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THE COLLEGE OMNIBUS

7TH EDITION

Edited by Leonard F. Dean

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

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Preface

THE wide-ranging materials in this edition of *The College Omnibus* have been selected with one eye on the tastes and interests of college students and with the other eye on Alfred North Whitehead's assertion that if a textbook is not difficult, it ought to be burned, for it cannot be educational. By "difficult" I have understood Whitehead to mean challenging. The problem is to present selections that are interesting but not superficial, demanding but not forbidding. Since students are people and therefore various and essentially unknowable, the editorial margin of error in assessing their interests and abilities is certain to be large. I have tried to stay on the safe side by keeping in mind Alfred Harbage's statement about Shakespeare and his audience: "It was impossible to produce anything too good for the race in Shakespeare's time, and it is equally impossible now. It is an arrogant man indeed who writes down to mankind, and he hits always below the mark."

In the separate introductions preceding each section will be found explanations of the choice of particular selections and suggestions as to how they may be fruitfully read. Ultimately, of course, the only reading or interpretation that counts, that is alive, is the one that arises from the interplay of minds in a classroom. An editor can contribute to that vital interplay by providing, with the help of the publisher, materials that are rich enough to repay serious discussion and fresh enough to interest the teacher, and by presenting through questions some of the ideas and relationships that the materials suggested to him. Questions of that kind, and related helps, are at the back of the book. But they are meant to start something, not to finish it.

In preparing this edition of *The College Omnibus,* I have received help and encouragement from many of my own colleagues and students, and also from the following teachers at other colleges: Helen D. Barnes, John Muir College; Richard W. Borst, Fullerton Junior College; F. E. Bowman, Duke University; Hulda Chisholm, Ventura Junior College; W. P. Cumming, Davidson College; Helen Edwards, University of Oklahoma; Carlyle King, University of Saskatchewan; John D. Makowsky, Western Maryland College; Nancy Moore, Butler University; and Laban C. Smith, Indiana State Teachers College.

LEONARD F. DEAN

Storrs, Connecticut

I FEEL that this award was not made to me as a man but to my work—a life's work in the agony and sweat of the human spirit, not for glory and least of all for profit, but to create out of the materials of the human spirit something which did not exist before. So this award is only mine in trust. It will not be difficult to find a dedication for the money part of it commensurate with the purpose and significance of its origin. But I would like to do the same with the acclaim too, by using this moment as a pinnacle from which I might be listened to by the young men and women already dedicated to the same anguish and travail, among whom is already that one who will some day stand here where I am standing.

Our tragedy today is a general and universal physical fear so long sustained by now that we can even bear it. There are no longer problems of the spirit. There is only the question: When will I be blown up? Because of this, the young man or woman writing today has forgotten the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself which alone can make good writing because only that is worth writing about, worth the agony and the sweat.

He must learn them again. He must teach himself that the basest of all things is to be afraid; and, teaching himself that, forget it forever, leaving no room in his workshop for anything but the old verities and truths of the heart, the old universal truths lacking which any story is ephemeral and doomed—love and honor and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice.

Until he does so he labors under a curse. He writes not of love but of lust, of defeats in which nobody loses anything of value, of victories without hope and worst of all without pity or compassion. His griefs grieve on no universal bones, leaving no scars. He writes not of the heart but of the glands.

Until he relearns these things he will write as though he stood among and watched the end of man. I decline to accept the end of man. It is easy enough to say that man is immortal simply because he will endure; that when the last ding-dong of doom has clanged and faded from the last worthless rock hanging tideless in the last red and dying evening, that even then there will still be one more sound: that of his puny inexhaustible voice, still talking. I refuse to accept this. I believe that man will not merely endure: he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance. The poet's, the writer's, duty is to write about these things. It is his privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honor and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past. The poet's voice need not merely be the record of man, it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail.

WILLIAM FAULKNER

upon receiving the Nobel Prize

Stockholm, December 10, 1950

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ESSAYS

THE thirty-seven essays that follow have been arranged in six groups, including the research paper. This organization is an aid to reading and study, and in those courses where the essays are used as models the progression from autobiographical sketch to research paper is only natural. In addition, two of the groups, READING AND WRITING, and CRITICISM, supplement the Introductions to the various types of literature in the *Omnibus* by discussing the general problems of reading and the interpretation of types of literature.

Other arrangements and combinations are possible. The essays may be read chronologically to reveal historical changes in subject and style. They may be arranged on a scale from exposition to near-fiction in order to emphasize and clarify the essay's range of literary techniques. Many of them may be paired or grouped in new clusters to enlarge the study of issues. Or they may be read first for one purpose and then reread for another. By and large, they are not essays that wear out.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

THESE autobiographic essays have been placed first because most students find it easiest to write first from personal experience. The particular essays were chosen for three reasons: they are well written; they are about growing up and going to school; and they show how personal experience can be interpreted from different points of view.

The usual position is face-to-face, solemnly. It is doubtless the most usual because it seems to be the truest, and yet anyone who has tried to write about himself honestly will understand why William Allen White, an expert reporter and editor, prefaced his autobiography with this statement: "This Autobiography, in spite of all the pains I have taken and the research I have put into it, is necessarily fiction. The fact that names, dates, and places seem to correspond with such things that may have occurred in real life does not guarantee the truth of these stories. So, in all candor, I wish to warn the reader not to confuse this story with reality. For God only knows the truth. I am hereby trying, in my finite way, to set down some facts which seem real and true to me. At best, this is only a tale that is told."

The problem, then, is not simply to recollect facts and set them down chronologically, but to tell a tale so that the "truth" will be revealed. Humorous exaggeration, like that employed by Fessier and Thurber, may be the best device for getting at some kinds of "truth." Daydreams are an important part of everyone's experience, but to describe them straightforwardly may give a false impression. One way to keep them from sounding silly or mawkish is to show through a fiction like Fessier's that the writer has some detachment, that he understands what is silly and what is valuable in the daydreams and in actual life. We know that the college experiences described by Thurber are "too good to be true," but by pushing things to their logical conclusions, by drawing caricatures, he more effectively shows up what is true enough even though it is ordinarily submerged or glossed over.

Indirection is another device that may be more efficient than a frontal approach. H. F. Ellis, who was once a schoolteacher himself, might have written a straightforward critical description of one of his old colleagues or masters, but it would take a long page of description and comment to say explicitly everything that is instantaneously implied by Wentworth's earnest assertion: "I never wake up sleeping boys by throwing books at them, as hundreds of old Burgrove boys will be able to testify." And even if all the implications in this dramatic assertion could be set down, they would not be so vivid as this relatively simple sentence is, because the reader would not have collaborated in their creation.

The following essays in autobiography have many values and they may, of course, be read for many purposes. They may enlarge our imagination and judgment by acquainting us with unusually thoughtful and perceptive persons. The student who is to describe some of his own experiences may find it especially useful to read these essays with an eye for the various strategies with which the writers have tried to capture the elusive "truth" about one's self.

MARK TWAIN

The Boys' Ambition

WHEN I was a boy, there was but one permanent ambition among my comrades in our village on the west bank of the Mississippi River. That was, to be a steamboatman. We had transient ambitions of other sorts, but they were only transient. When a circus came and went, it left us all burning to become clowns; the first Negro minstrel show that ever came to our section left us all suffering to try that kind of life; now and then we had a hope that, if we lived and were good, God would permit us to be pirates. These ambitions faded out, each in its turn; but the ambition to be a steamboatman always remained.

Once a day a cheap, gaudy packet arrived upward from St. Louis, and another downward from Keokuk. Before these events, the day was glorious with expectancy; after them, the day was a dead and empty thing. Not only the boys, but the whole village, felt this. After all these years I can picture that old time to myself now, just as it was then: the white town drowsing in the sunshine of a summer's morning; the streets empty, or pretty nearly so; one or

THE BOYS' AMBITION From *Life on the Mississippi* by Mark Twain. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Brothers.

two clerks sitting in front of the Water Street stores, with their splint-bottomed chairs tilted back against the walls, chins on breasts, hats slouched over their faces, asleep—with shingle-shavings enough around to show what broke them down; a sow and a litter of pigs loafing along the sidewalk, doing a good business in watermelon rinds and seeds; two or three lonely little freight piles scattered about the "levee"; a pile of "skids" on the slope of the stone-paved wharf, and the fragrant town drunkard asleep in the shadow of them; two or three wood flats at the head of the wharf, but nobody to listen to the peaceful lapping of the wavelets against them; the great Mississippi, the majestic, the magnificent Mississippi, rolling its mile-wide tide along, shining in the sun; the dense forest away on the other side; the "point" above the town, and the "point" below, bounding the river-glimpse and turning it into a sort of sea, and withal a very still and brilliant and lonely one. Presently a film of dark smoke appears above one of those remote "points"; instantly a Negro drayman, famous for his quick eye and prodigious voice, lifts up the cry, "S-t-e-a-m-boat a-comin'!" and the scene changes! The town drunkard stirs, the clerks wake up, a furious clatter of drays follows, every house and store pours out a human contribution, and all in a twinkling the dead town is alive and moving. Drays, carts, men, boys, all go hurrying from many quarters to a common center, the wharf. Assembled there, the people fasten their eyes upon the coming boat as upon a wonder they are seeing for the first time. And the boat *is* rather a handsome sight, too. She is long and sharp and trim and pretty; she has two tall, fancy-topped chimneys, with a gilded device of some kind swung between them; a fanciful pilot-house, all glass and "gingerbread," perched on top of the "texas" deck behind them; the paddle-boxes are gorgeous with a picture or with gilded rays above the boat's name; the boiler-deck, the hurricane-deck, and the texas deck are fenced and ornamented with clean white railings; there is a flag gallantly flying from the jack-staff; the furnace doors are open and the fires glaring bravely; the upper decks are black with passengers; the captain stands by the big bell, calm, imposing, the envy of all; great volumes of the blackest smoke are rolling and tumbling out of the chimneys—a husbanded grandeur created with a bit of pitch-pine just before arriving at a town; the crew are grouped on the forecastle; the broad stage is run far out over the port bow, and an envied deck-hand stands picturesquely on the end of it with a coil of rope in his hand; the pent steam is screaming through the gauge-cocks; the captain lifts his hand, a bell rings, the wheels stop; then they turn back, churning the water to foam, and the steamer is at rest. Then such a scramble as there is to get aboard, and to get ashore, and to take in freight and to discharge freight, all at one and the same time; and such a yelling and cursing as the mates facilitate it all with! Ten minutes later the steamer is under way again, with no flag on the jack-staff and no black smoke issuing from the chimneys. After ten more minutes the town is dead again, and the town drunkard asleep by the skids once more.

My father was a justice of the peace, and I supposed he possessed the power of life and death over all men, and could hang anybody that offended him. This was distinction enough for me as a general thing; but the desire to be a steamboatman kept intruding, nevertheless. I first wanted to be a cabin-boy,

so that I could come out with a white apron on and shake a table-cloth over the side, where all my old comrades could see me; later I thought I would rather be the deck-hand who stood on the end of the stage-plank with the coil of rope in his hand, because he was particularly conspicuous. But these were only day-dreams—they were too heavenly to be contemplated as real possibilities. By and by one of our boys went away. He was not heard of for a long time. At last he turned up as apprentice engineer or "striker" on a steamboat. This thing shook the bottom out of all my Sunday-school teachings. That boy had been notoriously worldly, and I just the reverse; yet he was exalted to his eminence, and I left in obscurity and misery. There was nothing generous about this fellow in his greatness. He would always manage to have a rusty bolt to scrub while his boat tarried at our town, and he would sit on the inside guard and scrub it, where we all could see him and envy him and loathe him. And whenever his boat was laid up he would come home and swell around the town in his blackest and greasiest clothes, so that nobody could help remembering that he was a steamboatman; and he used all sorts of steamboat technicalities in his talk, as if he were so used to them that he forgot common people could not understand them. He would speak of the "labboard" side of a horse in an easy, natural way that would make one wish he was dead. And he was always talking about "St. Looy" like an old citizen; he would refer casually to occasions when he was "coming down Fourth Street," or when he was "passing by the Planter's House," or when there was a fire and he took a turn on the brakes of "the old Big Missouri"; and then he would go on and lie about how many towns the size of ours were burned down there that day. Two or three of the boys had long been persons of consideration among us because they had been to St. Louis once and had a vague general knowledge of its wonders, but the day of their glory was over now. They lapsed into a humble silence, and learned to disappear when the ruthless "cub"-engineer approached. This fellow had money, too, and hair-oil. Also an ignorant silver watch and a showy brass watch-chain. He wore a leather belt and used no suspenders. If ever a youth was cordially admired and hated by his comrades, this one was. No girl could withstand his charms. He "cut out" every boy in the village. When his boat blew up at last, it diffused a tranquil contentment among us such as we had not known for months. But when he came home the next week, alive, renowned, and appeared in church all battered up and bandaged, a shining hero, stared at and wondered over by everybody, it seemed to us that the partiality of Providence for an undeserving reptile had reached a point where it was open to criticism.

This creature's career could produce but one result, and it speedily followed. Boy after boy managed to get on the river. The minister's son became an engineer. The doctor's and the postmaster's sons became "mud clerks"; the wholesale liquor dealer's son became a barkeeper on a boat; four sons of the chief merchant, and two sons of the county judge, became pilots. Pilot was the grandest position of all. The pilot, even in those days of trivial wages, had a princely salary—from a hundred and fifty to two hundred and fifty dollars a month, and no board to pay. Two months of his wages would pay

a preacher's salary for a year. Now some of us were left disconsolate. We could not get on the river—at least our parents would not let us.

So, by and by, I ran away. I said I would never come home again till I was a pilot and could come in glory. But somehow I could not manage it. I went meekly aboard a few of the boats that lay packed together like sardines at the long St. Louis wharf, and humbly inquired for the pilots, but got only a cold shoulder and short words from mates and clerks. I had to make the best of this sort of treatment for the time being, but I had comforting day-dreams of a future when I should be a great and honored pilot, with plenty of money, and could kill some of these mates and clerks and pay for them.

MICHAEL FESSIER

That's What Happened to Me

I HAVE done things and had things happen to me and nobody knows about it. So I am writing about it so that people will know. Although there are a lot of things I could tell about, I will just tell about the jumping because that is the most important. It gave me the biggest thrill. I mean high jumping, standing and running. You probably never heard of a standing high jumper but that's what I was. I was the greatest jumper ever was.

I was going to high school and I wasn't on any team. I couldn't be because I had to work for a drugstore and wash bottles and deliver medicine and sweep the floor. So I couldn't go out for any of the teams because the job started soon's school was over. I used to crab to the fellows about how old man Patch made me wash so many bottles and so they got to calling me Bottles Barton and I didn't like it. They'd call me Bottles in front of the girls and the girls'd giggle.

Once I poked one of the fellows for calling me Bottles. He was a big fellow and he played on the football team and I wouldn't have hit him because I was little and couldn't fight very well. But he called me Bottles before Anna Louise Daniels and she laughed and I was so mad I didn't know whether I wanted to hit her or the football player but finally I hit him. He caught my arm and threw me down and sat on me and pulled my nose.

"Look, Anna Louise," he said, "it stretches."

He pulled my nose again and Anna Louise put her arms around herself and jumped up and down and laughed and then I knew that it was her I should have taken the first poke at. I was more mad at her than the football player although it was him pulling my nose and sitting on me.

The next day I met Anna Louise in the hall going to ancient history class and she was with a couple of other girls and I tried to go past without them noticing me. I don't know why but I had a funny feeling like as if somebody

THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED TO ME Reprinted by permission of Harold Matson.

was going to throw a rock at me or something. Anna Louise looked at me and giggled.

"Hello, old rubbernose," she said.

The girls giggled and I hurried down the hall and felt sick and mad and kind of like I was running away from a fight, although nobody'd expect me to fight a girl. And so they called me Bottles sometimes and Rubbernose other times and always whoever was near would laugh. They didn't think it was funny because Jimmy Wilkins was called Scrubby or Jack Harris was called Doodles. But they thought it was funny I was called Rubbernose and Bottles and they never got tired of laughing. It was a new joke every time.

Scrubby pitched for the baseball team and Doodles was quarterback of the football team.

I could have pitched for the baseball team or played quarterback on the football team. I could have pitched no-hit games and I could have made touchdowns from my own ten-yard line. I know I could. I had it all figured out. I went over how I'd throw the ball and how the batter'd miss and it was easy. I figured out how to run and dodge and straight-arm and that was easy too. But I didn't get the chance because I had to go right to Patch's Drugstore after school was out.

Old man Patch was a pretty good guy but his wife she was nothing but a crab. I'd wash bottles and old man Patch he would look at them and not say anything. But Mrs. Patch, old lady Patch, she would look at the bottles and wrinkle her nose and make me wash half of them over again. When I swept up at night she'd always find some corner I'd missed and she'd bawl me out. She was fat and her hair was all straggly and I wondered why in the deuce old man Patch ever married her, although I guess maybe she didn't look so awful when she was a girl. She couldn't have been very pretty though.

They lived in back of the drugstore and when people came in at noon or at six o'clock either old man or old lady Patch'd come out still chewing their food and look at the customer and swallow and then ask him what he wanted.

I studied salesmanship at high school and I figured this wasn't very good for business and I wanted to tell them but I never did.

One of the fellows at school was in waiting for a prescription and he saw me working at some of the things I did at the drugstore. So when another fellow asked me what I did this fellow he laughed and said, "Old Bottles! Why, he rates at that store. Yes, he does! He rates like an Armenian's helper."

That's about the way I did rate but I was planning on how I'd someday own a real, modern drugstore and run the Patches out of business so I didn't mind so much.

What I did mind was Anna Louise at school. She was the daughter of a doctor and she thought she was big people and maybe she was but she wasn't any better'n me. Maybe my clothes weren't so good but that was only temporary. I planned on having twenty suits someday.

I wanted to go up to her and say, "Look here, Anna Louise, you're not so much. Your father isn't a millionaire and someday I'm going to be one. I'm going to have a million dollars and twenty suits of clothes." But I never did.

After she laughed at me and started calling me Rubbernose, I began plan-

ning on doing things to make her realize I wasn't what she thought I was. That's how the jumping came about.

It was the day before the track meet and everybody was talking about whether or not our school could win. They figured we'd have to win the high jump and pole vault to do it.

"Lord, if we only had old Heck Hansen back!" said Goobers MacMartin. "He'd outjump those Fairfield birds two inches in the high and a foot in the pole vault."

"Yeah," somebody else said, "but we haven't got Heck Hansen. What we got is pretty good but not good enough. Wish we had a jumper."

"We sure need one," I said.

There was a group of them all talking, boys and girls, and I was sort of on the outside listening.

"Who let you in?" Goobers asked me.

Frank Shay grabbed me by the arm and dragged me into the center of the circle.

"The very man we've been looking for," he said. "Yessir. Old Bottles Rubbernose Barton. He can win the jumping events for us."

"Come on, Bottles," they said. "Save the day for us. Be a good old Rubbernose."

Anna Louise was one who laughed the most and it was the third time I'd wanted to pop her on the nose.

I went away from there and didn't turn back when they laughed and called and whistled at me.

"She'd be surprised if I did," I said.

I kept thinking this over and pretty soon I said, "Well, maybe you could."

Then when I was sweeping the drugstore floor I all of a sudden said, "I can!"

"You can what?" Mrs. Patch asked me.

"Nothing," I said.

"You can hurry about sweeping the floor, that's what you can do," she said.

There was a big crowd out for the track meet and we were tied when I went up to our coach. It was just time for the jumping to start.

"What the hell you doing in a track suit?" he asked me.

"I'm going to save the day for Brinkley," I said. "I'm going to jump."

"No, you aren't," he said. "You run along and start a marble game with some other kid."

I looked him in the eye and I spoke in a cold, level tone of voice.

"Mr. Smith," I said, "the track meet depends on the high jump and the pole vault and unless I am entered we will lose those two events and the meet. I can win and I am willing to do it for Brinkley. Do you want to win the meet?"

He looked amazed.

"Where have you been all the time?" he asked. "You talk like you've got something on the ball."

I didn't say anything, I just smiled.

The crowd all rushed over to the jumping pits and I took my time going

over. When everybody had jumped but me the coach turned and said, "Come on now, Barton, let's see what you can do."

"Not yet," I said.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"I'll wait until the last man has been eliminated," I said. "Then I'll jump."

The crowd laughed but I just stared coldly at them. The coach tried to persuade me to jump but I wouldn't change my mind.

"I stake everything on one jump," I said. "Have faith in me."

He looked at me and shook his head and said, "Have it your own way."

They started the bar a little over four feet and pretty soon it was creeping up toward five feet and a half. That's always been a pretty good distance for high school jumpers. When the bar reached five feet seven inches all our men except one was eliminated. Two from Fairfield were still in the event. They put the bar at five feet nine inches and one man from Fairfield made it. Our man tried hard but he scraped the bar and knocked it off.

The crowd started yelling, thinking Fairfield had won the event.

"Wait a minute," I yelled. "I haven't jumped yet."

The judges looked at their lists and saw it was so. Maybe you think it was against the rules for them to allow me to skip my turn but anyway that's the way it was.

"You can't make that mark," one of the judges said. "Why try? You're not warmed up."

"Never mind," I said.

I walked up close to the jumping standard and stood there.

"Go ahead and jump," one of the judges said.

"I will," I said.

"Well, don't stand there," he said. "Come on back here so's you can get a run at it."

"I don't want any run at the bar," I said. "I'll jump from here."

The judge yelled at the coach and told him to take me out on account of I was crazy.

I swung my arms in back of me and sprung up and down a second and then I jumped over the bar with inches to spare. When I came down it was so silent I could hear my footsteps as I walked across the sawdust pit. The judge that'd crabbed at me just stood and looked. His eyes were bugged out and his mouth hung open.

"Good Lord!" he said. "Almighty most loving Lord!"

Our coach came up and he stood beside the judge and they both looked the same, bug-eyed.

"Did you see that?" the coach asked. "Tell me you didn't. Please do. I'd rather lose this track meet than my mind."

The judge turned slowly and looked at him.

"Good Lord!" he said, "there's two of us."

All of a sudden everybody started yelling and the fellows near me pounded me on the back and tried to shake my hand. I smiled and brushed them aside and walked over to the judge.

"What's the high school record for this state?" I asked.

"Five feet, eleven inches," he said.

"Put her at six," I said.

They put the bar at six and I gathered myself together and gave a heave and went over the bar like I was floating. It was easy. Well, that just knocked the wind out of everybody. They'd thought I couldn't do anything and there I'd broken the state record for the high jump without a running start.

The crowd surrounded me and tried to shake my hand and the coach and judge got off to one side and reached out and pinched each other's cheek and looked at the bar and shook their heads. Frank Shay grabbed my hand and wrung it and said, "Gosh, Bottles, I was just kidding the other day. I didn't know you were such a ring-tailed wonder. Say, Bottles, we're having a frat dance tonight. Will you come?"

"You know what you can do with your frat," I said. "I don't approve of them. They're undemocratic."

A lot of the fellows that'd made fun of me before crowded around and acted as if I'd been their friend all along.

When Anna Louise crowded through the gang and said, "Oh, you're marvelous!" I just smiled at her and said, "Do you think so?" and walked away. She tagged around after me but I talked mostly with two other girls.

They didn't usually have a public address system at our track meets but they started using one then.

"Ladies and gentlemen," the announcer said, "you have just witnessed a record-breaking performance by Bottles Barton—."

He went on like that telling them what an astonishing thing I'd done and it came to me I didn't mind being called Bottles any more. In fact, I kind of liked it.

Mr. and Mrs. Patch came up and Mrs. Patch tried to kiss me but I wouldn't let her. Old man Patch shook my hand.

"You've made our drugstore famous," he said. "From now on you're a clerk. No more bottle washing."

"We'll make him a partner," old lady Patch said.

"No, you won't," I said. "I think I'll go over to the McManus Pharmacy."

Then they called the pole vault and I did like I'd done before. I wouldn't jump until our men'd been eliminated. The bar was at eleven feet.

"It's your turn," our coach told me. "Ever use a pole before?"

"Oh, sure," I told him.

He gave me a pole and the crowd cleared away and grew silent. Everyone was watching me.

I threw the pole down and smiled at the crowd. The coach yelled for me to pick up the pole and jump. I picked it up and threw it ten feet away from me. Everybody gasped. Then I took a short run and went over the bar at eleven feet. It was simple.

This time the coach and the judge took pins and poked them in one another's cheeks. The coach grabbed me and said, "When I wake up I'm going to be so mad at you I'm going to give you the beating of your life."

Anna Louise came up and held my arm and said, "Oh, Bottles, you're so

wonderful! I've always thought so. Please forgive me for calling you Rubbernose. I want you to come to our party tonight."

"All right," I said, "I'll forgive you but don't you call me Rubbernose again."

They moved the bar up again and the fellow from Fairfield couldn't make it. I took a short run and went over. I did it so easy it came to me I could fly if I wanted to but I decided not to try it on account of people wouldn't think it so wonderful if a fellow that could fly jumped eleven feet without a pole. I'd won the track meet for Brinkley High and the students all came down out of the stand and put me on their shoulders and paraded me around and around the track. A lot of fellows were waving papers at me asking me to sign them and get $1000 a week as a professional jumper. I signed one which threw in an automobile.

That's what I did once and nobody knows about it, so I am writing about it so people will know.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS

Reveries

IX

MY FATHER read out poetry, for the first time, when I was eight or nine years old. Between Sligo and Rosses Point, there is a tongue of land covered with coarse grass that runs out into the sea or the mud according to the state of the tide. It is the place where dead horses are buried. Sitting there, my father read me *The Lays of Ancient Rome*. It was the first poetry that had moved me after the stable-boy's *Orange Rhymes*. Later on he read me *Ivanhoe* and *The Lay of the Last Minstrel,* and they are still vivid in the memory. I reread *Ivanhoe* the other day, but it has all vanished except Gurth, the swineherd, at the outset and Friar Tuck and his venison pasty, the two scenes that laid hold of me in childhood. *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* gave me a wish to turn magician that competed for years with the dream of being killed upon the seashore. When I first went to school, he tried to keep me from reading boys' papers, because a paper, by its very nature, as he explained to me, had to be made for the average boy or man and so could not but thwart one's growth. He took away my paper and I had not courage to say that I was but reading and delighting in a prose re-telling of the *Iliad*. But after a few months, my father said he had been too anxious and became less urgent about my lessons and less violent if I had learnt them badly, and he ceased to notice what I read. From that on I shared the excitement which ran through all my fellows on Wednesday afternoons when the boys' papers were published, and I

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read endless stories I have forgotten as I have forgotten Grimm's *Fairy Tales* that I read at Sligo, and all of Hans Andersen except the "Ugly Duckling" which my mother had read to me and to my sisters. I remember vaguely that I liked Hans Andersen better than Grimm because he was less homely, but even he never gave me the knights and dragons and beautiful ladies that I longed for. I have remembered nothing that I read, but only those things that I heard or saw. When I was ten or twelve my father took me to see Irving play *Hamlet,* and did not understand why I preferred Irving to Ellen Terry, who was, I can now see, the idol of himself and his friends. I could not think of her, as I could of Irving's *Hamlet,* as but myself, and I was not old enough to care for feminine charm and beauty. For many years Hamlet was an image of heroic self-possession for the poses of youth and childhood to copy, a combatant of the battle within myself. My father had read me the story of the little boy murdered by the Jews in Chaucer and the tale of Sir Topaz, explaining the hard words, and though both excited me, I had liked Sir Topaz best and been disappointed that it left off in the middle. As I grew older, he would tell me plots of Balzac's novels, using incident or character as an illustration for some profound criticism of life. Now that I have read all the *Comedie Humaine,* certain pages have an unnatural emphasis, straining and overbalancing the outline, and I remember how in some suburban street, he told me of Lucien de Rubempre's duel after the betrayal of his master, and how the wounded Lucien hearing some one say that he was not dead had muttered "So much the worse."

I now can but share with a friend my thoughts and my emotions, and there is a continual discovery of difference, but in those days, before I had found myself, we could share adventures. When friends plan and do together, their minds become one mind and the last secret disappears. I was useless at games. I cannot remember that I ever kicked a goal or made a run, but I was a mine of knowledge when I and the athlete and those two notoriously gentlemanly boys—theirs was the name that I remember without a face—set out for Richmond Park, for Coomb Wood or Twyford Abbey to look for butterflies and moths and beetles. Sometimes today I meet people at lunch or dinner whose address sounds familiar and I remember of a sudden that a gamekeeper chased me from the plantation behind their house, or that I turned over the cow-dung in their paddock in the search for some rare beetle believed to haunt the spot. The athlete was our watchman and our safety. He would suggest, should we meet a carriage on the drive, that we take off our hats and walk on as though about to pay a call. And once when we were sighted by a gamekeeper at Coomb Wood, he persuaded the eldest of the brothers to pretend to be a schoolmaster taking his boys for a walk, and the keeper, instead of swearing and threatening the law, was sad and argumentative. No matter how charming the place, (and there is a little stream in a hollow where Wimbledon Common flows into Coomb Wood that is pleasant in the memory,) I knew that those other boys saw something I did not see. I was a stranger there. There was something in their way of saying the names of places that made me feel this.

X

When I arrived at the Clarence Basin, Liverpool, (the dock Clarence Mangan had his first name from) on my way to Sligo for my holidays I was among Sligo people. When I was a little boy, an old woman who had come to Liverpool with crates of fowl, made me miserable by throwing her arms around me, the moment I had alighted from my cab, and telling the sailor who carried my luggage that she had held me in her arms when I was a baby. The sailor may have known me almost as well, for I was often at Sligo quay to sail my boat; and I came and went once or twice in every year upon the *S.S. Sligo* or the *S.S. Liverpool* which belonged to a company that had for directors my grandfather and his partner William Middleton. I was always pleased if it was the *Liverpool,* for she had been built to run the blockade during the war of North and South.

I waited for this voyage always with excitement and boasted to other boys about it, and when I was a little boy had walked with my feet apart as I had seen sailors walk. I used to be sea-sick, but I must have hidden this from the other boys and partly even from myself; for, as I look back, I remember very little about it, while I remember stories I was told by the captain or by his first mate, and the look of the great cliffs of Donegal, and Tory Island men coming alongside with lobsters, talking Irish and, if it was night, blowing on a burning sod to draw our attention. The captain, an old man with square shoulders and a fringe of grey hair round his face, would tell his first mate, a very admiring man, of fights he had had on shore at Liverpool; and perhaps it was of him I was thinking when I was very small and asked my grandmother if God was as strong as sailors. Once, at any rate, he had been nearly wrecked; the *Liverpool* had been all but blown upon the Mull of Galloway with her shaft broken, and the captain had said to his mate, "Mind and jump when she strikes, for we don't want to be killed by the falling spars"; and when the mate answered, "My God, I cannot swim," he had said, "Who could keep afloat for five minutes in a sea like that?" He would often say his mate was the most timid of men and that "a girl along the quays could laugh him out of anything." My grandfather had more than once given him a ship of his own, but he had always thrown up his berth to sail with his old captain where he felt safe. Once he had been put in charge of a ship in a dry dock in Liverpool, but a boy was drowned in Sligo, and before the news could have reached him he wired to his wife, "Ghost, come at once, or I will throw up berth." He had been wrecked a number of times, and maybe that had broken his nerve or maybe he had a sensitiveness that would in another class have given him taste and culture. I once forgot a copy of *Count Robert of Paris* on a deck-seat, and when I found it again, it was all covered with the prints of his dirty thumb. He had once seen the coach-a-baur or death coach. It came along the road, he said, till it was hidden by a cottage and it never came out on the other side of the cottage.

Once I smelled new-mown hay when we were quite a long way from land, and once when I was watching the sea-parrots (as the sailors call the puffin) I noticed they had different ways of tucking their heads under their wings,

or I fancied it, and said to the captain, "They have different characters." Sometimes my father came too, and the sailors when they saw him coming would say, "There is John Yeats and we shall have a storm," for he was considered unlucky.

I no longer cared for little shut-in places, for a coppice against the stable-yard at Merville where my grandfather lived or against the gable at Seaview where Aunt Micky lived, and I began to climb the mountains, sometimes with the stable-boy for companion, and to look up their stories in the county history. I fished for trout with a worm in the mountain streams and went out herring-fishing at night; and because my grandfather had said the English were in the right to eat skates, I carried a large skate all the six miles or so from Rosses Point, but my grandfather did not eat it.

One night just as the equinoctial gales were coming, when I was sailing home in the coastguard's boat, a boy told me a beetle of solid gold, strayed maybe from Poe's "gold bug," had been seen by somebody in Scotland and I do not think that either of us doubted his news. Indeed, so many stories did I hear from sailors along the wharf, or round the fo'castle fire of the little steamer that ran between Sligo and Rosses, or from boys out fishing that the world seemed full of monsters and marvels. The foreign sailors wearing earrings did not tell me stories, but like the fishing boys, I gazed at them in wonder and admiration.

When I look at my brother's picture, "Memory Harbour"—houses and anchored ship and distant lighthouse all set close together as in some old map—I recognize in the blue-coated man with the mass of white shirt the pilot I went fishing with, and I am full of disquiet and of excitement, and I am melancholy because I have not made more and better verses. I have walked on Sinbad's yellow shore and never shall another's hit my fancy.

I had still my red pony, and once my father came with me riding too, and was very exacting. He was indignant and threatening because he did not think I rode well. "You must do everything well," he said, "that the Pollexfens respect, though you must do other things also." He used to say the same about my lessons, and tell me to be good at mathematics. I can see now that he had a sense of inferiority among those energetic, successful people. He himself, some Pollexfen told me, though he rode very badly, would go hunting upon anything and take any ditch. His father, the County Down Rector, though a courtly man and a scholar, had been so dandified a horseman that I had heard of his splitting three riding breeches before he had settled into his saddle for a day's hunting, and of his first rector exclaiming, "I had hoped for a curate but they have sent me a jockey."

Left to myself, I rode without ambition, though getting many falls, and more often to Rathbroughan where my great-uncle Mat lived, than to any place else. His children and I used to sail our toy-boats in the river before his house, arming them with toy-cannon, touch-paper at all the touch-holes, always hoping but always in vain that they would not twist about in the eddies but fire their cannon at one another. I must have gone to Sligo sometimes in the Christmas holidays, for I can remember riding my red pony to a hunt. He balked at the first jump, to my relief, and when a crowd of boys began to beat

him, I would not allow it. They all jeered at me for being afraid. I found a gap and when alone tried another ditch, but the pony would not jump that either; so I tied him to a tree and lay down among the ferns and looked up into the sky. On my way home I met the hunt again and noticed that everybody avoided the dogs, and to find out why they did so rode to where the dogs had gathered in the middle of the lane and stood my pony amongst them, and everybody began to shout at me.

Sometimes I would ride to Castle Dargan, where lived a brawling squireen, married to one of my Middleton cousins, and once I went thither on a visit with my cousin George Middleton. It was, I dare say, the last household where I could have found the reckless Ireland of a hundred years ago in final degradation. But I liked the place for the romance of its two ruined castles facing one another across a little lake, Castle Dargan and Castle Fury. The squireen lived in a small house his family had moved to from their castle some time in the eighteenth century, and two old Miss Furys, who let lodgings in Sligo, were the last remnants of the breed of the other ruin. Once in every year he drove to Sligo for the two old women, that they might look upon the ancestral stones and remember their gentility, and he would put his wildest horses into the shafts to enjoy their terror.

He himself, with a reeling imagination, knew not where to find a spur for the heavy hours. The first day I came there he gave my cousin a revolver, (we were upon the high road,) and to show it off, or his own shooting, he shot a passing chicken; and half an hour later, at the lake's edge under his castle, now but the broken corner of a tower with a winding stair, he fired at or over an old countryman walking on the far edge of the lake. The next day I heard him settling the matter with the old countryman over a bottle of whisky, and both were in good humour. Once he had asked a timid aunt of mine if she would like to see his last new pet, and thereupon had marched a racehorse in through the hall door and round the dining-room table. And once she came down to a bare table because he had thought it a good joke to open the window and let his harriers eat the breakfast. There was a current story, too, of his shooting, in the pride of his marksmanship, at his own door with a Martini-Henry rifle till he had shot the knocker off. At last he quarrelled with my great-uncle William Middleton, and to avenge himself gathered a rabble of wild country lads, mounted them and himself upon the most broken-down rascally horses he could lay hands on and marched them through Sligo under a land-league banner. After that, having now neither friends nor money, he made off to Australia or to Canada.

I fished for pike at Castle Dargan and shot at birds with a muzzle-loading pistol until somebody shot a rabbit and I heard it squeal. From that on I would kill nothing but the dumb fish.

XI

We left Bedford Park for a long thatched house at Howth, Co. Dublin. The land war was now at its height and our Kildare land, that had been in the family for many generations, was slipping from us. Rents had fallen more and more, we had to sell to pay some charge or mortgage, but my father and

his tenants parted without ill-will. During the worst times an old tenant had under his roof my father's shooting-dog and gave it better care than the annual payment earned. He had set apart for its comfort the best place at the fire; and if some man were in the place when the dog walked into the house, the man must needs make room for the dog. And a good while after the sale, I can remember my father being called upon to settle some dispute between this old man and his sons.

I was now fifteen; and as he did not want to leave his painting my father told me to go to Harcourt Street and put myself to school. I found a bleak eighteenth-century house, a small playing-field full of mud and pebbles, fenced by an iron railing, and opposite a long hoarding and a squalid, ornamental railway station. Here, as I soon found, nobody gave a thought to decorum. We worked in a din of voices. We began the morning with prayers, but when class began the headmaster, if he was in the humour, would laugh at Church and Clergy. "Let them say what they like," he would say, "but the earth does go round the sun." On the other hand there was no bullying and I had not thought it possible that boys could work so hard. Cricket and football, the collection of moths and butterflies, though not forbidden, were discouraged. They were for idle boys. I did not know, as I used to, the mass of my school-fellows; for we had little life in common outside the class-rooms. I had begun to think of my school work as an interruption of my natural history studies, but even had I never opened a book not in the school course, I could not have learned a quarter of my night's work. I had always done Euclid easily, making the problems out while the other boys were blundering at the blackboard, and it had often carried me from the bottom to the top of my class; but these boys had the same natural gift and instead of being in the fourth or fifth book were in the modern books at the end of the primer; and in place of a dozen lines of Virgil with a dictionary, I was expected to learn with the help of a crib a hundred and fifty lines. The other boys were able to learn the translation off, and to remember what words of Latin and English corresponded with one another, but I, who it may be had tried to find out what happened in the parts we had not read, made ridiculous mistakes; and what could I, who never worked when I was not interested, do with a history lesson that was but a column of seventy dates? I was worst of all at literature, for we read Shakespeare for his grammar exclusively.

One day I had a lucky thought. A great many lessons were run through in the last hour of the day, things we had learnt or should have learnt by heart over-night and not having known one of them for weeks, I cut off that hour without anybody's leave. I asked the mathematical master to give me a sum to work and nobody said a word. My father often interfered, and always with disaster, to teach me my Latin lesson. "But I have also my geography," I would say. "Geography," he would reply, "should never be taught. It is not a training for the mind. You will pick up all that you need, in your general reading." And if it was a history lesson, he would say just the same, and "Euclid," he would say, "is too easy. It comes naturally to the literary imagination. The old idea, that it is a good training for the mind, was long ago

refuted." I would know my Latin lesson so that it was a nine days' wonder, and for weeks after would be told it was scandalous to be so clever and so idle. No one knew that I had learnt it in the terror that alone could check my wandering mind. I must have told on him at some time or other for I remember the head-master saying, "I am going to give you an imposition because I cannot get at your father to give him one." Sometimes we had essays to write; and though I never got a prize, for the essays were judged by handwriting and spelling, I caused a measure of scandal. I would be called up before some master and asked if I really believed such things, and that would make me angry for I had written what I had believed all my life, what my father had told me, or a memory of the conversation of his friends. I was asked to write an essay on "Men may rise on stepping-stones of their dead selves to higher things." My father read the subject to my mother who had no interest in such matters. "That is the way," he said, "boys are made insincere and false to themselves. Ideals make the blood thin, and take the human nature out of people." He walked up and down the room in eloquent indignation, and told me not to write on such a subject at all, but upon Shakespeare's lines, "To thine own self be true, and it must follow as the night the day thou canst not then be false to any man." At another time, he would denounce the idea of duty; "imagine," he would say, "how the right sort of woman would despise a dutiful husband"; and he would tell us how much my mother would scorn such a thing. Maybe there were people among whom such ideas were natural, but they were the people with whom one does not dine. All he said was, I now believe right, but he should have taken me away from school. He would have taught me nothing but Greek and Latin, and I would now be a properly educated man, and would not have to look in useless longing at books that have been, through the poor mechanism of translation, the builders of my soul, nor face authority with the timidity born of excuse and evasion. Evasion and excuse were in the event as wise as the house-building instinct of the beaver.

XII

My London school-fellow, the athlete, spent a summer with us, but the friendship of boyhood, founded upon action and adventure, was drawing to an end. He was still my superior in all physical activity and climbed to places among the rocks that even now are uncomfortable memories, but I had begun to criticize him. One morning I proposed a journey to Lambay Island, and was contemptuous because he said we should miss our mid-day meal. We hoisted a sail on our small boat and ran quickly over the nine miles and saw on the shore a tame sea-gull, while a couple of boys, the sons of a coastguard, ran into the water in their clothes to pull us to land, as we had read of savage people doing. We spent an hour upon the sunny shore and I said, "I would like to live here always, and perhaps some day I will." I was always discovering places where I would like to spend my whole life. We started to row home, and when dinner-time had passed for about an hour, the athlete lay down on the bottom of the boat doubled up with the gripes. I mocked at him and at his fellow-countrymen whose stomachs struck the hour as if they were clocks.

