the spell will fail.
We know, we know! When a bleak dawn appears
And the lagoon is riven by a gale,
We shall escape amid remorse and fears.

And fate broods mutely, and we ask in vain
If we can wrest redemption from our will.
If our own spirit can by contest gain
Conquest of life, sway over good and ill.

IMAGO

WOMEN mock me, are not for me.
And yet some thought of woman seems
Albeit in unfleshly wise
To light the spaces of my dreams.

I wandered in a laurel wood,
To come upon a marble stair;
And on a throne of ancient gold
I found the Queen of Egypt there.

She loosened from its amber pins
The ebon torrent of her hair:

Which, as a temple, veiled within
The deity of breast and limb;
The gleam died on the laurel leaves
And all things, save her eyes, grew dim.

They say the marriage bed is sweet,
And swelling throats have hymned its charms:

This vision came by night to me
Who never lay in woman's arms.

THE OLD POSTMAN

HERE he sits who day by day
Tramped the silent years away:
Knew a world but ten miles wide,
Cared not what befel outside.

Nor, his tramping at an end,
Has he need of book or friend:
Peace and comfort he can find
In the mill-pond of his mind.

E. ION SWINLEY

THE LIFTING OF THE DARK

Characters:

AN OLD WOMAN
A YOUNGER WOMAN (*her Daughter*)
A GIRL
THE MAN

The Scene is in the Turret of an old Castle in an unknown Country. There is a small narrow window at the back, a door on the right, from which winding stairs lead up to a yet higher turret, and another on the left which leads down to the rest of the castle. In the centre is a brasier, and round it are some wooden stools.

THE OLD WOMAN *is sitting on a stool looking into the glow of the brasier.* THE GIRL *is leaning against the wall at the back, looking out of the window. It is very dark. Outside the window the blackness is as a wall.* THE YOUNGER WOMAN *comes presently from the door on the right with a plate of food and a lighted lamp. The plate she puts on a block of stone projecting from the wall on the right, the lamp she hangs to a chain in front of the window.*

THE WOMAN. He has not eaten. He is still watching.

THE GIRL. You should have let me take it.

THE WOMAN. I am his mother, and he would not eat what I took him. Why should he eat what you take him?

THE GIRL. Because he has held me in his arms and kissed me.

THE OLD WOMAN. He will not eat because he watches for his dream, and has no hunger. Men who watch for their dreams forget their bodies.

THE GIRL. That is why he does not kiss me now.

THE WOMAN [*sitting by the brasier*]. It is a mad dream.

THE OLD WOMAN. What is it? I have forgotten.

THE WOMAN. He talks of Light. He says the light is coming. He says the land will be as it was before the Great Darkness fell. He is mad. My son is mad. The Darkness fell

for all time. Why should the light come again? We are well enough as we are.

THE OLD WOMAN. It was light once. The mother of my mother saw the last of the light when she was a little child. It was grey, she said, and one could see a long way without lamps.

THE GIRL [*still at the window*]. It will be beautiful, the light.

THE WOMAN. Why do you say it will be beautiful? How can you tell?

THE GIRL. He says it.

THE WOMAN. He is mad.

THE GIRL. He is a seer.

THE WOMAN. Down in the town they all call him mad. He was thought well of before he grew wild-headed with his dream. Now they laugh at him.

THE GIRL. They laugh because they cannot understand.

THE WOMAN. Come away from the window. It will not grow light for your watching.

THE GIRL. I want to see the first of the light with him.

THE WOMAN. You will watch long, then. [*A pause.*]

THE GIRL. I wish I could watch with him. I wish I could stand beside him so that he would say, "Look, there is the light; do you see it?" And I would say, "Yes, I see it. It is beautiful. You are a true seer." And we would stand close to one another and watch the coming of the light together. But he will not heed me any more. [*Coming to* THE WOMAN'S *knee.*] Mother of him I love, why will he not heed me?

THE WOMAN. He is mad. My son is mad. [*A pause; then* THE WOMAN *speaks suddenly.*] What was that?

THE GIRL. It was a wind.

THE OLD WOMAN. It was a cold wind that blew from out beyond the dark. The world is stirring in her sleep. [THE WOMEN *draw closer in to the brasier, but* THE GIRL *looks over her shoulder at the window.*] My mother's mother talked of one who prophesied the coming of the dark in the days when it was light. They called him mad. There were some few who believed him. They called him prophet. None believe in your son.

THE GIRL. None but I.

THE WOMAN. You would believe if he said he was God.