Our natural history, too, began to pull us apart. I planned some day to write a book about the changes through a twelve-month among the creatures of some hole in the rock, and had some theory of my own, which I cannot remember, as to the colour of sea-anemones: and after much hesitation, trouble and bewilderment, was hot for argument in refutation of Adam and Noah and the Seven Days. I had read Darwin and Wallace, Huxley and Haeckel, and would spend hours on a holiday plaguing a pious geologist, who, when not at some job in Guinness's brewery, came with a hammer to look for fossils in the Howth Cliffs. "You know," I would say, "that such and such human remains cannot be less, because of the strata they were found in, than fifty thousand years old." "Oh!" he would answer, "they are an isolated instance." And once when I pressed hard my case against Ussher's chronology, he begged me not to speak of the subject again. "If I believed what you do," he said, "I could not live a moral life." But I could not even argue with the athlete who still collected his butterflies for the adventure's sake, and with no curiosity but for their names. I began to judge his intelligence, and to tell him that his natural history had as little to do with science as his collection of postage stamps. Even during my schooldays in London, influenced perhaps by my father, I had looked down upon the postage stamps.

XIII

Our house for the first year or so was on the top of a cliff, so that in stormy weather the spray would soak my bed at night, for I had taken the glass out of the window, sash and all. A literary passion for the open air was to last me for a few years. Then for another year or two, we had a house overlooking the harbour where the one great sight was the going and coming of the fishing fleet. We had one regular servant, a fisherman's wife, and the occasional help of a big, red-faced girl who ate a whole pot of jam while my mother was at church and accused me of it. Some such arrangement lasted until long after the time I write of, and until my father going into the kitchen by chance found a girl, engaged during a passing need, in tears at the thought of leaving our other servant, and promised that they should never be parted. I have no doubt that we lived at the harbour for my mother's sake. She had, when we were children, refused to take us to a seaside place because she heard it possessed a bathing box, but she loved the activities of a fishing village. When I think of her, I almost always see her talking over a cup of tea in the kitchen with our servant, the fisherman's wife, on the only themes outside our house that seemed of interest—the fishing people of Howth, or the pilots and fishing people of Rosses Point. She read no books, but she and the fisherman's wife would tell each other stories that Homer might have told, pleased with any moment of sudden intensity and laughing together over any point of satire. There is an essay called "Village Ghosts" in my *Celtic Twilight* which is but a record of one such afternoon, and many a fine tale has been lost because it had not occurred to me soon enough to keep notes. My father was always praising her to my sisters and to me, because she pretended to nothing she did not feel. She would write him letters telling of her delight in the tumbling

clouds, but she did not care for pictures, and never went to an exhibition even to see a picture of his, nor to his studio to see the day's work, neither now nor when they were first married. I remember all this very clearly and little after it until her mind had gone in a stroke of paralysis and she had found, liberated at last from financial worry, perfect happiness feeding the birds at a London window. She had always, my father would say, intensity, and that was his chief word of praise; and once he added to the praise, "No spendthrift ever had a poet for a son, though a miser might."

XIV

The great event of a boy's life is the awakening of sex. He will bathe many times a day, or get up at dawn and having stripped leap to and fro over a stick laid upon two chairs and hardly know, and never admit, that he had begun to take pleasure in his own nakedness, nor will he understand the change until some dream discovers it. He may never understand at all the greater change in his mind.

It all came upon me when I was close upon seventeen like the bursting of a shell. Somnambulistic country girls, when it is upon them, throw plates about or pull them with long hairs in simulation of the polter-geist, or become mediums for some genuine spirit-mischief, surrendering to their desire of the marvellous. As I look backward, I seem to discover that my passions, my loves and my despairs, instead of being my enemies, a disturbance and an attack, became so beautiful that I had to be constantly alone to give them my whole attention. I notice that now, for the first time, what I saw when alone is more vivid in my memory than what I did or saw in company.

A herd had shown me a cave some hundred and fifty feet below the cliff path and a couple of hundred above the sea, and told me that an evicted tenant called Macrom, dead some fifteen years, had lived there many years, and shown me a rusty nail in the rock which had served, perhaps to hold up some wooden protection from wind and weather. Here I stored a tin of cocoa and some biscuits, and instead of going to bed, would slip out on warm nights and sleep in the cave on the excuse of catching moths. One had to pass over a rocky ledge, safe enough for any one with a fair head, yet seeming, if looked at from above, narrow and sloping; and a remonstrance from a stranger who had seen me climbing along it doubled my delight in the adventure. When however, upon a bank holiday, I found lovers in my cave, I was not content with it again till I heard that the ghost of Macrom had been seen a little before the dawn, stooping over his fire in the cave-mouth. I had been trying to cook eggs, as I had read in some book, by burying them in the earth under a fire of sticks.

At other times, I would sleep among the rhododendrons and rocks in the wilder part of the grounds of Howth Castle. After a while my father said I must stay indoors half the night, meaning that I should get some sleep in my bed; but I, knowing that I would be too sleepy and comfortable to get up again used to sit over the kitchen fire till half the night was gone. Exaggerated accounts spread through the school, and sometimes when I did not know a lesson some master would banter me about the way my nights were spent. My interest in science began to fade, and presently I said to myself, "It has all

been a misunderstanding." I remembered how soon I tired of my specimens, and how little I knew after all my years of collecting, and I came to believe that I had gone through so much labour because of a text, heard for the first time in St. John's Church in Sligo, and copied Solomon, who had knowledge of hyssop and of tree that I might be certain of my own wisdom. I still carried my green net but I began to play at being a sage, a magician or a poet. I had many idols, and as I climbed along the narrow ledge I was now Manfred on his glacier, and now Prince Athanase with his solitary lamp, but I soon chose Alastor for my chief of men and longed to share his melancholy, and maybe at last to disappear from everybody's sight as he disappeared drifting in a boat along some slow-moving river between great trees. When I thought of women they were modelled on those in my favourite poets and loved in brief tragedy, or like the girl in *The Revolt of Islam,* accompanied their lovers through all manner of wild places, lawless women without homes and without children.

XV

My father's influence upon my thoughts was at its height. We went to Dublin by train every morning, breakfasting in his studio. He had taken a large room with a beautiful eighteenth-century mantelpiece in a York Street tenement house, and at breakfast he read passages from the poets, and always from the play or poem at its most passionate moment. He never read me a passage because of its speculative interest, and indeed did not care at all for poetry where there was generalisation or abstraction however impassioned. He would read out the first speeches of the *Prometheus Unbound,* but never the ecstatic lyricism of that famous fourth act; and another day the scene where Coriolanus comes to the house of Aufidius and tells the impudent servants that his home is under the canopy. I have seen *Coriolanus* played a number of times since then, and read it more than once, but that scene is more vivid than the rest, and it is my father's voice that I hear and not Irving's or Benson's. He did not care even for a fine lyric passage unless he felt some actual man behind its elaboration of beauty, and he was always looking for the lineaments of some desirable, familiar life. When the spirits sang their scorn of Manfred, and Manfred answered, "O sweet and melancholy voices," I was told that they could not, even in anger, put off their spiritual sweetness. He thought Keats a greater poet than Shelley, because less abstract, but did not read him, caring little, I think, for any of that most beautiful poetry which has come in modern times from the influence of painting. All must be an idealisation of speech, and at some moment of passionate action or somnambulistic reverie. I remember his saying that all contemplative men were in a conspiracy to overrate their state of life, and that all writers were of them, excepting the great poets. Looking backwards, it seems to me that I saw his mind in fragments, which had always hidden connections I only now begin to discover. He disliked the Victorian poetry of ideas, and Wordsworth but for certain passages or whole poems. He said one morning over his breakfast that he had discovered in the shape of the head of a Wordsworthian scholar, an old and greatly respected clergyman whose portrait he was painting, all the animal instincts of a prize-fighter. He despised the formal beauty of Raphael, that calm which is not an

ordered passion but an hypocrisy, and attacked Raphael's life for its love of pleasure and its self-indulgence. In literature he was always pre-Raphaelite, and carried into literature principles that, while the Academy was still unbroken, had made the first attack upon academic form.

He no longer read me anything for its story, and all our discussion was of style.

THOMAS SANCTON

The Silver Horn

THE SCENE is a Boy Scout summer camp, thickly grown with pines and cypress. There is a row of green clapboard cabins, with clean floors and neat double-decker bunks; there is an open field and a flag hanging still in the heavy air; and at the field's edge the land drops down a little to the dark water of a bayou. I spent five summers here, from the time I was twelve until I entered college. I did my first real living and my first real thinking in this camp.

And I think of it now. Like some reader of a long novel who turns back through the pages to find a forgotten part of the plot, and who comes with a flash of recognition across old scenes and dialogues, and characters who have gone out of the narrative but whose personalities and substance once filled pages and pages, I have gone turning back through the pages of my life. When was it and where was it—I have been asking—that I first began to believe what I now believe about the Southern world I left not many years ago, about Negroes, about democracy, about America, about life and death, about men and all their curious fates? This search has been long and turning. Often it has led me back to the years of my early teens and to the summers I spent in the camp.

I was born to the sidewalks and asphalt of the largest city and the widest street in the South. In New Orleans, broad Canal Street was never empty of speeding automobiles and streetcars, even late at night, and of people walking by, their footsteps echoing on the sidewalk. But here on the bayou another world existed. In the morning it was the strange, thin call of a bugle that broke into our sleep. Almost before we were awake we could smell the wet exercise field and the forest. Birds popped from tree to tree, plump and colorful, bluejays, mockingbirds, cardinals, flickers—Audubon had painted in these woods. Rabbits ran into the bushes. Snakes we had no fear of, long thick blue racers and speckled king snakes, slid through the weeds at our approach.

Standing in the wet grass, still yawning and sleepy, we took the morning exercises. Night chill was in the air, but behind our backs the sun was rising,

THE SILVER HORN From *Harper's Magazine*, February 1944. Reprinted by permission of the author.

and its warmth crept onto our shoulders. After the exercises we raced along a wagon road to the swimming pool, and as we ran up, shouting and excited, two or three startled frogs made tremendous leaps and plumped beneath the glassy surface of the water. After the swim we dried our skinny sunburned bodies and ran to the mess hall.

Most of us in the camp were poor boys, or boys who were almost poor. It was not a welfare camp, but the fees were low, less than a dollar a day for a camper. As a consequence it was filled with boys from modest New Orleans neighborhoods and also from the tough ones. There was always a smattering of the democratic rich: the son of the traction company president came every summer. So did his cousin from Texas, a wild, hard towhead with plenty of money and the soul of a true picaroon. He fascinated and dominated the rest of us. He was the first colorful outlaw I ever knew. But most of the well-to-do families sent their boys to camps in the Maine woods or the North Carolina mountains. Our camp was only forty miles from the city. Department store clerks, streetcar motormen, little grocers could afford the fees.

We had no saddle horses, no golf course, and only a weed-grown tennis court which no one used. For diversion we fell back on nature. In the morning we performed a work detail, cutting a patch of weeds or hauling dirt in wheelbarrows to mend a road. After this we were free to swim, to paddle on the bayou in slender little Louisiana boats called pirogues, to fish for the boisterous black bass and yellow perch and fat blue catfish, and to work for our Boy Scout medals and merit badges, tracking through the grassy cut-over pine lands, cooking dough and bacon on sweet-gum spits, bandaging one another with first-aid splints.

These little medals and bits of colored ribbon meant a great deal to us. We wrote home enthusiastic letters about our progress, describing in detail how we had passed the tests, forwarding the comments of some eighteen-year-old camp officer as though it really mattered. Our parents, most of whom did not have very big events happening in their own lives, were just as eager and simple-hearted about these things, and one or two of the fathers were foolishly ambitious to have their sons win the highest number of merit badges in the area.

Little things that happened during these years seemed of great importance. I remember that in my first year at camp I wore an ill-fitting Boy Scout hat. One of the councillors, a boy five years my senior who seemed to me to belong already to the grown-up world of brilliance and authority, began, in a pleasant way, to tease me about the hat. Every morning for a week he led us to the abandoned logging road and clocked us as we walked and trotted a measured mile. My hat was anchored down by a heavy chin strap; it flopped and sailed about my head as I ran to the finish line. The boy began to laugh at me. He waved his arms and called out, "Come on, you rookie!" The other kids took it up and Rookie became my first nickname. I loved it. I tingled when someone called it out. I painted it on my belt, carved it in my packing case, inked it into my hatband, and began to sign it to my letters home. Years later when we were grown I knew this camp officer again. The gap between our ages had

vanished and in real life now he seemed to me a rather colorless young lawyer. He did not remember about the hat.

At mealtime we ate ravenously in the mess hall. There were steaming platters of pork and beans and cabbage and stew. As we walked to the long clapboard building with our hair freshly combed and water glistening on our faces, which we washed at the flowing pipe of a big artesian well, we existed in a transport of driving hunger. In the steamy fragrance of the mess hall we set up a clatter of knives and forks and china, and afterward we went to our cabins and flopped on the bunks in a state of drowsy satisfaction. Somehow, fat never formed on our skinny frames. We ran too much. We paddled in the boats. We swam. We cut firewood and played softball after supper. When there was nothing else to do we climbed in the rafters of our cabins, trying to invent complicated monkey swings that no one else could do. Every year some campers broke their arms.

II

A giant Negro named Joe did the camp's heavy work. He cut and trimmed the big trees, dug the deep post holes, mixed the cement, cleaned out the underbrush. His strength was a never-ending fascination for the rest of us. Joe was a light-eyed Negro, with a tan cast of skin and a huge bald dome of a head. One of his grandparents must certainly have been a white man. He lived half a mile down the bayou with his large and hazily defined family, in an old "plantation house."

Actually it was not, and never had been, a pretentious place, and I do not know what kind of plantation could have been there. The ground round it was alternately sandy and swampy and there are no plantations where pine trees grow. Pines mean sandy land. In slave days the Negroes had boiled Southern history down to a couplet:

> Cain't make a living on sandy lan'—
> Ruther be a nigger den a po' white man.

Joe's place stood on a cleared bend in the bayou. The weatherboards and shingles were green with age. The house rested on high slender pillars and there were patches of bright red brick where the covering mortar had fallen away. The yard was shaded by two enormous water oaks, hung with gray Spanish moss, and an iron kettle stood beneath the trees where women did the washing. At the bank of the bayou five or six towering cypress trees leaned heavily toward the water, for the slow currents of a century had washed their roots completely bare of soil. To get a new anchorage on the land the trees had sent out a forest of gnarled roots and stubby knees along the shoreline. The house seemed beautiful and somber in these surroundings as we paddled past it on our expeditions down the bayou to the lake.

Obviously a white man had built this place long ago, and if he had not been a plantation owner, he had at least been a man of substance. Perhaps this had been the summer home for some wealthy old New Orleans Frenchman in years gone by. Sometimes the camp officers spoke of Joe as "caretaker" on the place. But that was hardly possible. He and his family inhabited every room;

chickens roamed freely, and washing hung on lines stretched across the wide porch. It was clear to us that the Negro giant was no caretaker here. He possessed this place, to have and to hold. How he got it and why we never asked him; and his presence there did not seem a very curious thing to us. Already a dark, subjective understanding of Louisiana's history was in our blood and bones.

Joe smoked strong cigarettes and chewed tobacco. His teeth were rotted stumps. We delighted in bringing him supplies of smokes from the nearby town on Saturdays to win his quick and genuine appreciation. There were two or three measures of a Cajun French ditty he used to sing, dancing and stomping the ground, waving his hat and swaying his heavy shoulders with real grace. The words and the stomping finished together, with two hard accents. He would do this every time in exchange for a gift. Yet he did it in such a way that we knew always that this was nothing more than a grown-up man doing monkey-shines for children. He enjoyed making us laugh. There was nothing servile about it.

He got to be one of the people I liked best of all—not only in the camp but in my whole circumscribed world. I liked Joe very simply because he was a nice man. He recognized me every year when I returned to the camp, and after the second or third year I could tell that he considered me a real friend and was glad to have me back. We talked together often, equally and easily, and when I was sixteen and seventeen and by then a councillor in the camp, Joe would do me the honor of becoming quite serious with me and of placing our whole friendship on a mature plane. I do not remember many of the things we talked about, but I do remember that a conversation with him was a reassurance and a satisfaction; that it was always good to find him walking on the road and to fall in with him.

I saw a brief notice in the paper, some years after I had stopped going to the camp, that Joe had died of blood poisoning in the New Orleans Charity Hospital. I thought of those stumps of teeth, and of the many years they had been seeping infection into his system. I thought also of the tall trees I had seen him fell, and that now Joe too had come toppling to the earth. And, though I felt a quiet sorrow, I felt no anguish. Life grew rank and lush along the bayou. His old house was teeming with the spawn of his years. The sun would beat upon the water forever, the trout would break the surface, the rushes would grow thick and green. Joe had done his share of hauling and of digging. Now he could lie down in the warm and sun-drenched earth and sleep.

III

During those summers in camp a love grew up in me for the rhythms of nature, for tropical rains that came sweeping through the pines and oaks, for the fiery midday sun, for long evenings, and the deep black nights. Great campfires were lit beside the bayou and a rushing column of luminous smoke and sparks ascended to the cypress trees. Fire gleamed in the water where bass were sleeping in the stumps. Campers wandered toward the meeting place, their flashlights swinging in the woods. We sat about the fire, singing, beating

deep rumbling tom-toms made of hollowed oak logs, performing an ageless repertoire of skits and mimicry. And after these sessions one leader took the Protestant boys and another the Catholics and, standing in the open fields, in our separate groups, we prayed aloud.

My heart had strayed already from the formal, repetitious praying. A towering pine tree at the field's edge made a silhouette in the starry sky. I knew the constellations, the Giant, the Dipper, the Bear. I looked for the two inseparable stars, Misar and Alcar, horse and rider, and sensed the fact that Arabs named these stars a thousand years before me, and even in my boy's ignorance I felt aware of man's long and varied time upon the earth. I knew this night-filled wilderness had stretched beneath these stars for endless ages before Frenchmen had come in boats to build New Orleans. I thought of the Indians who had fished and hunted here, whose bones and broken pottery we sometimes found in grassy mounds. I felt worshipful of the earth, the pine tree, the night itself.

Sometimes we packed provisions and tents and mosquito bars and paddled down the bayou to the lake, ten miles away. The lake was a great inland finger of the Gulf of Mexico, twenty miles long, ten wide. Twenty miles below us, in prehistoric times, the mouth of the Mississippi river had built up new land, and these watery prairies had pinched off the small inland gulf and made a lake of it, but it connected still through a series of passes with the Mexican Gulf. The lake teemed with croakers, catfish, shrimp, and big blue-clawed crabs. At the northern end, where we camped, a network of tributary bayous emptied into the lake. For the last mile or so of their crooked lengths, where the brackish water of the lake crept into the slow-moving bayous, fish and small life were abundant, bass fed in the rushes, and muskrats built their cities of the plains.

There was a relatively high, sandy point near the mouth of the bayou, where we camped. The sun went down red into the lake and left a long, clear twilight. A few stars came out. A salty wind blew in from the Mexican Gulf; it came out of the south every night. The breeze swept over the rushes and made small waves break on the sandy, grassy shore. There was a red beacon light on weather-beaten piles out in the lake and its long reflection shimmered in the water. We sprayed our mosquito netting with citronella and built up a driftwood fire and lay down on canvas bedrolls spread upon the thin, tough grass and sand. The trade wind blew through our tents throughout the night. We listened to the waves. We could smell the vast salt marshes far below us. A yellow moon came out of the gulf. Far down the lake we could see the lights of a railroad bridge. We felt the beauty of this wilderness like a hunger.

After two days of fishing and swimming in the lake, our shoulders and faces darker from the sun, we paddled back up the winding bayou.

IV

One summer when I was sixteen a party of us, paddling upstream to buy some candy at a crossroads store, came upon three young girls who were bathing in a sandy cove. There were four of us in the long pirogue, all of an age. For a long moment we were speechless. At last we said hello, and they answered in warm gay voices. We drifted the boat into the cove and began to

speak to them. Two of the girls were sisters. The three of them had come to visit a relative who kept a fine summer lodge in the woods across the bayou from the camp. One of the sisters was fifteen and the others were seventeen. They were aglow with fresh and slender beauty, and their bathing suits were bright flags of color. Their impact upon us was overwhelming. We grew silly, tongue-tied, said foolish things we did not mean to say, shoved one another about in the boat, and finally overturned it. The lorelei laughed musical little laughs. They seemed unbearably beautiful. We had no idea what to do about it.

The girls had been at the lodge for a week. They missed their beaux in New Orleans, they missed the dating and the dancing and the music. It was a gay town in the summertime. The older girls looked upon us as children; but still—they must have reflected—we were not such children at that. The younger sister, a slender child with thick brown hair and heavily crimsoned lips, sat on the bank and regarded us with a happy open face.

At last we took courage and asked if we could call on them that night.

"Oh, yes!" they cried eagerly. Life at that moment was dazzling.

Making this rendezvous was an impulsive thing to do, for it was midweek and we should have to steal away after taps and walk down a path without flashlights through a snake-infested lowland and—because the boats were counted and chained at nightfall—swim across the bayou, holding our clothes above our heads.

We crept from our cabins at ten o'clock that night and met in the pine woods. One of us intoned a counting-out rhyme; the loser had to walk first down the path through the snake hole. He cut a long gum sapling and rattled it down the path ahead of us. We walked bunched tightly together, tense with fear, giggling at our own unbelievable audacity, trembling in our eagerness. At the bayou's edge we slipped out of our shorts and shirts and sneakers and, holding them above our heads with one hand, we felt our way round the knees and along the sunken roots of a cypress tree, and pushed off into the bayou and began to swim.

The moon had not yet risen. We had only the silhouettes of trees to guide us. We swam closely together, cautioning one another to silence, bursting into convulsive squeals as water lilies brushed against our bodies or when a fish broke the surface near us. We swam upstream from the camp, past two bends, and waded from the water in the cove where we had met the girls. Now we were laughing with relief and excitement, and popping one another on the backsides. We scraped the glistening water from our bodies, dressed, and combed our wet hair and hurried off down the wagon path into the woods. Long ago the cove had been a landing stage for small schooners which came to load pine firewood for New Orleans.

The girls were waiting for us, dressed in bright print cotton dresses and wearing hair ribbons. The soft light gave age and mystery to their youthful shoulders, to their slender bodies; and, like nameless night-blooming vines in the woods about us, they bore a splendid fragrance all their own, a fragrance of youth and cleanliness and fresh cosmetics. They were playing a phonograph on the wide porch of the lodge. This was the summer of Maurice Chevalier's

great success in American movies. The little sister sang his song, rolling her eyes, turning out her soft pink lip:

If ze night-ting gail
Cood zing lak you . . .

And she sang another:

. . . you make me feel so grand
I want to hand the world to you.
You seem to understand
Each foolish little dream I'm dreaming, scheme I'm scheming . . .

I was so in love with her I could hardly catch my breath. I was in love with the other sister too, and with their friend. All of the boys were in love with all of the girls; the girls—so they said—had crushes on each of us. Our hearts were afire.

We walked hand in hand down the wagon trail to the cove and built a bonfire. We stretched out on blankets, laughing, singing. We sang the songs that people always sing by rivers and campfires, "There's a Long, Long Trail A-winding," "The Sweetheart of Sigma Chi," all the rest. We kissed the girls and they held fast to us. Before this night we had been only boys, holding hands with girls in movies, not quite sure why we pursued them and acted silly. Now, lying beneath the open sky, for the first time we understood the poignance and the beauty of the human heritage.

Every night for two weeks we came to see them. And when they told us good-by the last kiss was as much a discovery as the first, and we knew that love was a thing that could never grow old. After they had gone we would steal from our cabins to sit on the back porch of the camp hospital, on a hill, where we could see the bayou and the cove and the woods where we had found them; and we sat there talking late into the night, like daemon lovers in the ballads of old. I never passed the cove again, even years later when I would paddle down the bayou fishing, without remembering our meetings with a suddenly racing heart. First love is unforgettable.

V

I had no lessons to do in those summer months of camp life. There was plenty of time to think. I was living a communal life with other boys. Among us were embryonic bullies, scoundrels, cheats, promoters, Babbitts, Christers, and stuffed shirts; and there were also the boys of good heart, the unselfish, the humorous, the courageous, boys who were the salt of the earth, but who, often in their later lives, would be misled and preyed upon and set against one another by the sharp ones. One and all we lived together, ate together, slept together. Our personalities clashed, fermented, or formed amalgams. Sitting together at night in the lamplit cabins, with darkness and towering woods closing in upon us, we had our first grave talks about religion, about death, about sex. The future stretching before us was wide and fathomless. And all about us, in the grass, in the underbrush, in towering summer skies, we beheld the face of nature and the earth's wide harmonies as they had never

been revealed in our city lives. At night we could stretch out upon the field, observe the stars, and grasp for the first time the fact that some were vastly deeper in space than others. In our star-study courses we heard phrases like "light years." It began to seep into the consciousness of many of us that a hundred years or the life of an individual had little meaning in the total universe; and from this point some of us began our first gropings after moral philosophy, gropings for a belief that could give the total universe a meaning in our own lives.

There was a bugler in our camp who was the first consummate expert, in any field, that I had known. He had no other talent but his music. He was a good-natured, chubby, curly-headed Italian boy, rather lazy, and when he was not back in the woods practicing his cornet he walked round with a dreamy look, as though our own handicrafts could not possibly be of interest to him.

Paolo had a silver trumpet and he preferred it to the bugle. He wanted to be a great musician. He would take his horn and music back into a pine clearing a quarter of a mile from the camp and all day long we could hear him practicing the runs. He blew the trumpet with a clear, sweet tone. We had supreme confidence as we stood at attention on the parade grounds and the flag came down the creaking flagpole pulley in the late afternoon sunlight, and Paolo stood alone, with everyone watching, and bugled. We were proud of him when visitors came. He had that ability of experts to create a sense of possessiveness in others.

It was at bedtime that Paolo gathered up into his clear, thin music all the ineffable hungering of our awakening lives. At ten o'clock he climbed a high ladder to a life-guard platform we had nailed into the branches of a tall cypress tree beside the bayou. Paolo lived for this moment and, with the whole camp silent and listening below him in the darkness, he blew taps with a soft and ghostly beauty all his own. Somehow the music spoke for us, uttered the thing we knew but had no words for, set up a wailing in the pine trees of the brevity and splendor of human life. Lying in our bunks in the darkness of the cabin, some of us fell into sleep; but some lay in silence thinking longer, alive to the night, and I was of these.

One night some ten years later I entered a smoke-filled tavern in another city where Paolo was playing in a band. By this time he had made a small reputation as a boy with a hot trumpet. I watched his now older face as he tore through the hot routines. He was tired. The silver horn made noise but, though I knew little about it, I could see that he was not a great jazz musician.

I did not go to see him any more. I wanted to remember Paolo before he had lost something, before any of us had lost it, a kind of innocence. I wanted to remember him in the land of our first discoveries, when he had climbed into a cypress tree to blow his horn, and there was a kind of Gothic night-drench in our lives.

ELIZABETH BOWEN

The Mulberry Tree

THE HOUSE with a shallow front lawn, swagged in July with Dorothy Perkins roses, stood back from a tarmac road outside the Kentish village of Downe. The main block, three stories high, had a white pillared portico and a dado of ivy, looking friendly and undistinguished. It contained classrooms and bedrooms for about sixty girls, the staff study and the dining-room. To the left facing the porch (as we seldom had time to do) was a stable-yard, to the right, a warren of painted iron buildings—gymnasium, music-rooms, wash-rooms—twisted off at an angle, parallel with the road. A low trellis of ivy concealed these windows.

The back of the house, one portion curving out in a deep bay, faced a lawn flanked each side by heavily treed paths, tunnels in summer. A bed of azaleas outside the senior study french window made the summer term exotic. Features of this lawn landscape were an old mulberry tree with an iron belt and a mound with a large ilex, backed by evergreen shrubs, on which Shakespeare plays were acted. It was usual during rehearsals to pluck and chew the leaves of the ilex tree. We girls were for ever masticating some foreign substance, leaves of any kind, grass from the playing fields, paper, india rubber, splinters from pencil-ends or the hems of handkerchiefs. In the course of my three years at school both the ilex and mulberry trees took on an emotional significance; under the mulberry a friend whose brother at that time captained the Winchester eleven, and who was herself our only overhand bowler, criticized my behaviour on an occasion, saying I had done something that was not cricket. The lawn gave on a meadow crossed by a path to the playing field: beyond the school boundary, meadows and copses rolled off into Kent pleasantly. In summer there was a great smell of hay. I remember also one June a cuckoo that used to flap round the school roof, stout, squawking and losing its mystery. It has taken years for me to reinstate cuckoos. The Cudham valley was said to be a great place for nightingales, but we girls can never have walked there at the right time. . . . From across country, features of this rather odd and imposing back view of the house were its very white window-frames, a glass veranda on to which the drawing-room debouched and a modern addition, one side, in the form of a kind of chalet, from whose balcony I played Jezebel with a friend's teddy bear.

The survival of such childish inanimate pets was encouraged by fashion; several dormitory beds with their glacial white quilts were encumbered all day and shared nightly with rubbed threadbare teddy bears, monkeys or in one case

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a blue plush elephant. Possibly this seemed a good way to travesty sentiment: we cannot really have been idiotic girls. A friend of mine wore a carved ivory Chinese dog round her neck on a gold cord for some days, then she was asked to wear this inside her djibbah. A good deal of innocent fetichism came to surround these animals; the mistress of the blue elephant used to walk the passages saying: "You must kiss my elephant." Photos of relatives, sometimes quite distant but chosen for their good appearance, the drawings of Dulac, Medici prints and portraits of Napoleon, Charles I, Rupert Brooke, Sir Roger Casement or Mozart lent advertising touches of personality to each cubicle's walls, slung on threads from the frieze-rail and flapping and tapping in an almost constant high wind from the open windows. The ever difficult business of getting oneself across was most pressing of all at this age: restricted possessions, a uniform dictated down to the last detail and a self-imposed but rigid emotional snobbishness shutting the more direct means of self-expression away. Foibles, mannerisms we therefore exaggerated most diligently.

If anyone said "You are always so such-and-such" one felt one had formed a new intimacy and made one's mark. A good many young women were led to buffoon themselves. It seemed fatal not to be at least one thing to excess, and if I could not be outstandingly good at a thing I preferred to be outstandingly bad at it. Personality came out in patches, like damp through a wall.

The dormitories were called bedrooms, and we had little opinion of schools where the bedrooms were called dormitories. Ours were in fact the bedrooms of a fair-sized country house, divided into from four to six cubicles. The window cubicles went to the best people, who were sometimes terribly cold at nights; the door cubicle went to the youngest inhabitant, who could hold everyone up if her sense of decency were over-acute. "You can't come through," she would shout; "I am indecent." The niceties of curtain-drawing and of intrusion varied from bedroom to bedroom, according to temper, but we always closed our curtains to say our prayers. No embarrassment surrounded the saying of prayers at this school; in fact it would have been more embarrassing to have left them unsaid. Whom one sleeps with is always rather important, and ill-assorted companions could cast a gloom over the term. There was always one rather quiet girl who patiently wished herself elsewhere, lurked a good deal behind her curtains and was afraid to speak. As in a railway carriage, one generally disliked one's companions less after some time. The tone of a bedroom would be, of course, set by the noisiest girl, who talked most freely about her private affairs. As one began to realize that bedroom lists for a term were drawn up on a psychological basis, the whole thing became more interesting. Great friends were not put together and we were not allowed into each other's bedrooms, but it was always possible to stand and talk in the door, with one toe outside. Assignations for serious or emotional talks connected themselves with the filling of hot-water-bottles and water cans at a tap outside the bathrooms, when one was otherwise ready for bed. Girls of a roving disposition with a talent for intimacy were always about this passage. A radiator opposite this tap was in demand in winter; one could lean while one talked and warm the spine through the dressing-gown. The passage was dim-lit, with wobbly gas brackets, and it was always exciting to see who had

got there first. The radiator was near the headmistress's door, and she would disperse any group she came out and found. It irritated her to see us being girlish in any way. We cannot really have been emotional girls; we were not highly sexed and any attractions had an aesthetic, snobbish, self-interested tinge. Conversations over the radiator were generally about art, Roman Catholicism, suicide, or how impossible somebody else had been. At nine o'clock a bell rang from the matron's room and we all darted back to our bedrooms and said our prayers.

I first went to this school in September 1914. We unpacked our trunks in a cement passage outside the gymnasium and carried our things upstairs. The school must have re-assembled with an elating sense of emergency, but as I was new I was not conscious of this. Everything seemed so odd that the war was dwarfed, and though one had been made to feel that one was now living in history, one's own biography was naturally more interesting. I found my school-fellows rather terse and peremptory, their snubbing of me had a kind of nobility: whether this arose from the war's or my own newness I did not ask: as I had been told that this was a very good school it was what I had been led to expect. A squad of troops marching past in the dark on the tarmac road, whistling, pointed the headmistress's address to us in the gymnasium that first night of term. Wind kept flapping the window cords on their pulleys, the gas jets whistled and the girls drawn up by forms in resolute attitudes looked rather grim. The headmistress stated that it did not matter if we were happy so long as we were good. At my former school the headmistress had always said she knew we should be good as long as we were happy. That sounded sunnier. But in my three years at this school I learnt to define happiness as a kind of inner irrational exaltation having little to do with morals one way or the other. That night in the gymnasium I felt some apprehension that my character was to be lopped, or even forcibly moulded, in this place, but this came to be dispelled as the term wore on. The war having well outlasted my school-days, I cannot imagine a girl's school without a war. The moral stress was appalling. We grew up under the intolerable obligation of being fought for, and could not fall short in character without recollecting that men were dying for us. During my second year, the Daily Mail came out with its headline about food-hogs, and it became impossible to eat as much as one wished, which was to over-eat, without self-consciousness. If the acutest food shortage had already set in, which it had not, meals would really have been easier. As it was, we could over-eat, but it became unfeeling to do so. The war dwarfed us and made us morally uncomfortable, and we could see no reason why it should ever stop. It was clear, however, that someone must have desired it, or it would not have begun. In my first term, we acted a pageant representing the Allies for the headmistress's birthday, and later sang songs of the epoch, such as "We don't want to lose you, but . . ." at a concert in the village, in our white muslin Saturday evening frocks. Most eligible fighters had, however, by this time gone to the war and we can only have made their relatives more hysterical. An excellent bun supper was provided by the village committee, and some of us over-ate.

I do not remember ever discussing the war among ourselves at school.

Possibly some of the girls may have done so, but I had a sense of inferiority owing to having no brothers and not taking in a daily paper. Though, seated beside one of the staff at meals one would say: "Aren't the French doing splendidly?" or "Isn't it awful about the Russians?" The Danish music mistress, however, had melancholia and we were not allowed to mention the war at her table. I do not think it was so much the war that made her melancholic as her unhappy friendship with the violin mistress; any attempt to make conversation with her was the last straw. She looked extraordinarily like Hamlet, and as she was a neutral I always resented her taking up this attitude about the war. . . . If a girl's brother were killed or wounded we were all too much embarrassed to speak of it. Though death became familiar, it never became less awkward: if heroic feeling ran low in us I think this was because the whole world's behaviour seemed to be travestying our own: everywhere, everyone was behaving as we were all, at our ages, most anxious not to behave. Things were being written and said constantly that would have damned any one of us: the world seemed to be bound up in a tragic attack of adolescence and there seemed no reason why we should ever grow up, since moderation in behaviour became impossible. So we became in contradistinction violently precious, martyrized by our own good taste. Our morbidity was ingrowing. I cannot, either, remember discussing men. Possibly the whole sex had gloomy associations. One or two of the girls fell in love in the holidays, but something in the atmosphere made it impossible to talk of this naturally without seeming at once to make copy of it. All the same, I and my friends all intended to marry early, partly because this appeared an achievement or way of making one's mark, also from a feeling it would be difficult to settle to anything else until this was done. (Like passing the School Certificate.) Few of my friends anticipated maternity with either interest or pleasure, and though some have since become mothers it still seems inappropriate. Possibly, however, we were not natural girls. We may have discussed love, but I do not remember how. The future remained very hazy and insecure. We were not ambitious girls, though we all expected to distinguish ourselves in some way. Not one of us intended to be L.O.P.H. (Left On Pa's Hands). We lived, however, intensively in the present; when the present became over-powering there was an attic-loft over the bedroom ceilings in the main buildings, with sacks and a cistern in it, where an enterprising person could go and weep. Less fastidious people wept in their cubicles.

We were not in love with each other at all continuously, or, as far as I know, with the staff at all. A certain amount of emotion banked up in the holidays, when letters became important. During the school day we all looked violently plain: school uniform, even djibbahs, cannot expect to suit everyone; red wrists stuck out of our cuffs and our hair (short hair was not at that time the prevailing fashion) was so skinned back that our eyes would hardly shut. After games we charged indoors, stripped, rubbed down, put on stays and private clothes, released our front hair and became a little more personable. On Saturday nights, in modified evening dresses, quite a certain amount of glamour set in. In the week, curvilinear good looks were naturally at a discount and a swaggering, nonchalant air cut the most ice. If you were not good

at games the best way of creating an atmosphere was to be good at acting. We acted a good deal. On Saturday afternoons, one or two people who could play the piano emotionally had séances in the music rooms. All this was the best we could put up in the way of romance. All the same, one or two people contrived to keep diaries, moon round the garden alone and be quite unhappy.

Competitive sociability and team spirit were rather well united at my school by the custom of picking up tables. The first day of term seven seniors shut themselves up and, by rotative bidding, each picked up from the rest of the school a team of about eight for her table at meals. Each team moved round each week to the next of the seven dining-room tables, each table presided over by one of the staff. The object of each team was to make the most conversation possible, and to be a success: girls were therefore picked with a view to chattiness, desirability, tact, table manners, resource and charm. Certain unfortunate girls were never in demand, and the screams of seniors repudiating them could sometimes be heard from the other end of the garden. It was a great thing to be at the head of the most patently animated table in the dining-room. Many of us have grown up to be good hostesses. If a girl sat just eating on without saying anything the head of the table would kick at her, if within reach. So that young nervous girls got into a way of saying almost anything. The great thing was to amuse the mistress whose table it was, and keep her smiling constantly: each girl had to take it in turns to do this. There was a French table and a German table: the games mistress was usually difficult to talk to. The headmistress sometimes received our remarks with irony, and was inclined to say "Quite . . ." The table rule bound us only for breakfast and dinner; at tea and supper we sat with whom we liked, few of the staff were present and very merry we were. Quarrels, if any, sometimes occurred at this time.

The other great social occasion was Saturday evening (as I have said). We danced (we thought) rather glamorously in the gymnasium to a piano, and dances were often booked up some days ahead. On summer Saturday evenings we walked round the garden between dances, feeling unlike ourselves. The garden was long, with lime trees and apple trees and long grass with cuckoo flowers in it: it looked very beautiful in the late evening light, with the sound of the piano coming out through the gymnasium door. On winter Saturday evenings we danced more heartily, in order to keep warm. The staff filed in in evening dresses and sat on a platform, watching the dancing, and occasionally being asked to dance, with expressions of animation which, now that I look back, command my respect.

Lessons must have occupied a good deal of our time, but I remember very little of this. What I learnt seems to have been absorbed into my system, which shows how well taught I was. I used to sit riveting, or trying to rivet, the mistress's eye, but must otherwise have been pretty passive. I spent an inordinate amount of time over the preparation for some lessons; the rest of my preparation time went by in reading poetry or the Bible or looking up more about the facts of life in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. We were morbidly honourable girls and never spoke to each other at preparation or in our bedrooms after the lights were out. I often wonder whether in after life one has

not suffered from an overstrained honour from having been too constantly put upon it in youth, and whether the espionage one hears of in foreign schools might not have kept one's sense of delinquency more enduringly active. In these ways, we were almost too good to last. We did not pass notes either, though one of my friends, just back from a day in London, once wrote on the margin of her rough note book, and pushed across to me, that Kitchener had been drowned. Perhaps the occasion may have excused the breach. I simply thought, however, that she was pulling my leg. . . . Games were compulsory and took up the afternoon: it did not matter being bad at them so long as you showed energy. At lacrosse, girls who could run would pound up and down the field; those who could not gripped their crosses fiercely and stalked about. Lacrosse is such a fierce game that I wonder we all lived through it. Hockey, though ungainly, is not nearly so perilous. The only real farce was cricket, a humiliating performance for almost all. I never thought worse of anyone for being good at games so long as she was not unattractive in other ways; one or two of the games committee had, however, an air of having no nonsense about them that was depressing. We were anything but apathetic about matches: when a match was played away the returning team would, if victorious, begin to cheer at a given turn of the road; we all sat with straining ears; if the charabanc rolled up in silence we knew the worst. Our team so often won that I should like to think we had given them moral support.

The literary society was presided over by the headmistress, of whom I should like to place it on grateful record that she did definitely teach me how not to write. There were gardens to garden in, if you had nothing more personal to do in your spare time, and, because of the war, there was haymaking in season. Two or three of the girls who had formed the idea that they wished to be engineers in after life spent a good deal of time looking through the windows of the engine room at the light plant and water-pumping machine; sometimes they were let in by the geography mistress to help her oil the thing. The geography mistress was a Pole, who had built the chapel as well as all the other modern additions to the school. The chapel was put up during my second year and dedicated by the Bishop of Rochester: a friend of mine pointed out to me during the service that the Bishop's sleeves were not white but of very pale pink lawn, and I have had no opportunity since to correct this impression: perhaps it was not incorrect. The chapel was approached by a dark, draughty and rather impressive arcade from the gymnasium. There were no cases of religious mania or any other obsession while I was at school.

Seeing *Madchen in Uniform,* and reading more sensitive people's impressions of their school life, makes me feel that either my old school was prosaic or that I was insensitive. A toughish, thick child, I did not in fact suffer in any way. My vanity would have been mortified anywhere and my heart was at that age really all over the place. At my old school there was nothing particular to conform to, and the worst that can be said of it is that I got no kick out of not conforming to anything. I was only too well understood, and when I left school my relations complained that my personality had made rapid and rank growth. I talked too much with a desperate self-confidence induced perhaps by competitive talking at meals. I say with deference to the susceptibilities

of possible other essayists in this book that I consider my old school an exceedingly good one. If girls ought really to be assembled and taught, I can think of no better way of assembling and teaching them. No one dragooned us; in the course of three years I never once heard the expression *esprit de corps* and we were never addressed as future mothers. The physical discomfort was often extreme but (I am prepared to believe now that its details escape me) salutary. I regret that my palate has been blunted for life by being made to finish up everything on my plate, so that when I dine out with a gourmet my manner becomes exceedingly artificial. I was taught not only how not to write (though I still do not always write as I should) but how not, if possible, to behave, and how not to exhibit feeling. I have not much idea what more than ten people at my school were like, so cannot well generalize about our type or mentality. No one of my companions betrayed my affections, corrupted me, aggravated my inferiority complex, made me wish I had more money, gave me a warp for life or did anything that is supposed to happen at schools. There is nothing I like better than feeling one of a herd, and after a term or two I began to feel firmly stuck in.