THE GIRL [*almost to herself*]. If he said he was God? [*To* THE OLD WOMAN.] Tell me more of this other prophet.

THE OLD WOMAN. He said the darkness was the cloud of men's sins. That angered them, so that when it fell they took him as a wizard who had conjured the dark upon them—they took him and nailed him to a Cross and he died.

THE GIRL. Died!

THE OLD WOMAN. That is the lot of prophets.

THE GIRL. But *he* brings the light! Him they will clothe in a purple robe and set on a high throne and crown like a king.

THE OLD WOMAN. Then he will not be a prophet any more.

THE GIRL. Why not?

THE OLD WOMAN. No king was ever a prophet, and no prophet was ever a king.

THE GIRL [*gazing in front of her as if inspired*]. But he will be. He will be the first. He will be the first Prophet-King of the world. Through him the world will be redeemed. I know it. I have seen it when I grew clear-eyed in my sleep.

THE WOMAN. She is mad, too.

THE OLD WOMAN. No. She loves. Her own heart is the world to her. He will be Prophet-King over that world. And over that world the light will come surely enough.

THE GIRL. We will spread our hearts out over the world in a mantle of light, and we will gather the world to shelter in the nest of our hearts. [*Then she falters from her ecstasy.*] Unless —unless he has forgotten me for ever. If he never loves me again, I shall be the only dark thing on earth.

THE OLD WOMAN. A man's dreams can make him forget all things—even love, for in his dreams he finds love anew.

THE GIRL. Ah, no, no!

THE OLD WOMAN. The love of dreams is more than the love of woman to some.

THE GIRL. But not to him, surely not to him. If I could but creep into his dreams. If the first light that he saw would fall on my face.

[*From above comes a long-drawn-out cry of triumph. The echo of it leaps and bounds from turret to turret of the castle.* THE WOMAN *and* THE GIRL *start to their feet.*

THE OLD WOMAN. What is it?

THE GIRL. It is he, crying aloud.

THE WOMAN. Did you not hear it? It was the voice of my son. It was terrible. It seems to sound still. It makes me afraid.

THE GIRL. I am afraid, too, but it is the fear of joy. The cry was glad. He has seen it. He has seen the first of the light. He spoke truth. The light is coming.

[*She goes to the window and peers out of it.*

THE WOMAN. Maybe his madness has taken hold of him. I must go to him.

THE GIRL. Listen. He is coming down.

[*She turns, looking towards the door on the right.* THE WOMAN *stops half-way between her and the door. As they wait the black slit of the window goes slowly grey, and gradually a pale light spreads over* THE GIRL'S *face. Then* THE MAN *appears in the doorway on the right. He is white with his long watching, but his eyes are shining with triumph. His gaze turns instinctively towards the window;* THE GIRL, *half-fearfully, stretches out her arms to him.* THE WOMAN *midway between them, waits for him to look at her.*

THE MAN. The light falls on you before all things, O face of wonder, face of my dear desire.

[*He goes to her and frames her face in his hands, holding it in the growing light.* THE WOMAN *makes as if to touch him as he passes her, but he is not aware of her, and she lets her hand fall.*

THE GIRL [*softly*]. Prophet-king, I thought you had forgotten.

THE MAN. The light came to *me*, when I loved you. How should I forget, when it spreads over the world. Look! how it grows and grows. The dark heart of this land is brightening

with the love of God. All these years the souls of my brothers have hung like bats in their bodies; now they shall unfold the wings of glad-coloured birds that yearn towards the sun. [*Clasping her to his side with one arm while he points upward with the other.*] Does you soul leap to the light?

THE GIRL. It leaps! It clings to yours.

THE WOMAN. I am chilled. [*She goes to the brasier, and crouches close to it, casting a frightened look now and again towards the window.*]

THE MAN. Mother. Come and look with us.

THE WOMAN. No. I am cold.

THE MAN. Are you not glad?

THE WOMAN. No. It is unkind, this light. It is like ice round my heart. [*During this the light has turned from grey to the red of the dawn.*]

THE GIRL [*clutching the man's arm*]. Oh, look! What is happening?

THE MAN. It is the dawn. The first dawn you have seen.

THE GIRL. It is red, like blood.

THE MAN [*throwing up his arms in triumph.*] The blood of the world pulsing in the veins of the sky.

THE OLD WOMAN. The fire is dying.

THE WOMAN. We must feed it.