Memory is, as Proust has it, so oblique and selective that no doubt I see my school days through a subjective haze. I cannot believe that those three years were idyllic: days and weeks were no doubt dreary and squalid on end. I recall the most thundering disappointments and baulked ambitions, but those keep repeating themselves throughout after life. I do not desire to live those three years again, but I should be exceedingly sorry to have them cut out of my past. Some years after I left, the house, after so much pounding and trampling, began to wear out; the school moved and the building has been reinstated as some kind of shrine, for Charles Darwin lived there for some years and died there, I believe, too. Our Morris wall-papers have been all stripped off and the white woodwork grained: the place now rather seriously and unsatirically reconstructs a late Victorian epoch. Our modern additions have been pulled down; the geography mistress has re-erected the chapel, the gymnasium, the lavatories and the music-rooms elsewhere. When I revisited the place, only the indestructible cement flooring of these remained. To indulge sentiment became almost impossible. I have never liked scientific people very much, and it mortifies me to think of them trampling reverently around there on visiting days, thinking of Charles Darwin and ignorant of my own youth.

H. F. ELLIS

Statement of Arthur James Wentworth, Bachelor of Arts

MY NAME is Arthur James Wentworth, I am unmarried and I am by profession an assistant master at Burgrove Preparatory School, Wilminster. The Headmaster is the Reverend Gregory Saunders, M.A. He is known to the boys as the Squid—not necessarily, I think, a term of opprobrium. He is a classical scholar of moderate attainments, a generous employer and much given to the use of the expression "The School must come first, Wentworth." I attach no particular meaning to this remark.

At 11:15 on the morning of Saturday, 8th July, I entered Classroom 4 for the purpose of instructing Set IIIA in Algebra. There were present Anderson, Atkins, Clarke, Etheridge, Hillman, Hopgood II, Mason, Otterway, Sapoulos, Trench and Williamson. Heathcote, who has, I am told, a boil, was absent. It should be explained that though I have given these names in the alphabetical order in which they appear in the school list, that is not the order in which the boys were sitting on this occasion. It is the custom at Burgrove for boys to sit according to their position in the previous week's mark-lists. Thus in the front row were seated Etheridge, a most promising mathematician, Hillman, Mason, Otterway and Clarke. Hopgood II, the boy whom I am now accused of assaulting, was in the middle of the second row. The third and last row was shared by Sapoulos, a Greek, and Atkins, a cretin. I do not think these facts have any bearing on anything that is to follow, but I give them for the sake of completeness.

"This morning," I remarked, taking up my Hall and Knight, "we will do problems," and I told them at once that if there was any more of that groaning they would do nothing but problems for the next month. It is my experience, as an assistant-master of some years' standing, that if groaning is not checked immediately it may swell to enormous proportions. I make it my business to stamp on it.

Mason, a fair-haired boy with glasses, remarked when the groaning had died down that it would not be possible to do problems for the next month, and on being asked why not, replied that there were only three weeks more of term. This was true, and I decided to make no reply. He then asked if he could have a mark for that. I said, "No, Mason, you may not," and, taking up my book and a piece of chalk, read out, "I am just half as old as my father and in twenty years I shall be five years older than he was twenty years ago. How

STATEMENT OF ARTHUR JAMES WENTWORTH, BACHELOR OF ARTS From *The Vexations of A. J. Wentworth, B.A.* by H. F. Ellis, by permission of Little, Brown & Co.

old am I?" Atkins promptly replied, "Forty-two." I inquired of him how, unless he was gifted with supernatural powers, he imagined he could produce the answer without troubling to do any working-out. He said, "I saw it in the School's Year-book." This stupid reply caused a great deal of laughter, which I suppressed.

I should have spoken sharply to Atkins, but at this moment I noticed that his neighbour Sapoulos, the Greek boy, appeared to be eating toffee, a practice which is forbidden at Burgrove during school hours. I ordered him to stand up. "Sapoulos," I said, "you are not perhaps quite used yet to our English ways, and I shall not punish you this time for your disobedience; but please understand that I will not have eating in my class. You did not come here to eat but to learn. If you try hard and pay attention I do not altogether despair of teaching you something, but if you do not wish to learn I cannot help you. You might as well go back to your own country." Mason, without being given permission to speak, cried excitedly, "He can't, sir. Didn't you know? His father was chased out of Greece in a revolution or something. A big man with a black beard chased him for three miles and he had to escape in a small boat. It's true, sir. You ask him. Sapoulos got hit on the knee with a brick, didn't you, Sappy? And his grandmother—at least I think it was his grandmother—"

"That will do, Mason," I said. "Who threw that?"

I am not, I hope, a martinet, but I will not tolerate the throwing of paper darts or other missiles in my algebra set. Some of the boys make small pellets out of their blotting paper and flick them with their garters. This sort of thing has to be put down with a firm hand or work becomes impossible. I accordingly warned the boy responsible that another offence would mean an imposition. He had the impertinence to ask what sort of an imposition. I said that it would be a pretty stiff imposition, and if he wished to know more exact details he had only to throw another dart to find out. He thereupon threw another dart.

I confess that at this I lost patience and threatened to keep the whole set in during the afternoon if I had any more trouble. The lesson then proceeded.

It was not until I had completed my working out of the problem on the board that I realised I had worked on the assumption—of course ridiculous—that I was twice my father's age instead of half. This gave the false figure of minus ninety for my own age. Some boy said "Crikey!" I at once whipped round and demanded to know who had spoken. Otterway suggested that it might have been Hopgood II talking in his sleep. I was about to reprimand Otterway for impertinence when I realised that Hopgood actually was asleep and had in fact, according to Williamson, been asleep since the beginning of the period. Mason said, "He hasn't missed much anyway."

I then threw my Hall and Knight. It has been suggested that it was intended to hit Hopgood II. This is false. I never wake up sleeping boys by throwing books at them, as hundreds of old Burgrove boys will be able to testify. I intended to hit Mason, and it was by a mischance which I shall always regret that Hopgood was struck. I have had, as I told my Headmaster, a great deal to put up with from Mason, and no one who knows the boy blames me for

the attempt to do him some physical violence. It is indeed an accepted maxim in the Common Room that physical violence is the only method of dealing with Mason which produces any results; to this the Headmaster some time ago added a rider that the boy be instructed to remove his spectacles before being assaulted. That I forgot to do this must be put down to the natural agitation of a mathematics master caught out in an error. But I blame myself for it.

I do not blame myself for the unfortunate stunning of Hopgood II. It was an accident. I did all I could for the boy when it was discovered (I think by Etheridge) that he had been rendered unconscious. I immediately summoned the Headmaster and we talked the matter over. We agreed that concealment was impossible and that I must give a full account of the circumstances to the police. Meanwhile the work of the school was to go on as usual; Hopgood himself would have wished it. The Headmaster added that in any case the School must come first.

I have made this statement after being duly cautioned, of my own free will and in the presence of witnesses. I have read it through three times with considerable satisfaction, and am prepared to state on oath that it is a true and full account of the circumstances leading up to the accident to Hopgood II. I wish only to add that the boy is now none the worse for the blow, and has indeed shown increased zeal for his studies since the occurrence.

8th July, 1939 (Signed) A. J. WENTWORTH, B.A.

JAMES THURBER

University Days

I PASSED all the other courses that I took at my university, but I could never pass botany. This was because all botany students had to spend several hours a week in a laboratory looking through a microscope at plant cells, and I could never see through a microscope. I never once saw a cell through a microscope. This used to enrage my instructor. He would wander around the laboratory pleased with the progress all the students were making in drawing the involved and, so I am told, interesting structure of flower cells, until he came to me. I would just be standing there. "I can't see anything," I would say. He would begin patiently enough, explaining how anybody can see through a microscope, but he would always end up in a fury, claiming that I could *too* see through a microscope but just pretended that I couldn't. "It takes away from the beauty of flowers anyway," I used to tell him. "We are not concerned with beauty in this course," he would say. "We are concerned

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solely with what I may call the *mechanics* of flars." "Well," I'd say, "I can't see anything." "Try it just once again," he'd say, and I would put my eye to the microscope and see nothing at all, except now and again, a nebulous milky substance—a phenomenon of maladjustment. You were supposed to see a vivid, restless clockwork of sharply defined plant cells. "I see what looks like a lot of milk," I would tell him. This, he claimed, was the result of my not having adjusted the microscope properly; so he would readjust it for me, or rather, for himself. And I would look again and see milk.

I finally took a deferred pass, as they called it, and waited a year and tried again. (You had to pass one of the biological sciences or you couldn't graduate.) The professor had come back from vacation brown as a berry, bright-eyed, and eager to explain cell-structure again to his classes. "Well," he said to me, cheerily, when we met in the first laboratory hour of the semester, "we're going to see cells this time, aren't we?" "Yes, sir," I said. Students to right of me and to left of me and in front of me were secing cells; what's more, they were quietly drawing pictures of them in their notebooks. Of course, I didn't see anything.

"We'll try it," the professor said to me, grimly, "with every adjustment of the microscope known to man. As God is my witness, I'll arrange this glass so that you see cells through it or I'll give up teaching. In twenty-two years of botany, I—" He cut off abruptly for he was beginning to quiver all over, like Lionel Barrymore, and he genuinely wished to hold onto his temper; his scenes with me had taken a great deal out of him.

So we tried it with every adjustment of the microscope known to man. With only one of them did I see anything but blackness or the familiar lacteal opacity, and that time I saw, to my pleasure and amazement, a variegated constellation of flecks, specks, and dots. These I hastily drew. The instructor, noting my activity, came back from an adjoining desk, a smile on his lips and his eyebrows high in hope. He looked at my cell drawing. "What's that?" he demanded, with a hint of a squeal in his voice. "That's what I saw," I said. "You didn't, you didn't, you *did*n't!" he screamed, losing control of his temper instantly, and he bent over and squinted into the microscope. His head snapped up. "That's your eye!" he shouted. "You've fixed the lens so that it reflects! You've drawn your eye!"

Another course that I didn't like, but somehow managed to pass, was economics. I went to that class straight from the botany class, which didn't help me any in understanding either subject. I used to get them mixed up. But not as mixed up as another student in my economics class who came there direct from a physics laboratory. He was a tackle on the football team, named Bolenciecwcz. At that time Ohio State University had one of the best football teams in the country, and Bolenciecwcz was one of its outstanding stars. In order to be eligible to play it was necessary for him to keep up in his studies, a very difficult matter, for while he was not dumber than an ox he was not any smarter. Most of his professors were lenient and helped him along. None gave him more hints, in answering questions, or asked him simpler ones than the economics professor, a thin, timid man named Bassum. One day when we were on the subject of transportation and distribution, it came Bolenciecwcz's

turn to answer a question. "Name one means of transportation," the professor said to him. No light came into the big tackle's eyes. "Just any means of transportation," said the professor. Bolenciecwcz sat staring at him. "That is," pursued the professor, "any medium, agency, or method of going from one place to another." Bolenciecwcz had the look of a man who is being led into a trap. "You may choose among steam, horse-drawn, or electrically propelled vehicles," said the instructor. "I might suggest the one which we commonly take in making long journeys across land." There was a profound silence in which everybody stirred uneasily, including Bolenciecwcz and Mr. Bassum. Mr. Bassum abruptly broke this silence in an amazing manner. "Choo-choo-choo," he said, in a low voice, and turned instantly scarlet. He glanced appealingly around the room. All of us, of course, shared Mr. Bassum's desire that Bolenciecwcz should stay abreast of the class in economics, for the Illinois game, one of the hardest and most important of the season, was only a week off. "Toot, toot, too-tooooooot!" some student with a deep voice moaned, and we all looked encouragingly at Bolenciecwcz. Somebody else gave a fine imitation of a locomotive letting off steam. Mr. Bassum himself rounded off the little show. "Ding, dong, ding, dong," he said, hopefully. Bolenciecwcz was staring at the floor now, trying to think, his great brow furrowed, his huge hands rubbing together, his face red.

"How did you come to college this year, Mr. Bolenciecwcz?" asked the professor. "*Chuf*fa chuffa, *chuf*fa chuffa."

"M'father sent me," said the football player.

"What on?" asked Bassum.

"I git an 'lowance," said the tackle, in a low, husky voice, obviously embarrassed.

"No, no," said Bassum. "Name a means of transportation. What did you *ride* here on?"

"Train," said Bolenciecwcz.

"Quite right," said the professor. "Now, Mr. Nugent, will you tell us—"

If I went through anguish in botany and economics—for different reasons—gymnasium work was even worse. I don't even like to think about it. They wouldn't let you play games or join in the exercises with your glasses on and I couldn't see with mine off. I bumped into professors, horizontal bars, agricultural students, and swinging iron rings. Not being able to see, I could take it but I couldn't dish it out. Also, in order to pass gymnasium (and you had to pass it to graduate) you had to learn to swim if you didn't know how. I didn't like the swimming pool, I didn't like swimming, and I didn't like the swimming instructor, and after all these years I still don't. I never swam but I passed my gym work anyway, by having another student give my gymnasium number (978) and swim across the pool in my place. He was a quiet, amiable blonde youth, number 473, and he would have seen through a microscope for me if we could have got away with it, but we couldn't get away with it. Another thing I didn't like about gymnasium work was that they made you strip the day you registered. It is impossible for me to be happy when I am stripped and being asked a lot of questions. Still, I did better than a lanky agricultural student who was cross-examined just before I was. They

asked each student what college he was in—that is, whether Arts, Engineering, Commerce, or Agriculture. "What college are you in?" the instructor snapped at the youth in front of me. "Ohio State University," he said promptly.

It wasn't that agricultural student but it was another a whole lot like him who decided to take up journalism, possibly on the ground that when farming went to hell he could fall back on newspaper work. He didn't realize, of course, that that would be very much like falling back full-length on a kit of carpenter's tools. Haskins didn't seem cut out for journalism, being too embarrassed to talk to anybody and unable to use a typewriter, but the editor of the college paper assigned him to the cow barns, the sheep house, the horse pavilion, and the animal husbandry department generally. This was a genuinely big "beat," for it took up five times as much ground and got ten times as great a legislative appropriation as the College of Liberal Arts. The agricultural student knew animals, but nevertheless his stories were dull and colorlessly written. He took all afternoon on each of them, because he had to hunt for each letter on the typewriter. Once in a while he had to ask somebody to help him hunt. "C" and "L," in particular, were hard letters for him to find. His editor finally got pretty much annoyed at the farmer-journalist because his pieces were so uninteresting. "See here, Haskins," he snapped at him one day, "why is it we never have anything hot from you on the horse pavilion? Here we have two hundred head of horses on this campus—more than any other university in the Western Conference except Purdue—and yet you never get any real low-down on them. Now shoot over to the horse barns and dig up something lively." Haskins shambled out and came back in about an hour; he said he had something. "Well, start it off snappily," said the editor. "Something people will read." Haskins set to work and in a couple of hours brought a sheet of typewritten paper to the desk; it was a two-hundred-word story about some disease that had broken out among the horses. Its opening sentence was simple but arresting. It read: "Who has noticed the sores on the tops of the horses in the animal husbandry building?"

Ohio State was a land grant university and therefore two years of military drill was compulsory. We drilled with old Springfield rifles and studied the tactics of the Civil War even though the World War was going on at the time. At 11 o'clock each morning thousands of freshmen and sophomores used to deploy over the campus, moodily creeping up on the old chemistry building. It was good training for the kind of warfare that was waged at Shiloh but it had no connection with what was going on in Europe. Some people used to think there was German money behind it, but they didn't dare say so or they would have been thrown in jail as German spies. It was a period of muddy thought and marked, I believe, the decline of higher education in the Middle West.

As a soldier I was never any good at all. Most of the cadets were glumly indifferent soldiers, but I was no good at all. Once General Littlefield, who was commandant of the cadet corps, popped up in front of me during regimental drill and snapped, "You are the main trouble with this university!" I think he meant that my type was the main trouble with the university but he may have meant me individually. I was mediocre at drill, certainly—that is,

until my senior year. By that time I had drilled longer than anybody else in the Western Conference, having failed at military at the end of each preceding year so that I had to do it all over again. I was the only senior still in uniform. The uniform which, when new, had made me look like an interurban railway conductor, now that it had become faded and too tight, made me look like Bert Williams in his bell-boy act. This had a definitely bad effect on my morale. Even so, I had become by sheer practise little short of wonderful at squad manoeuvres.

One day General Littlefield picked our company out of the whole regiment and tried to get it mixed up by putting it through one movement after another as fast as we could execute them: squads right, squads left, squads on right into line, squads right about, squads left front into line, etc. In about three minutes one hundred and nine men were marching in one direction and I was marching away from them at an angle of forty-five degrees, all alone. "Company, halt!" shouted General Littlefield. "That man is the only man who has it right!" I was made a corporal for my achievement.

The next day General Littlefield summoned me to his office. He was swatting flies when I went in. I was silent and he was silent too, for a long time. I don't think he remembered me or why he had sent for me, but he didn't want to admit it. He swatted some more flies, keeping his eyes on them narrowly before he let go with the swatter. "Button up your coat!" he snapped. Looking back on it now I can see that he meant me although he was looking at a fly, but I just stood there. Another fly came to rest on a paper in front of the general and began rubbing its hind legs together. The general lifted the swatter cautiously. I moved restlessly and the fly flew away. "You startled him!" barked General Littlefield, looking at me severely. I said I was sorry. "That won't help the situation!" snapped the general, with cold military logic. I didn't see what I could do except offer to chase some more flies toward his desk, but I didn't say anything. He stared out the window at the faraway figures of co-eds crossing the campus toward the library. Finally, he told me I could go. So I went. He either didn't know which cadet I was or else he forgot what he wanted to see me about. It may have been that he wished to apologize for having called me the main trouble with the university; or maybe he had decided to compliment me on my brilliant drilling of the day before and then at the last minute decided not to. I don't know. I don't think about it much any more.

READING AND WRITING

INTRODUCTION

THE FOUR essays in this section have been chosen to focus attention on a critical modern problem in reading and writing. People today, perhaps more than at any other time in history, are likely to be afraid of language or indifferent to it. We are afraid—if we haven't already become quite numb—of what can be done to us with language. Gibson's essay reminds us of the skill needed to detect and evaluate the subtle demands made on us by writers to behave and react in certain ways, to be various kinds of "persons." Orwell's essay reminds us of the dangerously vague or even contradictory meanings of political words in a time of idealogical conflict. We can almost understand what has led the Chicago *Tribune* to propose abandoning the use of the word "democracy." Or, on a lower level, our fear of words may even be aggravated by the full-page newspaper advertisements warning us against the use of "incorrect" English, of slang and "bad" grammar.

The proper cure of fear is knowledge. What, we should ask, really needs to be feared in the use of language? The following essays help to answer that question. They do not argue for timorous correctness, for giving up words because they are hard to use or because we have not yet realized the ideals they symbolize. These essays argue, rather, for a more precise and vigorous use of the full language. They may be usefully recalled or reread in connection with many of the selections in this book.

H. L. MENCKEN

The Nature of Slang

SLANG is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "language of a highly colloquial type, considered as below the level of standard educated speech, and consisting either of new words or of current words employed in some special sense." The origin of the word is unknown. Ernest Weekley, in his "Etymological Dictionary of Modern English," 1921, suggests that it may have some relation to the verb *to sling,* and cites two Norwegian dialect words, based upon the cognate verb *slenge* or *slengje,* that appear to be its brothers: *slengjeord,* a neologism, and *slengjenamn,* a nickname. But he is not sure, so he adds the note that "some regard it as an argotic perversion of the French *langue,* language." A German philologian, O. Ritter, believes that it may be derived, not from *langue,* but from *language* itself, most probably by a combination of blending and shortening, as in *thieve(s' lang)uage, beggar(s' lang)-uage,* and so on.[1] "Webster's New International," 1934, follows somewhat haltingly after Weekley. The Oxford Dictionary, 1919, evades the question by dismissing *slang* as "a word of cant origin, the ultimate source of which is not apparent." When it first appeared in English, about the middle of the Eighteenth Century,[2] it was employed as a synonym of *cant,* and so designated "the special vocabulary used by any set of persons of a low or disreputable character"; and half a century later it began to be used interchangeably with *argot,* which means the vocabulary special to any group, trade or profession. But during the past fifty years the three terms have tended to be more or less clearly distinguished. The jargon of criminals is both a kind of slang and a kind of argot, but it is best described as *cant,* a word derived from the Latin *cantus,* and going back, in its present sense, to *c.* 1540. One of the principal aims of cant is to make what is said unintelligible to persons outside the group, a purpose that is absent from most forms of argot and slang. Argot often includes slang, as when a circus man calls his patrons *suckers* and speaks of refunding money to one full of complaints as *squaring the beef,* but when he calls the circus grounds the *lot* and the manager's quarters the *white wagon,* he is simply using the special language of his trade, and it is quite as respect-

[1] *Archiv fur das Studium der neueren Sprachen,* Vol. CXVI, 1906. I am indebted for the reference to Concerning the Etymology of *Slang,* by Fr. Klaeber, *American Speech,* April, 1926. The process is not unfamiliar in English: *tawdry,* from *Saint Audrey,* offers an example.

[2] It has since appeared in German, French and Swedish, as is shown by the titles of Deutsches Slang, by Arnold Genthe; Strassburg, 1892; Le Slang, by J. Manchon; Paris, 1923; and Stockholmska Slang, by W. P. Uhrstrom; Stockholm, 1911.

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able as the argot of lawyers or diplomats. The essence of slang is that it is of general dispersion, but still stands outside the accepted canon of the language. It is, says George H. McKnight,[3] "a form of colloquial speech created in a spirit of defiance and aiming at freshness and novelty. . . . Its figures are consciously farfetched and are intentionally drawn from the most ignoble of sources. Closely akin to profanity in its spirit, its aim is to shock." Among the impulses leading to its invention, adds Henry Bradley,[4] "the two more important seem to be the desire to secure increased vivacity and the desire to secure increased sense of intimacy in the use of language." "It seldom attempts," says the London *Times,* "to supply deficiencies in conventional language; its object is nearly always to provide a new and different way of saying what can be perfectly well said without it."[5] What chiefly lies behind it is simply a kind of linguistic exuberance, an excess of word-making energy. It relates itself to the standard language a great deal as dancing relates itself to music. But there is also something else. The best slang is not only ingenious and amusing; it also embodies a kind of social criticism. It not only provides new names for a series of everyday concepts, some new and some old; it also says something about them. "Words which produce the slang effect," observes Frank K. Sechrist,[6] "arouse associations which are incongruous or incompatible with those of customary thinking."

Everyone, including even the metaphysician in his study and the eremite in his cell, has a large vocabulary of slang, but the vocabulary of the vulgar is likely to be larger than that of the cultured, and it is harder worked. Its content may be divided into two categories: (*a*) old words, whether used singly or in combination, that have been put to new uses, usually metaphorical, and (*b*) new words that have not yet been admitted to the standard vocabulary. Examples of the first type are *rubberneck,* for a gaping and prying person, and *iceberg,* for a cold woman; examples of the second are *hoosegow, flimflam, blurb, bazoo* and *blah.* There is a constant movement of slang terms into ac-

[3] English Words and Their Background; New York, 1923, p. 43.

[4] *Art.* Slang, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 14 ed.; New York, 1929.

[5] American Slang (leading article), May 11, 1931. Many other definitions of *slang* are quoted in What is Slang? by H. F. Reves, *American Speech,* Jan., 1926. A few by literati may be added. "Slang," said Carl Sandburg, "is language that takes off its coat, spits on its hands, and gets to work." "Slang," said Victor Hugo, "is a dressing-room in which language, having an evil deed to prepare, puts on a disguise." "Slang," said Ambrose Bierce, "is the speech of him who robs the literary garbage-carts on their way to the dumps." Emerson and Whitman were its partisans. "What can describe the folly and emptiness of scolding," asked the former (Journals, 1840), "like the word *jawing*?" "Slang," said Whitman, "is the wholesome fermentation or eructation of those processes eternally active in language, by which the froth and specks are thrown up, mostly to pass away, though occasionally to settle and permanently crystalize." (Slang in America, 1885.) And again: "These words ought to be collected—the bad words as well as the good. Many of these bad words are fine." (An American Primer, *c.* 1856.)

[6] The Psychology of Unconventional Language, *Pedagogical Seminary,* Dec., 1913, p. 443. "Our feeling and reactions to slang words," continues Sechrist, "may be due to the word as such, to the use it is put to, to the individual using it, to the group using it, to the thing tabooed to which it applies, or to the context in which it is found. . . . Unconventional language keeps close to the objective world of things. It keeps oriented to the sense of touch, contact, pressure, preferring a language material which is ultimately verifiable by the most realistic sense." This last, I fear, is somewhat dubious. See also An Investigation of the Function and Use of Slang, by A. H. Melville, *Pedagogical Seminary,* March, 1912; and La Psychologie de l'argot, by Raoul de La Grasserie, *Revue Philosophique* (Paris), Vol. LX, 1905.

cepted usage. *Nice,* as an adjective of all work, signifying anything satisfactory, was once in slang use only, and the purists denounced it,[7] but today no one would question "a *nice* day," "a *nice* time," or "a *nice* hotel." The French word *tête* has been a sound name for the human head for many centuries, but its origin was in *testa,* meaning a pot, a favorite slang word of the soldiers of the decaying Roman Empire, exactly analogous to our *block, nut* and *bean.* The verb-phrase *to hold up* is now perfectly good American, but so recently as 1901 the late Brander Matthews was sneering at it as slang. In the same way many other verb-phrases, *e.g., to cave in, to fill the bill* and *to fly off the handle,* once viewed askance, have gradually worked their way to a relatively high level of the standard speech. On some indeterminate tomorrow *to stick up* and *to take for a ride* may follow them. "Even the greatest purist," says Robert Lynd, "does not object today to the inclusion of the word *bogus* in a literary English vocabulary, though a hundred years ago *bogus* was an American slang word meaning an apparatus for coining false money. *Carpetbagger* and *bunkum* are other American slang words that have naturalized themselves in English speech, and *mob* is an example of English slang that was once as vulgar as *incog* or *photo.*" [8] Sometimes a word comes in below the salt, gradually wins respectability, and then drops to the level of slang, and is worked to death. An example is offered by *strenuous.* It was first used by John Marston, the dramatist, in 1599, and apparently he invented it, as he invented *puffy, chilblained, spurious* and *clumsy.* As strange as it may seem to us today, all these words were frowned on by the purists of the time as uncouth and vulgar, and Ben Jonson attacked them with violence in his "Poetaster," written in 1601. In particular, Ben was upset by *strenuous.* But it made its way despite him, and during the next three centuries it was used by a multitude of impeccable authors, including Milton, Swift, Burke, Hazlitt, and Macaulay. And then Theodore Roosevelt invented and announced the Strenuous Life, the adjective struck the American fancy and passed into slang, and in a little while it was so horribly threadbare that all persons of careful speech sickened of it, and to this day it bears the ridiculous connotation that hangs about most slang, and is seldom used seriously.

All neologisms, of course, are not slang. At about the time the word *hoosegow,* derived from the Spanish, came into American slang use, the word *rodeo,* also Spanish, came into the standard vocabulary. The distinction between the two is not hard to make out. *Hoosegow* was really not needed. We had plenty of words to designate a jail, and they were old and good words. *Hoosegow* came in simply because there was something arresting and outlandish about it—and the users of slang have a great liking for pungent novelties. *Rodeo,* on the other hand, designated something for which there was no other word in American—something, indeed, of which the generality of Americans had just become aware—and so it was accepted at once. Many neologisms have been

[7] It came in about 1765. During the early Eighteenth Century *elegant* was commonly used, and in Shakespeare's day the favorite was *fine. Nice* has had many rivals, *e.g., tipping* and *topping* in England, and *grand* and *swell* in America, but it hangs on.

[8] The King's English and the Prince's American, *Living Age,* March 15, 1928.

the deliberate inventions of quite serious men, *e.g., gas, kodak, vaseline. Scientist* was concocted in 1840 by William Whewell, professor of moral theology and casuistical divinity at Cambridge. *Ampere* was proposed solemnly by the Electric Congress which met in Paris in 1881, and was taken into all civilized languages instantly. *Radio* was suggested for wireless telegrams by an international convention held in Berlin in 1906, and was extended to wireless broadcasts in the United States about 1920, though the English prefer *wireless* in the latter sense. But such words as these were never slang; they came into general and respectable use at once, along with *argon, x-ray, carburetor, stratosphere, bacillus,* and many another of the sort. These words were all sorely needed; it was impossible to convey the ideas behind them without them, save by clumsy circumlocutions. It is one of the functions of slang, also, to serve a short cut, but it is seldom if ever really necessary. Instead, as W. D. Whitney once said, it is only a wanton product of "the exuberance of mental activity, and the natural delight of language-making." [9] This mental activity, of course, is the function of a relatively small class. "The unconscious genius of the people," said Paul Shorey, "no more invents slang than it invents epics. It is coined in the sweat of their brow by smart writers who, as they would say, are *out for the coin.*" [10] Or, if not out for the coin, then at least out for notice, *kudos,* admiration, or maybe simply for satisfaction of the "natural delight of language-making." Some of the best slang emerges from the argot of college students, but everyone who has observed the process of its gestation knows that the general run of students have nothing to do with the matter, save maybe to provide an eager welcome for the novelties set before them. College slang is actually made by the campus wits, just as general slang is made by the wits of the newspapers and theaters. The idea of calling an engagement-ring a *handcuff* did not occur to the young gentlemen of Harvard by mass inspiration; it occurred to a certain definite one of them, probably after long and deliberate cogitation, and he gave it to the rest and to his country.

Toward the end of 1933 W. J. Funk of the Funk and Wagnalls Company, publishers of the Standard Dictionary and the *Literary Digest,* undertook to supply the newspapers with the names of the ten most fecund makers of the American slang then current. He nominated T. A. (Tad) Dorgan, the cartoonist; Sime Silverman, editor of the theatrical weekly, *Variety;* Gene Buck, the song writer; Damon Runyon, the sports writer; Walter Winchell and Arthur (Bugs) Baer, newspaper columnists; George Ade, Ring Lardner and Gelett Burgess.[11] He should have added Jack Conway and Johnny O'Connor

[9] The Life and Growth of Language; New York, 1897, p. 113.

[10] The American Language, in Academy Papers; New York, 1925, p. 149. Henry Bradley says (*Art.* Slang, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 14th ed. 1929) that "slang develops most freely in groups with a strong realization of group activity and interest, and groups without this interest, *e.g.,* farmers, rarely invent slang terms."

[11] Mr. Funk added my own name to the list, but this, apparently, was only a fraternal courtesy, for I have never devised anything properly describable as slang, save maybe *booboisie.* This was a deliberate invention. One evening in February, 1922, Ernest Boyd and I were the guests of Harry C. Black at his home in Baltimore. We fell to talking of the paucity of words to describe the victims of the Depression then current, and decided to remedy it. So we put together a list of about

of the staff of *Variety;* James Gleason, author of "Is Zat So?"; Rube Goldberg, the cartoonist; Johnny Stanley and Johnny Lyman, Broadway figures; Wilson Mizner and Milt Gross. Conway, who died in 1928, is credited with the invention of *palooka* (a third-rater), *belly-laugh, Arab* (for Jew), *S.A.* (sex appeal), *high-hat, pushover, boloney* (for buncombe, later adopted by Alfred E. Smith), *headache* (wife), and the verbs *to scram, to click* (meaning to succeed), and *to laugh that off.*[12] Winchell, if he did not actually invent *whoopee,* at least gave it the popularity it enjoyed, *c.* 1930.[13] He is also the father of *Chicagorilla, Joosh* (for Jewish), *pash* (for passion) and *shafts* (for legs), and he has devised a great many nonce words and phrases, some of them euphemistic and others far from it, *e.g.,* for married: *welded, sealed, lohengrined, merged* and *middle-aisled;* for divorced: *Reno-vated;* for contemplating divorce: *telling it to a judge, soured, curdled, in husband trouble, this-and-that-way,* and *on the verge;* for in love: *on the merge, on fire, uh-huh, that way, cupiding, Adam-and-Eveing,* and *man-and-womaning it;* for expecting young: *infanticipating, baby-bound* and *storked.* I add a few other characteristic specimens of his art: *go-ghetto, debutramp, phffft, jooffy* (a pest), *Wildeman* (a homosexual), *heheheh* (a mocking laugh), Hard-Times Square (Times Square), *blessed-event* (the birth of young), *the Hardened Artery* (Broadway), *radiodor* (a radio announcer), *moom-pitcher* (moving picture), *girl-mad, Park Rowgue* (a newspaper reporter) and *intelligentlemen.* Most of these, of course, had only their brief days, but a few promise to survive. Dorgan, who died in 1929, was the begetter of *apple-sauce, twenty-three, skiddoo,*[14] *ball-and-chain* (for wife), *cake-eater, dumb Dora, dumbell* (for stupid person), *nobody home,* and *you said it.* He also gave the world, "Yes, we have no bananas," though he did not write the song, and he seems to have originated *the cat's pajamas,* which was followed by a long series of

fifty terms, and on Feb. 15 I published it in the Baltimore *Evening Sun.* It included *boobariat, booberati, boobarian, boobomaniac, boobult* and *booboisie.* Only *booboisie,* which happened to be one of my contributions, caught on. A bit later I added *Homo boobus,* and Boyd, who is learned in the tongues, corrected it to *Homo boobiens.* This also had its day, but its use was confined to the *intelligentsia,* and it was hardly slang. Even *booboisie* lies rather outside the bounds.

[12] Conway's coinages are listed by Walter Winchell in Your Broadway and Mine, New York *Graphic,* Oct. 4, 1928, and in A Primer of Broadway Slang, *Vanity Fair,* Nov., 1927. On December 29, 1926, under the title of Why I Write Slang, Conway contributed a very shrewd article to *Variety.* In it he differentiated clearly between the cant of criminals, which is unintelligible to the general, and what he called Broadway slang. The latter differs from the former, he said, "as much as Bostonese from hog Latin."

[13] Lexicographical explorers have found *whoopee* in a cowboy song published by John A. Lomax in 1910, in Kipling's Loot (Barrack-Room Ballads), 1892, and in Mark Twain's A Tramp Abroad, 1880. *Whoope* was common in the English literature of the Fifteenth, Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries, but it was probably only our *whoop* with a silent final *e.* Said Winchell in the New York *Mirror,* Jan. 17, 1935: "They contend *whoopee* is older than Shakespeare. Well, all right. I never claimed it, anyhow. But let 'em take *makin' whoopee* from me and look out!"

[14] Dorgan's claims to both *twenty-three* and its brother *skiddoo* have been disputed. An editorial in the Louisville *Times,* May 9, 1929, credits Frank Parker Stockbridge with the theory that *twenty-three* was launched by The Only Way, a dramatization of Dickens's Tale of Two Cities, presented by Henry Miller in New York in 1899. In the last act an old woman counted the victims of the guillotine, and Sydney Carton was the twenty-third. According to Stockbridge, her solemn "Twenty-three!" was borrowed by Broadway, and quickly became popular. He says that *skiddoo,* derived from *skedaddle,* was "added for the enlightenment of any who hadn't seen the play."

similar superlatives.[15] The sports writers, of course, are all assiduous makers of slang, and many of their inventions are taken into the general vocabulary. Thus, those who specialize in boxing have contributed, in recent years, *kayo, cauliflower-ear, prelim, shadow-boxing, slug-fest, title-holder, punch-drunk,*[16] *brother-act, punk, to side-step* and *to go the limit;*[17] those who cover baseball have made many additions to the list of baseball terms given in Chapter V;[18] and those who follow the golf tournaments have given currency to *birdie, fore, par, bunker, divot, fairway, to tee off, stance,* and *onesome, twosome, threesome* and so on—some of them received into the standard speech, but the majority lingering in the twilight of slang.[19]

George Philip Krapp attempts to distinguish between slang and sound idiom by setting up the doctrine that the former is "more expressive than the situation demands." "It is," he says, "a kind of hyperesthesia in the use of language. *To laugh in your sleeve* is idiom because it arises out of a natural situation; it is a metaphor derived from the picture of one raising his sleeve to his face to hide a smile, a metaphor which arose naturally enough in early periods when sleeves were long and flowing; but *to talk through your hat* is slang, not only because it is new, but also because it is a grotesque exaggeration of the truth."[20] The theory, unluckily, is combated by many plain facts. *To hand it to him, to get away with it* and even *to hand him a lemon* are certainly not metaphors that transcend the practicable and probable, and yet all are un-

[15] See Tad Dorgan is Dead, by W. L. Werner, *American Speech,* Aug., 1929. *The flea's eyebrows, the bee's knees, the snake's hips* and *the canary's tusks* will be recalled. A writer in *Liberty,* quoted in *American Speech,* Feb., 1927, p. 258, says that Dorgan also helped to popularize *hard-boiled,* the invention of Jack Doyle, keeper of a billiard academy in New York.

[16] For a learned discourse on the pathological meaning of this term see *Punch Drunk,* by Harrison S. Martland, *Journal of the American Medical Association,* Oct. 13, 1928. In severe cases "there may develop a peculiar tilting of the head, a marked dragging of one or both legs, a staggering, propulsive gait with facial characteristics of the parkinsonian syndrome, or a backward swaying of the body, tremors, vertigo and deafness." Some of the synonyms are *cuckoo, goofy, cutting paper-dolls* and *slug-nutty.*

[17] See Jargon of Fistiana, by Robert E. Creighton, *American Speech,* Oct., 1933, and Color Stuff, by Harold E. Rockwell, the same, Oct., 1927. William Henry Nugent, in The Sports Section, *American Mercury,* March, 1929, says that the father of them all was Pierce Egan, who established *Pierce Egan's Life in London and Sporting Guide* in 1824. A year earlier Egan printed a revised edition of Francis Grose's Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongues, 1785. In it appeared *to stall off, cheese it, to trim* (in the sense of to swindle), *to pony up, squealer, sucker, yellow-belly,* and many other locutions still in use.

[18] See Baseball Slang, by V. Samuels, *American Speech,* Feb., 1927, p. 255. Hugh Fullerton, one of the rev. elders of the fraternity, says that the first baseball reports to be adorned with neologisms, *e.g., south-paw, initial-sack, grass-cutter, shut-out* and *circus-play,* were written by Charlie Seymour of the Chicago *Inter-Ocean* and Lennie Washburn of the Chicago *Herald* during the 80's. Some years ago the Chicago *Record-Herald,* apparently alarmed by the extravagant fancy of its baseball reporters, asked its readers if they would prefer a return to plain English. Such of them as were literate enough to send in their votes were almost unanimously against a change. As one of them said, "One is nearer the park when Schulte *slams the pill* than when he merely *hits the ball.*" For the argot of baseball players, as opposed to the slang of sports writers, see Baseball Terminology, by Henry J. Heck, *American Speech,* April, 1930.

[19] See Golf Gab, by Anne Angel, *American Speech,* Sept., 1926. In 1934 Willis Stork, a student of Dr. Louise Pound at the University of Nebraska, prepared a paper on The Jargon of the Sports Writers, mainly confined to an examination of the sports pages of two Lincoln, Neb., papers, the *State Journal* and the *Star* from July 1, 1933 to July 15, 1934. So far it has not been published. See also Our Golf Lingo Peeves the British, *Literary Digest,* April 11, 1931.

[20] Modern English; New York, 1910, p. 211.

doubtedly slang. On the other hand, there is palpable exaggeration in such phrases as "he is not worth the powder it would take to kill him," in such adjectives as *breakbone* (fever), and in such compounds as *fire-eater,* and yet it would be absurd to dismiss them as slang. Between *blockhead* and *bonehead* there is little to choose, but the former is sound English, whereas the latter is American slang. So with many familiar similes, *e.g., like greased lightning, as scarce as hen's teeth:* they are grotesque hyperboles, but hardly slang.

The true distinction, in so far as any distinction exists at all, is that indicated by Whitney, Bradley, Sechrist and McKnight. Slang originates in the effort of ingenious individuals to make the language more pungent and picturesque—to increase the store of terse and striking words, to widen the boundaries of metaphor, and to provide a vocabulary for new shades of difference in meaning. As Dr. Otto Jespersen has pointed out,[21] this is also the aim of poets (as, indeed, it is of prose writers), but they are restrained by consideration of taste and decorum, and also, not infrequently, by historical or logical considerations. The maker of slang is under no such limitations: he is free to confect his neologism by any process that can be grasped by his customers, and out of any materials available, whether native or foreign. He may adopt any of the traditional devices of metaphor. Making an attribute to duty for the whole gives him *stiff* for corpse, *flat-foot* for policeman, *smoke-eater* for fireman, *skirt* for woman, *lunger* for consumptive, and *yes-man* for sycophant. Hidden resemblances give him *morgue* for a newspaper's file of clippings, *bean* for head, and *sinker* for a doughnut. The substitution of far-fetched figures for literal description gives him *glad-rags* for fine clothing, *bonehead* for ignoramus, *booze-joundry* for saloon, and *cart-wheel* for dollar, and the contrary resort to a brutal literalness gives him *kill-joy, low-life* and *hand-out.* He makes abbreviations with a free hand—*beaut* for beauty, *gas* for gasoline, and so on. He makes bold avail of composition, as in *attaboy* and *whatdyecallem,* and of onomatopoeia, as in *biff, zowie, honky-tonk* and *wow.* He enriches the ancient counters of speech with picturesque synonyms, as in *guy, gink, duck, bird* and *bozo* for fellow. He transfers proper names to common usage, as in *ostermoor* for mattress, and then sometimes gives them remote figurative significances, as in *ostermoors* for whiskers. Above all, he enriches the vocabulary of action with many new verbs and verb-phrases, *e.g., to burp, to neck, to gang, to frame up, to hit the pipe, to give him the works,* and so on. If, by the fortunes that condition language-making, his neologism acquires a special and limited meaning, not served by any existing locution, it enters into sound idiom and is presently wholly legitimatized; if, on the contrary, it is adopted by the populace as a counter-word and employed with such banal imitativeness that it soon loses any definite significance whatever, then it remains slang and is avoided by the finical. An example of the former process is afforded by *tommy-rot.* It first appeared as English school-boy slang, but its obvious utility soon

[21] Language: Its Nature, Development and Origin; London, 1922, p. 300. G. K. Chesterton said pretty much the same thing in The Defendant; London, 1901; "All slang is metaphor, and all metaphor is poetry."

brought it into good usage. In one of Jerome K. Jerome's books, "Paul Kelver," there is the following dialogue:

"The wonderful songs that nobody ever sings, the wonderful pictures that nobody ever paints, and all the rest of it. It's *tommy-rot!*"

"I wish you wouldn't use slang."

"Well, you know what I mean. What is the proper word? Give it to me."

"I suppose you mean *cant.*"

"No, I don't. *Cant* is something that you don't believe in yourself.[22] It's *tommy-rot;* there isn't any other word."

Nor were there any other words for *hubbub, fireworks, foppish, fretful, sportive, dog-weary, to bump* and *to dwindle* in Shakespeare's time; he adopted and dignified them because they met genuine needs.[23] Nor was there any other satisfactory word for *graft* when it came in, nor for *rowdy,* nor for *boom,* nor for *joy-ride,* nor for *slacker,* nor for *trust-buster.* Such words often retain a humorous quality; they are used satirically and hence appear but seldom in wholly serious discourse. But they have standing in the language nevertheless, and only a prig would hesitate to use them as George Saintsbury used *the best of the bunch* and *joke-smith.* So recently as 1929 the Encyclopaedia Britannica listed *bootlegger, speakeasy, dry, wet, crook, fake, fizzle, hike, hobo, poppycock, racketeer* and *O.K.* as American slang terms, but today most of them are in perfectly good usage. What would one call a racketeer if *racketeer* were actually forbidden? It would take a phrase of four or five words at least, and they would certainly not express the idea clearly.[24]

On the other hand, many an apt and ingenious neologism, by falling too quickly into the gaping maw of the proletariat, is spoiled forthwith and forever. Once it becomes, in Oliver Wendell Holmes's phrase, "a cheap generic term, a substitute for differentiated specific expressions," it quickly acquires such flatness that the fastidious flee it as a plague. The case of *strenuous* I have already mentioned. One recalls, too, many capital verb-phrases, thus ruined by unintelligent appreciation, *e.g., to freeze on to, to have the goods, to cut no ice, to fall for,* and *to get by;* and some excellent substantives, *e.g., dope* and *dub,* and compounds, *e.g., come-on* and *easy-mark,* and simple verbs, *e.g., to neck* and *to vamp.* These are all quite as sound in structure as the great majority of our most familiar words and phrases—*to cut no ice,* for example, is certainly as good as *to butter no parsnips*—, but their adoption by the ignorant and their

[22] This sense of the word, of course, is to be differentiated sharply from the philological sense of a more or less secret jargon.

[23] A long list of his contributions to the vocabulary, including a number borrowed from the slang of his time, is to be found in Modern English in the Making, by George H. McKnight; New York, 1928, p. 188 *ff.*

[24] In 1932-33 Dr. Walter Barnes of the New York University set four of his associates to canvassing 100 college, high-school and elementary teachers on the subject of slang. They were asked to scrutinize a list of 432 slang terms, and to estimate them as acceptable, trite and forceless, doubtful, or offensive. Those chosen as most acceptable were *pep, fake, stiff upper lip, double-cross* and *booster.* All these, in ordinary discourse, are nearly if not quite irreplaceable. Others high on the list were *speakeasy, bone-dry, broke, fan, go-getter, snappy, to make the grade, pull* (in the sense of influence), *come-back, frame-up, racket, give-away, cinch* and *to turn down.* The results of the inquiry were issued in mimeograph as Studies in Current Colloquial Usage; New York, 1933.

endless use and misuse in all sorts of situations have left them tattered and obnoxious, and soon or late they will probably go the way, as Brander Matthews once said, of all the other "temporary phrases which spring up, one scarcely knows how, and flourish unaccountably for a few months, and then disappear forever, leaving no sign." Matthews was wrong in two particulars here. They do not arrive by any mysterious parthenogenesis, but come from sources which, in many cases, may be determined. And they last, alas, a good deal more than a month. *Shoo-fly* afflicted the American people for four or five years, and "I *don't* think," *aber nit, over the left, good night* and *oh yeah* were scarcely less long-lived.[25] There are, indeed, slang terms that have survived for centuries, never dropping quite out of use and yet never attaining to good usage. Among verbs, *to do* for to cheat has been traced to 1789, *to frisk* for to search to 1781, *to grease* for to bribe to 1557, and *to blow* for to boast to *c.* 1400.[26] Among nouns, *gas* for empty talk has been traced to 1847, *jug* for prison to 1834, *lip* for insolence to 1821, *sap* for fool to 1815, *murphy* for potato to 1811, *racket* to 1785, *bread-basket* for stomach to 1753, *hush-money* to 1709, *hick* to 1690, *gold-mine* for profitable venture to 1664, *grub* for food to 1659, *rot-gut* to 1597 and *bones* for dice to *c.* 1386. Among the adjectives, *lousy* in the sense of inferior goes back to 1690; when it burst into American slang in 1910 or thereabout it was already more than two centuries old. *Booze* has never got into Standard English, but it was known to slang in the first years of the Fourteenth Century. When *nuts* in the sense revealed by "Chicago was *nuts* for the Giants" came into popularity in the United States *c.* 1920, it was treated by most of the newspaper commentators on current slang as a neologism, but in truth it had been used in precisely the same sense by R. H. Dana, Jr., in "Two Years Before the Mast," 1840, and by Mark Twain in "Following the Equator," 1897.[27] Sometimes an old slang word suddenly acquires a new meaning. An example is offered by *to chisel*. In the sense of to cheat, as in "He *chiseled* me out of $3," it goes back to the first years of the Nineteenth Century, but with the advent of the N.R.A., in the late Summer of 1933, it took on the new meaning of to evade compliance with the law by concealment or stealth. It has been credited to Franklin D. Roosevelt, but I believe that its true father was General Hugh S. Johnson, J.D.

With the possible exception of the French, the Americans now produce more slang than any other people, and put it to heavier use in their daily affairs. But they entered upon its concoction relatively late, and down to the second

[25] The life of such a word or phrase seems to depend, at least to some extent, upon its logical content. When it is sheer silliness the populace quickly tires of it. Thus "Ah there, my size, I'll steal you," "Where did you get that hat?", "How'd you like to be the iceman?", "Would you for fifty cents?", "Let her go, Gallegher," "So's your old man" and their congeners were all short-lived. Many such vacuities have a faintly obscene significance. It is their function to conceal the speaker's lack of a logical retort by raising a snicker. Those of rather more sense and appositeness, *e.g.*, "Tell your troubles to a policeman," "How do you get that way?", "Where do you get that stuff?", "I'll say so" and "You said a mouthful," seem to last longer. In 1932 a Bridgeport, Conn., high-school teacher, Miss Julia Farnam, told the Bridgeport *Post* on returning from a visit to England that she had met there "the daughter of an earl" who thought "You said a mouthful" "the cleverest expression she ever heard." (*Post*, Oct. 3.)

[26] These and the following examples are taken from The Age of Slang, by J. Louis Kuethe, *Baltimore Evening Sun*, July 3, 1934.

[27] For this I am indebted to Mr. James D. Hart of Cambridge, Mass.

decade of the Nineteenth Century they were content to take their supply from England. American slang, says George Philip Krapp, "is the child of the new nationalism, the new spirit of joyous adventure that entered American life after the close of the War of 1812."[28] There was, during the colonial and early republican periods, a great production of neologisms, as we have seen in Chapter III, but very little of it was properly describable as slang. I find *to boost,* defined as to raise up, to lift up, to exalt, in the glossary appended to David Humphreys's "The Yankey in England," 1815,[29] but all the other slang terms listed, *e.g., duds* for clothes, *spunk* for courage, and *uppish,* are in Francis Grose's "Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue," published in London thirty years before. The Rev. John Witherspoon's denunciation of slang in "The Druid," 1781, is a denunciation of English slang, though he is discussing the speech habits of Americans. But with the great movement into the West, following the War of 1812, the American vulgate came into its own, and soon the men of the ever-receding frontier were pouring out a copious stream of neologisms, many of them showing the audacious fancy of true slang. When these novelties penetrated to the East they produced a sort of linguistic shock, and the finicky were as much upset by the "tall talk" in which they were embodied as English pedants are today by the slang of Hollywood.[30] That some of them were extremely extravagant is a fact: I need point only to *blustiferous, clamjamphrie, conbobberation, helliferocious, mollagausauger, peedoodles, ripsniptiously, slangwhanger, sockdolager, to exfluncti fy, to flummuck, to giraffe, to hornswoggle, to obfusticate* and *to puckerstopple.*[31] Most of these, of course, had their brief days and then disappeared, but there were others that got into the common vocabulary and still survive, *e.g., blizzard, to hornswoggle, sockdolager* and *rambunctious,* the last-named the final step in a process which began with *robustious* and ran through *rumbustious* and *rambustious* in England before Americans took a hand in it. With them came many verb-phrases, *e.g., to pick a crow with, to cut one's eye-teeth, to go the whole hog.* This "tall talk," despite the horror of the delicate, was a great success in the East, and its salient practitioners—for example, David Crockett—were popular heroes. Its example encouraged the production of like neologisms everywhere, and by 1840 the use of slang was very widespread. It is to those days before the Civil War that we owe many of the colorful American terms for strong drink, still current, *e.g., panther-sweat, nose-paint, red-eye, corn-juice, forty-rod, mountain-dew, coffin-varnish, bust-head, stagger-soup, tonsil-paint, squirrel-whiskey* and so on, and for drunk, *e.g., boiled, canned, cock-eyed, frazzled, fried, oiled, ossified, pifficated, pie-eyed, plastered, snozzled, stewed, stuccoed, tanked, woozy.*[32] "Perhaps the most striking difference between British and American slang,"

[28] Is American English Archaic? *Southwest Review,* Summer, 1927, p. 302.

[29] The first example in the Supplement to the Oxford Dictionary is from John Neal's Brother Jonathan, 1825.

[30] Specimens of this tall talk are given in Chapter IV, Section 1.

[31] For these examples I am indebted to M. M. Mathews, who prints a longer list in The Beginnings of American English; Chicago, 1931, pp. 114-15.

[32] For a much longer list see Slang Synonyms for *Drunk,* by Manuel Prenner, *American Speech,* Dec., 1928.

says Krapp,[33] "is that the former is more largely merely a matter of the use of queer-sounding words, like *bally* and *swank*, whereas American slang suggests vivid images and pictures." This was hardly true in the heyday of "tall talk," but that it is true now is revealed by a comparison of current English and American college slang. The vocabulary of Oxford and Cambridge seems inordinately obvious and banal to an American undergraduate. At Oxford it is made up in large part of a series of childish perversions of common and proper nouns, effected by adding *-er* or inserting *gg*. Thus, breakfast becomes *brekker*, collection becomes *collecker*, the Queen Street Cinema becomes the *Queener*, St. John's becomes *Jaggers* and the Prince of Wales becomes the *Pragger-Wagger*. The rest of the vocabulary is equally feeble. To match the magnificent American *lounge-lizard* the best the Oxonians can achieve is *a bit of a lad*, and in place of the multitudinous American synonyms for *girl*,[34] there are only *bint* (Arabic for *woman*) and a few other such flabby terms.[35] All college slang, of course, borrows heavily from the general slang vocabulary. For example, *chicken*, which designated a young girl on most American campuses until 1921 or thereabout,[36] was used by Steele in 1711, and, in the form of *no chicken*, by Swift in 1720.

[33] The English Language in America; New York, 1925, Vol. I, p. 114.

[34] There is a list of them in English Words and Their Background, by George H. McKnight; New York, 1923, p. 61.

[35] I am indebted here to Mr. Hiram D. Blauvelt. The literature dealing with American college slang begins with A Collection of College Words and Customs, by B. H. Hall, Cambridge, Mass., 1851. Its contents are summarized in College Slang of a Century Ago, by Joseph C. Smith, *Delta Kappa Epsilon Quarterly*, May, 1933. For the slang in vogue at the beginning of the present century see College Words and Phrases, by Eugene H. Babbitt, *Dialect Notes*, Vol. II, Pt. I, 1900, a very valuable compilation. For later periods see College Slang, by M. C. McPhee, *American Speech*, Dec., 1927, and College Abbreviations, by W. E. Schultz, the same, Feb., 1930. There are many monographs on the slang of definite colleges, for example: College Slang Words and Phrases From Bryn Mawr College, by Howard J. Savage, *Dialect Notes*, Vol. V, Pt. V, 1922; Colgate University Slang, by J. A. Russell, *American Speech*, Feb., 1930; A Babylonish Cruise [Girard College], by Carroll H. Frey, *Steel and Garnet*, Dec., 1922; Johns Hopkins Jargon, by J. Louis Kuethe, *American Speech*, June, 1932; Kansas University Slang, by Carl Pingry and Vance Randolph, the same, Feb., 1928; Midshipman Jargon, by Mary B. Peterson, the same, Aug., 1928; Negro Slang in Lincoln University, by Hugh Sebastian, the same, Dec., 1934, University of Missouri Slang, by Virginia Carter, the same, Feb., 1931; Slang at Smith, by M. L. Farrand, *Delineator*, Oct., 1920; Stanford Expressions, by W. R. Morse, *American Speech*, March, 1927; Stanfordiana, by John A. Shidler and R. M. Clarke, Jr., the same, Feb., 1932, More Stanford Expressions, by John A. Shidler, the same, Aug., 1932, and College Slang Words and Phrases From Western Reserve University, *Dialect Notes* Vol. IV, Pt. III, 1915.

[36] I take the date from Slang Today and Yesterday, by Eric Partridge; 2nd ed.; London, 1935, p. 429. Partridge says that it was displaced, at least for a time, by the English *flapper*.

GEORGE ORWELL

Politics and the English Language

MOST PEOPLE who bother with the matter at all would admit that the English language is in a bad way, but it is generally assumed that we cannot by conscious action do anything about it. Our civilization is decadent, and our language—so the argument runs—must inevitably share in the general collapse. It follows that any struggle against the abuse of language is a sentimental archaism, like preferring candles to electric light or hansom cabs to aeroplanes. Underneath this lies the half-conscious belief that language is a natural growth and not an instrument which we shape for our own purposes.

Now, it is clear that the decline of a language must ultimately have political and economic causes: it is not due simply to the bad influence of this or that individual writer. But an effect can become a cause, reinforcing the original cause and producing the same effect in an intensified form, and so on indefinitely. A man may take to drink because he feels himself to be a failure, and then fail all the more completely because he drinks. It is rather the same thing that is happening to the English language. It becomes ugly and inaccurate because our thoughts are foolish, but the slovenliness of our language makes it easier for us to have foolish thoughts. The point is that the process is reversible. Modern English, especially written English, is full of bad habits which spread by imitation and which can be avoided if one is willing to take the necessary trouble. If one gets rid of these habits one can think more clearly, and to think clearly is a necessary first step towards political regeneration: so that the fight against bad English is not frivolous and is not the exclusive concern of professional writers. I will come back to this presently, and I hope that by that time the meaning of what I have said here will have become clearer. Meanwhile, here are five specimens of the English language as it is now habitually written.

These five passages have not been picked out because they are especially bad —I could have quoted far worse if I had chosen—but because they illustrate various of the mental vices from which we now suffer. They are a little below the average, but are fairly representative samples. I number them so that I can refer back to them when necessary:

(1) I am not, indeed, sure whether it is not true to say that the Milton who once seemed not unlike a seventeenth-century Shelley had not become, out of an experience ever more bitter in each year, more alien (*sic*) to the founder of that Jesuit sect which nothing could induce him to tolerate.

PROFESSOR HAROLD LASKI (Essay in *Freedom of Expression*).

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(2) Above all, we cannot play ducks and drakes with a native battery of idioms which prescribes such egregious collocations of vocables as the Basic *put up with* for *tolerate* or *put at a loss* for *bewilder*.

PROFESSOR LANCELOT HOGBEN (*Interglossa*).

(3) On the one side we have the free personality: by definition it is not neurotic, for it has neither conflict nor dream. Its desires, such as they are, are transparent, for they are just what institutional approval keeps in the forefront of consciousness; another institutional pattern would alter their number and intensity; there is little in them that is natural, irreducible, or culturally dangerous. But *on the other side,* the social bond itself is nothing but the mutual reflection of these self-secure integrities. Recall the definition of love. Is not this the very picture of a small academic? Where is there a place in this hall of mirrors for either personality or fraternity?

Essay on psychology in *Politics* (New York).

(4) All the "best people" from the gentlemen's clubs, and all the frantic fascist captains, united in common hatred of Socialism and bestial horror of the rising tide of the mass revolutionary movement, have turned to acts of provocation, to foul incendiarism, to medieval legends of poisoned wells, to legalize their own destruction of proletarian organizations, and rouse the agitated petty-bourgeoisie to chauvinistic fervour on behalf of the fight against the revolutionary way out of the crisis.

Communist pamphlet.

(5) If a new spirit *is* to be infused into this old country, there is one thorny and contentious reform which must be tackled, and that is the humanization and galvanization of the B.B.C. Timidity here will bespeak canker and atrophy of the soul. The heart of Britain may be sound and of strong beat, for instance, but the British lion's roar at present is like that of Bottom in Shakespeare's *Midsummer Night's Dream*—as gentle as any sucking dove. A virile new Britain cannot continue indefinitely to be traduced in the eyes, or rather ears, of the world by the effete languors of Langham Place, brazenly masquerading as "standard English." When the Voice of Britain is heard at nine o'clock, better far and infinitely less ludicrous to hear aitches honestly dropped than the present priggish, inflated, inhibited, school-ma'amish arch braying of blameless bashful mewing maidens!

Letter in *Tribune*.

Each of these passages has faults of its own, but, quite apart from avoidable ugliness, two qualities are common to all of them. The first is staleness of imagery: the other is lack of precision. The writer either has a meaning and cannot express it, or he inadvertently says something else, or he is almost indifferent as to whether his words mean anything or not. This mixture of vagueness and sheer incompetence is the most marked characteristic of modern English prose, and especially of any kind of political writing. As soon as certain topics are raised, the concrete melts into the abstract and no one seems able to think of turns of speech that are not hackneyed: prose consists less and less of *words* chosen for the sake of their meaning, and more and more of *phrases* tacked together like the sections of a prefabricated hen-house. I list below, with notes and examples, various of the tricks by means of which the work of prose-construction is habitually dodged:

Dying metaphors. A newly invented metaphor assists thought by evoking a visual image, while on the other hand a metaphor which is technically "dead" (e.g. *iron resolution*) has in effect reverted to being an ordinary word and can generally be used without loss of vividness. But in between these two classes there is a huge dump of worn-out metaphors which have lost all evocative power and are merely used because they save people the trouble of inventing phrases for themselves. Examples are: *Ring the changes on, take up the cudgels for, toe the line, ride roughshod over, stand shoulder to shoulder with, play into the hands of, no axe to grind, grist to the mill, fishing in troubled waters, on the order of the day, Achilles' heel, swan song, hotbed.* Many of these are used without knowledge of their meaning (what is a "rift," for instance?), and incompatible metaphors are frequently mixed, a sure sign that the writer is not interested in what he is saying. Some metaphors now current have been twisted out of their original meaning without those who use them even being aware of the fact. For example, *toe the line* is sometimes written *tow the line.* Another example is *the hammer and the anvil,* now always used with the implication that the anvil gets the worst of it. In real life it is always the anvil that breaks the hammer, never the other way about: a writer who stopped to think what he was saying would be aware of this, and would avoid perverting the original phrase.

Operators, or *verbal false limbs.* These save the trouble of picking out appropriate verbs and nouns, and at the same time pad each sentence with extra syllables which give it an appearance of symmetry. Characteristic phrases are: *render inoperative, militate against, prove unacceptable, make contact with, be subjected to, give rise to, give grounds for, have the effect of, play a leading part (role) in, make itself felt, take effect, exhibit a tendency to, serve the purpose of, etc., etc.* The keynote is the elimination of simple verbs. Instead of being a single word, such as *break, stop, spoil, mend, kill,* a verb becomes a *phrase,* made up of a noun or adjective tacked on to some general-purposes verb such as *prove, serve, form, play, render.* In addition, the passive voice is wherever possible used in preference to the active, and noun constructions are used instead of gerunds (*by examination of* instead of *by examining*). The range of verbs is further cut down by means of the *-ize* and *de-* formations, and banal statements are given an appearance of profundity by means of the *not un-* formation. Simple conjunctions and prepositions are replaced by such phrases as *with respect to, having regard to, the fact that, by dint of, in view of, in the interests of, on the hypothesis that;* and the ends of sentences are saved from anti-climax by such resounding commonplaces as *greatly to be desired, cannot be left out of account, a development to be expected in the near future, deserving of serious consideration, brought to a satisfactory conclusion,* and so on and so forth.

Pretentious diction. Words like *phenomenon, element, individual* (as noun), *objective, categorical, effective, virtual, basic, primary, promote, constitute, exhibit, exploit, utilize, eliminate, liquidate,* are used to dress up simple statement and give an air of scientific impartiality to biased judgements. Adjectives like

epoch-making, epic, historic, unforgettable, triumphant, age-old, inevitable, inexorable, veritable, are used to dignify the sordid processes of international politics, while writing that aims at glorifying war usually takes on an archaic colour, its characteristic words being: *realm, throne, chariot, mailed fist, trident, sword, shield, buckler, banner, jackboot, clarion.* Foreign words and expressions such as *cul de sac, ancien régime, deus ex machina, mutatis mutandis, status quo, gleichschaltung, weltanschauung,* are used to give an air of culture and elegance. Except for the useful abbreviations *i.e., e.g.,* and *etc.,* there is no real need for any of the hundreds of foreign phrases now current in English. Bad writers, and especially scientific, political and sociological writers, are nearly always haunted by the notion that Latin or Greek words are grander than Saxon ones, and unnecessary words like *expedite, ameliorate, predict, extraneous, deracinated, clandestine, subaqueous* and hundreds of others constantly gain ground from their Anglo-Saxon opposite numbers.[1] The jargon peculiar to Marxist writing (*hyena, hangman, cannibal, petty bourgeois, these gentry, lacquey, flunkey, mad dog, White Guard,* etc.) consists largely of words and phrases translated from Russian, German or French; but the normal way of coining a new word is to use a Latin or Greek root with the appropriate affix and, where necessary, the -ize formation. It is often easier to make up words of this kind (*deregionalize, impermissible, extramarital, non-fragmentatory* and so forth) than to think up the English words that will cover one's meaning. The result, in general, is an increase in slovenliness and vagueness.

Meaningless words. In certain kinds of writing, particularly in art criticism and literary criticism, it is normal to come across long passages which are almost completely lacking in meaning.[2] Words like *romantic, plastic, values, human, dead, sentimental, natural, vitality,* as used in art criticism, are strictly meaningless, in the sense that they not only do not point to any discoverable object, but are hardly even expected to do so by the reader. When one critic writes, "The outstanding feature of Mr. X's work is its living quality," while another writes, "The immediately striking thing about Mr. X's work is its peculiar deadness," the reader accepts this as a simple difference of opinion. If words like *black* and *white* were involved, instead of the jargon words *dead* and *living,* he would see at once that language was being used in an improper way. Many political words are similarly abused. The word *Fascism* has now no meaning except in so far as it signifies "something not desirable." The words *democracy, socialism, freedom, patriotic, realistic, justice,* have each of them several different meanings which cannot be reconciled with one another. In the case of a word like *democracy,* not only is there no agreed definition,

[1] An interesting illustration of this is the way in which the English flower names which were in use till very recently are being ousted by Greek ones, *snapdragon* becoming *antirrhinum, forget-me-not* becoming *myosotis,* etc. It is hard to see any practical reason for this change of fashion: it is probably due to an instinctive turning-away from the more homely word and a vague feeling that the Greek word is scientific.

[2] Example: "Comfort's catholicity of perception and image, strangely Whitmanesque in range, almost the exact opposite in aesthetic compulsion, continues to evoke that trembling atmospheric accumulative hinting at a cruel, an inexorably serene timelessness . . . Wrey Gardiner scores by aiming at simple bullseyes with precision. Only they are not so simple, and through this contented sadness runs more than the surface bitter-sweet of resignation." (*Poetry Quarterly.*)

but the attempt to make one is resisted from all sides. It is almost universally felt that when we call a country democratic we are praising it: consequently the defenders of every kind of régime claim that it is a democracy, and fear that they might have to stop using the word if it were tied down to any one meaning. Words of this kind are often used in a consciously dishonest way. That is, the person who uses them has his own private definition, but allows his hearer to think he means something quite different. Statements like *Marshal Pétain was a true patriot, The Soviet Press is the freest in the world, The Catholic Church is opposed to persecution,* are almost always made with intent to deceive. Other words used in variable meanings, in most cases more or less dishonestly, are: *class, totalitarian, science, progressive, reactionary, bourgeois, equality.*

Now that I have made this catalogue of swindles and perversions, let me give another example of the kind of writing that they lead to. This time it must of its nature be an imaginary one. I am going to translate a passage of good English into modern English of the worst sort. Here is a well-known verse from *Ecclesiastes*:

I returned, and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all.

Here it is in modern English:

Objective consideration of contemporary phenomena compels the conclusion that success or failure in competitive activities exhibits no tendency to be commensurate with innate capacity, but that a considerable element of the unpredictable must invariably be taken into account.

This is a parody, but not a very gross one. Exhibit (3), above, for instance, contains several patches of the same kind of English. It will be seen that I have not made a full translation. The beginning and ending of the sentence follow the original meaning fairly closely, but in the middle the concrete illustrations—race, battle, bread—dissolve into the vague phrase "success or failure in competitive activities." This had to be so, because no modern writer of the kind I am discussing—no one capable of using phrases like "objective consideration of contemporary phenomena"—would ever tabulate his thoughts in that precise and detailed way. The whole tendency of modern prose is away from concreteness. Now analyse these two sentences a little more closely. The first contains 49 words but only 60 syllables, and all its words are those of everyday life. The second contains 38 words of 90 syllables: 18 of its words are from Latin roots, and one from Greek. The first sentence contains six vivid images, and only one phrase ("time and chance") that could be called vague. The second contains not a single fresh, arresting phrase, and in spite of its 90 syllables it gives only a shortened version of the meaning contained in the first. Yet without a doubt it is the second kind of sentence that is gaining ground in modern English. I do not want to exaggerate. This kind of writing is not yet universal, and outcrops of simplicity will occur here and there in the

worst-written page. Still, if you or I were told to write a few lines on the uncertainty of human fortunes, we should probably come much nearer to my imaginary sentence than to the one from *Ecclesiastes*.

As I have tried to show, modern writing at its worst does not consist in picking out words for the sake of their meaning and inventing images in order to make the meaning clearer. It consists in gumming together long strips of words which have already been set in order by someone else, and making the results presentable by sheer humbug. The attraction of this way of writing is that it is easy. It is easier—even quicker, once you have the habit—to say *In my opinion it is a not unjustifiable assumption that* than to say *I think*. If you use ready-made phrases, you not only don't have to hunt about for words; you also don't have to bother with the rhythms of your sentences, since these phrases are generally so arranged as to be more or less euphonious. When you are composing in a hurry—when you are dictating to a stenographer, for instance, or making a public speech—it is natural to fall into a pretentious, Latinized style. Tags like *a consideration which we should do well to bear in mind or a conclusion to which all of us would readily assent will* save many a sentence from coming down with a bump. By using stale metaphors, similes and idioms, you save much mental effort, at the cost of leaving your meaning vague, not only for your reader but for yourself. This is the significance of mixed metaphors. The sole aim of a metaphor is to call up a visual image. When these images clash—as in *The Fascist octopus has sung its swan song, the jackboot is thrown into the melting pot*—it can be taken as certain that the writer is not seeing a mental image of the objects he is naming; in other words he is not really thinking. Look again at the examples I gave at the beginning of this essay. Professor Laski (1) uses five negatives in 53 words. One of these is superfluous, making nonsense of the whole passage, and in addition there is the slip *alien* for akin, making further nonsense, and several avoidable pieces of clumsiness which increase the general vagueness. Professor Hogben (2) plays ducks and drakes with a battery which is able to write prescriptions, and, while disapproving of the everyday phrase *put up with,* is unwilling to look *egregious* up in the dictionary and see what it means. (3), If one takes an uncharitable attitude towards it, is simply meaningless: probably one could work out its intended meaning by reading the whole of the article in which it occurs. In (4), the writer knows more or less what he wants to say, but an accumulation of stale phrases chokes him like tea leaves blocking a sink. In (5), words and meaning have almost parted company. People who write in this manner usually have a general emotional meaning—they dislike one thing and want to express solidarity with another—but they are not interested in the detail of what they are saying. A scrupulous writer, in every sentence that he writes, will ask himself at least four questions, thus: What am I trying to say? What words will express it? What image or idiom will make it clearer? Is this image fresh enough to have an effect? And he will probably ask himself two more: Could I put it more shortly? Have I said anything that is avoidably ugly? But you are not obliged to go to all this trouble. You can shirk it by simply throwing your mind open and letting the ready-made phrases come crowding in. They will construct your sentences for you—even think your

thoughts for you, to a certain extent—and at need they will perform the important service of partially concealing your meaning even from yourself. It is at this point that the special connection between politics and the debasement of language becomes clear.

In our time it is broadly true that political writing is bad writing. Where it is not true, it will generally be found that the writer is some kind of rebel, expressing his private opinions and not a "party line." Orthodoxy, of whatever colour, seems to demand a lifeless, imitative style. The political dialects to be found in pamphlets, leading articles, manifestoes, White Papers and the speeches of under-secretaries do, of course, vary from party to party, but they are all alike in that one almost never finds in them a fresh, vivid, home-made turn of speech. When one watches some tired hack on the platform mechanically repeating the familiar phrases—*bestial atrocities, iron heel, bloodstained tyranny, free peoples of the world, stand shoulder to shoulder*—one often has a curious feeling that one is not watching a live human being but some kind of dummy: a feeling which suddenly becomes stronger at moments when the light catches the speaker's spectacles and turns them into blank discs which seem to have no eyes behind them. And this is not altogether fanciful. A speaker who uses that kind of phraseology has gone some distance towards turning himself into a machine. The appropriate noises are coming out of his larynx, but his brain is not involved as it would be if he were choosing his words for himself. If the speech he is making is one that he is accustomed to make over and over again, he may be almost unconscious of what he is saying, as one is when one utters the responses in church. And this reduced state of consciousness, if not indispensable, is at any rate favourable to political conformity.

In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defence of the indefensible. Things like the continuance of British rule in India, the Russian purges and deportations, the dropping of the atom bombs on Japan, can indeed be defended, but only by arguments which are too brutal for most people to face, and which do not square with the professed aims of political parties. Thus political language has to consist largely of euphemism, question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness. Defenceless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called *pacification*. Millions of peasants are robbed of their farms and sent trudging along the roads with no more than they can carry: this is called *transfer of population* or *rectification of frontiers*. People are imprisoned for years without trial, or shot in the back of the neck or sent to die of scurvy in Arctic lumber camps: this is called *elimination of unreliable elements*. Such phraseology is needed if one wants to name things without calling up mental pictures of them. Consider for instance some comfortable English professor defending Russian totalitarianism. He cannot say outright, "I believe in killing off your opponents when you can get good results by doing so." Probably, therefore, he will say something like this:

While freely conceding that the Soviet régime exhibits certain features which the humanitarian may be inclined to deplore, we must, I think, agree that a certain cur-

tailment of the right to political opposition is an unavoidable concomitant of transitional periods, and that the rigours which the Russian people have been called upon to undergo have been amply justified in the sphere of concrete achievement.

The inflated style is itself a kind of euphemism. A mass of Latin words falls upon the facts like soft snow, blurring the outlines and covering up all the details. The great enemy of clear language is insincerity. When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms, like a cuttlefish squirting out ink. In our age there is no such thing as "keeping out of politics." All issues are political issues, and politics itself is a mass of lies, evasions, folly, hatred and schizophrenia. When the general atmosphere is bad, language must suffer. I should expect to find—this is a guess which I have not sufficient knowledge to verify—that the German, Russian and Italian languages have all deteriorated in the last ten or fifteen years, as a result of dictatorship.

But if thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought. A bad usage can spread by tradition and imitation, even among people who should and do know better. The debased language that I have been discussing is in some ways very convenient. Phrases like *a not unjustifiable assumption, leaves much to be desired, would serve no good purpose, a consideration which we should do well to bear in mind,* are a continuous temptation, a packet of aspirins always at one's elbow. Look back through this essay, and for certain you will find that I have again and again committed the very faults I am protesting against. By this morning's post I have received a pamphlet dealing with conditions in Germany. The author tells me that he "felt impelled" to write it. I open it at random, and here is almost the first sentence that I see: "(The Allies) have an opportunity not only of achieving a radical transformation of Germany's social and political structure in such a way as to avoid a nationalistic reaction in Germany itself, but at the same time of laying the foundations of a co-operative and unified Europe." You see, he "feels impelled" to write—feels, presumably, that he has something new to say—and yet his words, like cavalry horses answering the bugle, group themselves automatically into the familiar dreary pattern. This invasion of one's mind by ready-made phrases (*lay the foundations, achieve a radical transformation*) can only be prevented if one is constantly on guard against them, and every such phrase anaesthetizes a portion of one's brain.

I said earlier that the decadence of our language is probably curable. Those who deny this would argue, if they produced an argument at all, that language merely reflects existing social conditions, and that we cannot influence its development by any direct tinkering with words and constructions. So far as the general tone or spirit of a language goes, this may be true, but it is not true in detail. Silly words and expressions have often disappeared, not through any evolutionary process but owing to the conscious action of a minority. Two recent examples were *explore every avenue* and *leave no stone unturned,* which were killed by the jeers of a few journalists. There is a long list of flyblown metaphors which could similarly be got rid of if enough people would interest themselves in the job; and it should also be possible to laugh the *not un-*

formation out of existence,[3] to reduce the amount of Latin and Greek in the average sentence, to drive out foreign phrases and strayed scientific words, and, in general, to make pretentiousness unfashionable. But all these are minor points. The defence of the English language implies more than this, and perhaps it is best to start by saying what it does *not* imply.

To begin with, it has nothing to do with archaism, with the salvaging of obsolete words and turns of speech, or with the setting-up of a "standard English" which must never be departed from. On the contrary, it is especially concerned with the scrapping of every word or idiom which has outworn its usefulness. It has nothing to do with correct grammar and syntax, which are of no importance so long as one makes one's meaning clear, or with the avoidance of Americanisms, or with having what is called a "good prose style." On the other hand it is not concerned with fake simplicity and the attempt to make written English colloquial. Nor does it even imply in every case preferring the Saxon word to the Latin one, though it does imply using the fewest and shortest words that will cover one's meaning. What is above all needed is to let the meaning choose the word, and not the other way about. In prose, the worst thing one can do with words is to surrender to them. When you think of a concrete object, you think wordlessly, and then, if you want to describe the thing you have been visualizing, you probably hunt about till you find the exact words that seem to fit it. When you think of something abstract you are more inclined to use words from the start, and unless you make a conscious effort to prevent it, the existing dialect will come rushing in and do the job for you, at the expense of blurring or even changing your meaning. Probably it is better to put off using words as long as possible and get one's meaning as clear as one can through pictures or sensations. Afterwards one can choose—not simply *accept*—the phrases that will best cover the meaning, and then switch round and decide what impression one's words are likely to make on another person. This last effort of the mind cuts out all stale or mixed images, all prefabricated phrases, needless repetitions, and humbug and vagueness generally. But one can often be in doubt about the effect of a word or a phrase, and one needs rules that one can rely on when instinct fails. I think the following rules will cover most cases:

(i) Never use a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.
(ii) Never use a long word where a short one will do.
(iii) If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
(iv) Never use the passive where you can use the active.
(v) Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
(vi) Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.

These rules sound elementary, and so they are, but they demand a deep change of attitude in anyone who has grown used to writing in the style now fashionable. One could keep all of them and still write bad English, but one could

[3] One can cure oneself of the *not un-* formation by memorizing this sentence: *A not unblack dog was chasing a not unsmall rabbit across a not ungreen field.*

not write the kind of stuff that I quoted in those five specimens at the beginning of this article.

I have not here been considering the literary use of language, but merely language as an instrument for expressing and not for concealing or preventing thought. Stuart Chase and others have come near to claiming that all abstract words are meaningless, and have used this as a pretext for advocating a kind of political quietism. Since you don't know what Fascism is, how can you struggle against Fascism? One need not swallow such absurdities as this, but one ought to recognize that the present political chaos is connected with the decay of language, and that one can probably bring about some improvement by starting at the verbal end. If you simplify your English, you are freed from the worst follies of orthodoxy. You cannot speak any of the necessary dialects, and when you make a stupid remark its stupidity will be obvious, even to yourself. Political language—and with variations this is true of all political parties, from Conservatives to Anarchists—is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable, and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind. One cannot change this all in a moment, but one can at least change one's own habits, and from time to time one can even, if one jeers loudly enough, send some worn-out and useless phrase—some *jackboot, Achilles' heel, hotbed, melting pot, acid test, veritable inferno* or other lump of verbal refuse—into the dustbin where it belongs.

I. A. RICHARDS

Some Criteria of Words

THE VIEW that meanings belong to words in their own right—and the more sophisticated views which have the same effect—are a branch of sorcery, a relic of the magical theory of names. And my experience is that the most determined efforts do no more than free us from it now and then for a few precious moments. Thus in exhorting you to discard it, I feel in the position of that Basuto Chief, reported by Casalis in 1861, who called his tribe together to warn them against another mode of sorcery. "Sorcery," said the Basuto Chief—who was evidently as much persuading himself as them—"Sorcery only exists in the mouths of those who speak it. It is no more in the power of a man to kill his fellow by mere effort of his will, than it would be to raise him from the dead. That is my opinion. Nevertheless, you sorcerers who hear me speak, use moderation!"

So here, though I may be intellectually persuaded, and persuade you, that a word by itself without a setting of other words, uttered or supplied, can no more have a meaning than a patch of color can have a size or distance without

SOME CRITERIA OF WORDS From *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* by I. A. Richards. Copyright 1936 by Oxford University Press, Inc.

its setting, yet I do not expect that our behavior will be much changed. The habitual pull of the contrary received assumption is too strong. Our best hope is that we may learn to use moderation in our reliance on that assumption.

The evil influence of the assumption is most glaringly shown with the abstract words upon which all discussions of general theoretical topics turn. Outside of the sciences—in our talk about politics, society or conduct, or about science itself, in all branches of philosophy including psychology, in all discussions of art, literature, language, truth, beauty and the good, our principal terms incessantly change their meanings with the sentences they go into and the contexts they derive from. We are all ready enough to suspect this, if not in our own talk at least in that of our fellows, and ready to see in it a chief cause for the lamented fact that these subjects show—once we have allowed for current fashions—strangely little progress. But both the extent *and the plan* of these deluding shifts are hidden from us by the assumption I am attacking. It leads us to think that a shift of meaning is a flaw in discourse, a regrettable accident, instead of a virtue. And therefore we neglect to study the plan of the shifts.

The assumption is that words have, or should have, proper meanings which people should recognize, agree about and stick to. A pretty program, if it were possible. But, outside the technical languages of the sciences, it is not possible. For in the topics with which all generally interesting discussion is concerned, words must shift their meanings thus. Without these shifts such mutual understanding as we achieve would fail even within the narrowed resultant scope. Language, losing its subtlety with its suppleness, would lose also its power to serve us.

The remedy is not to resist these shifts but to learn to follow them. They recur in the same forms with different words; they have similar plans and common patterns, which experience enables us to observe and obey in practice—sometimes with a skilful ease which seems amazing when we examine it. We may reasonably hope that systematic study will in time permit us to compare, describe and explain these systematic ambiguity or transference patterns on a scale as much surpassing our best present-day Dictionary Technique as, say, our present competence in chemistry surpasses that of Bacon who foresaw it. Even now, if we could take *systematic* cognizance of even a small part of the shifts we fleetingly observe, the effect would be like that of introducing the multiplication table to calculators who just happened to know the working of a few sums and no others. And with such a clarification, such a translation of our skills into comprehension, a new era of human understanding and co-operation in thinking would be at hand. It would not be difficult to do not a little towards this at once. What stands in the way is chiefly the Proper Meaning Superstition and the effort it sustains towards increased rigidity in fields where rigidity is inappropriate.

These shifts deceive us most when they affect abstract words, because then they are hardest to follow. But they occur as much and as variously with seemingly simple concrete words. With these we often follow them so easily that we may not suspect that any shifts are taking place. The word *book*, for example, troubles no one. And yet compare the use of *book*, in which we dis-

tinguish a book from a magazine or journal, with that in which a majority of speakers in England (call them uneducated if you like) describe a weekly as a book. Or compare the senses of *book* in "It's a formidable volume, but it's not a book." "He has his mind full of his book." "Writing a book." "Binding a book." "Printing a book." "Rearranging the books in the catalogue." In each of these we have shifted the sense of *book,* sometimes to positions incompatible with one another. No one, for example, will ever bind the book which I am now making of these lectures. What will be printed and what will be bound are different things altogether from what I am now working on (a set of ideas), though of course they are connected in obvious ways with it.

We follow these shifts without trouble because we are familiar with them. We are not yet so familiar with the shifts of the more heavily worked abstract words of reflection. It is the hope and the great opportunity for intellectual improvement that we may in time become equally familiar with them. That, I would say, is fundamentally the aim and the justification of advanced verbal education, a thing otherwise often hard to justify; and the best answer to the troublesome question, "Why should we worry ourselves with it?" is that thereby we may better find out what we and others are thinking.