THE MAN. No. You will need it no longer. There shall be no more crouching over the dull-glowing embers. There shall be no more groping in the blackness with feeble lamps. We shall warm our bodies in the glow of the sun and walk unafraid by the strong light of his beams. Mother—Grandmother, come away from the fire.

THE WOMAN. The fire was kind. It was ours—we tended it, and it warmed us, and flickered on the walls gratefully. But this light of yours is cruel. It beats down from the hard heaven on all alike.

THE OLD WOMAN. I will stay by the fire till it dies. It is too late to change.

THE MAN. Has the darkness crusted your hearts? [*He comes and stands between them.*] You, Grandmother, you are

old—for you, maybe, it *is* too late. But you, mother? You are young. You have many years to live. How can you speak so of this blessing of God—this lifting of his wrath?

THE WOMAN. How do I know it is God's blessing? His blessing should be gentle—it should not hurt me as this light does. I was happy in the darkness; I felt nothing of his wrath. I wanted no change. I was well enough as things were.

THE MAN. It is always so. I might have known. That cry rises always out of the mud of weakness that clogs the feet of the strong. The fear of change, the fear of the unknown. But look now. The change has come, and there is nothing to fear;—the unknown is known and it is good.

THE WOMAN. I look and I fear. I look, and it is not good.

[*The murmurs and cries of a great crowd gathering are heard from below.*

THE MAN. Listen! The people are gathering to greet the light. They laughed at me, but now they know I spoke truth. *They* are not afraid. They do not hang over a dying fire. They come out to bathe their faces in the gathering light.

[*A pause. Then* THE GIRL, *who has been listening intently at the window, suddenly beckons to* THE MAN. *He goes to her.*

THE GIRL [*in a half-whisper*]. Listen! I think *they* are afraid too.

[*They stand listening. The sound of the crowd grows louder; then above the general murmur a single agonized voice is heard calling.*

THE VOICE. Woe! Woe! Woe!

[*The crowd takes up the cry, till it becomes one long clamorous moan.*

THE MAN [*passes his hand over his eyes as if dazed. Then when he speaks there is in his voice for the first time the note of despair.*] Oh God! Can they not feel the joy?

THE OLD WOMAN. No.

THE MAN [*almost helplessly*]. They—must feel!—It was dark. Now it is light. They—must—feel—the joy!

THE VOICE. Woe! Woe! Woe!

THE MAN. I must go to them. I must show them the gladness that is in me—that must be in them.

THE WOMAN [*suddenly*]. You must not go. [*She clings to him.*] You must not go—my son!

THE MAN. Let me be, mother. You cannot understand. You have lost me because you feared to follow me. You cannot stay me now. [*He puts her away from him.*]

THE WOMAN [*to* THE GIRL]. Can *you* not hold him?

THE GIRL. He must go.

THE WOMAN. Keep him here. You can. [*She falls on her knees before* THE GIRL.] On my knees I ask you, keep him here!

THE GIRL. He—must go.

[THE MAN *moves straight to the door on the left, and goes out down the steps without looking back. A pause.*

THE WOMAN [*dully*]. He put me from him. My son has gone from me. He is not my son any more.

THE GIRL. He never looked back. But he will come again, when he has taught them to rejoice. They will raise him up and do him honour, and he will come again in triumph.

THE WOMAN [*still on her knees, not daring to look*]. Has he come among them yet?

THE GIRL [*at the window*]. Not yet.

[*A pause. Then a great roar goes up from the crowd.*

THE GIRL. He is among them now. They are thronging round him. Others are carrying something towards him. It must be a throne. [*She looks intently. Suddenly she draws in her breath, and shrinks back from the window. She speaks in a horror-stricken whisper.*] The lot of Prophets!

THE OLD WOMAN. What is it!

THE WOMAN [*dragging herself to the window and looking. Then she turns away and comes into the room, speaking with a still calm*]. They are nailing my son to a cross.

[*A great beam of sunlight strikes through the window, and streams over* THE GIRL *as she leans with closed eyes against the wall.*

AT A DANCE

WEARILY apart I sit though still my shoulders rub
with partners of the feast,
And still my laughter froths as from the yeast of curious
chemicals beyond my will.
This tainted music that disgusts and pleases, this fog of faces
hateful and appealing,
Cut wounds within my heart and give them healing, are both
the fever and the drug that eases.
So intermingled are the two sensations of hopelessness and
fluctuating joy,
As children play though wearied of their toy, they leave a
negative of inclinations . . .
I feel aloof and cold, though keeping chime with clicking
tongues, brains whirring and unwinding,
With laughter shrill, and restless fingers binding a dying
garland round the feet of Time—
But in some face caught unawares, or word dropped like a
silence in the noisy throng,
I seem to be released upon a song that wings me on its music
like a bird
Pulsing the darkness. Suddenly the scale of song falls sharply
down to that abyss
Of margins sinking below emptiness, where tones gape voiceless
as a dreamer's wail . . .
Wilted, devitalised I seem to be, my flaunted valour like
a blowing flag,
Flaps pale and tattered as a washed-out rag that wetly coils
around the heart of me.
No jests can stir me, I can make no jest, a blurring darkness
shifts across the glass