Towards the end of the last lecture I was suggesting that our words commonly take meaning through the influence of other words which we may never think of but which in the back of the mind co-operate in controlling them. And I concluded with the remark that a great writer often gains his aim by making a single phrase pull with or against large ranges of the language. This, if true, is, of course, an additional argument against the Proper Usage Superstition. We can say of the single word what Donne said of single sentences, "Sentences in Scripture, like hairs in horsetails, concur in one root of beauty and strength; but being plucked out one by one, serve only for springes and snares." We need especially to beware of plucking words out one by one when we are tempted to judge new additions that are being made to the language, for these are more easily detached and carry less latent, or assumed context with them. Nothing better tests our ideas about the choice of words than the reasons we find ourselves giving for liking or disliking a new word and nothing better exposes the doctrine of usage. Our language is growing faster and in more varied ways than at any time since Elizabeth's. It is estimated that even for that conservative section of the English speaking peoples which lives in England, as many as thirty new words a year have recently been coming into general use. This quite apart from the technicalities of the trades and the sciences. A large number of them crosses the Atlantic and it is fair to say, I think, that among these will be found many that have been most heartily welcomed in England.

But new words are not always or even usually welcomed, certainly not by the vocal few who profess to have explicit reasons for their opinions about them. A new word commonly stirs up complaints and some of these complaints are worth study for the interesting light they throw upon current assumptions about language.

Let me take first the complaints most often heard against the new words that are coined in the sciences—against those of them that pass from scientific use into general currency. These complaints are, commonly, that they are awkward or difficult to pronounce or too long, and that they are not labels but compacted descriptions or explanations. The prejudice is sometimes so strong that even the lexicographers succumb to it. You will not find, in the two-volume *Shorter Oxford Dictionary,* for example, either the word extraversion (extravert) or introversion (introvert) in their Jungian senses—indispensable though these words have been to an enormous amount of conversation.

Now what do these complaints amount to? What sort of case can be made out for them? First as to the awkwardness—the uncertainty that may be felt as to how to pronounce them, as to whether, for example, *epistemology* should be *e'pistemology, epis'temology, episte'mology* or *epistemol'ogy.* Sir James Murray in his Preface to the *Oxford Dictionary,* notes that, on applying "directly to the introducer of a word, to know how he pronounces it, or means it to be pronounced," on several occasions, the answer received was "that he has never thought of its pronunciation, does not presume to say how it ought to be pronounced, and leaves it to people to pronounce as they like, or to the *Dictionary* to say what is the *right* pronunciation."

This, Sir James complained, inverts the established order by which speech comes first. But surely the surprised introducers were justified. Being themselves the very fountain-heads of usage they knew better than to trust it! They knew that the good and bad of words have other standards. How a word should be pronounced is, at least in part, a matter requiring reference to how the other words in the language are pronounced. And that evidently is the lexicographer's not the philosopher's or the psychologist's business. But unfortunately the lexicographer is sometimes himself—in these matters of pronunciation as in matters of interpretation—too much under the spell of crude usage theories. Daunted by his responsibilities he falls back upon the task of making a phonetic record of pronunciations that have been established, or he takes refuge in a variety of the usage doctrine which I can ticket here as obedience to the Club Spirit.

This is an important mode of the usage doctrine. Essentially it makes the conduct of language subservient to manners—to the manners of a special set of speakers. If you belong to a certain sort of Club you thereby enter upon an engagement to behave, while there, in certain ways—or rather an engagement not to behave in certain other ways. As usual it is much easier to say what you will *not* do there, than what you will. Similarly, in using a language, you join a more or less select company—of correct users of the language. Deviation from their customs is *incorrectness* and is visited with a social penalty as such. And no account is taken, in this, of whether what you do is better or worse than the customs of the company. It is enough that it is different to bring you into condemnation.

This specialized form of control by usage, this social or snob control over all language, is obviously very wide and rigorous. One of the tasks of an improved Rhetoric is to question it, whether it concerns pronunciation or matters of meaning and interpretation. For the moment I am concerned with pro-

nunciation, but I would like to insist that what I am saying about pronunciation has its parallels throughout the whole field and can be applied too to variations and specializations of meaning. Thus it was the Club Spirit in England which made us say "I'm sorry!" when you over here say "I beg your pardon!" Apart from the Club Spirit, your phrase is perhaps the better of the two, with less risk of confusing the important with the trivial. The effects of questioning the utility of the Rule of the Club Spirit would I believe be extremely drastic. The reasons for questioning it are, since it is itself a social rule, themselves social. In the past, I am willing to believe, such snob control was often useful to the whole community, not merely, as now, to the members of the Club, who find in it an advantage over their fellow citizens. This use of verbal differences as weapons in the class-war dates for us, in some important respects, from the 17th Century. In Shakespeare's age it seems probable that a less derogatory and a more humorous notice was taken of differences in speech. There was less need to be scornful. It was because a new stratification of society had arisen that the early 18th Century began to observe that niceties of pronunciation and expression constituted the most certain differentiation between a gentleman and his valet, between a lady and a mantua-maker. The new effort towards uniform spelling is another aspect of the same change. And it was then that a preoccupation with correctness (in this Club Spirit sense) became the obsession of the grammar-book merchants—of those (Steele is an example) who purveyed instruction to the new gentry about how they were to make it clear that they were really gentry.

That is the humiliating side of the Rule of the Club Spirit. But there is a worthier side. In the 18th Century—when comparatively few were educated, and when the education given was relatively all of a piece—this sort of correctness did give some reliable indication of culture in a deeper sense. Nowadays we educate a far larger proportion of a population ten times more numerous, and, what is more important, education in the humanities is no longer uniform. If asked for a definition of the humanities now, we would have to reply, "Anything that has anything to do with anything in the Metropolitan or the British Museums." And, with that, the Rule of the Club Spirit ceases to guarantee anything important about the depth of the culture of those who speak correctly or incorrectly, according or not according to its terms.

And yet how strong it still is. I suppose a large part of the justification of lectures in many colleges, is that they ensure that those who attend them will know how to pronounce the names of Italian painters and Greek heroines. Even extensive reading in prose translations of the classics will not protect us from the awful dangers of saying Saloam, or Pennylope or Hermy-one. I will remember a worthy young auto-didact from Manchester bursting in upon me to announce with deep enthusiasm that he had become, in the vacation, "Desperately keen on Dant and Goath." I do not believe that he would have read them with a whit more genuine profit had he known that he was really reading Dante and Goethe.

Enough about these breaches of the Club Spirit. Let us go back to the complaints against new scientific terms. Conciseness and pronunciability, said Jeremy Bentham, are merits in a new-coined word. A queer doctrine, we may

think, to come from a man who, himself, for example, coined as key-terms in the analysis of metaphor—which he did so much to advance—the words *archetypation* and *phraseoplerosis:* for the discovery of the ground of the shift of meaning and the filling in of the phrase to represent that ground. How about conciseness as a merit? Must we not qualify it with that useful phrase "other things being equal"? And shall we not then agree that, *with words,* other things are never equal and that very often length too (within limits) may be a merit in a word? Most especially when, as often with these scientific words, the meanings they have to carry are complex. It is an advantage with many scientific words that they should look scientific and should remind us that they belong to a system and depend upon assumptions which we must take account of. And there comes in the answer to that other complaint that so many of these words (*introversion* and *extraversion,* for example) are explanations, not labels. For familiar things, it is often said, we need a label, not a description. Yes! if the things are really familiar. But the dangers of mere labels when the things are not really familiar—of labels which give no hint of what they are attached to—should hardly need pointing out.

To pass to another type of complaint—that these words are cumbrous and ugly in themselves. I have seen it urged—and by no slight authority—that whereas good old words like *mind* and *thought* are neat, concise and beautiful, a word like *psychology* is cumbrous and disagreeable. How sound a complaint is that? And is it really a complaint against the form of the word or against some of its uses? Let us grant that some of the derivative uses of *psychology* are objectionable—because inconveniently and unnecessarily ambiguous—as when someone persists in talking and writing of *Shakespeare's psychology* without letting us see whether he means (1) Shakespeare's theories, if any, about the mind, (2) the assumptions Shakespeare unconsciously made about mental processes, (3) the inference as to mental processes we might arrive at from Shakespeare's work, or (4) (to go no further into these possibilities) just the way Shakespeare's own mind worked. These vagaries of the word are typical and unfortunate. They endanger discourse, and much use of that sort of language rightly discredits a speaker or writer. But such uses of *psychology* are no ground for complaint against the word in its use for the theoretical study of how the mind works, or in derivative uses where the context takes care of them. The complaint against *Shakespeare's psychology* is really against the inadequate contextual control. And for controlled uses of the word—seeing what a cumbrous subject psychology is—a cumbrous word may have therein its recommendation.

Such a word may, however, be tainted, for many, even its prime use, by its associations with unhappy uses. This is a common case—especially with new words—and, I think, instructive. It can be illustrated with *colorful.* A violent distaste for this word, as for *tasteful,* is prevalent in many circles in England. Colorful came in seemingly about 1890. On the principle that any stick will do to beat a dog with, all sorts of reasons are brought out to justify dislike for it. That it is a hybrid, that it is vulgar, that we do not say *soundful* or *lightful,* that if we use it we shall soon be using *lifeful* and *laughterful,* that we already have "full of color" which does its work, and so on. None of these ob-

jections will bear examination. Our language has too many lusty and valuable hybrids in it already for that to matter (compare *beautiful* and *joyful* which would be equally hybrids). Most of the other objections are drawn from analogy and may fairly be met by pursuing the analogies further. You will see that in doing so we would be considering the situations in which a word is backed up by other words, and that the analogies which would matter would not be those that were only evident to the philologist but those actually operative, on occasion, in backing up or deflecting (i.e., steering) our use of the words.

The interesting objection, against such words as *colorful,* concerns vulgarity. It is an objection that many new words are open to because they are often taken up most readily by people the objectors like to describe so. Moreover, that a word should be popular is often the chief condition for its admission into the language and to some people *popular* means what *vulgar* means. But a word like *colorful* can evidently be used in many different ways with different meanings, and to compare these is the way to judge it. We would not judge a quadruped without deciding whether it is a horse or a dog. So, we ought not to judge a word without considering what sorts of uses it is peculiarly suited to and without remembering that a good ferret makes a bad rabbit. What then are the peculiar utilities of the word *colorful?*

First, I would draw attention to the ironical implications it is capable of conveying. Like the phrases, *hard-working, painstaking, does his best, industrious* and *well-intentioned,*—and others which turn up in schoolmasters' reports, it can suggest that if this is the best that can be said about something, well, we know where we are! To call a prose-style, or a dramatic production, *colorful* and leave it at that, can be a very polite and therefore very effective way of damning it with faint praise. It is the more effective because it suggests that those who will be content with it as straight praise are not bringing a sufficient critical apparatus to bear upon the matter. There are, of course, uses of *colorful* which have no such implications—where, for example, that a thing should be full of color is all we can ask where no ironical reserves and no disparagement can be intended. And indeed it is the fact that there are these other straight uses, and that confusion between the straight and the derogatory uses is easy and frequent, that gives the word its peculiar subtlety on occasion.

And this confusion too is, I think, the source of the distaste for the word. If it is used straight, when the ironical implication would be in place, it suggests a lack of discrimination in the user, which—unless we analyse—we allow to infect the word itself. If *beautiful* were not such an old and well understood word we might let the same thing happen with it. Gross uses of *beautiful* might make the word itself a thing suited only to gross uses. When people talk of "beautiful food" some are apt to shudder. When Mr. Eliot in *The Waste Land* makes one of his characters say,

> Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot gammon,
> And they asked me in to get the beauty of it hot

he is using that shudder, and all the pathetic reverberations from its occasion and its contrasts. That is the full use of language—which dramatic writing

more than any other, of course, requires. It takes its word, not as the repository of a single constant power but as a means by which the different powers it may exert in different situations are brought together and again with an interinanimating apposition.

I have taken *colorful* as a type word. Its own peculiar problems are local, perhaps temporary and unimportant—but if we pursue them we find that they lead us to most of the problems of the choice of words, and further still that they bring into view most of the problems of aesthetics. To realize that it is idle to ask of a word, "Is it beautiful?"—unless we are ready to ask thoroughly, "What will it do in its varied incidences?"—is a first step and a long step in the aesthetics of language. A parallel step must be made for every branch of aesthetics. A discussion of the reasons for the choice of words—which too often seems a trivial exchange of whimsies—can become an introduction to the theory of all choices. The art of so transforming it from a tea-table topic into the central discipline of education waits to be rediscovered, but the better we understand what place words hold in our lives the readier we shall be to admit that to think about their choice is the most convenient mode of thinking about the principle of all our choices.

WALKER GIBSON

Authors, Speakers, Readers, and Mock Readers

IT IS NOW common in the classroom as well as in criticism to distinguish carefully between the *author* of a literary work of art and the fictitious *speaker* within the work of art. Most teachers agree that the attitudes expressed by the "lover" in the love sonnet are not to be crudely confused with whatever attitudes the sonneteer himself may or may not have manifested in real life. Historical techniques are available for a description of the sonneteer, but the literary teacher's final concern must be with the speaker, that voice or disguise through which someone (whom we may as well call "the poet") communicates with us. It is this speaker who is "real" in the sense most useful to the study of literature, for the speaker is made of language alone, and his entire self lies on the page before us in evidence.

Closely associated with this distinction between author and speaker, there is another and less familiar distinction to be made, respecting the *reader*. For if the "real author" is to be regarded as to a great degree distracting and mysterious, lost in history, it seems equally true that the "real reader," lost in today's history, is no less mysterious and sometimes as irrelevant. The fact is that every time we open the pages of another piece of writing, we are embarked on a new adventure in which we become a new person—a person as controlled

AUTHORS, SPEAKERS, READERS, AND MOCK READERS From *College English*, February, 1950. Reprinted by permission of author and publisher.

and definable and as remote from the chaotic self of daily life as the lover in the sonnet. Subject to the degree of our literary sensibility, we are re-created by the language. We assume, for the sake of the experience, that set of attitudes and qualities which the language asks us to assume, and, if we cannot assume them, we throw the book away.

I am arguing, then, that there are two readers distinguishable in every literary experience. First, there is the "real" individual upon whose crossed knee rests the open volume, and whose personality is as complex and ultimately inexpressible as any dead poet's. Second, there is the fictitious reader—I shall call him the "mock reader"—whose mask and costume the individual takes on in order to experience the language. The mock reader is an artifact, controlled, simplified, abstracted out of the chaos of day-to-day sensation.

The mock reader can probably be identified most obviously in subliterary genres crudely committed to persuasion, such as advertising and propaganda. We resist the blandishments of the copywriter just in so far as we refuse to become the mock reader his language invites us to become. Recognition of a violent disparity between ourself as mock reader and ourself as real person acting in a real world is the process by which we keep our money in our pockets. "Does your toupee collect moths?" asks the toupee manufacturer, and we answer, "Certainly not! My hair's my own. You're not talking to *me,* old boy; I'm wise to you." Of course we are not always so wise.

Consider the mock reader in a case only slightly less obvious, the following opening paragraph from a book review of Malcolm Cowley's recent collection, *The Portable Hawthorne:*

> Our thin self-lacerating and discontinuous culture automatically produces such uneasy collaborations as this one between Mr. Cowley, the hard-working scribe and oddly impressionable cultural sounding board, and the publishing industry with its concept of the "Portable." The Hawthorne who emerges has had such a bad fall between stools, or clichés, that he appears almost as giddy and shattered as we. . . .

The assumptions buried rather shallowly in this passage can very easily be brought to light. A nimble and sympathetic conversation is passing back and forth here—as always—between the speaker and the mock reader, a conversation that goes in part something like this:

> You and I, in brave rebellion against the barbarousness of a business culture, can see this book for what of course it is—an "uneasy collaboration" and a defamation of that fine Hawthorne whom you and I know and love. *We* would not be content, would we, to be mere "scribes"; how stupid other people are to think that industry alone is sufficient. You and I are quickly able to translate "oddly impressionable" into what of course more literally describes the situation, though we were too polite to say so—namely, that Cowley is a weak sister. Nothing "odd" about it—you and I know what's going on all right.

It is interesting to observe how frankly the speaker throws his arm around the mock reader at the end of the passage I have quoted, as the two comrades experience their common giddiness at the appalling quality of this book. Remember that the *real* reader has in all likelihood not even seen the book yet, and, if

he takes his own mock-reader-personality seriously enough, he probably never will.

An opening paragraph from another book review requires us to take on another character:

> I never got around to the early books of the Pasquier series, Georges Duhamel's multigeneration history of a French family, but after reading "Suzanne and Joseph" (Holt), the two-volume novel that closes the series, I can't see any very pressing reason for flying in the face of prevailing opinion about M. Duhamel. He is, as has been claimed by such admirers of his as Kate O'Brien and Sean O'Faolain, quite a good writer. He deals in honored narrative methods and old truths, and he turns out the kind of novel that can be recognized from afar as A Story. . . .

Again, some obvious portion of the between-the-lines dialogue between speaker and mock reader might be paraphrased as follows:

> You and I are persons of leisure and taste, but unostentatious about it; we make no pretense of having Big Ideas, and we "can't see any very pressing reason for flying in the face of prevailing opinion" (you'll excuse my casual, homely phrase) merely because it *is* prevailing. We favor comfort, after all, and we won't lament over the things we never got around to. On the other hand we recognize competence and talent when we see it; we'll certainly listen to whatever Kate O'Brien and Sean O'Faolain have to say; and though we are enlightened enough to realize that A Story (you'll appreciate my capitals) won't in itself do in this complex age, nevertheless the honored methods and old truths are after all the Honored Methods and Old Truths. . . .

Here again it is worth pointing out that many successful readers of this passage —perhaps most of them—never even heard of Kate O'Brien or Sean O'Faolain. It is possible to imagine a reader saying, "I never heard of Kate O'Brien; this review isn't addressed to the likes of me; I'll read something else." But a more plausible response, I believe, would be this: "It's true I never heard of Kate O'Brien, but in my status as mock reader I'm going to pretend that I have; after all, it's obvious how highly I would think of her if I had heard of her."

It will surprise no one to learn that the first passage was taken from a recent issue of the *Partisan Review,* and that the second is from the *New Yorker.* Perhaps it is fair to say that the mock readers addressed by these speakers represent ideal audiences of the two periodicals. In any case it seems plain that the job of an editor is largely the definition of his magazine's mock reader and that an editorial "policy" is a decision or prediction as to the role or roles in which one's customers would like to imagine themselves. Likewise, a man fingering the piles at a magazine stand is concerned with the corollary question, Who do I want to pretend I am today?

(The mock reader of this article numbers among his many impressive accomplishments the feat of having participated at various times as mock reader of both the *New Yorker* and the *Partisan.*)

It is evident that imaginative literature too makes similar demands on its readers. There is great variation from book to book in the ease and particularity

with which one can describe the mock reader, but he is always present, and sometimes is so clearly and rigorously defined as to suggest serious limitations on the audience. The mock reader of the opening paragraphs of *The Great Gatsby,* for instance, is a person determined within fairly rigid limits of time and space.

In my younger and more vulnerable years my father gave me some advice that I've been turning over in my mind ever since.

"Whenever you feel like criticising any one," he told me, "just remember that all the people in this world haven't had the advantages that you've had."

He didn't say any more, but we've always been unusually communicative in a reserved way, and I understood that he meant a good deal more than that. In consequence, I'm inclined to reserve all judgments, a habit that has opened up many curious natures to me and also made me the victim of not a few veteran bores. The abnormal mind is quick to detect and attach itself to this quality when it appears in a normal person, and so it came about that in a college I was unjustly accused of being a politician, because I was privy to the secret griefs of wild, unknown men. Most of the confidences were unsought—frequently I have feigned sleep, preoccupation, or a hostile levity when I realized by some unmistakable sign that an intimate revelation was quivering on the horizon. . . .

Here the mock reader must not only take in stride a series of "jokes" formed by some odd juxtapositions—vulnerable years, not a few veteran bores, etc.—but must also be quick to share the attitudes and assumed experiences of the speaker. For instance, the speaker by overt statement and the mock reader by inference have both attended a particular kind of college in a particular way; notice how "in college" appears grammatically as a dependent phrase within a dependent clause, supporting the casual, offhand tone.

Of course we remember, you and I, how it was in college, where as normal persons we certainly had no wish to be confused with campus politicians, yet were even warier of the wild unknown men, those poets, those radicals and misfits. You and I understand with what deliberate and delicate absurdity I make fun of both the wild unknown men and the formal-literary language to which you and I have been exposed in the course of our expensive educations: "an intimate revelation was quivering on the horizon."

It is probable that *Gatsby* today enjoys a greater reputation among real-life wild unknown men than it does among the equivalents of Nick Carraway's class. Somehow many people are able to suspend their antagonisms against Nick's brand of normalcy in order to participate in the tone. Yet it is neither necessary nor desirable to suspend all one's judgments against Nick and his society, for in so far as Nick himself is self-critical, of course we can and must join him. And, finally, Nick is not the speaker at all, I think, but a kind of mock speaker, as our mock reader is a more complex and discerning person than Nick himself. There is another speaker somewhere—almost as if this novel were written in the third person—and it is from this other speaker that the mock reader ultimately takes on some important attitudes. They speak right over Nick Carraway's head.

You and I recognize the weaknesses in Nick, do we not: his snobbery and his facile assumptions. But we like him pretty well, after all—and it's a question whether his shallowness is really his fault. . . .

The concept of the mock reader need not be "taught" in so many words to be useful to the teacher of literature. The question the teacher might well ask himself is no more than this: Is there among my students a growing awareness that the literary experience is not just a relation between themselves and an author, or even between themselves and a fictitious speaker, but a relation between such a speaker and a projection, a fictitious modification of themselves? The realization on the part of a student that he is many people as he reads many books and responds to their language worlds is the beginning of literary sophistication in the best sense. One crucial objective of the teacher, I take it, is simply the enlargement of his "mock" possibilities. But this is not to imply that one reading experience is as good as another or that there are not value discriminations that are appropriate among various mock readers. In fact, the term may be particularly useful in recognizing just such discriminations and in providing one way of pointing out what we mean by a bad book. A bad book, then, is a book in whose mock reader we discover a person we refuse to become, a mask we refuse to put on, a role we will not play. If this seems to say little more than "A bad book is a bad book," consider an example:

Alan Foster wanted to go to Zagazig. He wasn't exactly sure why, except that he liked the name, and after having spent four months in Cairo Alan was ready to go places and do things. Twenty-two years old, tall, blond, with powerful shoulders and trim waist, Alan found no difficulty in making friends. He had had a good time in Egypt. Now he wanted to leave Cairo and try out Zagazig.

What is so irritating about this? Many things, but if we isolate the third sentence and describe its mock reader, we can begin to express why this is bad writing. For the mock reader of the third sentence is a person for whom there is a proper and natural relation between powerful shoulders and making friends. No student in a respectable English course, I assume, should be willing to accept such a relation except perhaps as part of an irony. Only by irony could this passage be saved. ("You and I recognize that he makes friends all right, but what friends! This parody of a matinee idol is of course an ass.") No such irony is perceptible, however; the mock reader is expected to make one simple assumption only, and if the real reader has any sophistication at all, the passage collapses. It collapses precisely because the real reader finds in the mock reader a fellow of intolerable simplicity.

It is a question of rejecting the toupee ad, of recognizing that one's hair is one's own. However, the possibility must immediately suggest itself that a skilful control of tone could persuade us in an instant to don a fictitious toupee and to feel in all possible vividness the tug of a textile scalp against our own suddenly naked head. It is, finally, a matter of the details of language, and no mock reader can be divorced for long from the specific words that made him.

And the question remains: By what standard does one judge mock readers, how does one arrive at the decision that this one or that one is intolerable? Often it is as easy as in the case above—a case of oversimple assumptions. But

obviously the problem is larger than that, and the tremendous importance, as it seems to me, of distinguishing for students between the mock world of the literary experience and the real world of everyday experience must not obscure the fact that in the end our appeals for decisions of value are toward sanctions of society, in a very real world indeed. For the student, the problem of what mock reader—or part of a mock reader—it is proper for him to accept, and what to reject, involves the whole overwhelming problem of learning to read and learning to act. No terminology can remove his hesitations over attempting the enormously difficult job of becoming the mock reader of *Paradise Lost,* or *Antigone,* or Wallace Stevens. The student's hesitation is no more than a part of a larger question that possibly no teacher can presume to answer for him: Who do I want to be?

ISSUES

INTRODUCTION

THE TWO groups of essays in this section are meant to provoke thought, discussion, and writing. There are countless issues, but those involving society, the individual, and science are crucially important today. Many modern essays on these subjects are, indeed, like communiqués from the front lines where the issues are being fought out every hour. Urey on the atomic bomb, Barzun on scientific education, and Jones's appeal to the undergraduates in his college are essays of this sort. The issues are as old as thinking man, however; and to give perspective and to lay bare some assumptions, essays by Conant, Peirce, Emerson, Milton, Machiavelli, and Plato have been included.

Jones's deliberately partial argument for individual dissent in a time of conformity and thought control is enlarged and tested by a study of his assumptions in Emerson's "Self-Reliance." If we agree with Jones, must we be willing to believe with Emerson in the essential nobility of individual human nature, in the genuine independence of youth as opposed to the timorous dishonesty of adulthood, in the rightness of refusing to organize for social improvement? The religious basis of individualism, referred to by Jones and assumed by Emerson, is clarified in traditional terms by Milton's belief that when Adam and Eve were

driven from the Eden of natural goodness their doom was henceforth to know good only by distinguishing it from evil, in a world where good and evil grow up together. Milton's further assumption, that truth will win over falsehood in a fair debate, is in turn qualified by the experience of Socrates, and by the latter's ultimate reliance on spiritual values alone, and on the proposition that no essential harm can come to a good man. Opposed to this whole idealistic tradition is Machiavelli's acceptance of self-interest as the only reality and his consequent defense of realistic politics, *Realpolitik,* as the sole means of attaining the limited security of which man is capable.

The issues explored by these five writers are acute today because rational knowledge (typified by science), which should be our aid, has seemingly become our greatest enemy. Can we save ourselves only by burning our books and laboratories and denying our powers of reason? Urey describes the threats of mass production and of the atomic bomb, the products of science, to our lives and civil liberties. The responsibility of science for "this most dangerous situation" is discussed by Barzun and Conant. Barzun charges that modern education has produced scientists who are really irresponsible technicians, and laymen who are in ignorant awe of science. Conant denies that scientists should be blamed or idolized as the sole exponents of rational inquiry. Peirce, distinguishing the pure from the applied scientist, makes a radical separation between science and social morality, arguing that free speculation, regardless of results, is essential for the former but disastrous for the latter.

This counterpointing, in short, is a dramatic test of assumptions, proofs, generalizations, emotionally-toned words, and all the other tactics of persuasion. The interplay of argument should engage our own ideas and help us to develop, examine, and express them with greater precision and responsibility.

The Individual and Society

HOWARD MUMFORD JONES

The Iron String

I HAVE lately been reading a Harvard author who is just now out of favor here. He has been unpopular before. He once made a speech at this college, a speech so disliked that he was *persona non grata* in Cambridge for thirty years. However, the alumni and the Faculty finally decided he was a solid citizen—this was after the Civil War—and so they made him an Overseer, they gave him an honorary degree, and they asked him to deliver a course of lectures. In view of this history I take some pleasure in remembering that the title of these lectures was: "The Natural History of the Intellect." Another thirty years or so drifted by, and they erected a building in his honor. On any class day in winter you can enter it and see Frank Duveneck's statue of him buried under the coats and hats. Somehow, this symbolizes what has happened to Emerson.

The reasons for Emerson's current lack of favor are understandable. He was a transcendentalist, and any beginner in philosophy can tell you what is wrong with transcendentalism. As a philosophy it is inconsistent, illogical, and indefensible. Its epistemology is contrary to fact, its ethical system is unscientific, its language is confused, and its frame of reference is romantic America. It is not, as we owlishly say, for our time. All it has is imagination and insight.

Another reason for Emerson's unpopularity is that he did not have a vision of evil. To count in criticism nowadays you must have a vision of evil. It seems that Herman Melville had a vision of evil in *Moby Dick,* that Nathaniel Hawthorne had a vision of evil in *The Scarlet Letter,* and that Henry James had a vision of evil in *The Turn of the Screw.* Precisely what the evil was in each case is in dispute, but it is there. Emerson had no vision of evil. His life was threatened by tuberculosis, he abandoned his pulpit, his first wife died young, his brothers were sick men, and his son perished—

> That hyacinthine boy, for whom
> Morn well might break and April bloom

he was ostracized by the conservative, he took the unpopular side in politics, he was accused of advocating atheism, he was said to be a radical, but he had

THE IRON STRING An address given at the Leverett House Junior-Senior Dinner, 1950. Copyright by the *Harvard Bulletin, Inc.* Reprinted by permission of the editor of the *Harvard Alumni Bulletin.*

no vision of evil. All he had was a vision of good. Good, he said, is something so tough, resilient, and timeless, it is indestructible. Our culture is supposed to have this vision of good as its ideal, yet Emerson is unpopular. I am not a philosopher, but merely a literary historian, and I do not pretend to explain the contradiction.

A third reason for Emerson's unpopularity is that he was a liberal. A liberal, says the Oxford Dictionary, is favorable to changes and reforms tending in the direction of democracy. Emerson favored these changes. However, liberalism is dead. It is not merely dead, it was mistaken. Mr. Wallace's failure to create a liberal party in this country is proof. The latest British election, which again buried the liberal party, is proof. The liberal point of view in economics is wrong. The liberal point of view in history, or rather the point of view of liberal historians, is wrong. These historians denounced Talleyrand, but Talleyrand was a force for stability. They attacked Metternich, but Metternich was a force for order. I am afraid Emerson was a liberal; that is, he assumed that man might amount to something by and by if he would but consult his better self, and that men, taken individually, might improve themselves, so to speak, into a democratic state. This is the American dream which, through the Voice of America, we are broadcasting round the world, particularly into darkest Russia. I am not a politician, merely a literary man, and I cannot explain this contradiction.

That somewhat frightened conservative, Matthew Arnold, came here in the eighties to lecture us about culture. He began the habit of depreciating Emerson. His lecture brings me to the fourth reason for Emerson's unpopularity. Arnold hinted that Emerson did not quite understand human weakness. Ours is the aspirin age, and we understand human weakness. Mr. T. S. Eliot has told us a number of times that man is full of sin. Mr. Reinhold Niebuhr has told us that man is full of sin. Monsignor Sheen has told us that man is full of sin. The bright faith in man characteristic of the eighteenth century, the bright trust in spiritual development characteristic of much of the nineteenth century, were fallacies.

Arnold allowed Emerson a single virtue. Emerson, he said, is the friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit. But we are informed that our profoundest failure, individual and political, is a failure of the spirit. For example, we are not truly successful in democratizing Germany because there is lacking a spiritual content to our democracy. Through the Marshall Plan and through military aid to Western Europe, there must glow, we are told, a radiancy of the spirit, or Communism will rush in. I do not understand how, if all men are weak, if all men are sinful, we can hope to maintain, much less improve, democratic society, I do not see how universal wickedness can be restrained except by an authoritarian church and state, I do not see how free men can be held together by mere unanimity of evil hearts. Nothing, of course, is more flattering than to think of one's self as a great sinner, irreparably lost. Byron is a case in point. A new Byronism now appears in poetry and theology, but I still suggest that some tincture of virtue is necessary for citizens of a republic. However, I am not a theologian.

By now you have rightly inferred that I find something important in Emerson. I am speaking of Emerson *à propos* of our time in order to revalidate an old Harvard custom—the custom of dissent. The protection of dissent is old at Harvard. Emerson's Divinity School Address *was* delivered, whatever happened afterwards—an early example. President Lowell's refusal to discharge Munsterberg and Harold Laski, when mob feeling demanded it, is a second example. The refusal of the President and Fellows to silence Harlow Shapley at the demand of an influential alumnus is a third. If Oxford's proudest products are its rebels, the proudest tradition of Harvard is the protection of dissent. Long may it be so. I sometimes think dissent may have no other place to go if the drives for conformity continue. For a slow, irresistible drive against dissent does go forward. That is why Emerson is important. Let me briefly discuss four examples of the drive for conformity—two from politics, two from education.

The British election shows what a genuine two-party system is—a system in which there is a fundamental philosophic issue. In Great Britain that issue lies between the Socialist state and the Tory state. No such issue divides the Republican state from the Democratic state. There is with us a set of persons called Democrats, some of them in office, and another set of persons calling themselves Republicans, not so many of whom are in office, but neither you nor I nor more competent observers can define the philosophic difference between these sets of persons in terms that will really make sense. Almost nothing could be more comic, if it were not so tragic, than to watch the Republicans hunting for somebody who will tell them what to do—a party in search of a platform. The only thing just as comic and just as tragic is the Democrats hunting for somebody who will tell them what they have done—a platform in search of a party. We are afraid of political dissent. We are so afraid of it that we use every means we can to prevent the creation or continuation of a dissenting party, Communist, Progressive, or what have you. I wonder what Emerson would say to this spectacle—he who interested himself in man rather than in mass.

This example of our distrust of dissent is from the national scene. My next example is from the international scene. There is a country called Russia. There is something called the cold war. There is something called the atom bomb, and there may be something called the hydrogen bomb. Now I do not care whether you think Mr. Wallace is politically naive or whether you think Mr. Wallace is an instrument of Satan, but I find nothing more characteristic of the pressure of conformity upon opinion than to compare what happened to Mr. Wallace and what happened to Senator McMahon. A few years ago Mr. Wallace was roundly smeared for urging that on the whole it would be more sensible patiently to continue to seek some accommodation with the Kremlin than to continue to slide down the terrifying spiral along which we are descending. Now that the situation has worsened, Senator McMahon—I mean no disrespect when I say he is safely ensconced in office—was a few weeks ago roundly applauded for saying very much the same thing. Mr. Wallace is on the political left and must therefore be intrinsically wrong; Senator McMahon is an administration Democrat, and must therefore be intrinsically

right. We applaud the Christian sentiment of the one and denounce the identical Christian sentiment of the other. It is now, of course, clear that sensible persons were right in saying that no important military weapon and no important scientific discovery can be long kept secret, but as our emotions of conformity are always predictable when this question comes up, the Russians must be very pleased. It makes me think of what General Lee said when he learned that General McClellan had been called back to command the Army of the Potomac. "I am very happy that General McClellan is again opposed to me," he remarked, "because I always know what he is going to do." I wonder what Emerson would tell us here about a foolish consistency, that hobgoblin of little minds.

I take my third example from the world of learning. I received a week or two ago an airmail letter asking me to protest against the action of twelve regents of the University of California who, in the teeth of faculty opinion, of administrative opinion, of gubernatorial opinion, of the opinion of six members of the board, and of the opinion of many outside the university, are determined to require a new oath from a faculty which has already taken an oath, and which has declined to take the new oath by a vote of 900 to 0.[1] It is apparently supposed not only that some member of the faculty may be a Communist, but that members of the faculty may, or might, or could, or would belong to mysterious organizations not named, mysteriously threatening the peace and dignity of California. The exact language of the proposed oath is: "That I am not a member of the Communist party, or under any oath, or a party to any agreement, or under any commitment that is in conflict with my obligation under this oath." No one knows what this language means except that it is insulting. It is not proved that any member of the California faculty has perjured himself or committed treason or acted as a spy. It is provable that the faculty of no university served the country more patriotically during the war. Now a majority of the regents has discovered that this same faculty are potential liars. They infer that the faculty might take oaths only to violate the oaths they take. They therefore set up this second oath, although if the oath-taker is not bound by oath number one, he is not going to be any more bound by oath number two. The effect is simply to penalize dissent. On the other hand, a friend of Emerson's preached active disloyalty to this government, an aunt of Emerson's helped that friend to violate the laws, and when this friend eulogized a rebel named John Brown, Emerson applauded him. Now, as we quaintly say, we "teach" Thoreau's *Essay on Civil Disobedience,* even in California. I cite these familiar facts only that you measure from what Massachusetts permitted in 1850 what California demands in 1950.

Let me turn to my last example. Passing over such obvious dangers to higher education as the military control of research, the extraordinary oath proposed

[1] Subsequent votes on related issues should not be confused with this one as reported in the newspapers At the time of going to press, the author's summary of the situation was believed to be reasonably correct.

to be attached to the National Science Foundation, the stool-pigeon clause demanded by the Navy Department of officers in training and happily modified because of student dissent, let me briefly contrast two patterns of collegiate training.

I suppose the greatest president Harvard had in the nineteenth century was Charles W. Eliot. Like Emerson he is now undervalued. He believed in the individual. His great work was to break up the cake of custom which then bound this college. He argued that if a man was old enough to go to college, he was old enough to know what he was going to college for. Mr. Eliot therefore instituted the elective system. He restored dignity both to learning and to the scholar. He knew very well that many men would not profit under his system, and that many men would abuse his system, but he also knew very well that for men worth educating, this was education worthy of men. He had got tired of educating boys. He guessed that the social gains would outweigh the social losses, and the brilliant roll call of distinguished Harvard men graduating in Mr. Eliot's time proves that he was right.

I suppose the greatest president of the University of Chicago in the twentieth century is Mr. Hutchins. I honor Mr. Hutchins. He speaks his mind. He is a remarkable individual. But I am always puzzled to know why Mr. Hutchins, who speaks his mind, infers that single-mindedness is therefore the principal virtue in liberal education. Mr. Hutchins has abandoned the pattern of Mr. Eliot and gone back to the pattern of Aquinas. I do not fully understand the Chicago system, but the part I do understand is the dogma that a selected list of great books is sufficient for, or synonymous with, a liberal education. These the teacher is to expound. The student is there to be taught. He may argue, he may debate, but he is there to master this library.

But why a library? The people who wrote these books had no such library, for the most part. As Emerson said, librarians are not wiser than other men. Why is bookishness a virtue? What is a great book? Who determines when it is great enough to get in, or, what is more important, small enough to be left out? Some books in some moments for some people have great beauty, and some books for some people at some moments have great wisdom, but I submit that one gains as much pleasure and wisdom and instruction from little books as one does from big ones. Are there great books, indeed? May not one truly say there are only great readers of books, and that the great reader seldom confines himself to any restricted list? Yet it is seriously maintained at Chicago that only by bookish authority can democracy be maintained and culture be enriched.

It is regrettable that Abraham Lincoln's library was meager. He never read Aquinas. He merely wrote the Gettysburg Address, which is shorter than Pericles' and just as good. Meek young men, said Emerson, grow up in libraries believing it their duty to accept the views which Cicero, which Locke, which Bacon have given, forgetful that Cicero, Locke, and Bacon were only young men in libraries when they wrote these books. It is true that Mr. Eliot put together the Harvard classics, but he did not do it to end a library; he merely thought it might be an economical way to begin one.

I do not remember who first made popular the phrase: "failure of nerve." But in these several instances of a drive to conformity, I detect a failure of nerve, a failure of belief in the individual.

In each case, of course, there is something to be said for conformity. There is always something to be said for conformity. I think, for example, something is to be said for the theory that whether the party in power is Democratic or Republican, we have in fact a coalition government; but a coalition government so insecure that it treats dissent as unpatriotic is not a government which Emerson, at any rate, could approve. The doctrine that "Papa knows best" troubles the presidency and the office of secretary of state, but it is not the doctrine of Emerson. The demand for patriotic oaths contrasts with the sentiment of a president in Emerson's time who once said of a rival that he would gladly hold General McClellan's stirrup, if by so doing he could get the country through its danger.

Honor is not manufactured by printed forms to be taken before a notary public; it is a function of manly self-respect—and it is a mark of the time that I feel almost apologetic for using so old-fashioned a phrase. The notion of standardized wisdom—so many parts of Plato, so many parts of Newton, so many parts of Milton; do not shake before taking—is a product of this same loss of nerve. It reveals hurry and distrust—hurry, because, when you have invented the formula, you can push the product through to its shaping, faster; distrust, because when you substitute uniformity of pattern for equality of individuals, you transfer your belief from the individuals to the pattern. A belated Emersonian, I am still, in things of the spirit, for the individual. Robert Frost reminds us that a one-man revolution is the only revolution that is coming.

By this circuitous route I come back to Emerson and education. We have found out in two wars that if all we want to do is to train the young, we can do it cleverly. If all you want to do is to train the young, establish your pattern —Great Books, General Education, call it what you will—and the training may be admirable. But it will be only training. We set up these teaching patterns and then look around for somebody to make them operate instead of assuring ourselves that we first have men to teach.

Like everybody else I have tinkered with the curriculum, but beyond rudimentary common sense and the baser parts of diplomacy, it does not matter what the pattern is, provided you have good scholars and students who really want to learn. The pattern seems wonderful only for a time. Ask any Harvard graduate ten years out what the catalogue outlined as proper education when he was a junior, and you will probably draw a blank; ask him who taught him, and he will instantly recur in memory to this or that powerful personality.

Education is a private affair. It is as private as falling in love. There is no such thing as general education, there are only specific individual educations. How often in the biographies of Harvard men do you find the phrase: "He studied with Agassiz, or Kittredge, or Royce, or Shaler!" How seldom does the curriculum appear except in a negative and crippling connotation!

Education, I repeat, *is* a private affair. It is essentially a lonely business, which neither deans nor advisers nor proctors nor tutors nor professors can substitute for. Like religion and marriage, it is personal, the result of the impact of character upon character. My objection to some things we are trying to do here is that we have strayed away from the spirit of Emerson.

When Emerson uttered his famous phrase: "Trust thyself—every heart vibrates to that iron string," he makes, if I may say so, the whole iron curtain vibrate. He did not speak to the sentimental, the lazy, the superficial men, the men who are content to get by with the aid of a tutor and skilful appeals to the dean's office. What he had in mind is the stark truth that we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out, and that therefore between these poles of time lies our only opportunity to develop character. And when he said that books are for the scholar's idle time, he did not mean that nobody should enter the Lamont Library.

In a democracy we count by ones and not by masses, though there are those who would define democracy by another pattern—the hatred of those who count by masses. Hate, however, is neither salvation nor statesmanship. The great contribution of Emerson is not only that he agreed to count by ones, but he also believed that one—anyone—had infinity behind him. I cannot defend this belief logically, though it looks suspiciously like Christianity, and is no more absurd than existentialism. But in education, as in the national life, how are we to fortify the individual unless we rally infinity behind him? This will, I know, be incomprehensible to many and impractical to some, and I can only point to the historic truth that this doctrine, incomprehensible and impractical, is the child of Harvard—of the great, traditional Harvard, the Harvard that I, who am merely Harvard by adoption, think we must not lose. When Lowell recited his ode for the Harvard dead in 1865, he did not celebrate the curriculum:

> Those love her best who to themselves are true,
> And what they dare to dream of, dare to do;
> They followed her and found her
> Where all may hope to find,
> Not in the ashes of the burnt-out mind,
> But beautiful with danger's sweetness round her.