Where my impressions leave their seal and pass from off my spirit, stripping it for rest.
No rest, no quick impressions, limp and grey as worn elastic stretched beyond its leap,
I quiver no response to those that keep their pull upon my nerves, yet I obey
Their glance with a mechanical intent, as though my thought were swifter than my speech,
As though my soul had leapt beyond their reach, and waited mocking. So I circumvent
Their scorn with an instinctive subtlety. . . Yet why should I have waited
Within this vat of folly to be baited by fools I have redeemed with phantasy?
I see the stomach spirits that they force into such fanciful elaborate kit,
In stationary speed their pleasures sit astride them as upon a rocking-horse . . .
I hear the music groan beneath the whip that goads it to a last hilarity,
I see my life with hectic clarity scourging itself into a final skip;
Melting all moments into one quick round of panting dance tune, cheating time
With all its chords that echo, hours that rhyme in Heaven, keeping the soul bound
Through mortal rhythm to eternal tune. . . False is this tinkling jig that sets my feet
To such a frantic measure, while each beat stiffens my soul and freezes it immune—
The new day comes at length, but in his face I see the mottled colours of the last,
The future takes its semblance from the past and follows up the custom of its race—
This night shall be reflected in a glass, repeated in another dimly seen,

Endless perspectives mimic what has been in avenues through
which my life must pass—
And they at last converging to a wall shall make me halt,
to find no open door
Through which to pass, I shall be evermore the guest of mirrors
at a dancing hall.
Oh, let Earth enter here; a dawning cloud, and lonely
hill-shapes where the long winds blow,
Let Silence shut her palms. Great souls I know live in the
stillness, and their thoughts are bowed,
Listening, toward a point of silence, yet, I fear that quiet
more than any sound,
My very roots are restless underground, the leaves are agued
with a cureless fret.
A rain of whims has blotted out my thought, and I can hear
my body humming, singing,
The little bells of flesh forever ringing to drown the far-off
music I have sought.
Sensation drugs my brain and tears my will, sensations creeping
fluid over me,
Like hands of foam that stretch out of the sea to snatch the
flowers growing on a hill. . .
So I remain here banqueting with lust, so I still spin the circles
of the dance,
To pick the spangle of a dead romance from out this heap of
animated dust! . . .

THE CHURCH

I HAVE forgotten this yet it returns
With gentle mystery upon me as before,
As though a trailing invisible presence met me at the door
And drew me forward where the pale lamp burns,
Through darkening curtains to the darkest core
Where silence reigns alone,
The sombre velvet robes floating around her throne.
As though a breath had chilled my lips with sighs,
Hands hushed my ears, and as though veils were blown
Smokily, driftingly before my eyes,
And falling waters lulled my sense to sleep
Plashing in darkness. Till again recalling
My self that came here and that soon will creep
Back to the streets, from exultation falling
Into the spin of hours that stand and keep
Watch for me, timing me behind the gate
Lest I linger late.
And now I walk indifferently, remember the day
That brought me hither and will take away,
Smile to the tickling purr of flatteries
That shiver in me still, observe the play
Of my quick thoughts against the motionless mysteries
That wait for prayer, against the whispering litanies
Monotonously passing in an endless stream,
Half envying, half pitying those that kneel
And bow, and dip their hearts into a dream
That it may calm and heal.
The women seem so small that their appeal
Appears the larger, the more filled with light,
Because their little shrinking bodies needs must feel
Their lonely darkness in the circling candles bright . . .