Perhaps if we looked more often, both faculty and students, upon the face of the statue in Emerson Hall, we might detect a smiling irony about its lips. Perhaps, if we looked at it oftener, a noble doubt, as Emerson would say, might suggest itself about our faith in advice, in pattern, in crutches, in conformity.

Emerson's faith was not in machinery but in man thinking, whereas we today are proud of machines that think, and suspicious of any man who tries to. I see no reason for being as apologetic as we are about the protest of protestantism and the dissidence of dissent in a college which was founded by dissenters; and difficult though it is to make my point, I for one dissent from current notions in college and country that democracy will survive only after you have imposed a pattern and made as many persons as possible conform to it.

of the door-post, *Whim*. I hope it is somewhat better than whim at last, but we cannot spend the day in explanation. Expect me not to show cause why I seek or why I exclude company. Then again, do not tell me, as a good man did today, of my obligation to put all poor men in good situations. Are they *my* poor? I tell thee, thou foolish philanthropist, that I grudge the dollar, the dime, the cent I give to such men as do not belong to me and to whom I do not belong. There is a class of persons to whom by all spiritual affinity I am bought and sold; for them I will go to prison if need be; but your miscellaneous popular charities; the education at college of fools; the building of meeting-houses to the vain end to which many now stand; alms to sots, and the thousand-fold Relief Societies;—though I confess with shame I sometimes succumb and give the dollar, it is a wicked dollar, which by and by I shall have the manhood to withhold.

Virtues are, in the popular estimate, rather the exception than the rule. There is the man *and* his virtues. Men do what is called a good action, as some piece of courage or charity, much as they would pay a fine in expiation of daily non-appearance on parade. Their works are done as an apology or extenuation of their living in the world,—as invalids and the insane pay a high board. Their virtues are penances. I do not wish to expiate, but to live. My life is for itself and not for a spectacle. I much prefer that it should be of a lower strain, so it be genuine and equal, than that it should be glittering and unsteady. I wish it to be sound and sweet, and not to need diet and bleeding. I ask primary evidence that you are a man, and refuse this appeal from the man to his actions. I know that for myself it makes no difference whether I do or forbear those actions which are reckoned excellent. I cannot consent to pay for a privilege where I have intrinsic right. Few and mean as my gifts may be, I actually am, and do not need for my own assurance or the assurance of my fellows any secondary testimony.

What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

The objection to conforming to usages that have become dead to you is that it scatters your force. It loses your time and blurs the impression of your character. If you maintain a dead church, contribute to a dead Bible-society, vote with a great party either for the government or against it, spread your table like base housekeepers,—under all these screens I have difficulty to detect the precise man you are: and of course so much force is withdrawn from your proper life. But do your work, and I shall know you. Do your work, and you shall reinforce yourself. A man must consider what a blind-man's-buff is this game of conformity. If I know your sect I anticipate your argument. I hear a preacher announce for his text and topic the expediency of one of the institutions of his church. Do I not know beforehand that not possibly can he say a new and spontaneous word? Do I not know that with all this ostentation of

examining the grounds of the institution he will do no such thing? Do I not know that he is pledged to himself not to look but at one side, the permitted side, not as a man, but as a parish minister? He is a retained attorney, and these airs of the bench are the emptiest affectation. Well, most men have bound their eyes with one or another handkerchief, and attached themselves to some one of these communities of opinion. This conformity makes them not false in a few particulars, authors of a few lies, but false in all particulars. Their every truth is not quite true. Their two is not the real two, their four not the real four; so that every word they say chagrins us and we know not where to begin to set them right. Meantime nature is not slow to equip us in the prison-uniform of the party to which we adhere. We come to wear one cut of face and figure, and acquire by degrees the gentlest asinine expression. There is a mortifying experience in particular, which does not fail to wreak itself also in the general history; I mean "the foolish face of praise," the forced smile which we put on in company where we do not feel at ease, in answer to conversation which does not interest us. The muscles, not spontaneously moved but moved by a low usurping wilfulness, grow tight about the outline of the face, with the most disagreeable sensation.

For nonconformity the world whips you with its displeasure. And therefore a man must know how to estimate a sour face. The by-standers look askance on him in the public street or in the friend's parlor. If this aversion had its origin in contempt and resistance like his own he might well go home with a sad countenance; but the sour faces of the multitude, like their sweet faces, have no deep cause, but are put on and off as the wind blows and a newspaper directs. Yet is the discontent of the multitude more formidable than that of the senate and the college. It is easy enough for a firm man who knows the world to brook the rage of the cultivated classes. Their rage is decorous and prudent, for they are timid, as being very vulnerable themselves. But when to their feminine rage the indignation of the people is added, when the ignorant and the poor are aroused, when the unintelligent brute force that lies at the bottom of society is made to growl and mow, it needs the habit of magnanimity and religion to treat it godlike as a trifle of no concernment.

The other terror that scares us from self-trust is our consistency; a reverence for our past act or word because the eyes of others have no other data for computing our orbit than our past acts, and we are loth to disappoint them.

But why should you keep your head over your shoulder? Why drag about this corpse of your memory, lest you contradict somewhat you have stated in this or that public place? Suppose you should contradict yourself; what then? It seems to be a rule of wisdom never to rely on your memory alone, scarcely even in acts of pure memory, but to bring the past for judgment into the thousand-eyed present, and live ever in a new day. In your metaphysics you have denied personality to the Deity, yet when the devout motions of the soul come, yield to them heart and life, though they should clothe God with shape and color. Leave your theory, as Joseph his coat in the hand of the harlot, and flee.

A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply

nothing to do. He may as well concern himself with his shadow on the wall. Speak what you think now in hard words and tomorrow speak what tomorrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict every thing you said today.—"Ah, so you shall be sure to be misunderstood."—Is it so bad then to be misunderstood? Pythagoras was misunderstood, and Socrates, and Jesus, and Luther, and Copernicus, and Galileo, and Newton, and every pure and wise spirit that ever took flesh. To be great is to be misunderstood. . . .

JOHN MILTON

Areopagitica

I DENY not but that it is of greatest concernment in the Church and Commonwealth to have a vigilant eye how books demean themselves as well as men; and thereafter to confine, imprison, and do sharpest justice on them as malefactors. For books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intellect that bred them. I know they are as lively, and as vigorously productive, as those fabulous dragon's teeth; and being sown up and down, may chance to spring up armed men. And yet, on the other hand, unless wariness be used, as good almost kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills a reasonable creature, God's image; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were, in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth; but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life. 'Tis true, no age can restore a life, whereof perhaps there is no great loss; and revolutions of ages do not oft recover the loss of a rejected truth, for the want of which whole nations fare the worse. We should be wary, therefore, what persecution we raise against the living labors of public men, how we spill that seasoned life of man, preserved and stored up in books; since we see a kind of homicide may be thus committed, sometimes a martyrdom; and if it extend to the whole impression, a kind of massacre, whereof the execution ends not in the slaying of an elemental life, but strikes at that ethereal and fifth essence, the breath of reason itself, slays an immortality rather than a life. . . .

Good and evil we know in the field of this world grow up together almost inseparably; and the knowledge of good is so involved and interwoven with the knowledge of evil, and in so many cunning resemblances hardly to be discerned, that those confused seeds which were imposed upon Psyche as an incessant labor to cull out, and sort asunder, were not more intermixed. It was from out the rind of one apple tasted, that the knowledge of good and evil, as two twins cleaving together, leaped forth into the world. And perhaps

this is that doom which Adam fell into of knowing good and evil, that is to say, of knowing good by evil.

As therefore the state of man now is, what wisdom can there be to choose, what continence to forbear without the knowledge of evil? He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true wayfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather: that which purifies us is trial, and trial is by what is contrary. That virtue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank virtue, not a pure; her whiteness is but an excremental whiteness; which was the reason why our sage and serious poet Spenser, whom I dare be known to think a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas, describing true temperance under the person of Guion, brings him in with his palmer through the cave of Mammon and the bower of earthly bliss, that he might see and know, and yet abstain.

Since therefore, the knowledge and survey of vice is in this world so necessary to the constituting of human virtue, and the scanning of error to the confirmation of truth, how can we more safely, and with less danger, scout into the regions of sin and falsity, than by reading all manner of tractates and hearing all manner of reason? And this is the benefit which may be had of books promiscuously read. . . .

PLATO

The Apology of Socrates

SOCRATES' DEFENCE

WHAT EFFECT my accusers had upon you, Men of Athens, I know not. As for me, they well-nigh made me forget who I was, so telling were their speeches! And yet, so to say, not one atom of truth did they utter. But that which astonished me most among all their fabrications was this, that they said you must be on your guard, and not be deceived by me, as I was a masterly speaker. That they should not be ashamed when they were promptly going to be caught by me in a lie, through the fact, since I shall show myself to be no orator at all, therein methought they reached the very height of their effrontery; unless perchance what they call masterly speaker means the one

THE APOLOGY OF SOCRATES *Plato on the Trial and Death of Socrates,* Lane Cooper trans. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1941, pp. 49-77. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

who tells the truth. If that is what they are saying, then I will admit I am an orator, though not of the sort they describe.

Well then, as I say, these men have uttered nothing, or next to nothing, that is true. From me, however, you shall hear the simple truth. But, by Heaven! fellow citizens, it will not be in language like theirs, decked out with epithets and phrases, nor beautifully ordered; rather you shall hear such utterances as come to me, in any words that offer, for of the justice of what I say I am convinced, and from me you need none of you expect aught else. No, Gentlemen! it would hardly befit a man of my age to come into your presence moulding phrases like a youngster. And nevertheless, my fellow citizens, and above all, I do request and beg of you this thing: if you should hear me pleading my cause with the same expressions I habitually have used in speaking, whether at the market by the counters, where many of you have heard me, or elsewhere, do not for that reason marvel and make a disturbance. The facts stand thus. At the age of seventy years I now for the first time have come up before a tribunal, and so I am an absolute stranger to the language of this place. Let it be as if I really were a foreigner here, since then you surely would excuse me if I used the accent and manner of speech in which I was reared. And so I now make this request of you, a matter of justice as it seems to me, that you let me use my way of speaking; it may be better, it may be worse, but the only thing you have to consider is this, and this is what you have to put your mind on, whether that which I say is right or not. That is the merit of a judge; the merit of a speaker is to tell the truth.

To begin with, fellow citizens, it is right for me to answer the earliest charges falsely brought against me, and my first accusers, and then I must answer the charges and accusers that come later.

Many, in fact, were they who formerly brought charges against me, yes many years ago, and spoke not a word of truth. And them I fear more than I do the group of Anytus, dangerous as these are too. No, Gentlemen, those others are more dangerous, for they have prejudiced the major part of you since your childhood, convincing you of an utterly false charge against me; to wit, "There is a person, Socrates by name, a 'wise man,' who speculates about the heavens above, and also searches into everything below the earth, and in argument can make the worse case win." Those persons who have spread this charge abroad, they, fellow citizens, are my dangerous accusers; for people who listen to them think that men who make the said investigations do not believe in any gods. Add that these accusers are many in number, have brought their charges for a long time now, and, moreover, made them to you when you most readily believed things, when some of you were children or striplings; sheer accusation of an absent person without anybody to defend him. And what is most baffling of all, it is impossible to identify and name them, unless perchance in the case of a certain comic poet. For the rest, for all who through jealousy and malice misled you, and those who, once they were misled, got others to believe the same—with all these it is impossible to deal. There is no means of bringing one of them here to court, or putting a single one to cross-examination. No, in making my defense I am simply forced to fight, as it were, with shadows, and to question with

nobody to make reply. Accordingly, I ask you to assume with me that, as I say, my accusers fall into these two classes, one group who are accusing me at present, the other those who of old accused me as aforesaid; and understand that it is these I must reply to first, for it is they whom you heard bringing charges earlier, and far more than this group who now come after.

Well then, fellow citizens, I must now make my defence, and must try to clear away in this brief time that calumny which you have entertained so long. I would that this might come to pass, if so it should be better for both you and me, and if it profits me to plead. But I think the task to be a hard one, and what its nature is I am by no means unaware. Still, let the outcome be as it pleases God; the law must be obeyed, and the defence be made.

Let us, then, go back and look at the original accusation from which the slander arose, the slander that gave Meletus his ground for this indictment he has lodged against me. Let us see. Precisely what did the slanderers say when they slandered? We must read their complaint as if it were a legal accusation: "Socrates is wicked; overdoes inquiry into what occurs below the earth and in the heavens; in arguing makes the worse case win; and teaches others to do the same as he." Such is in substance the accusation—what you actually saw in the comedy [the *Clouds*] of Aristophanes, where a man called "Socrates" is swung about, declaring that he treads the air, and sputtering a deal of other nonsense on matters of which I have not one bit of knowledge either great or small. And I do not say so in disparagement of any science such as that, if any one is learned in such matters; I should not wish to be attacked by Meletus upon so grave a charge. But actually, fellow citizens, to me these matters are of absolutely no concern. I call the greater part of you yourselves to witness, and beg all who ever heard me in discussion to tell one another and declare it; many of you are in a position to do this. Declare to one another, therefore, whether any of you ever heard me dealing with such matters either briefly or at length. In that way you will see what all the rest amounts to of what the generality of people say concerning me.

No, there is nothing in it whatsoever. And if you have heard anybody say that I profess to give instruction, and get money in that way, neither is that true; although to my mind it is very fine indeed if any one is able to instruct his fellows, as are Gorgias of Leontini, and Prodicus of Ceos, and Hippias of Elis. Each one of them is able, Gentlemen, to go to city after city and attract young men; youths who might without expense consort with any one they chose among their own fellow citizens, these they persuade to give up that fellowship, to consort with them, to pay them money, and to be grateful to them besides. And indeed there is another man of learning here, from Paros, who, I learned, was staying in the City, for I happened to be calling on a man, Callias son of Hipponicus, who has paid more money to the Sophists than have all the others put together. And so I questioned him, he having, in fact, two sons:

"Callias," said I, "if your two sons had been colts or calves, we should have no trouble in finding some one to look after them, who for pay would make them fine and good according to the standard of their kind. We should pick some trainer of horses, say, or farmer. But now that they are human beings,

whom have you in mind to put in charge of them? Who is there with a knowledge of their proper quality, the excellence of a human being and a citizen? I fancy you have given thought to this since you have sons. Is there any one," said I, "or not?"

"Yes, certainly," said he.

"Who?" said I. "Whence comes he? What does he charge for teaching?"

"Socrates," he said, "it is Evenus; comes from Paros; charge, five minae."

So I thought Evenus was a lucky man if he really had this art, and would teach it at so reasonable a rate. For myself, I should be very proud and self-conceited if I knew all that. But the truth is, fellow citizens, I have no such knowledge.

Then perhaps some one of you may be inclined to ask: "But, Socrates, what *is* the matter with you? What is the origin of these charges that are made against you? Unless you acted very differently from everybody else, surely no such story and repute would have arisen—if you did not do something other than most people do. Tell us what it is, in order to keep us from rushing to our own conclusion about you."

That, I take it, would be fairly spoken; and I shall try to show you what it is that has given me this name and ill repute. Pray listen. Some of you, perhaps, will take me to be joking, but be assured that I shall tell you the simple truth. The fact is, fellow citizens, that I have got this name through my possession of a certain wisdom. What sort of wisdom is it? A wisdom, doubtless, that appertains to man. With respect to this, perhaps, I actually am wise; whereas those others whom I just now mentioned may possibly be wise with a wisdom more than human, or else I do not know what to say of it; as for me, I certainly do not possess it, and whoever says I do is lying, and seeks to injure me.

And, fellow citizens, do not interrupt me even if I say what seems extravagant, for the statement I shall make is not my own; instead, I shall refer you to a witness whose word can be accepted. Your witness to my wisdom, if I have any, and to its nature, is the god at Delphi. You certainly knew Chaerephon. He was a friend of mine from our youth, and a friend of your popular party as well; he shared in your late exile, and accompanied you on your return. Now you know the temper of Chaerephon, how impulsive he was in everything he undertook. Well so it was when once he went to Delphi, and made bold to ask the oracle this question—and, Gentlemen, please do not make an uproar over what I say; he asked if there was any one more wise than I. Then the Pythian oracle made response that there was no one who was wiser. To this response his brother here will bear you witness, since Chaerephon himself is dead.

Now bear in mind the reason why I tell you this. It is because I am going on to show you whence this calumny of me has sprung; for when I heard about the oracle, I communed within myself: "What can the god be saying, and what does the riddle mean? Well I know in my own heart that I am without wisdom great or small. What is it that he means, then, in declaring me to be most wise? It cannot be that he is lying; it is not in his nature." For a

long time I continued at a loss as to his meaning, then finally decided, much against my will, to seek it in the following way.

I went to one of those who pass for wise men, feeling sure that there if anywhere I could refute the answer, and explain to the oracle: "Here is a man that is wiser than I, but you said I was the wisest." The man I went to see was one of our statesmen; his name I need not mention. Him I thoroughly examined, and from him, as I studied him and conversed with him, I gathered, fellow citizens, this impression. This man appeared to me to seem to be wise to others, and above all to himself, but not to be so. And then I tried to show him that he thought that he was wise, but was not. The result was that I gained his enmity and the enmity as well of many of those who were present. So, as I went away, I reasoned with myself: "At all events I am wiser than this man is. It is quite possible that neither one of us knows anything fine and good. But this man fancies that he knows when he does not, while I, whereas I do not know, just so I do not fancy that I know. In this small item, then, at least, I seem to be wiser than he, in that I do not fancy that I know what I do not." Thereafter I went to another man, one of those who passed for wiser than the first, and I got the same impression. Whereupon I gained his enmity as well as that of many more.

Thereafter I went from one man to another, perceiving, with grief and apprehension, that I was getting hated, but it seemed imperative to put the service of the god above all else. In my search for the meaning of the oracle I must go to all who were supposed to have some knowledge. And, fellow citizens, by the Dog, since I have to tell you the truth, here is pretty much what I encountered. The persons with the greatest reputation seemed to me to be the ones who were well-nigh the most deficient, as I made my search in keeping with the god's intent; whereas others of inferior reputation I found to be men superior in regard to their possession of the truth. I needs must tell you all about my wandering course, a veritable round of toils heroic, which I underwent to prove that the oracle was not to be refuted.

After the statesmen, I went to the poets, tragic, dithyrambic, and the rest. There, I thought, my ignorance would be self-evident in comparison with them. So I took those poems of theirs which seemed to me to have been most carefully wrought by them, and asked the authors what they meant, in order that I might at the same time learn from them. Well, Gentlemen, I am ashamed to tell you the truth; and yet it must be done. The fact is, pretty nearly everybody, so to say, who was present could have spoken better than the authors did about the poems they themselves had written. So here again in a short time I learned this about the poets too, that not by wisdom do they make what they compose, but by a gift of nature and an inspiration similar to that of the diviners and the oracles. These also utter many beautiful things, but understand not one of them. And such, I saw, was the experience of the poets. At the same time I perceived that their poetic gift led them to fancy that in all else, too, they were the wisest of mankind, when they were not. So I went away from them as well, believing that I had the same advantage over them as over the statesmen.

To make an end, I went, then, to the artisans. Conscious that I did not,

so to say, know anything myself, I was certain I should find that they knew many things and fine. Nor in that was I deceived; they did indeed know things which I did not, and in that they were wiser than I. But, fellow citizens, these excellent workmen seemed to me to have the same defect as the poets. Because they were successful in the practice of their art, each thought himself most wise about all other things of the highest import, and this mistake of theirs beclouded all that wisdom. So I asked myself the question, for the oracle, whether I preferred to be just what I was, neither wise as they were wise nor ignorant as they were ignorant, or to be both wise and ignorant like them. And my response to myself and the oracle was that it paid me to be as I was.

Such, fellow citizens, was the quest which brought me so much enmity, hatreds so utterly harsh and hard to bear, whence sprang so many calumnies, and this name that is given me of being "wise"; for every time I caught another person in his ignorance, those present fancied that I knew what he did not. But, Gentlemen, in all likelihood it really is the god who is wise, and by that oracle he meant to say that human wisdom is of little worth, or none. And it appears that when he picked out "Socrates," he used my name to take me for an example; it was as if he said: "O race of men, he is the wisest among you, who, like Socrates, knows that in truth his knowledge is worth nothing." So even now I still go about in my search, and, in keeping with the god's intent, question anybody, citizen or stranger, whom I fancy to be wise. And when it seems to me that he is not, in defence of the god I show that he is not. And this activity has left me without leisure either to take any real part in civic affairs or to care for my own. Instead, I live in infinite poverty through my service to the god.

In addition, the young men who of their own accord are my companions, of the class who have most leisure, sons of the very rich—they listen with joy to the men who are examined; they often imitate me, and in turn attempt to test out others. And thereupon, I take it, they find a great abundance of men who imagine they have some knowledge, and yet know little or nothing. And then these men whom they examine get angry, not at them, but at me, and say there is one Socrates, a perfect blackguard, who corrupts the young. Yet when anybody asks them how he does it, and by teaching what, they have nothing to tell, nor do they know. But in order not to seem quite at a loss, they make the usual attacks that are leveled at philosophers, namely, about "things occurring in the heavens and below the earth," "not believing in the gods," and "making the worse case win." What they do not care to utter, I imagine, is the truth: that they have been shown up in their pretense to knowledge when they actually knew nothing. Accordingly, since they are proud, passionate, and numerous, and organized and effective in speaking about me, they have long since filled your ears with their violent calumnies.

From among them have come Meletus, Anytus, and Lycon to attack me; Meletus aggrieved on behalf of the poets, Anytus on behalf of the artists and the politicians, Lycon on behalf of the rhetoricians. Consequently, as I said at the beginning, I shall be surprised if I succeed, within so short a time, in ridding you of all this swollen mass of calumny.

There, fellow citizens, you have the truth. I hide nothing from you, either great or small, nor do I dissimulate. And yet I know that even by this I stir up hatred, which itself proves that I tell the truth, and that it is precisely this that constitutes the charge against me, and is the cause of it. And whether now or later you investigate the matter, you will find it to be so.

Therewith let me close my defence to you on the charges made against me by my first accusers. As for Meletus, that honest man and good friend of the City, as he styles himself, to him and my more recent foes I will now endeavor to reply.

Here again, since the present charges vary from the former, let us take the actual text of the complaint. It runs, in effect, as follows: "Socrates," it declares, "offends against the law since he corrupts the young, does not believe in the gods the State believes in, and believes in novel deities [spirits, *daimonia*] instead." Such is the accusation. Let us examine it point by point.

First, it holds that I offend by corrupting the young. But I, fellow citizens, I hold that Meletus offends in that he makes a jest of a serious matter, when he lightly brings men to trial on questions in which he pretends to be deeply interested and concerned, whereas he never took the slightest interest in any of them. That this is so, I will try to prove to you.

Your attention, Meletus! Answer! Do you not attach the utmost importance to the moral improvement of our youth?

[MELETUS.] I do indeed.

Well then, tell the assembly here, who makes the young men better? You obviously know, for it is your special concern. You have discovered, so you state, who it is that corrupts them: I, whom you bring hither and accuse. Come now, tell who the person is who makes them better, and name him to these judges.

See, Meletus, you are silent. Have you nothing to say? Doesn't that seem shameful to you, and proof enough of my assertion that you have had no interest in the matter? But come, friend, say who makes them better?

[MELETUS.] The laws.

No, my good fellow, that is not what I ask. I mean, what man? for, obviously, first of all he will have to know this very thing, the laws.

[MELETUS.] These judges, Socrates.

What say you, Meletus? These judges here are competent to instruct the young, and make them better?

[MELETUS.] Most certainly.

All are able? Or some are, and some are not?

[MELETUS.] All of them!

By Hera, that is welcome news! We have an ample store of men who benefit their kind! What next? What about the audience here, do these too make them better?

[MELETUS.] Yes, they too.

What about the Council?

[MELETUS.] Yes, the Council also.

But, Meletus, what about the men in the Assembly, the members of it, do they corrupt the young, or do they one and all make young men better?

[MELETUS.] Yes, they do it too.

So it seems that every one in Athens except me makes them fine and good, and I alone corrupt them. Is that your meaning?

[MELETUS.] Precisely that.

You detect me in a most unlucky situation. Answer me, though. Does the same thing seem to you to hold for horses too? Do you think all other men make horses better, and only one man ruins them? Or is it just the opposite of this, that some one man, or a very few, the horsemen, can improve them, whereas most people, if they have to deal with horses, and to make use of them, will spoil them? Is that not so, Meletus, both with horses and all other animals? It surely is, whether Anytus and you deny it or admit it. And what wonderful luck it would be for the young people if there were only one who did them harm, and all others did them good! But no, Meletus, you give ample proof that you never cared at all about the young; and your indifference is clearly shown—that you had no interest whatever in the things for which you bring me into court.

Now, Meletus, another question. In the name of Zeus, tell us whether it is better to live with honest citizens or with bad ones. Answer, friend; I ask you nothing difficult. Don't the wicked always do some evil to their neighbors, and the good some good?

[MELETUS.] Certainly.

Well, is there anybody who would rather be harmed than helped by those he lives with? Answer, my friend; the law requires you to do so. Does anybody like to be injured?

[MELETUS.] Certainly not.

Come now. When you bring me into court for corrupting the younger generation and making them worse, do you charge that I do so purposely or without design?

[MELETUS.] Purposely, say I.

What's that, Meletus? Are you at your age so much wiser than I am at mine? And thus, while you know that the wicked always do some injury to their nearest neighbors, and the good some good, I, you think, am come to such a state of ignorance as not to know that if I make some one I live with bad, I run the risk of getting injured by him? So according to you I do myself all this harm on purpose! That, Meletus, you will not get me to believe, nor, I fancy, anybody else in all the world. No, either I do not corrupt them, or if I do corrupt them, it is not by design. So either way you lie. If I ruin them unwittingly, the case is that of an involuntary error which does not legally bring me before this court; the proper thing would be to take me privately, and to instruct and warn me; for obviously when I learn better I shall stop doing what I do unwittingly. But you avoided joining me in order to instruct me; you chose not to do it. You bring me to this court where it is legal to try those who stand in need of punishment, not of learning.

There, fellow citizens, you have evidence enough of what I said, that Meletus has not taken the slightest interest in these matters.

Yet tell us, Meletus: in what way do you say I corrupt the younger men? Or is it not clear from the text of your complaint that you mean I teach them

not to believe in the gods the State believes in, but in other new divinities? Isn't that the way you mean I corrupt them by my teaching?

[MELETUS.] Yes, that is just what I assert.

In that case, Meletus, in the name of those very gods we are discussing, explain your meaning still more clearly to these gentlemen here and me, for there is a point I am unable to make out. If you mean that I teach them to believe in the existence of certain gods, then I myself believe that there are gods, and so I am not out and out an atheist, and do not break the law in that respect. Or do you mean that they are not the gods the State believes in, but other gods instead, and is this the point of your complaint, that they are different? Or do you say that I myself do not believe in any gods at all, and that I teach this disbelief to others?

[MELETUS.] Yes, that is what I maintain, that you do not believe in any gods at all.

You amaze me, Meletus. How can you say so? Do you mean that I do not, like other men, regard the sun and moon as gods?

[MELETUS.] By Heaven, Gentlemen of the Jury, he does not; he holds that the sun is a stone, and the moon an earth.

You must think you are accusing Anaxagoras, my dear Meletus. Have you such a poor opinion of these men here, and do you think them so illiterate as not to know that the works of Anaxagoras of Clazomenae are full of these ideas? And so you think that the young men learn these things from me, when on occasion they could buy the books for a drachma at most in the orchestra, and then laugh at Socrates if he pretended that these theories were his—apart from the fact that they are so bizarre! But, by Heaven, is that the way you think of me, that I don't believe in any god whatever?

[MELETUS.] No, by Heaven, not a single one.

Now that, Meletus, is incredible, and something that I take it you do not believe yourself. In my opinion, fellow citizens, this man is an utterly overweening and unbridled person, who has brought this accusation simply out of insolence, intemperance, and youthful rashness. It looks as if he had made up a riddle with which to try me out: "See whether Socrates, the wise man, will know that I am jesting and self-contradictory, or whether I shall fool him and all the rest who listen"; for to me he clearly contradicts himself in the complaint, where in effect he says: "Socrates offends by not believing in gods, but by believing in gods." And that is simply joking.

Examine with me, Gentlemen, my way of showing that he says this. And, Meletus, you answer us. But, Gentlemen, remember the request I made at the outset, and do not interrupt if I pursue the argument in my customary fashion.

Is there any living man, Meletus, who believes that there are human things, but does not believe that there are human beings? Let him answer, Gentlemen, and not make noisy protests beside the point. Does any one believe in horsemanship, and not in horses? Or does any one believe there is an art of piping, but that there are no pipers? No, honorable sir, there isn't any one who does it. If you do not choose to answer, I will speak for you and these others here

as well. But give the answer to this. Is there anybody who believes in the doings of spirits [*daimonia*], but thinks there are no spirits [*daimones*]?

[MELETUS.] No.

How you oblige me by the grudging answer these gentlemen force you to make! Well then, you admit, I believe and teach that there are doings of spirits, whether recent or of old. At all events I do believe in them according to your statement; you have even sworn to this in your complaint. But if I believe in them, then quite necessarily, I suppose, I must believe in spirits. Isn't it so? It must be. I put you down as in agreement since you make no reply.

Now, must we not consider spirits as either gods or the offspring of gods? Say yes or no.

[MELETUS.] Yes, certainly.

If, then, I think that there are spirits, as you assert, and if the spirits are in some way gods, am I not right in saying that you talk in riddles and are jesting? First you say that I do not believe in gods, and next that I do believe in them inasmuch as I believe in spirits. Or again: if the spirits [*daimones*] are illegitimate children of the gods, whether by nymphs or other mothers as report will have it, who on earth will ever think that there are children of the gods, but that there are no gods? It would be as queer as to think that mules were the offspring of horses and asses, but that horses and asses did not exist. No, Meletus, there is no way out of it; either you formulated this complaint in order to try us out, or else you could find no real crime with which to charge me. That you could get a living person with the least intelligence to admit that a given man believed in the doings of spirits but not of gods, and that the same man, again, believed in neither spirits, gods, nor heroes, is quite beyond the bounds of possibility.

No, fellow citizens, that I am guiltless with respect to Meletus' indictment seems to me to call for no long defence; rather, let this argument suffice. But what I have said before, that much antagonism has arisen against me in the minds of many, rest assured that it is true. And this it is that will undo me, if I am undone, not Meletus nor Anytus, but the slander of the many, and their malice. Many another man, and good ones, has it undone, and, methinks, it will yet undo. There is no danger that the thing may stop with me.

Perhaps some one will say: "Well, Socrates, aren't you ashamed that you pursued a course from which you now are in danger of death?" To that it would be right for me to reply: "Good sir, it is not well said if you think that a man of any worth at all ought to calculate his chances of living or dying, and not rather look to this alone, when he acts, to see if what he does is right or wrong, and if his are the deeds of a good man or a bad. By your account, the demigods who fell at Troy would be sorry fellows, all of them, and notably the son of Thetis, who so despised all danger in comparison with any disgrace awaiting him, and with what result? When his mother saw him eager to slay Hector, she, the goddess, addressed him, as I recall, approximately thus: 'My child, if you avenge the death of your comrade Patroclus by slaying Hector, then you yourself will die. For you the lot of death,' she said, 'comes straightway after Hector's.' But he, on hearing that, made light of death and danger, fearing far more to live a coward and not avenge his loved ones. 'Straight-

way let me die,' said he, 'once I give the villain his reward, and not continue here, a laughing-stock, beside the hollow ships, a burden to the earth.' Do you think that he took heed of death or danger?"

That, fellow citizens, is the way things really stand. If any one is stationed where he thinks it is best for him to be, or where his commander has put him, there, as it seems to me, it is his duty to remain, no matter what the risk, heedless of death or any other peril in comparison with disgrace.

It would have been dreadful conduct, fellow citizens, had I acted otherwise. When the leaders you had chosen to command me assigned a post to me at Potidaea, at Amphipolis, and at Delium, in the face of death itself I was as steadfast as any one could be in holding the position where they placed me; and when the god, as I believed and understood, assigned to me as my duty that I should live the life of a philosopher, and examine myself and others, it would have been dreadful had I through fear of death, or of anything else whatever, deserted my post. Dreadful indeed would it be, and verily any one would then be justified in bringing me to trial for not believing in gods, when I had disobeyed the oracle, feared death, and thought that I was wise when I was not.

For, Gentlemen, to be afraid of death is nothing else than thinking that one is wise when one is not, since it means fancying that one knows what one does not. Nobody knows, in fact, what death is, nor whether to man it is not perchance the greatest of all blessings; yet people fear it as if they surely knew it to be the worst of evils. And what is this but the shameful ignorance of supposing that we know what we do not? It is there and in that perhaps that I differ, Gentlemen, from the majority of mankind; and if I might call myself more wise than another, it would be in this, that as I do not know enough about what goes on in Hades, so too I do not think that I know. But doing wrong, and disobeying the person who is better than myself, be it god or man, that I know is base and wicked. Therefore never for the sake of evils which I know to be such will I fear or flee from what for all I know may be a good.

Accordingly, suppose you were now to acquit me, and went against Anytus; he who says that either I ought not to have been summoned hither to begin with, or, once I appeared I must inevitably be put to death; for he tells you that, if I am freed, your sons, who already put in practice what Socrates teaches, will all be utterly ruined. Suppose with reference to that you were to say to me: "Socrates, at present we shall not give Anytus our assent, but will acquit you, yet upon one condition, namely, that hereafter you shall not pass your time in this investigation nor pursue philosophy; if you are caught doing it again, you die." Well, as I said, if you were ready to let me go upon these conditions, my reply to you would be:

"Fellow citizens, I respect and love you, but I must obey the god rather than you, and so long as I draw breath, and can pursue philosophy, I will not cease from it nor from exhorting you, and ever pointing out the way to any one of you I meet, saying to him as I have been wont: 'Good friend, you are a citizen of Athens, the greatest of all cities and the most renowned for power and learning, and yet you feel no shame at giving your mind to money

so that you may get as much as possible, and to your reputation and to honor; but for insight, for the truth, for your soul and how it shall be at its best, you do not care nor trouble.'"

And if any one of you disputes it, and says that he does care, I shall not forthwith dismiss him and go away, but will question him, and sift him, and put him to the test; and if he seems to me to have no fund of virtue, while professing to have it, I shall reproach him with attaching little value to what has most importance, and taking paltry things for what is larger. So will I do with young and old, whatever he be that I meet with, foreigner or native, yet rather with you citizens since you are nearer to me by kin; for this, you may rest assured, is what the god demands of me. And I think that there never came to you a greater good in the City than the service I render the god.

All I do is to go about persuading you, both young and old, not to think first of your bodies or your property, nor to be so mightily concerned about them as about your souls, how the spirit shall be at its best; it is my task to tell you that virtue does not spring from wealth, but that wealth and every other good that comes to men in private life or in public proceed from virtue. If it is by saying this that I corrupt the young, then this must be injurious; but any one who holds that I say anything save this says nothing. On that head, fellow citizens, I may assure you that whether you trust Anytus or not, and whether you acquit me or do not acquit me, I shall not alter my course, no matter if I have to die a hundred times.

Now, fellow citizens, do not interrupt, but continue granting my request of you not to cry out at what I may say, but to listen; I do believe that you will profit if you listen. I am, in fact, about to tell you certain other things at which you might possibly protest. Yet please do not. No; for you may rest assured that if you condemn me to death, I being such a person as I say, you will do yourselves more harm than you do me. As for me, Meletus will no more hurt me than will Anytus. It does not lie in his power, for in my belief the eternal order does not permit a better man to be harmed by a worse. Oh yes! quite possibly he might kill or banish me, or rob me of my civic rights; and doubtless this man and the next will think that these are major evils. I do not think them such; no, I think it a far greater evil for a man to do what this man now is doing, namely trying to get a man condemned to death unjustly.

So, fellow citizens, at present I am far from making my defence upon my own account, as one might think; I make it for your sake, in order that you may not, by condemning me, do wrong about the gift of the god to you; for if you have me put to death, you will not easily find another of the sort, fastened upon the City by the god, for all the world (if I may use a rather ludicrous comparison) like a gadfly on a great and noble horse that is somewhat sluggish on account of his size and needs the fly to wake him up. So, it seems to me, the god has fastened me like that upon the City, to rouse, exhort, and rebuke each one of you, everywhere besetting you, and never once ceasing all day long. Another one like that, Gentlemen, you will not come by so easily; but if you listen to me, you will take good care of me. You may, however, quite possibly be annoyed, like people awakened from their slumbers, and, striking out at me, may listen readily to Anytus and condemn me

to death. Then you would finish out the rest of your life in sleep, unless the god were in mercy to send you some one else to take my place. That it is the deity by whom I, such as I am, have been given to the City you may see from this: it is not like human nature for me to neglect all my own concerns, to put up with a neglected household all these years, and to attend to your affair, ever going to you individually in private, like a father or an elder brother, urging you to care for your moral welfare. And if I got any profit from it all, if these exhortations brought me any pay, there would seem to be some reason in my conduct. As it is, you see for yourselves that my accusers, who, unashamed, have brought so many other charges against me, have yet not had the effrontery to present a witness to allege that I ever took any sort of fee or sought one. Why not? Because, methinks, the witness I present to show that I speak the truth is quite enough—my poverty.

Possibly it may look odd that I should busily go about in private with my counsels, but in public dare not approach the mass of you with counsel for the City. The reason for that is something you have often heard me speak of in many a place; it is that there comes to me a thing divine and spiritual, what Meletus has mockingly referred to in his indictment. From childhood on, this sign has come to me; it is a voice, which, when it comes, always deters me from what I am about to do, but never urges me to act. It is this that fights against my entering political affairs; and the opposition strikes me as being altogether good; for, fellow citizens, you may rest assured that if I, long ago, had tried to take up politics, I should long ago have perished, and been of no service whatever either to you or to myself. And do not be aggrieved at me for telling the truth: there is not a man on earth that is safe if he nobly puts himself in opposition to you or to any other crowd, and strives to stop all sorts of wrong and lawlessness in the State. But if any one is really going to battle for the right, and to be safe for some short time in doing it, he must perforce remain a private citizen; he must not appear in public life.

Of that I will furnish you with telling evidence, not arguments, but what you value, facts. Listen to what happened in my case, and you will see that I am not a man to yield to any one unjustly for fear of death, not even if by my not yielding I were at once to perish. The tale I shall tell you is of the legal sort and uninspiring, but is true.

I never held any public office, fellow citizens, but one: I was a member of the Council. And it happened that our tribe, Antiochis, had the executive function [*prytany*] at the time you wished to sentence in a body the ten commanders who failed to pick up the survivors of the naval action [at Arginusae]. The procedure was illegal, as after a while you all admitted. But at the time I was the only one of the prytanes who stood out against your doing an illegal act and voted against you; and although the orators were ready to indict me and arrest me, while you urged them on and made an uproar, I thought that I ought to risk all danger on the side of law and justice rather than side with you in an unjust decree for fear of imprisonment or death.

This took place while Athens still was a democracy. But again, when the oligarchy was established, the Thirty had me and four others summoned to the Rotunda, and ordered us to go get Leon of Salamis, and bring him thence

to have him put to death; they gave such orders frequently to many other persons in order to involve as many as they could in their crimes. But there again I showed, by deeds, and not by words, that death, if I may speak quite baldly, meant nothing at all to me, while not to do an unjust or an impious act, this meant everything; for that power, however huge its sway, did not terrify me into doing what was wrong. No, when we came out of the Rotunda, the other four went off to Salamis and brought back Leon, and as for me I went to my home. And for that I might well have paid with my life, had the government not promptly fallen. Of these facts many persons will bear witness to you.

Well then, do you think I could have survived through all these years if I had taken part in state affairs, and, acting properly as a good citizen, had fought for justice, making this perforce of paramount importance? Far from it, fellow citizens; nor could any other living man have done it. As for me, all my life long, if ever I did anything in an official way, I showed myself to be that sort of person, and in private just the same; never once did I yield to any one in any point against the right, not even to one of those whom my slanderers declare to be my pupils.

But I never have been anybody's teacher. If any one cares to listen to me as I speak and carry on my special function, be he young or old, I never have begrudged it. I am not one who will engage in discussion if he gets money, and if not refuses. No, rich and poor alike I am prepared to question, and whoever will may listen to what I say when I make reply. And for my part, if any of them turns out well or ill, I cannot rightly be held responsible when I never offered to give any one instruction, nor gave it. If any one asserts that he ever learned or heard a thing from me other than what all the others heard as well, rest assured that he who says so does not tell the truth.

Well then, why do certain persons like to spend so much of their time with me? I told you, fellow citizens, what the reason is. The truth of the matter is just what I said: they like to hear the sifting out of those who think that they are wise, but are not. The thing, in fact, is not unpleasant. But for me, as I aver, it is a task enjoined upon me by the deity, through oracles, through dreams, and in every single way that ever a divine injunction was laid upon a man to do a thing. These statements, fellow citizens, are true and are easily proved. Suppose I am at present ruining some of the young people, and already have perverted others; then necessarily, no doubt, a number of them, when they grew older, would have seen that on occasion, when they were young, I gave them evil advice, and would now appear in court to accuse and punish me. Or, if they themselves were unwilling to do it, then some of their relations, fathers, brothers, or others of their kin—if it were true that members of the family had received some injury from me—would now remember it, and have me punished. Certainly there are many of them present whom I see: first Crito here, a man of my own generation and my deme, father of yon Critobulus; next, Lysanias of Sphettus, father of yon Aeschines; add Antiphon here of Kephisia, father of Epigenes. Among others, men whose brothers have attended at the pastime, Nicostratus son of Theozotides and brother of Theodotus—as for Theodotus, he is dead, and therefore could not plead for

me against him; so also Paralus here whose father is Demodocus and whose brother is Theages, Adeimantus son of Ariston whose brother is Plato here, and Aiantodorus, whose brother is yon Apollodorus. And many others I could name to you, of whom Meletus surely ought to have offered somebody as witness in his accusation. If he forgot it then, let him present it now—I yield the point—and let him say if he has any evidence of the sort. But, Gentlemen, you will find the case to be the very opposite of that; will find them all prepared to help me, the ruiner, the man who has done injury to their kin, as Meletus and Anytus aver. The ruined themselves, of course, might have some reason for coming to my aid. But those who are not ruined, men already mature, the relatives of these, what other reason could they have for coming to my aid except the straight and just one, that they know that Meletus is lying, and that I am telling the truth?

There you have it, Gentlemen. That is pretty much what I might have to say in my defence, that with possibly some additions to the like effect. Perhaps, however, one or another of you will be angry when he recalls his own experience, in some trial he was engaged in of less gravity than this; if he besought and with many tears implored the judges, and, in order to arouse the greatest pity, brought in his children along with others of his kin and many friends; while, as for me, I shall do nothing of the sort, although I am in danger, as I might suppose, to the last degree of peril. Perhaps, then, as he thinks of this, he will bear himself with the less remorse towards me, and, irritated by these very things, will cast his vote in anger. Now if any of you feels so, though for my part I do not impute it—but if anybody feels that way, then it seems to me the proper thing for me to say to him would be: "Good friend, I too have friends and relatives; in fact, my case is just as Homer says. 'I did not spring from either oak or rock,' but from mankind, and so I have a family and sons; three sons, my fellow citizens, one a youth, and the other two are little boys." Nevertheless not one of them will I bring hither imploring you to let me off. And why shall I do nothing of all that? Not, fellow citizens, out of hardihood, nor in disdain of you. And whether I fear death or not is another question; but for my own honor, and yours, and the honor of the entire City, it does not seem proper for me at my age, and with the name I have, to do any of these things. The opinion may be true, or may be false; at all events the view is held that Socrates is somehow different from the mass of men. Well, if those of you who are regarded as distinguished in point of wisdom, or of courage, or of any other quality, behaved like that, it would be shameful. And yet, often enough, I have seen persons of such sort, persons of some reputation, behaving in extraordinary fashion when they were to hear the verdict, as if they thought they must be going to suffer something terrible if they had to die—as if they thought that they would be immortal in case you did not condemn them. To my mind, they brought shame upon the City; anybody from another city would infer that the Athenians who were eminent for their virtue, those whom their fellows selected as their rulers and for other places of distinction, were in no way better than women. These things, fellow citizens, it behoves us not to do if we have any reputation whatsoever; and if we do them, you should not allow it. No; you should make

this very thing quite clear, that you will far more readily give your vote against the person who drags in these tearful dramas, and makes the City ridiculous, than against the man who argues quietly.

But apart from the question of propriety, Gentlemen, it does not seem right to me to beg the judge for mercy, or, by doing it, to get away, when one ought rather to enlighten and convince him. He does not take his seat for this, the judge, to render justice as a favor, but to decide on what is just. Indeed he took an oath that he would not favor people according to his notion of them, but that he would give judgment in accordance with the laws. And so we should not get you into the habit of perjuring yourselves, nor should you get into it; neither of us should commit impiety. So do not ask me, fellow citizens, to treat you in a way which I take to be dishonorable, wrong, and impious; above all, by Zeus! when I am under accusation of impiety by this Meletus here present; for obviously, if I swayed you and by begging forced you to act against your oath, I would be teaching you not to believe that there are gods, and by my defence would simply accuse myself of not believing in them. But that be far from me! I do believe in them, my fellow citizens, as none of my accusers does; and to you I commend myself, and to the Deity, to judge concerning me what shall be best at once for me and for you.

AFTER THE VOTE AGAINST HIM

If I am not distressed, my fellow citizens, at what has happened in that you voted to convict me, there are many reasons for it, and in particular that the outcome was to me not unexpected. What is to me far more surprising is the actual division of the votes. I thought for my part that the vote would go not by this small majority, but by a large one. As it is, apparently, if only thirty votes had gone the other way, I should have been acquitted. Accordingly, so far as Meletus is concerned, it seems to me I do now stand acquitted, and not only that, but it must be clear to every one that if Anytus and Lycon had not come hither to accuse me, he would have had to pay one thousand drachmas as a fine for not obtaining a fifth part of the votes.

Meanwhile the man proposes for me the penalty of death. So be it. What penalty, fellow citizens, am I to offer you instead? Evidently what I ought to get? What is it, then? What do I deserve to get or pay? I who, when I had learned a thing, did not lead my life in peace, but neglecting what the many care for—wealth, household matters, military leadership and civic and the other high positions, coalitions, factions that arise in the State—thought myself in fact too good a man to enter into these affairs with safety. I did not enter there where if I came I was not to be of any use either to you or to myself, but going to you one by one in private, I did you, I aver, the greatest service possible. There I went trying to persuade each one of you not to care first for his own possessions before caring for himself and how he might be at his best and wisest, nor to set the affairs of the City above the City itself, and to give attention to all other things in just that way. Being a man of that description, what ought I to get? Something good, my fellow citizens, if the award must truly square with the desert; and the good ought further to be something that fits my case. What, then, befits a poor man, a benefactor, who

needs leisure for the office of exhorting you? Nothing is so proper as the maintenance of such a man in the Prytaneum, a reward far more befitting him than for any one of you who may have won a victory at Olympia with a horse or a pair of them or four. He makes you think that you are happy; I cause you to be so. He, moreover, has no need of maintenance; I stand in need of it. And so if I must get what I deserve, there is my proposal: maintenance in the Prytaneum.

Perhaps when I say that to you, you will think that I am talking with the same bravado as about the tears and supplications. It is not, fellow citizens, as you think; no, it is more like this. I am persuaded that I never willingly wronged any man, but I have not persuaded you, since we have had small time to reach an understanding; whereas if the law with you were what it is with others, if a case involving the penalty of death could not be settled in a day, but took a number, I believe I would have won you over. As matters stand, it is not easy in a limited time to refute a mass of slanders.

Persuaded that I do no wrong to any one, I am far from ready to do injustice to myself, and will not say of myself that I merit some evil, and should allot myself that sort of penalty. In fear of what? For fear that otherwise I shall suffer the thing which Meletus proposes, that of which I say I know not whether it is good or evil? Instead of that ought I to choose one of the things that I know for certain to be ills, and penalize myself with that? Imprisonment? Why should I live in prison, a slave to a recurrent board of governors, the Eleven? Or say a fine, and to be jailed until I pay it? But that would be no different for me from what I just now mentioned, since I have no money to pay with. Well, suppose I offered to go into exile. Perhaps you would accept that. But truly, fellow citizens, the love of life must have a powerful hold on me, and make me heedless, if I cannot reason thus: You who are my fellow citizens could not endure my doings and discussions; no, they were too much for you, and so irritating that now you seek to be rid of them. Well, will others bear them easily? Far from it, fellow citizens. And what a fine existence that would be, for a man of my age to go away and live a wanderer and a waif driven from city to city; for well I know that wherever I went the young would listen to me just as they do here. And if I drove them off, they would get the older men's permission, and themselves expel me. And if I did not, their fathers and relations would expel me on the sons' account.

Well, perhaps some one will say: "Why can't you go away from us, and then keep quiet, Socrates, and live in peace?" But that is the thing that is hardest of all to make some of you see. If I say that this means disobedience to the god, and for that very reason I cannot keep still, you will not believe me, but will think I speak in irony. If, on the other hand, I say it is perhaps the greatest good that can befall a man, daily to argue about virtue, and to discuss the other subjects about which you have heard me debating and examining myself as well as others, if I add that for mankind the unexamined life is not worth living, still less will you believe me when I tell you that. These matters stand, however, Gentlemen, precisely as I say, only it is not easy to convince you. And meanwhile, for my part, I am not in the habit of

thinking that I merit ill at all. If I had wealth, I would suggest a sum that I was in a position to pay, for in that case I should do myself no harm. But now the fact is that I haven't, unless you chose to set a fine for me at a rate that I could pay. Perhaps I could pay you a silver mina; so that is what I offer.

But Plato here, my fellow citizens, and Crito, Critobulus, and Apollodorus, bid me offer thirty minæ upon their security. Well then, I offer that; these men will be adequate security to you for the amount.

AFTER HE IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

For no great thrift in time, my fellow citizens, you will have from those who wish to vilify the City the name and blame of having put to death the wise man, Socrates; for they will call me wise, even if I am not, they who would defame you. If only you had waited for a little while, the thing would have occurred for you in the course of nature; for you can see my age, that I am far along in life, and near to death. I say this, not to all of you, but only to those who voted for my death. And to them I have also to say this as well. It may be, Gentlemen, that you think I lost my cause for lack of arguments of the sort with which I might have won you over, if I had thought that I ought to say and do all things in order to escape the verdict. Far from it. I lost for a lack, but not of arguments; it was for lack of impudence and daring, and for not being ready to say to you the sort of thing it would have given you most pleasure to hear—me weeping and wailing, and doing and saying any and every sort of thing that I hold to be unworthy of me, but you are accustomed to hear from the rest. No, I did not then believe that, to avoid a danger, I ought to do anything unseemly in a freeman, nor do I now regret my manner of defence. No, far rather would I choose this manner of defence, and die, than follow that, and live. Whether in a court of justice or in war neither I nor any other man should seek by using every means conceivable to escape from death; for in battle you very often see that if you throw away your weapons and beg those who are pursuing you for mercy, you may get out of dying. Indeed, in every sort of danger there are various ways of winning through, if one is ready to do and say anything whatever. No, Gentlemen, that is not the hard thing, to escape from death; ah no, far harder is it to escape from sin, for sin is swifter than death. And so I, being old and slow, am overtaken by the slower enemy; while my accusers, who are strong and swift, have been caught by the swifter, namely wickedness. And so I now depart, by you condemned to pay the penalty of death; and they, by the truth convicted of a base injustice. And as I abide the payment, so do they. Who knows? Perhaps it had to be so, and I think that things are as they ought to be.

Touching the future, I desire to make for you who voted to condemn me, a prediction; for I am at the point where men foresee the future best—when they are soon to die. Let me tell you then, you men who have condemned me, that after I am gone there will straightway come upon you a chastisement far heavier, by Zeus, than the death you have set for me. You have now done this in the belief that you have freed yourselves from giving any reckoning for your life; but I tell you the result will be the very opposite for you.

There will be more inquisitors to sift you, men whom I now hold in check without your knowing it. And they will be more critical as they are younger, and will annoy you more; for if you think that by putting men to death you will prevent the slur from being cast at you that you do not live aright, you are in error. This way of getting freedom is neither very sure nor fine; no, the finest and readiest way is this, not to interfere with other people, but to render oneself as good a man as possible. There is the prophecy I make for you who voted to condemn me. And of them I take my leave.

With those of you who voted to acquit me I should be glad to talk about this thing that has occurred, while the magistrates are busy and it is not time for me to go to the place where I must die. So, Gentlemen, please wait with me as long as that. There is nothing to keep us from talking to each other as long as it is allowed. To you as to friends I wish to explain the real meaning of what has just happened to me.

Justices, for when I call you that I am naming you aright, the thing that has come to me is wonderful.

My customary warning, by the spirit, in previous times has always, up to now, come to me very often to oppose me, even when a matter was quite unimportant, if ever I was going to do something amiss. But today, as you yourselves have witnessed, that thing has happened to me which anybody might suppose, and which is considered, to be the uttermost of evils. Yet neither did the sign from god oppose me when I left my house this morning, nor at the point when I ascended here to the tribunal, nor in my speech at anything I was about to say; though often when I have been talking elsewhere it has stopped me in the middle of a speech. But today, with reference to the whole procedure, not once did it oppose me in a thing I did or said. What, then, do I take to be the cause of this? No doubt this thing that has happened to me is good, and it cannot be that our supposition is correct when any of us think that death is a misfortune. For me, the proof of this is telling: it cannot be but that the customary sign would have opposed me, if I had not been about to do a thing that was good.

Let us view in another way how ample are the grounds for our hope that death is good. To be dead is one of two things. Either it is a sort of non-existence, and the dead man has no feeling about anything whatever, or else, as people say, the soul experiences a shift and a migration from here into another place. Now if there is no feeling, if death is like a sleep in which one does not even dream, what a wonderful gain it would be! I believe if a man were to take that night in which he slept so deeply that he did not have a single dream, and compared it with the other nights and days of his life; if he had to say, upon reflection, how many days and nights, all told, in his life, he had passed better and more sweetly than that night; I believe that every one, not merely any private citizen, but the Great King himself, would find them easy to count up in comparison with all the others. So if death is a sleep like that, I say it is a gain; for thus all time appears to be no more than a single night. If, on the other hand, death is like a journey from here to another place, and if what they say is true, that everybody who has died is there, then, Justices, what greater good than this could there be? If, on

arriving in Hades, one could be freed from those who here pretend that they are Justices, and there find those who by report deal real justice, Minos, Rhadamanthus, Aeacus, and Triptolemus, and all the rest of the demigods who were just in their lives here, what a small thing would that journey seem! Or, again, to be with Orpheus and Musæus, with Hesiod and Homer, what price would not any of you pay for that? I would gladly die repeatedly, if all that is true. To me it would be a wonderful way to pass my time, there where I could meet with Palamedes and with Ajax son of Telamon, and any one else among the ancients who died through an unjust decision. To compare my lot with theirs, methinks, would not be so unpleasant; and most important of all would be to go on sifting people there, as here, and finding out who is wise, and who thinks he is so, but is not. What would not anybody give to examine, Justices, the leader of that mighty expedition against Troy, or else Odysseus, or Sisyphus, or a myriad of others one might mention, men and women too? There to talk with them, consort with them, examine them, would be a happiness beyond compare! Surely there, I take it, they do not put a man to death for doing that; for, happy in all else, people are happier there than here in that henceforth they are immortal, at all events if what is said is true.

But, Justices, you also it behoves to have good hope with reference to death, and this one thing you must bear in mind as true, that, living or dead, to a good man there can come no evil, nor are his affairs a matter of indifference to the gods. Nor has my destiny now come about by chance; rather, it is clear to me that it was better for me now to die and to be released from my troubles. That is why the sign did not at any point deter me, and why I am not very bitter at those who voted to condemn me, or at my accusers. It is true they did not have this notion in condemning and accusing me; no, they thought to injure me, and therein they merit blame.

One thing, however, I do beg of them. When my sons grow up, then, Gentlemen, I ask you to punish them, you hurting them the same as I hurt you, if they seem to you to care for money, or aught else, more than they care for virtue. And if they pretend to be somewhat when they are nothing, do you upbraid them as I upbraided you, for not regarding as important what they ought to think so, and for thinking they have worth when they do not. If you do that, I shall have received just treatment from you, and my sons as well.

And now the time has come for our departure, I to die, and you to live. Which of us goes to meet the better lot is hidden from all unless it be known to God.

MACHIAVELLI

The Prince

Translated by Allan H. Gilbert

ON THE THINGS FOR WHICH MEN, AND ESPECIALLY PRINCES, ARE PRAISED OR CENSURED

IT NOW remains to see what should be the methods and conduct of a prince in dealing with his subjects and his friends. And because I know that many have written on this topic, I fear that when I too write I shall be thought presumptuous, because, in discussing it, I break away completely from the principles laid down by my predecessors. But since it is my purpose to write something useful to an attentive reader, I think it more effective to go back to the practical truth of the subject than to depend on my fancies about it. And many have imagined republics and principalities that never have been seen or known to exist in reality. For there is such a difference between the way men live and the way they ought to live, that anybody who abandons what is for what ought to be will learn something that will ruin rather than preserve him, because anyone who determines to act in all circumstances the part of a good man must come to ruin among so many who are not good. Hence, if a prince wishes to maintain himself, he must learn how to be not good, and to use that ability or not as is required.

Leaving out of account, then, things about an imaginary prince, and considering things that are true, I say that all men, when they are spoken of, and especially princes, because they are set higher, are marked with some of the qualities that bring them either blame or praise. To wit, one man is thought liberal, another stingy (using a Tuscan word, because *avaricious* in our language is still applied to one who desires to get things through violence, but *stingy* we apply to him who refrains too much from using his own property); one is thought open-handed, another grasping; one cruel, the other compassionate; one is a breaker of faith, the other reliable; one is effeminate and cowardly, the other vigorous and spirited; one is philanthropic, the other egotistic; one is lascivious, the other chaste; one is straight-forward, the other crafty; one hard, the other easy to deal with; one is firm, the other unsettled; one is religious, the other unbelieving; and so on.

And I know that everybody will admit that it would be very praiseworthy for a prince to possess all of the above-mentioned qualities that are considered good. But since he is not able to have them or to observe them completely, because human conditions do not allow him to, it is necessary that he be pru-

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dent enough to understand how to avoid getting a bad name because he is given to those vices that will deprive him of his position. He should also, if he can, guard himself from those vices that will not take his place away from him, but if he cannot do it, he can with less anxiety let them go. Moreover, he should not be troubled if he gets a bad name because of vices without which it will be difficult for him to preserve his position. I say this because, if everything is considered, it will be seen that some things seem to be virtuous, but if they are put into practice will be ruinous to him; other things seem to be vices, yet if put into practice will bring the prince security and well-being.

ON LIBERALITY AND PARSIMONY

Beginning, then, with the first of the above-mentioned qualities, I assert that it is good to be thought liberal. Yet liberality, practiced in such a way that you get a reputation for it, is damaging to you, for the following reasons: If you use it wisely and as it ought to be used, it will not become known, and you will not escape being censured for the opposite vice. Hence, if you wish to have men call you liberal, it is necessary not to omit any sort of lavishness. A prince who does this will always be obliged to use up all his property in lavish actions; he will then, if he wishes to keep the name of liberal, be forced to lay heavy taxes on his people and exact money from them, and do everything he can to raise money. This will begin to make his subjects hate him, and as he grows poor he will be little esteemed by anybody. So it comes about that because of this liberality of his, with which he has damaged a large number and been of advantage to but a few, he is affected by every petty annoyance and is in peril from every slight danger. If he recognizes this and wishes to draw back, he quickly gets a bad name for stinginess.

Since, then, a prince cannot without harming himself practice this virtue of liberality to such an extent that it will be recognized, he will, if he is prudent, not care about being called stingy. As time goes on he will be thought more and more liberal, for the people will see that because of his economy his income is enough for him, that he can defend himself from those who make war against him, and that he can enter upon undertakings without burdening his people. Such a prince is in the end liberal to all those from whom he takes nothing, and they are numerous; he is stingy to those to whom he does not give, and they are few. In our times we have seen big things done only by those who have been looked on as stingy; the others have utterly failed. Pope Julius II, though he made use of a reputation for liberality to attain the papacy, did not then try to maintain it, because he wished to be able to make war. The present King of France has carried on great wars without laying unusually heavy taxes on his people, merely because his long economy has made provision for heavy expenditures. The present King of Spain, if he had continued liberal, would not have carried on or completed so many undertakings.

Therefore a prince ought to care little about getting called stingy, if as a result he does not have to rob his subjects, is able to defend himself, does not become poor and contemptible, and is not obliged to become grasping. For this vice of stinginess is one of those that enables him to rule. Somebody may say: Caesar, by means of his liberality, became emperor, and many others have

come to high positions because they have been liberal and have been thought so. I answer: Either you are already prince, or you are on the way to become one. In the first case liberality is dangerous; in the second it is very necessary to be thought liberal. Caesar was one of those who wished to attain dominion over Rome. But if, when he had attained it, he had lived for a long time and had not moderated his expenses, he would have destroyed his authority. Somebody may answer: Many who have been thought very liberal have been princes and done great things with their armies. I answer: The prince spends either his own property and that of his subjects or that of others. In the first case he ought to be frugal; in the second he ought to abstain from no sort of liberality. When he marches with his army and lives on plunder, loot, and ransom, a prince controls the property of others. To him liberality is essential, for without it his soldiers would not follow him. You can be a free giver of what does not belong to you or your subjects, as were Cyrus, Caesar, and Alexander, because to spend the money of others does not decrease your reputation but adds to it. It is only the spending of your own money that hurts you.

There is nothing that eats itself up as fast as does liberality, for when you practice it you lose the power to practice it, and become poor and contemptible, or else to escape poverty you become rapacious and therefore are hated. And of all the things against which a prince must guard himself, the first is being an object of contempt and hatred. Liberality leads you to both of these. Hence there is more wisdom in keeping a name for stinginess, which produces a bad reputation without hatred, than in striving for the name of liberal, only to be forced to get the name of rapacious, which brings forth both bad reputation and hatred.

ON CRUELTY AND PITY, AND WHETHER IT IS BETTER TO BE LOVED OR TO BE FEARED, AND VICE VERSA

Coming then to the other qualities already mentioned, I say that every prince should wish to be thought compassionate and not cruel; still, he should be careful not to make a bad use of the pity he feels. Cesare Borgia was considered cruel, yet this cruelty of his pacified the Romagna, united it, and changed its condition to that of peace and loyalty. If the matter is well considered, it will be seen that Cesare was much more compassionate than the people of Florence, for in order to escape the name of cruel they allowed Pistoia to be destroyed. Hence a prince ought not to be troubled by the stigma of cruelty, acquired in keeping his subjects united and faithful. By giving a very few examples of cruelty he can be more truly compassionate than those who through too much compassion allow disturbances to continue, from which arise murders or acts of plunder. Lawless acts are injurious to a large group, but the executions ordered by the prince injure a single person. The new prince, above all other princes, cannot possibly avoid the name of cruel, because new states are full of perils. Dido in Vergil puts it thus: "Hard circumstances and the newness of my realm force me to do such things, and to keep watch and ward over all my lands."

All the same, he should be slow in believing and acting, and should make no one afraid of him, his procedure should be so tempered with prudence and

humanity that too much confidence does not make him incautious, and too much suspicion does not make him unbearable.

All this gives rise to a question for debate: Is it better to be loved than to be feared, or the reverse? I answer that a prince should wish for both. But because it is difficult to reconcile them, I hold that it is much more secure to be feared than to be loved, if one of them must be given up. The reason for my answer is that one must say of men generally that they are ungrateful, mutable, pretenders and dissemblers, prone to avoid danger, thirsty for gain. So long as you benefit them they are all yours; as I said above, they offer you their blood, their property, their lives, their children, when the need for such things is remote. But when need comes upon you, they turn around. So if a prince has relied wholly on their words, and is lacking in other preparations, he falls. For friendships that are gained with money, and not with greatness and nobility of spirit, are deserved but not possessed, and in the nick of time one cannot avail himself of them. Men hesitate less to injure a man who makes himself loved than to injure one who makes himself feared, for their love is held by a chain of obligation, which, because of men's wickedness, is broken on every occasion for the sake of selfish profit; but their fear is secured by a dread of punishment which never fails you.

Nevertheless the prince should make himself feared in such a way that, if he does not win love, he escapes hatred. This is possible, for to be feared and not to be hated can easily co-exist. In fact it is always possible, if the ruler abstains from the property of his citizens and subjects, and from their women. And if, as sometimes happens, he finds that he must inflict the penalty of death, he should do it when he has proper justification and evident reason. But above all he must refrain from taking property, for men forget the death of a father more quickly than the loss of their patrimony. Further, causes for taking property are never lacking, and he who begins to live on plunder is always finding cause to seize what belongs to others. But on the contrary, reasons for taking life are rarer and fail sooner.

But when a prince is with his army and has a great number of soldiers under his command, then above all he must pay no heed to being called cruel, because if he does not have that name he cannot keep his army united or ready for duty. It should be numbered among the wonderful feats of Hannibal that he led to war in foreign lands a large army, made up of countless types of men, yet never suffered from dissension, either among the soldiers or against the general, in either bad or good fortune. His success resulted from nothing else than his inhuman cruelty, which, when added to his numerous other strong qualities, made him respected and terrible in the sight of his soldiers. Yet without his cruelty his other qualities would not have been adequate. So it seems that those writers have not thought very deeply who on one side admire his accomplishment and on the other condemn the chief cause for it.

The truth that his other qualities alone would not have been adequate may be learned from Scipio, a man of the most unusual powers not only in his own times but in all ages we know of. When he was in Spain his armies mutinied. This resulted from nothing other than his compassion, which had allowed his soldiers more license than befits military discipline. This fault was censured

before the Senate by Fabius Maximus, and Scipio was called by him the corruptor of the Roman soldiery. The Locrians were destroyed by a lieutenant of Scipio's, yet he did not avenge them or punish the disobedience of that lieutenant. This all came from his easy nature, which was so well understood that one who wished to excuse him in the Senate said there were many men who knew better how not to err than how to punish errors. This easy nature would in time have overthrown the fame and glory of Scipio if, in spite of this weakness, he had kept on in independent command. But since he was under the orders of the Senate, this bad quality was not merely concealed but was a glory to him.

Returning, then, to the debate on being loved and feared, I conclude that since men love as they please and fear as the prince pleases, a wise prince will evidently rely on what is in his own power and not on what is in the power of another. As I have said, he need only take pains to avoid hatred.

IN WHAT WAY FAITH SHOULD BE KEPT BY PRINCES

Everybody knows how laudable it is in a prince to keep his faith and to be an honest man and not a trickster. Nevertheless, the experience of our times shows that the princes who have done great things are the ones who have taken little account of their promises and who have known how to addle the brains of men with craft. In the end they have conquered those who have put their reliance on good faith.

You must realize, then, that there are two ways to fight. In one kind the laws are used, in the other, force. The first is suitable to man, the second to animals. But because the first often falls short, one has to turn to the second. Hence a prince must know perfectly how to act like a beast and like a man. This truth was covertly taught to princes by ancient authors, who write that Achilles and many other ancient princes were turned over for their up-bringing to Chiron the centaur, that he might keep them under his tuition. To have as teacher one who is half beast and half man means nothing else than that a prince needs to know how to use the qualities of both creatures. The one without the other will not last long.

Since, then, it is necessary for a prince to understand how to make good use of the conduct of the animals, he should select among them the fox and the lion, because the lion cannot protect himself from traps, and the fox cannot protect himself from the wolves. So the prince needs to be a fox that he may know how to deal with traps, and a lion that he may frighten the wolves. Those who act like the lion alone do not understand their business. A prudent ruler, therefore, cannot and should not observe faith when such observance is to his disadvantage and the causes that made him give his promise have vanished. If men were all good, this advice would not be good, but since men are wicked and do not keep their promises to you, you likewise do not have to keep yours to them. Lawful reasons to excuse his failure to keep them will never be lacking to a prince. It would be possible to give innumerable modern examples of this and to show many treaties and promises that have been made null and void by the faithlessness of princes. And the prince who has best known how to act as a fox has come out best. But one who has this capacity

must understand how to keep it covered, and be a skilful pretender and dissembler. Men are so simple and so subject to present needs that he who deceives in this way will always find those who will let themselves be deceived.

I do not wish to keep still about one of the recent instances. Alexander VI did nothing else than deceive men, and had no other intention; yet he always found a subject to work on. There never was a man more effective in swearing that things were true, and the greater the oaths with which he made a promise, the less he observed it. Nonetheless his deceptions always succeeded to his wish, because he thoroughly understood this aspect of the world.

It is not necessary, then, for a prince really to have all the virtues mentioned above, but it is very necessary to seem to have them. I will even venture to say that they damage a prince who possesses them and always observes them, but if he seems to have them they are useful. I mean that he should seem compassionate, trustworthy, humane, honest, and religious, and actually be so; but yet he should have his mind so trained that, when it is necessary not to practice these virtues, he can change to the opposite, and do it skilfully. It is to be understood that a prince, especially a new prince, cannot observe all the things because of which men are considered good, because he is often obliged, if he wishes to maintain his government, to act contrary to faith, contrary to charity, contrary to humanity, contrary to religion. It is therefore necessary that he have a mind capable of turning in whatever direction the winds of Fortune and the variations of affairs require, and, as I said above, that he should not depart from what is morally right, if he can observe it, but should know how to adopt what is bad, when he is obliged to.

A prince, then, should be very careful that there does not issue from his mouth anything that is not full of the above-mentioned five qualities. To those who see and hear him he should seem all compassion, all faith, all honesty, all humanity, all religion. There is nothing more necessary to make a show of possessing than this last quality. For men in general judge more by their eyes than by their hands; everybody is fitted to see, few to understand. Everybody sees what you appear to be; few make out what you really are. And these few do not dare to oppose the opinion of the many, who have the majesty of the state to confirm their view. In the actions of all men, and especially those of princes, where there is no court to which to appeal, people think of the outcome. A prince needs only to conquer and to maintain his position. The means he has used will always be judged honorable and will be praised by everybody, because the crowd is always caught by appearance and by the outcome of events, and the crowd is all there is in the world; there is no place for the few when the many have room enough. A certain prince of the present day, whom it is not good to name, preaches nothing else than peace and faith, and is wholly opposed to both of them, and both of them, if he had observed them, would many times have taken from him either his reputation or his throne.

Science and Society

HAROLD C. UREY

How Does It All Add Up?

DURING the nineteenth century the elements and techniques of mass production were developed. They have been improved and exploited for peaceful purposes during this century and especially in this country, until today nearly everything we use is produced by mass methods. Without these methods the high standard of living in the United States would be impossible, and with them a high standard of living is possible in all countries of the world that have reasonable resources. During the present century many scientific and engineering discoveries have been made that contribute to this high standard of living.

Also, unfortunately, mass-production methods and scientific discoveries have been used for purposes of war. In order to apply these methods and discoveries to a given purpose, we must have an opportunity to practice them. The First World War gave the first opportunity for adaptation of mass production to purposes of war. But it was only an elementary course in the art of mass destruction. The Second World War gave the opportunity for the advanced course, and by the end of it the lessons were thoroughly learned. Today we have the scientific knowledge, the engineering talent and experience, and the industrial know-how to make war on a real mass-production basis. Another war would differ from this past one in the same degree as a modern automobile differs from the Model T Ford, or perhaps a horse and wagon. Another war would be so successful from the point of view of destruction that little of the physical and human bases of our civilization would be left. For our scientific and mass techniques now include the atomic bomb and probably other weapons not yet come to the attention of the general public.

The particular weapons that concern us here include the airplane, the pilotless flying bomb (V-1), the rocket bomb (V-2), and the atomic bomb. It is possible that other methods suitable for delivering the atomic bomb may be partially developed and as yet unknown to the public. Still other methods may be developed in the future. Only the B-29 bomber was used in this war for the delivery of the atomic bomb, but the combination of these two weapons made conditions intolerable to Japan. In the future these weapons, produced

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on a mass-production basis, will make war intolerable to all peoples of the world. This does not mean that war will not come. It does mean that the war will probably not be of long duration because of the vast destruction that will be quickly and decisively accomplished.

Let us review the facts in regard to the atomic bomb as we see them today. . . .

The atomic bomb, because of its overwhelming increase in effectiveness, which makes all defenses known or foreseeable nearly useless and completely ineffective, is not best regarded as just another weapon. In the past many new weapons have been invented, and in many cases they have added greatly to the effectiveness of the attack as compared to the defense. But our present defenses against atomic bombs are about as effective as a Roman army armed with spears, javelins, and shields would be against a modern army equipped with machine guns. Within a few years the atomic bomb carried by modern airplanes has increased the advantage of attack by about as much as was accomplished in a thousand years in the past. These weapons can destroy all defenses that we can devise at the present time.

Dr. Ridenour . . . has reviewed in detail this question of defense against the atomic bomb. Still, many people believe that there will always be a defense for every weapon. There will always be an exception to such glib rules. But is the statement true in any sense that is of interest to us? Is there a defense against bullets? Perhaps, but they killed many men in this past war. Is there a defense against submarines? Yes, definitely. But they destroyed a large fraction of the world's shipping during this past war. Is there a defense against airplanes? Certainly defenses are known, but only the United States among the major combatants of the Second World War escaped serious damage or nearly complete destruction of its cities. Similar answers to similar questions could be made with respect to tanks, naval vessels, and other weapons great and small.

Weapons disappear from war if they are superseded by more effective weapons, but so long as they are used in war they produce actual damage in spite of defenses and in a rather definite proportion to their ability to inflict damage. When more destructive weapons than atomic bombs are developed, atomic bombs will not be used; but so long as they are used, they will continue to destroy many square miles of cities for each bomb exploded. Perhaps a question points the argument. Can any of us imagine a defense so effective that, sometime in the future, a country such as the United States would decide not to manufacture atomic bombs because defenses against them made their manufacture inadvisable for purely military reasons? I think not. If atomic bombs are not made in the future, it will be for other reasons than the effectiveness of defense. No military defense exists, and none can be devised. Atomic bombs are able to destroy the cities of the world and they will do so, if used in another war.

This thesis assumes that atomic bombs can be made in sufficient numbers and at costs sufficiently low to be used effectively in another war. Unfortunately both assumptions are correct. Our mass-production methods, which give us our high standard of living, our automobiles, power plants, chemical products,

electrical devices, etc., make possible the production of atomic bombs in large numbers and at low cost. In fact, war will be cheaper in the future so far as the production and use of weapons are concerned and far more expensive from the point of view of destruction accomplished. Even small countries can make these bombs in numbers if they are such utter fools as to engage in the lethal business. They will not, because they know that they would be completely destroyed if bombs were used. It is only powerful industrialized countries that may not realize that before this weapon all countries are small and weak. Before the past war small countries realized that they must get along with their neighbors. The cheapness of the atomic weapon relative to its destructive power makes it necessary that *all* countries get along with each other.

The question is asked: Can other countries besides England and the United States produce these bombs? And the answer is: Of course they can. What weapon ever devised by man remained the sole possession of the country of origin? The production of atomic bombs was a tricky, intricate business, but so is the production of tanks, airplanes, and other major weapons of war. The United States is the greatest industrial power at the present time and could and did make these weapons faster than any other country. But it is nonsense for us to assume that other countries cannot learn all the details of their production and, in fact, improve on the methods. If the people of the United States or England believe otherwise, they engage in the most dangerous of delusions.

How long will it take other countries to devise these weapons? Estimates vary. Most scientific and technical men who helped to produce the bombs guess between five and ten years; a few think less and some think more. Drs. Seitz and Bethe give convincing reasons for their estimate of six years or less. . . . It is to be hoped that the time will be large rather than small, since that would give more time for a solution of the whole problem.

Some have suggested that the United States would be safe if it were to keep ahead of other countries in the development and production of atomic weapons. It is not certain that this country could succeed in this attempt over any great length of time and certainly not for all time, for others will surely come abreast of us—and perhaps in less time than we think. But let us look more closely at the suggestion. Supposing that the United States remains ahead of other countries in number or effectiveness of bombs, what good does it do us? Do we plan to attack other countries at a favorable moment? Following such an attack, it would be necessary to occupy the countries with our armies in order to prevent the manufacture of bombs in the future. Some 7 per cent of the world's population would have to keep its feet on the necks of the rest of the world's peoples. It does not seem likely that we would choose this role voluntarily, with a full understanding of its responsibility and hardships let alone other considerations.

Later, when other countries secure enough atomic bombs to destroy the cities and other appropriate targets of this country, we would be in a position to destroy their cities, and it would do us no good whatever to have bombs enough to destroy those targets more than once. Extra bombs would be useless once sufficient numbers were available to destroy all large military targets of

any possible enemy. If our hypothetical enemy had sufficient bombs to destroy our military targets, in what way could we keep ahead of this enemy? Atomic bombs are different. Enough can be made to destroy completely all possible targets and kill the inhabitants of all major cities of any country. It is then impossible to destroy them twice or to kill people twice. Eventually, therefore, we cannot hope to keep ahead of other countries in an atomic war.

We turn to defensive measures again and specifically to the dispersal of cities and going underground. This appears to be the only effective defense that anyone has proposed as yet, and it is only a palliative, only a way of moderating the effects of an attack. The cost of such dispersal would be high, on the order of the cost of the Second World War to us, for the actual translocation of dwellings, industries, and transportation facilities. Dispersal would also impair the efficiency of our industrial system, since industries are usually placed where they are because of economic advantages, such as natural transportation facilities and availability of power or raw materials. In many manufacturing processes concentration is often of great advantage; for many industries it is necessary.

The psychological problems associated with the dispersal of cities would be great. Many of us, and perhaps most of us, for one reason or another like the places and conditions under which we live, though you and I may not understand why others do so. Dispersal would affect each of us in a very direct manner. Agreement to carry through such a program would never be unanimous, and possibly the decision in regard to it would rest on a mere majority, with a determined minority vigorously opposed to it. Proposals have been made that dispersal could and should be achieved in fifteen years; this seems too short a time, though in the face of the threat under which we all may live, we may decide to carry it through. It would probably require a dictatorship for its execution. And in the end it would not be a definite and decisive defense, for if somewhat larger bombs were secured a determined enemy could destroy our economy and our people just the same. The atomic bomb is a very effective and inexpensive weapon and will probably become more effective and less expensive with time.

Perhaps critical plants could be placed underground, but to what purpose? This would not prevent the destruction of the people above ground, and if military plants and installations cannot protect the citizens of a country, what are they for and why prevent *their* destruction? If the Navy, Army, Air Forces, and atomic bombs cannot protect citizens of a country and their property, who cares whether or not the military forces can protect themselves?

This book is concerned primarily with the military threat of atomic energy rather than with its peacetime uses, but such possible uses have a bearing on the military applications. Radioactive materials for medical uses can be secured without large plants containing large amounts of fissionable materials, for example, U-235 or plutonium. However, atomic power plants must necessarily contain sufficient of these materials to make bombs. Undetected diversion of these materials for use in bombs might be comparatively easy, since all chemical plants lose some material and losses vary from plant to plant. Records could be falsified comparatively easily, if those operating the plants were determined

on such falsification. A much more extensive inspection system would be needed to prevent diversion of material in operating plants than would be necessary to prevent the construction of these plants. The possibility of diversion would not be conducive to confidence on the part of the peoples of the world. And since confidence in the operation of world control of atomic bombs is so vitally important, everything should be done to promote it first. If proper controls could be secured and confidence established, the operation of power plants could *then* be considered.

Let us consider briefly what would be lost if no large-scale power plants were operated in any country until world control had been established on such a basis that reasonable confidence could be assured. . . . We cannot truthfully contend that the immediate use of atomic power is of very great economic importance. In any case, atomic power would first and most logically be used in locations where there are no other sources of energy—for example, in northern Canada, the Amazon River Basin, and other such places where oil and coal are not found. Ships might use atomic power to avoid refueling and the storage of fuel, but this will probably not be economical for some time.

Naval vessels might be more likely consumers of atomic energy than other ships, since the economic factor is not important. However, if we plan to build and operate such naval vessels, we are deciding to prepare for further wars. To be logical we should then decide to make bigger and better atomic bombs, for others will use these bombs if we threaten to use naval vessels or other implements of war against them. If atomic power is developed for naval vessels, the world will inevitably slip back into the atomic-bomb armament race and the whole problem moves back to the use of, and defense against, these bombs. Control of atomic bombs must inevitably lead to the control of all weapons of war. It is foolish to think of controlling only atomic-bomb manufacture and then to let wars start and continue with other weapons until atomic-bomb plants can be put into operation in order to finish the wars. Nothing less than the total abolition of war will prevent their use. In particular the use of atomic power for naval vessels would complicate the control of the military use of atomic energy and, it is hardly necessary to add, almost certainly prevent that degree of confidence so necessary for control.

The postponement of the use of atomic energy for large power plants would make for easier control of the atomic bomb. It is a small price to pay for the accomplishment of this most desirable end. It would not be necessary to postpone the use of radioactive materials at the same time.

The citizens of the United States are justly proud of the personal freedom they enjoy. It has been celebrated in song and speech from the beginning of the republic. It is referred to in the first sentence of our Declaration of Independence. It has been continuously lauded in public addresses throughout the land on all public occasions. It has always been imperfect, with violations of its principles at some time in the lives of most individuals and, in some sections of the population, throughout their lives. But our personal freedom, considering the number of people in the country and the length of time over which it has existed, represents a very large fraction of all such freedom that has existed in the whole history of mankind.

There are many circumstances that have led to this condition. The traditions of the early pioneers who settled the country should be remembered. Politically freedom began with the English Magna Charta. But in this country people have attained freedom mostly sooner and to a greater extent than have their blood brothers of Europe. In very large degree this has been due to safety from external aggression provided by the broad expanse of the Atlantic Ocean, behind which we have been able to solve our internal problems without being crushed by a foreign power even during a long and disabling Civil War.

With improvements in transportation and particularly with the discovery and development of air transportation, isolation due to our water defense has disappeared. Today it no longer exists. Twice in this century this country has believed that it was forced to defend itself and its vital interests by sending its sons to fight in Europe and, in this past war, in Asia as well. The same has been true of other similarly situated countries, such as Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

With the advent of modern airplanes, and now atomic bombs, all natural defenses of all countries of the world have disappeared. Rivers, mountains, and oceans are of no value as defenses now and never will be again. With the obliteration of these defenses, the freedom of this country will be seriously threatened, and, in fact, the threat has already begun. From our beginnings we have known the extent of our armed forces. Today we and our elected representatives do not know the extent of these forces. Atomic bombs are being manufactured in an amount unknown to us, and these bombs represent an armament equivalent to a Navy, a large Army, or a large Air Force. Even Congress does not know the extent of this power, which represents a threat to other countries and has an important effect on the relations of this country to other countries.

If an atomic armament race continues—it is already going on—the citizens of the country will know less and less in regard to vital questions of this kind and finally must accept decisions in regard to public affairs blindly and from a few men in power. Not knowing the size of its armament, the people of the country must trust men in Washington with important decisions previously made through their elected representatives. Men on horseback will rapidly appear on the public scene. . . .

The atomic bomb is such a grave threat to all men in all countries that frantic and desperate means of handling the problem have been proposed. If the armament race continues, more and more such things will occur. We become afraid, and we destroy the freedom of science. We fear other countries and conceal the number of our atomic bombs. We fear that bombs will be smuggled into our cities and that we will have to introduce secret police to detect such bombs. We fear attacks on our cities and may disperse them regardless of the desires of the people of those cities and of the people of the countryside to which they are moved. We fear sudden attack from without and will transfer the right to declare war from Congress to a single man, and that man, whoever he may be, will be affected by that power. He will become a dictator. Absolute power corrupts absolutely.

The same trend will occur in all countries of the world, and the end will be deadly fear everywhere. But of all the countries of the world, the most industrialized countries will be the most vulnerable and the most likely to be attacked by atomic bombs. These weapons stopped the Second World War, and at the same time they ended the defenses of the United States. They also threaten our liberties.