Yet mournfully with weariness my sight
Accepts their forms, my heart accepts their patience,
My heart that nothing stirs and nothing chastens.
And wearily my thought looks down again
Observing all the restless atoms of my brain
Where no faith dawns, no shimmering renascence
Of simple love. But bright and vain
My moments light their wings at every fire
And scream because their triumph brings them pain,
Because Life hurts in killing more than does the martyr's pyre
Of voluntary death . . . These penitents forego
Vanity, yet many look at me with quick desire
For my vain joys, not knowing my vain woe;
So all things cancel one another burning low
On the same dusty level to expire.
These sufferers renounce in coming here
Life that would yield no glitter while I wear
The golden nails that tear me and still stare
With pity for their tears through frozen eyes . . .
Ah, I feel guilty as though they prayed for me
Envious of faith where I can only see
An altar mailed with scintillating lies . . .
So now I go, and leave without replies
The haunted questions stealing through my brain,
Remembering the gay hours, that came before and come again,
Yet feeling in between as though a door
Of Gothic silence waited for my cries
To rend its hush with martydom and pain.

OSCAR WILDE

[The manuscript of this unpublished poem by Oscar Wilde, from the collection of Mr. John B. Stetson, Junr., of Elkins Park, Pennsylvania, was sold at the Anderson Galleries, New York, on April 23 last, with a volume of Wilde's Poems for 260 dollars. It is presumably inscribed to Miss Margaret Burne-Jones, and must therefore have been written before September 4th, 1888, on which day the only daughter of the late Sir Edward Burne-Jones became the wife of Professor John William Mackail, the friend and biographer of William Morris.

The poem is here reprinted by permission of the author's literary executors.]

To M. B.-J.

SWEET are the summer meadows,
  Blue is the summer sky,
And the swallows like flickering shadows
  Over the tall corn fly.

And the red rose flames on the thicket,
  And the redbreast sings on the spray,
And the drowsy hum of the cricket
  Comes from the new-mown hay.

And the morning dewdrops glisten,
  And the lark is on the wing:
Ah, how can you stop and listen
  To what I have to sing!

G. M. BESSEMER WRIGHT

THREE FABLES

I.—Ideals

AN artist, being on his death-bed, called for his three sons and gave them, in default of the concrete, a quantity of advice. To the eldest he said: "You, my son, have chosen to follow in my footsteps and to be a painter. I charge you to be true to your art and to yourself. Eschew the fashionable drawing-room and flatter no one by your art or your demeanour. Paint only that which you see in your subject. Express yourself in your work regardless of whether your pictures please the multitude. Like me, you will die a poor man, but mayhap after many generations your name will be famous."

To the second he said, "Having been brought up to worship only beauty it is but natural that the artistic temperament which I have been careful to foster in you should assert itself. You have chosen letters as the medium in which to express yourself, and I can offer you no better advice than that which I have given your brother. During your life, if you are honest, you will receive no recognition, no applause; for these are only attained, in this materialistic and unappreciative age, by him who prostitutes his art to delight the many. You will die penniless in a garret, but your soul will be satisfied."

To the third he said, "You, being the fool of the family and having no artistic sense, had best become a brewer. You will die rich and respected." So saying, he turned his face to the wall and breathed his last.

The youngest son pondered over his father's last words and said to himself, "Since I am a fool and not worthy to follow a higher calling I will become a brewer. I will make it my business to brew perfect beer; beer so infinitely better than the

beer of any other man, that I shall indeed become rich and shall thus be enabled to help my brothers when they fall upon evil days." So he hired himself to a brewer to learn his trade. But none of the beer which other men brewed satisfied him, and his wages he spent in travelling to far countries in search of the secret of brewing perfect beer.

While he was thus employed his brothers painted and wrote. The eldest, in his determination to express himself and to flatter no man, painted pictures so hideous that the people flocked to see them and to buy them. In spite of himself he found he was growing rich and famous, but knowing that he was obeying his father's last wish he comforted himself with the thought that the world was growing more appreciative of true art. The second wrote poems, entirely to please himself, with no form, no meaning, no beginning and no end. And the people, in amazement, bought his books and encouraged him to write more. Like his brother he comforted himself for the fame and riches which came to him.

The youngest, after many years of travel and much poverty, suffering, and vexation, discovered the perfect beer, and his last pence were spent in establishing himself in a cellar with the necessary materials and equipment for brewing it. The beer he made was amber-coloured and mellow, like nectar in the throat. The people, on tasting it, said, "This is like no other beer we have ever drunk." And they would have none of it. Whereupon the youngest, being an old man before his time, died. His brothers did not allow him to be given a pauper's funeral.

II.—The Tree

A young woman married the man of her choice and lived happily with him in a cottage. In time children came to them, and prosperity, and they asked nothing more. One day in the market place the woman picked up a little seed. It was round and shiny and she was attracted by it. She

carried it home and showed it to her husband, and neither knew what manner of seed it could be. The woman said idly, "I shall plant it in the earth and we shall see what will spring from it." And her husband laid his hand on her and looked kindly at her and said, "Plant it then, if you have a mind to."

So the woman planted it just outside the door of the cottage, and in the spring a little plant came up. She tended it and watered it, and the children played with it. Her husband, not knowing what was the name of the plant, paid no attention to it. As time went on the woman forgot to water it, but it grew and became a young tree, until its branches overshadowed the door. The woman's mother came, pushing her way through the leaves, and said, "You should cut down that tree; it has no fruit and it will be difficult to enter your door." And the woman said, "When that time comes my husband will cut it down. Now the children play in the boughs and it gives us shade in the summer; and it is a pretty tree."

The tree grew bigger and bigger, and the husband and wife agreed that it should be cut down. But he was prospering and had much business to attend to, and from week to week he delayed. At last a day came when he had to go on a long journey. At his departure the woman clung to him and said, "I shall stay in our cottage until you return; never will I go out of doors. I shall sit and think of your presence until it seems that you are still with me." The husband laughed fondly and kissed her, and promising to make haste over his business, he went away.

After many weeks his work was accomplished, and, a richer man than he had set out, he returned. At first he could not see the cottage, and doubted the evidence of his eyes, for the tree had grown all over and round it. To reach the door was impossible; thick boughs lay across it from top to bottom. The man gave a cry of despair, calling his wife's name, but the leaves kept out all sound. Then he saw peaceful smoke curling out of the chimney and he knew all was well with the woman; so comforting himself he set out in all haste in search of an axe

with which to fell the tree. When he returned with it the cottage was in ruins, crushed into mortar by the ever-growing arms of the tree.

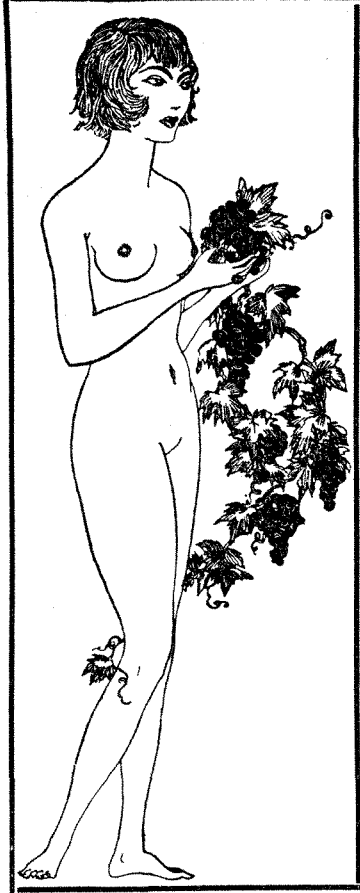
III.—Fear

A certain youth, born of a brave and warlike race, was afraid that when put to the test he might be overcome by fear. When a youth was full grown and had attained a man's strength he was sent, according to the custom of this people, on a journey through a terrible valley. Should he emerge alive from the valley he was counted as a man; but should he dare to return without following the appointed path he was deprived for ever of a man's rights. None who had accomplished the journey would tell of the horrors encountered in the valley.

When the day grew near on which this youth was to set out, his sleep was troubled, he could not eat, and when he was alone he trembled at the thought of what was before him. But when he was with his companions he carried himself gallantly, saying "I am not afraid." The night before the ordeal he lay on his couch trembling and sweating as one on the rack, but in the morning he steeled his heart, and as he was armed and caparisoned his head was held high.

The elder men accompanied him part of the way, but when they came to the entrance to the valley they left him, bidding him be of good courage, for once the valley was passed fear would have left him for ever. When the elders had turned back and the youth saw the grey rocks rising on either side, such fear came upon him as he had never known. For a time he lay on the grass, and wrestled with it, then, grasping his sword, he entered the valley. His way lay along a path hewn out of the rocks, which rose sheer to the sky. As he advanced, with only the sound of his own footsteps, he knew that terror was coming nearer, and tried to hearten himself with a song. The rocks caught the sound and tossed it mockingly from one to another. Fear came nearer. For a few steps he ran to meet it. Then

suddenly it was upon him—it seized him, and mad with the fear of fear, he could bear no more. Up the face of the rock he climbed carefully, grasping and slipping, but forgetting all fear in the fear of what might have been in the valley. Having attained a great height he stood upright on a narrow ledge, and driving his sword through his heart, fell, fluttering and turning like a leaf. And in the valley there was nothing but his body and the silence.



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