But why shudder before these fears? Should we not vigorously grasp the situation and take the offensive? The United States might ally with itself as many countries of the world as possible and lead them to conquest of the remainder. In such an undertaking this country would have to supply most of the men and materials. It is a very great effort that would be required, with much sacrifice. Assuming the will to do it, and ultimate success, this nation would become the most hated country on earth, and the hatred would last for a century and perhaps more. Throughout all that time constant vigilance would be required to prevent rebellion in conquered lands. Our people would become brutalized, as the conquering always have. It is not a pleasant solution, and, our traditions being what they are, it would be impossible to secure the will and determination required of our people to carry the program through to the end. Though all proposals for the solution of the atomic bomb are difficult, I believe that this is the most impossible of all.

The advent of the atomic bomb has caused endless confusion in the thinking of men, and the confusion spreads to more people as they come to realize all the implications of this weapon. What do the facts add up to?

The people of the world have in their hands a weapon of transcending size and destructiveness. The knowledge of the existence of this weapon and the methods of its production can never be lost. It can never again be returned to the realm of the unknown. Bombs can be made in large numbers—and cheaply. There is no defense against them. They can destroy physically beyond our ability to comprehend. Fear of them will destroy our liberties. To take the offensive and attempt to dominate the world would wreck our whole lives and those of generations to come.

Civilizations have risen and fallen repeatedly in the history of the world. We all recall such examples as the Babylonian Empire, the ancient Egyptian civilization, the Roman Empire; and, on this hemisphere, the empires of the Incas and the Mayans. It is to be expected that the future will see rises and falls, too. Modern technological war as developed by the European civilization of which we are a part may cause its complete disintegration. A world war in which atomic weapons are used might very well weaken all of our countries and peoples to such an extent that they would not be able to survive in the future. And not only may our own culture be destroyed by these weapons of mass destruction, but all civilizations as they exist in the world may be retarded and weakened for centuries to come.

It all adds up to the most dangerous situation that humanity has ever faced in all history.

JACQUES BARZUN

The Ivory Lab

> I degrade Physics into an implement of culture, and this is my deliberate design.
>
> —JOHN TYNDALL, *Fragments of Science*

MOST OF the excitement about "higher education" in the last three years has been about the teaching of history, languages, and "great books." But the most serious and pressing need in colleges today seems to me to be the teaching of science. It may appear paradoxical that I speak of a "need" which everyone believes to be adequately met, but paradox disappears when the point of view changes. From one point of view, science is taught in every American college; from another point of view, it is taught in none, or very few. Looked at in a certain light, science teaching today is the most efficient, up to date, and worldly-wise. In another light, it is backward, wasteful and "escapist." Let me explain these contrasts.

Fifty or sixty years ago, science was a new academic subject. People mistrusted its power to educate, and many of its proponents seemed as if they could never be educated themselves. The tradition of liberal studies had always included mathematics, because mathematics was supposed to train the mind; but the new physical sciences were first seen as manual arts, messy and expensive, and with no more "discipline" to them than a pair of elastic-sided boots. At the time of the fight for adding science to the curriculum, the defensive position was held by Greek and Latin, which unfortunately adopted a "scorched earth" policy. I mean that they allowed themselves to be invaded by the "scientific spirit" and in trying to compete with it reduced their field to a wasteland of verbal criticism, grammar, and philology. Literature was relegated to a second place and studying the classics came to mean research into the uses of *utor, fruor,* and *fungor.*

Naturally the classics were exterminated, for science could beat them at their own game. A young man trained in science could on graduation get any of a hundred desirable jobs in industry. A young "scientific" classicist could only hope to teach his own subject to a dwindling number of students. That is what invariably comes of trying to put belles-lettres into utilitarian envelopes. As Dean Briggs of Harvard said when the Bachelor of Science degree was established: "It does not guarantee that the holder knows any science, but it does guarantee that he does *not* know any Latin." When the study of classical literature in translation was reintroduced for freshmen at Columbia College a

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few years ago, the undergraduate department of classics was surprised to find its enrollment in beginning Greek increased 150 per cent: they now had ten students.

But the bitter joke is not on the Classics alone. Having stepped into Greek's vacated place, Science now occupies its position, not with respect to size of enrollment, but with respect to educational attitude. It is now in power and it acts disdainful, holier-than-thou, and prudish. Someone once asked, "What is it that our men of science are guarding like a threatened virginity?" "Oh," was the answer, "they have a Vestal interest in their subject." Considered—somewhat unfairly—in the mass, science teachers may be said to contribute the greatest proportion of backward-looking, anti-intellectual, mechanic-minded members to the faculty. Characteristically, single departments of physical science have in certain institutions tried to set up separate schools, where only their one science would be taught for four years and rewarded with some kind of Bachelor's degree. The intention was to monopolize the student's time, cram him full of "practical" knowledge, and sell him to the highest bidder the moment he had clutched his diploma and redeemed his ten-dollar deposit for apparatus.

Doubtless there is a demand for such prefabricated industrial robots and I see no reason why such schools should not function in a manner useful to the commonwealth—off the campus. But departments that once clamored for admission to university status and have had it for fifty years are unwilling to give up all the *douceurs* of the association. They would still like to profit from the university connection, to color their degree with a faint tincture of liberal teaching—perhaps they would require a year of English and a year of history and economics—and to boast that their own subject, be it chemistry or geology, is also one of the "humanities." They want to eat their cake as many times over as a cow does her cud.

A crowd of evils springs from this ambiguous mood in the present college curriculum. There is an undignified scramble for the student's time, with broad hints on the part of a scientist that the rest of the program is folderol. Repressed antagonisms divide teachers of the humanities (vague, pointless, unpractical subjects—except economics) from teachers of the real stuff represented by science. Moreover, departments of physics and chemistry require mathematical preparation in strict amount and order of time, with the result that all scheduling revolves around their claims. Since most young Americans discover their vocational bent while undergraduates, the wish to qualify for a profession is a powerful lever to make everyone study science for one or two years under these barbaric conditions. The doctor, the engineer, the research man in any science must gobble up as many courses as he can; and the man uninterested in science must "fulfill the requirements." Both are often judged on their science record, in the belief that it unmistakably reveals "real brains" or the lack of them.

The worst of all this is that neither group of students learns much about science but goes to swell the ranks of the two great classes of modern men—the single-track expert and the scientific ignoramus. Could anything more plainly demonstrate the failure of science to become a subject fit for college

teaching? What makes a subject fit for the higher curriculum is surely no novelty: it is that it shall enlighten all the corners of the mind and teach its own uses. The humble three R's begin in strict utility and end up in poetry, science, and the search for the Infinite. They can and should therefore be taught indefinitely. Men have known for three thousand years that other matters of knowledge naturally divide themselves into special and general, that both are needful, but that whereas the special *add* to one's powers, the general *enhance the quality* of all of them.

At a recent educational conference, the Dean of a Midwestern university complained humorously that he was always being asked to give credits for impossible subjects—subjects that, he said, deserved to be called *in-credible*. A transfer student, for example, wanted "points" for seven hours of saw filing. Undeniably saw filing is a necessary art, but its merits as a general enhancer of power and personality stop accruing so soon after study is begun that it is not properly a branch of academic learning. The same is true of still more complex matters like shorthand, typewriting, and dress designing. Farther on in the series, it becomes harder to draw the line: stamp collecting is sub-educational but numismatics is a province of history.

Fortunately there is no doubt whatever about the place of the sciences: they *are* humanities and they belong in the college curriculum. Accordingly, they should be introduced into it *as humanities,* at the earliest possible moment. How? I have some tentative suggestions to make, but first I want to stress the danger of further delay and of the continuance of our present malpractice.

The worst danger is the creation of a large, powerful, and complacent class of college-trained uneducated men at the very heart of our industrial and political system. We may be too near to judge, but it strikes me that one of the conditions that made possible the present folly in Germany was the split among three groups: the technicians, the citizens, and the irresponsible rabble. This becomes persuasively plain if you consider the professional army caste as a group of unthinking technicians. The rabble together with the technicians can cow the citizenry; the technicians—wedded solely to their workbench—will work for any group that hires; and the rabble, worshiping "science" to the exclusion of less tangible necessaries, are perfectly willing to sacrifice the citizen. They probably think that, if necessary, "science" could manufacture German citizens—out of wolfram.

Such principles will hardly give long life and happiness to a democracy. The only hope for a democratic state is to have more citizens than anything else. Hence technicians must not be allowed to hibernate between experiments, but must become conscious, responsible, politically and morally active men. Otherwise they will find not only that representative government has slipped out of their fingers, but that they have also lost their commanding position. They will be paid slaves in the service of some rabble, high or low. Meanwhile our present stock of citizens must not simply gape at the wonders of science, but must understand enough of its principles to criticize and value the results. As for the rabble, it must be transmuted as fast as it forms, by science and morals both.

All this clearly depends on teaching our easygoing, rather credulous college

boys and girls what science is. If they leave college thinking, as they usually do, that science offers a full, accurate, and literal description of man and Nature; if they think scientific research by itself yields final answers to social problems; if they think scientists are the only honest, patient, and careful workers in the world; if they think that Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Lavoisier, and Faraday were unimaginative plodders like their own instructors; if they think theories spring from facts and that scientific authority at any time is infallible; if they think that the ability to write down symbols and read monometers is fair grounds for superiority and pride, and if they think that science steadily and automatically makes for a better world—then they have wasted their time in the science lecture room; they live in an Ivory Laboratory more isolated than the poet's tower and they are a plain menace to the society they belong to. They are a menace whether they believe all this by virtue of being engaged in scientific work themselves or of being disqualified from it by felt or fancied incapacity.

I return to what might perhaps be done preventively and constructively. To begin with, a change of direction must be imparted to the teaching of science. The fact must be recognized that most students still do not make science their profession. Consequently, for future lay citizens the compulsory science requirement in force nearly everywhere must be justified by a course explicitly designed for them. Such a course must not play at making physicists or biologists, but must explain the principles of the physical sciences in a coherent manner. A "survey" of all the sciences is out of the question. It would be at once superficial and bewildering. But an intelligent introduction to principles can be given. The assumptions that connect and that differentiate the sciences of matter, of living beings, and of logical relation can be taught; the meaning and the grounds of great unifying theories can be explained, and significant demonstrations and experiments can be shown to and made by the students.

Out of such a course there would surely come a changed attitude on the part of teachers and indeed a change in teaching personnel. At present, side by side with wise men and ripe teachers in the sciences, one finds many highly trained and absolutely uneducated practitioners. One also finds fanatics of the order that Dickens described in Professor Dingo, who, being caught defacing houses with his geological hammer, replied that "he knew of no building save the Temple of Science." Many university scientists openly scorn teaching and use their appointment to boil the pot of individual research. Now a life of research is a worthy one, but no amount of worthy motive justifies false pretenses and fraudulent impersonations—in this case the pretense of imparting knowledge and the impersonation of a teacher.

In the classroom, such men usually are neither civil, nor literate, nor even scientific, for their knowledge of science is purely from inside—a limitation equally bad but more misleading than the limitation of knowing it purely from outside. "What do they know of science who only science know?" They teach it as a set of rules, and speak of the profession as a "game." Drill in manual dexterity they entrust to laboratory assistants, who are only younger editions of themselves, and for whom a good notebook or speed in performing repetitious experiments is the passport to approval. There is seldom any con-

sideration of the students as thinking minds, of the proper allocation of effort among the many interests legitimate at their time of life, nor of the philosophical implications which the words, the history, and the processes of the particular science disclose.

To offset this lamentable state of things, it must be said that two of the professions most concerned with scientific training—engineering and medicine—have lately amended their outlook and made overtures to the humanities. The medical schools have declared that cramming the student with science in college was a poor thing. He had better study other, less "practical," more formative subjects and postpone advanced chemistry and biology until medical school, where they will be taught him again in a fashion better tailored to his needs. This new policy is excellent, but it is not yet sufficiently enforced. The lesser medical schools—and some others—do not trust their own belief in the principle; they still appeal to "practical" views and judge applicants by A's in science.

Similarly, the Society for the Promotion of Engineering Education has passed splendid resolutions approving what they call the "social-humanistic stem"—by which they mean a few branches of non-engineering study; more accurately then, the "social-humanistic faggots." But here again, engineering thought is ahead of the engineer's emotions. When it comes to the test, the student or the program is pushed around to suit engineering subject matter.

If you add to this the important fact that many young Americans choose "engineering" in the belief that this means a career of research in pure science, you may form some notion of the present anarchical mess. The would-be engineer of seventeen finds that what he really wants to work at is pure research in electricity, that is, to be a physicist. He must therefore back water, change his course, and take some new prerequisites. Meanwhile his upbringing as a man and citizen goes by the board. He is caught between two grindstones, each indifferent to the effect of its motion, just as if the boy being put through this mill were not a human being, a student of the university, and a future citizen of the nation. Who is being "practical" now?

Some would probably still maintain that the professional schools in contact with "the world" know best what is the practical view, and that the college is as ever utopian. But there is one curious fact to be added. It is that the scientific professional schools have a way of relaxing their jaws into a smile whenever the market demand for their product decreases: it is a reflex action. They fall in love with the humanities all over again and raise the amount they require for admission, until outside pressure once again lowers the floodgates and the frown succeeds the smile. This self-regulating action is a feat of engineering in itself—or shall I say of doctoring the supply for public consumption?

The question is not whether this is the easy way to go about marketing young men, but whether it is a responsible grown-up way of replenishing the professional class of society. Granted that practice is the test of all schemes and ideals, is this the most practical scheme that American ingenuity can devise? I concede that in the present state of mind of the American public, desire for vocational training takes the lead over anything else. But are the directing members of the university world to follow other people's untutored

impulses or to guide and redirect them? We may well ask when we reflect that the first victims of the system are the children of the unthinking public and the public itself. For it is the oldest fallacy about schooling to suppose that it can train a man for "practical" life. Inevitably, while the plan of study is being taught, "practical life" has moved on. "They did it this way three months ago, now they do it this way." No employer who knows anything about men will value a beginner because he knows the ropes of a particular changeable routine. It would be as sensible to require that newcomers know the floor plan of the factory ahead of time.

The corporations employing the largest numbers of engineers and scientific research men are on this matter way ahead of the colleges. One such firm conducted a survey last year to find out where and how its first-rate executives had been prepared. They came from the most unexpected places—including small liberal arts colleges, the teaching profession, the stage, and the Baptist ministry. It was found that the engineering schools—particularly those sensible ones that make no pretense at intellectual *cachet*—turned out a good average product, but few leaders. The company's own institutes and night courses raised the chance of foremen and district managers—but only up to a point. The survey concluded that what it wanted as material to shape future executives was graduates of liberal arts colleges, trained in history and economics, in philosophy and in good English, and likewise possessed of *an intelligent interest in science and technology*. Gentlemen, the path lies open.

II

My friend Dean Finch, of the Columbia University School of Engineering, might not agree with all I have just said, but I think he would approve of one element in my suggestions which I casually threw in. I mean the utility of history in the teaching of science. He himself is an historian of technology and offers in Columbia College a most valuable course in the subject for the use of "lay" students. What is surprising is that similar courses, accompanied by others in the history of pure science, are not given—indeed required—on every American campus.

The very idea, it must be said, is shrouded in the smoke of battle. When I mention it, some of my scientific colleagues slap me on the back and say "more power to you." They may express doubts about persuading their fellows, or finding good instructors, but they want to see it tried. Moreover they do not feel robbed when in my own teaching of nineteenth-century history I discuss Dalton and Darwin, Liebig and Faraday, Mayer and Clerk Maxwell. Though scientists, these colleagues of mine can see that to complain of general ignorance about the role of science in modern history, and to prevent historians from mentioning it, is to love monopoly above riches.

Others take the view that science has no history because every new achievement supersedes previous ones. The history of science, they feel, is nothing but biographical chitchat about scientists. Or else they admit that it is useful to find out what the Middle Ages thought of natural science, but only in order to point the lesson of freedom from church authority and fight anew the old battle of science against religion.

This angry confusion about the history of science is dense but not impenetrable. Three things may be distinguished. First there is historical research into the beginnings of science—Greek or Arabic or Medieval. This goes on as advanced study and concerns undergraduates only in the form of broad tested conclusions. Then there is the biography of scientists, which is of immense educational importance—whatever laboratory men may say. Biography does not mean recounting Newton's imaginary embroilments with women or Lavoisier's perfectly real ones with public finance. It means finding out from the lives of great scientific creators what they worked at and how their minds functioned. How tiresome it is to hear nothing from our scientific departments but Sunday-school homilies on the gameness of Galileo, the patience of Pasteur, and the carefulness of Madame Curie. And how uninstructive! Any man who accomplishes anything in any field is as patient as he has to be, and even little boys know that glass being breakable, you have to be careful.

What would be far more significant and novel, though true, would be to teach that Copernicus gambled on insufficient evidence; that Kepler was chiefly a horoscope-caster; that Faraday probably believed more wrong theories than any man alive—and turned them to good use in experiment; that Darwin, on his own admission, made awful blunders and admired the art of wriggling out of them; that T. H. Morgan's laboratory was rather messy; that Newton could not see how his own astronomy contradicted the Bible; that scientific men have suppressed and persecuted opponents of their theories, and that the best scientific truth can end in a rigid and mistaken orthodoxy—as happened after Newton and Darwin. The point is that science is made by man, in the light of interests, errors, and hopes, just like poetry, philosophy, and human history itself.

To say this is not to degrade science, as naïve persons might think; it is on the contrary to enhance its achievements by showing that they sprang not from patience on a monument but from genius toiling in the mud. I leave unexplained here all that accrues from studying how we came to use atoms or devise Absolute Zero or to state the Law of Conservation of Energy (including the reasons why energy is a better word than the earlier "force") or what steps led first to the abandonment and then to the later salvaging of Avogadro's hypothesis. A good scientist-historian would exhibit the assumptions and habits which affected scientific opinion at important turning points. He would unite science to other thought by discussing the nature of its evidence at various periods. And he would show the role of the pure imagination in all great scientific work. I know Bacon promised that science would level all the minds of its devotees to average size, and he is right insofar as drilling can make ordinary men into patient, careful laboratory workers. But science has not yet managed to get along without ideas, and these come only from men of special, powerful, and irreducible aptitudes. The chronological study of these men and ideas is the proper subject matter for an undergraduate course in the history of science.

I know the common objection offered to all this—to an historical and a synoptic account of scientific principles in place of the "regular" science courses: it is that the substitutes would be merely talk about science and not science

itself. Grant this for argument's sake. The objectors miss the point if they do not see that talk about science has a place in the curriculum and that such talk may be good or bad, quite all right or all quite wrong, exactly like talk about art. If science is one of the humanities it must be capable of being looked at and thought about apart from direct doing—at least until we require every concert-goer to write a symphony before being allowed to take his seat at Carnegie Hall. Besides, the synoptic course I have in view would include laboratory work, and it would rest with the scientists themselves whether the students mastered enough of the operative side of true science to keep them from irresponsible talk about it. If science teachers think that a year's drudgery in physics as now given prevents silly notions in those who take it in college, they are either inobservant or illogical.

Doubless it is bad logic they suffer from—the usual weakness of scientists . . . and of the rest of mankind, who generally want to have things both ways. Take as an example a comment made on the relation of science and history in the excellent study of Lavoisier by J. A. Cochrane. The author complains that "although Lavoisier was at the time of his death and for at least fifteen years before it one of the most eminent men in France, the general historian does not think it worth while to make any mention of him. . . . Science has undoubtedly changed the face of the world, and yet practically the only credit given to it by the historian is the Industrial Revolution . . . and even then the facts are not always accurate."

This is very sound criticism, but the scientist at once reasserts his monopoly: "No doubt the historian, having no qualifications to discuss the progress of science, feels that he had best leave it severely alone, but he can scarcely claim to trace the evolution of the modern world if he omits one of the most important factors in that evolution." Which will the author have—treatment with inevitable errors or leaving the sacred objects "severely alone"? So long as we act like watchdogs over our little plots, it is obvious that we cannot have the comprehensive views that all profess to desire. Somebody has to take the first step—and suffer for his pains.

But it would be unfair if I gave the impression that the opposition to teaching the history of science to college students was universal or came only from certain scientists. At one great university near New York there was a thriving enterprise of this sort, popular with students and science departments alike. It was given by a young man, equally gifted in the humanities and in his chosen physical science—a budding *uomo universale,* whom fellow scientists were willing to aid, guide, and correct—if need be—on the remoter details of their science. After a few years this course built up a tradition, exerted an influence, reached a kind of perfection in the fulfillment of its aim.

With the war, changes came in staff and direction; the instructor left and the opposition rallied to abolish the course. It will scarcely be believed when I say that the prime mover in this *Putsch* was a philosopher. What inspired him, the Absolute only knows. The science course did not teach any philosophy contrary to his own; it only taught the historical fact that great men of science have employed varying philosophical assumptions to gain their ends. It taught, besides, that the several sciences do not look at the world all in the same way

and that so far as science has a unified point of view, it is not exclusive of others—the ways, namely, of art, philosophy, religion, and common sense. Lastly, the course imparted a fair amount of matters of fact and showed how wrong was the man who said: "You don't have to teach the history of science to make a man understand that water is H_2O." It is precisely what you have to teach, unless you are willing to barter understanding for mere voodoo formulas.

What more could any philosophy department want? Their students were lucky enough to be taught to think. Is there any other use to make of the four years of college? The world being full of a number of things, it takes practice to think easily about the chief ones. Does philosophy pretend to monopolize cogitation because Descartes said, "Don't doubt I'm thinking!"

The fact is that philosophy has suffered emotionally, like Greek and Latin, from the triumph of science. Philosophy was a minor partner in the defeat of the classics, and that has left it laboring under the same sense of wrong, the same fancied need to be haughty—and even hoity-toity. In the '80s science said: "We bring you the answers. Philosophy will gradually be pushed out as we extend our certainty." Many philosophers agreed and looked for their retirement at the first outrush of some naked Archimedes shouting "Eureka." Other philosophers, courageously holding their ground, fought as critics of science's faulty logic or extreme arrogance, just as a few classicists kept saying, "Poison gas marks a great step forward but have you taken in the meaning of Thucydides's 'Peloponnesian War'?"

The time has now come for the three-cornered duel on the campus to cease. The classics, philosophy, and science are at once overlapping and complementary disciplines. No need even to adjust boundary differences. The students are well able to take care of seeming conflicts, and in truth profit from them, since opposition reinforces attention by heightening the drama of human thought. Science must be taught, and historically, too, or the people will perish. Philosophy likewise must have a voice in all courses throwing light on the history of ideas. It will save philosophy as a subject and save the students from caddishness and provincialism. But philosophy has other obvious collegiate duties. It must read its great masterpieces with the new generation, expound ethical and metaphysical theory, help teach logic, and do liaison work with historians, scientists, and theologians. Once in a while an original philosopher will arise, unsought, in the midst of his colleagues, and the world will know him to its own profit.

The classics, too, must enter the dance. They hold the key to the meaning of our long journey from the cave to—precisely—the laboratory. Why, one may ask, go back over those painful steps? I shall answer this presently as best I can

JAMES B. CONANT

The Scientific Education of the Layman

ARE ALL RATIONAL AND IMPARTIAL INQUIRIES SCIENTIFIC?

ONE extreme position which has been maintained with some insistence for the last seventy-five years attempts to equate the scientific method with all relatively impartial and rational inquiries. Somewhat more than fifty years ago, for example, Karl Pearson in his *Grammar of Science* proclaimed that "Modern science, as training the mind to an exact and impartial analysis of facts, is an education specially fitted to promote sound citizenship." And for the busy layman he recommended that, "What is necessary is the thorough knowledge of some small group of facts, the recognition of their relationship to each other, and of the formulae or laws which express scientifically their sequences. It is in this manner that the mind becomes imbued with the scientific method and freed from individual bias in the formation of its judgments—one of the conditions, as we have seen, for ideally good citizenship. This first claim of scientific training, its education in method, is to my mind the most powerful claim it has to state support."

I shall return later to Pearson's exposition of the scientific method; an exposition with which I find grave difficulties. For the moment I wish to concentrate attention only on two implications that run all through his introductory chapters: first, that an exact and impartial analysis of facts is alone possible in the realm of science; second, that exposure to such a discipline will produce a frame of mind that makes for impartial analysis in all matters.

Now, of course, there is no question that one of the necessary conditions for scientific investigation is an exact and impartial analysis of the facts. But this attitude was neither invented by those who first concerned themselves with scientific inquiries, nor was its overriding importance at once recognized. As one skims the histories of the natural sciences, it seems clear that in the embryonic stages of each of the modern disciplines, violent polemics rather than reasoned opinions often flowed most easily from the pen. This will be illustrated in more detail in the next two chapters. But if I read the history of science in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries rightly, it was only gradually that there evolved the idea that a scientific investigator must impose on himself a rigorous self-discipline the moment he enters his laboratory. As each new generation saw how the prejudice and vanity of their predecessors proved stumbling blocks to progress, standards of exactness and impartiality were raised. But as long as science was largely a field for amateurs, as it was well into the nineteenth century, a man could regard his discoveries like so

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many fish. If he defended their size against all detractors, and in so doing their length increased, well, his opponent was a well-known liar, too.

The formation of the scientific societies, their growing importance, and the gradual building up of a professional feeling about science slowly changed the atmosphere. The example of the few giants who, beginning with Galileo, had well recognized the need for self control became the accepted standard. The man who was inclined to use the same weapons in "philosophical" as in political and theological debate gave way to the modern scientist who places little reliance on persuading his opponent with rhetoric or driving him from the field with invective. For his jury today is a large body of well-informed peers and to them he need only present exact and impartial facts with the minimum of emotion. I am referring to scientists who speak to scientists, of course. I leave aside the great popularizers of science like Huxley who are really educators. I am not, for the moment, discussing those writings which concern science but are of a metaphysical nature, nor those which aim toward the acceptance of a new or altered cosmology.

Would it be too much to say that in the natural sciences today the given social environment has made it very easy for even an emotionally unstable person to be exact and impartial in his laboratory? The traditions he inherits, his instruments, the high degree of specialization, the crowd of witnesses that surrounds him, so to speak (if he publishes his results)—these all exert pressures that make impartiality on matters of *his* science almost automatic. Let him deviate from the rigorous role of impartial experimenter or observer at his peril; he knows all too well what a fool So-and-so made of himself by blindly sticking to a set of observations or a theory now clearly recognized to be in error. But once he closes the laboratory door behind him, he can indulge his fancy all he pleases and perhaps with all the less restraint because he is now free from the imposed discipline of his calling. One would not be surprised, therefore, if as regards matters beyond their professional competence laboratory workers were a little less impartial and self-restrained than other men, though my own observations lead me to conclude that as human beings scientific investigators are statistically distributed over the whole spectrum of human folly and wisdom much as other men.

Who were the precursors of those early investigators who in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries set the standards for exact and impartial scientific inquiries? Who were the spiritual ancestors of Copernicus, Galileo, and Vesalius? Not the casual experimenter or the artful contriver of new mechanical devices who gradually increased our empirical knowledge of physics and chemistry during the Middle Ages. These men passed on to subsequent generations many facts and valuable methods of attaining practical ends but not the spirit of scientific inquiry. For the burst of new ardor in disciplined intellectual inquiry we must turn to a few minds steeped in the Socratic tradition, and to those early scholars who first recaptured the culture of Greece and Rome by primitive methods of archaeology. In the first period of the Renaissance the love of dispassionate search for the truth was carried forward by those who were concerned with man and his works rather than with inanimate or animate nature. During the Middle Ages' interest in attempts to use the

human reason critically and without prejudice, to probe deeply without fear and favor, was kept alive more by those who wrote about human problems than about natural phenomena. In the early days of the Revival of Learning it was the humanist's exploration of antiquity that came nearest to exemplifying our modern ideas of impartial inquiry. Until the wave of scientific curiosity began to mount, inquiries into what we now call natural science were of little interest even to educated men. Scientific conclusions, unless they had profound influence on current cosmology, were apt to be lost like a pebble tossed into the sea.

Petrarch, Boccaccio, Machiavelli, and Erasmus, far more than the alchemists, must be considered the precursors of the modern scientific investigator. Likewise, Rabelais and Montaigne who carried forward the critical philosophic spirit must be counted, it seems to me, among the forerunners of the modern scientists. But not only a few hardy skeptics and the antiquarians, but also honest explorers and hardheaded statesmen and military commanders were the ancestors of all who endeavor to probe deeply to find new answers to old questions, who desire to minimize prejudice and examine facts impartially. As I see it, science today represents the accumulated fruits of one line of descent which migrated, so to speak, into certain fields which were ripe for cultivation. Once science became a self-propagating social phenomenon, those who till these fields have had a relatively easy time keeping up the tradition of their forebears.

Therefore, to put the scientist on a pedestal because he is an impartial inquirer is to misunderstand the situation entirely. Rather, if we seek to spread more widely among the population the desire to seek the facts without prejudice, we should pick our modern examples from the nonscientific fields. We should examine and admire the conduct of the relatively few who in the midst of human affairs can courageously, honestly, and intelligently come to conclusions based on reason without regard for their own or other people's loyalties and interests, and having come to these conclusions, can state them fairly, stick by them, and act accordingly.

To say that all impartial and accurate analyses of facts are examples of the scientific method is to add confusion beyond measure to the problems of understanding science. To claim that the study of science is the best education for young men who aspire to become impartial analysts of human affairs is to put forward a very dubious educational hypothesis at best. Indeed, those who contend that the habits of thought and the point of view of the scientist as a scientist can be transferred with advantage to other human activities have hard work documenting their proposition. Only an occasional brave man will be found nowadays to claim that the so-called scientific method is applicable to the solution of almost all the problems of daily life in the modern world. Yet some proponents of this doctrine have at times gone even further and maintained that only by a widespread application of the scientific method to the problems of society at every level can we hope for peace and sanity. Now, however, such extreme statements are less likely to be coupled with an insistence on the disciplinary value of the physical sciences. One is more likely to hear that what the layman needs is more education in the social sciences.

With any idolatry of science I must confess I have little sympathy. Yet a better understanding of natural science among laymen might not be without value in developing the attitude of which Karl Pearson spoke. Since scientific investigations provide widespread and often dramatic examples of an effective way of handling problems, a great knowledge of the genesis of scientific methods would probably reinforce certain habits of mind. Though the artificial restraints under which the experimentalist now operates unconsciously make cold-blooded factual analysis almost a routine operation, the demonstration day after day of the success of such methods is bound to have profound influence on public opinion. If properly understood, the demonstration strengthens those rational elements in our civic life which make for the adventurous yet orderly development of our free society. All of which is to say that a greater degree of understanding of science seems to me of importance for the welfare of the nation. But it is high time I proceeded to my task of suggesting how this may be achieved in fact. . . .

A DEFINITION OF SCIENCE

. . . As a first approximation, we may say that science emerges from the other progressive activities of man to the extent that new concepts arise from experiments and observations, and the new concepts in turn lead to further experiments and observations. The case histories drawn from the last three hundred years show examples of fruitful and fruitless concepts. The texture of modern science is the result of the interweaving of the fruitful concepts. The test of a new idea is therefore not only its success in correlating the then-known facts but much more its success or failure in stimulating further experimentation or observation which in turn is fruitful. This dynamic quality of science viewed not as a practical undertaking but as development of conceptual schemes seems to me to be close to the heart of the best definition. It is this quality which can be demonstrated only by the historical approach, or else learned by direct professional experience.

To illustrate what I have in mind let us imagine a period in the future when all interest in scientific investigation had ceased but the relatively simple conceptual schemes about matter and energy, the solar system and the basic facts of chemistry of the late nineteenth century were accepted and widely taught. Would the people of that day "understand" science as the late Victorians did? Not to my mind. There would be little difference in their intellectual outlook from that of a people who accept their cosmology as part of a revealed religion. If this be so, the characteristic of the scientific age in which we live lies not in the relative adequacies of our conceptual schemes as to the universe but in the dynamic character of these concepts as interpreted by both professional scientists and laymen. Almost by definition, I would say, science moves ahead.

CHARLES S. PEIRCE

The Scientific Attitude

IF WE endeavour to form our conceptions upon history and life, we remark three classes of men. The first consists of those for whom the chief thing is the qualities of feelings. These men create art. The second consists of the practical men, who carry on the business of the world. They respect nothing but power, and respect power only so far as it [is] exercised. The third class consists of men to whom nothing seems great but reason. If force interests them, it is not in its exertion, but in that it has a reason and a law. For men of the first class, nature is a picture; for men of the second class, it is an opportunity; for men of the third class, it is a cosmos, so admirable, that to penetrate to its ways seems to them the only thing that makes life worth living. These are the men whom we see possessed by a passion to learn, just as other men have a passion to teach and to disseminate their influence. If they do not give themselves over completely to their passion to learn, it is because they exercise self-control. Those are the natural scientific men; and they are the only men that have any real success in scientific research.

If we are to define science, not in the sense of stuffing it into an artificial pigeon-hole where it may be found again by some insignificant mark, but in the sense of characterizing it as a living historic entity, we must conceive it as that about which such men as I have described busy themselves. As such, it does not consist so much in *knowing,* nor even in "organized knowledge," as it does in diligent inquiry into truth for truth's sake, without any sort of axe to grind, nor for the sake of the delight of contemplating it, but from an impulse to penetrate into the reason of things. This is the sense in which this book is entitled a History of *Science.* Science and philosophy seem to have been changed in their cradles. For it is not knowing, but the love of learning, that characterizes the scientific man; while the "philosopher" is a man with a system which he thinks embodies all that is best worth knowing. If a man burns to learn and sets himself to comparing his ideas with experimental results in order that he may correct those ideas, every scientific man will recognize him as a brother, no matter how small his knowledge may be.

But if a man occupies himself with investigating the truth of some question for some ulterior purpose, such as to make money, or to amend his life, or to benefit his fellows, he may be ever so much better than a scientific man, if you will—to discuss that would be aside from the question—but he is not a scientific man. For example, there are numbers of chemists who occupy themselves exclusively with the study of dyestuffs. They discover facts that

THE SCIENTIFIC ATTITUDE From *The Philosophy of Peirce* edited by Justus Buchler. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

are useful to scientific chemistry; but they do not rank as genuine scientific men. The genuine scientific chemist cares just as much to learn about erbium—the extreme rarity of which renders it commercially unimportant—as he does about iron. He is more eager to learn about erbium if the knowledge of it would do more to complete his conception of the Periodic Law, which expresses the mutual relations of the elements.

When a man desires ardently to know the truth, his first effort will be to imagine what that truth can be. He cannot prosecute his pursuit long without finding that imagination unbridled is sure to carry him off the track. Yet nevertheless, it remains true that there is, after all, nothing but imagination that can ever supply him an inkling of the truth. He can stare stupidly at phenomena; but in the absence of imagination they will not connect themselves together in any rational way. Just as for Peter Bell a cowslip was nothing but a cowslip, so for thousands of men a falling apple was nothing but a falling apple; and to compare it to the moon would by them be deemed "fanciful."

It is not too much to say that next after the passion to learn there is no quality so indispensable to the successful prosecution of science as imagination. Find me a people whose early medicine is not mixed up with magic and incantations, and I will find you a people devoid of all scientific ability. There is no magic in the medical Papyrus Ebers. The stolid Egyptian saw nothing in disease but derangement of the affected organ. There never was any true Egyptian science.

There are, no doubt, kinds of imagination of no value in science, mere artistic imagination, mere dreaming of opportunities for gain. The scientific imagination dreams of explanations and laws.

A scientific man must be single-minded and sincere with himself. Otherwise, his love of truth will melt away, at once. He can, therefore, hardly be otherwise than an honest, fair-minded man. True, a few naturalists have been accused of purloining specimens; and some men have been far from judicial in advocating their theories. Both of these faults must be exceedingly deleterious to their scientific ability. But on the whole, scientific men have been the best of men. It is quite natural, therefore, that a young man who might develop into a scientific man should be a well-conducted person.

Yet in more ways than one an exaggerated regard for morality is unfavourable to scientific progress. I shall present only one of those ways. It will no doubt shock some persons that I should speak of morality as involving an element which can become bad. To them good conduct and moral conduct are one and the same—and they will accuse me of hostility to morality. I regard morality as highly necessary; but it is a means to good life, not necessarily coextensive with good conduct. Morality consists in the folklore of right conduct. A man is brought up to think he ought to behave in certain ways. If he behaves otherwise, he is uncomfortable. His conscience pricks him. That system of morals is the traditional wisdom of ages of experience. If a man cuts loose from it, he will become the victim of his passions. It is not safe for him even to reason about it, except in a purely speculative way. Hence, morality is

essentially conservative. Good morals and good manners are identical, except that tradition attaches less importance to the latter. The gentleman is imbued with conservatism. This conservatism is a habit, and it is the law of habit that it tends to spread and extend itself over more and more of the life. In this way, conservatism about morals leads to conservatism about manners and finally conservatism about opinions of a speculative kind. Besides, to distinguish between speculative and practical opinions is the mark of the most cultivated intellects. Go down below this level and you come across reformers and rationalists at every turn—people who propose to remodel the ten commandments on modern science. Hence it is that morality leads to a conservatism which any new view, or even any free inquiry, no matter how purely speculative, shocks. The whole moral weight of such a community will be cast against science. To inquire into nature is for a Turk very unbecoming to a good Moslem; just as the family of Tycho Brahe regarded his pursuit of astronomy as unbecoming to a nobleman. (See Thomas Nash in *Pierce Pennilesse* for the character of a Danish nobleman.)

This tendency is necessarily greatly exaggerated in a country when the "gentleman," or recognized exponent of good manners, is appointed to that place as the most learned man. For then the inquiring spirit cannot say the gentlemen are a lot of ignorant fools. To the moral weight cast against progress in science is added the weight of superior learning. Wherever there is a large class of academic professors who are provided with good incomes and looked up to as gentlemen, scientific inquiry must languish. Wherever the bureaucrats are the more learned class, the case will be still worse. . . .

The effect of mixing speculative inquiry with questions of conduct results finally in a sort of half make-believe reasoning which deceives itself in regard to its real character. Conscience really belongs to the subconscious man, to that part of the soul which is hardly distinct in different individuals, a sort of community-consciousness, or public spirit, not absolutely one and the same in different citizens, and yet not by any means independent in them. Conscience has been created by experience just as any knowledge is; but it is modified by further experience only with secular slowness.

When men begin to rationalize about their conduct, the first effect is to deliver them over to their passions and produce the most frightful demoralization, especially in sexual matters. Thus, among the Greeks, it brought about paederasty and a precedence of public women over private wives. But ultimately the subconscious part of the soul, being stronger, regains its predominance and insists on setting matters right. Men, then, continue to tell themselves they regulate their conduct by reason; but they learn to look forward and see what conclusions a given method will lead to before they give their adhesion to it. In short, it is no longer the reasoning which determines what the reasoning shall be. This is sham reasoning. In short, as morality supposes self-control, men learn that they must not surrender themselves unreservedly to any method, without considering to what conclusions it will lead them. But this is utterly contrary to the single-mindedness that is requisite in science. In order that science may be successful, its votaries must hasten to surrender

themselves at discretion to experimental inquiry, in advance of knowing what its decisions may be. There must be no reservations.

The effect of this shamming is that men come to look upon reasoning as mainly decorative, or at most, as a secondary aid in minor matters—a view not altogether unjust, if questions of conduct are alone to interest us. They, therefore, demand that it shall be plain and facile. If, in special cases, complicated reasoning is indispensable, they hire a specialist to perform it. The result of this state of things is, of course, a rapid deterioration of intellectual vigour, very perceptible from one generation to the next. This is just what is taking place among us before our eyes; and to judge from the history of Constantinople, it is likely to go on until the race comes to a despicable end.

. . . The old-fashioned political economist adored, as alone capable of redeeming the human race, the glorious principle of individual greed, although, as this principle requires for its action hypocrisy and fraud, he generally threw in some dash of inconsistent concessions to virtue, as a sop to the vulgar Cerberus. But it is easy to see that the only kind of science this principle would favour would be such as is immediately remunerative with a great preference for such as can be kept secret, like the modern sciences of dyeing and perfumery. Kepler's discovery rendered Newton possible, and Newton rendered modern physics possible, with the steam engine, electricity, and all the other sources of the stupendous fortunes of our age. But Kepler's discovery would not have been possible without the doctrine of conics. Now contemporaries of Kepler—such penetrating minds as Descartes and Pascal—were abandoning the study of geometry (in which they included what we now call the differential calculus, so far as that had at that time any existence) because they said it was so UTTERLY USELESS. There was the future of the human race almost trembling in the balance; for had not the geometry of conic sections already been worked out in large measure, and had their opinion that only sciences apparently useful ought to be pursued [prevailed], the nineteenth century would have had none of those characters which distinguish it from the *ancien régime*.

True science is distinctively the study of useless things. For the useful things will get studied without the aid of scientific men. To employ these rare minds on such work is like running a steam engine by burning diamonds.

THE RANGE OF THE ESSAY

INTRODUCTION

THIS section is designed to complete our view of the richly varied patterns of the essay, the range of its subject matter and of its literary techniques. Today we are likely to identify the essay with the magazine article, to think of it as being characteristically a short piece of non-fiction which is straightforwardly argumentative or expository in manner. Actually, that is only one kind of essay. Its uses and merits, however, may be very great. They tend to be those of the public speech, the debate, or the explanatory lecture. We ask the writer of this kind of essay to gain our attention with a striking opening paragraph and then to develop his subject in a clear, coherent, and logical fashion. It is a type of essay well illustrated by many of the selections in this book.

The range of the essay is extended by the use of techniques that are frequently associated with fiction. The style and structure of Swift's "A Modest Proposal," for example, are more subtle, or indirect, than those commonly encountered in most modern articles on social injustice. Instead of arguing against his readers, Swift becomes one of them, assumes their own manner of sensible benevolence, and then goes on to expose their inhumanity by carrying to its conclusion the selfish materialism that is their unacknowledged god. A variation of this indirect technique will be found in Stephen Potter's essay on gamesmanship. On the surface it appears to be a rather trivial account of ping-pong at the Meynells', of college tennis matches. Read with attention to possible ambiguity, parody, mock solemnity, and other varieties of irony, it is seen to be a many-edged satire. Like Swift, Potter identifies himself with his readers in order to expose their unconscious hypocrisy. The uses of parody and paradox are further illustrated in the essays by Beerbohm, Chesterton, and Stevenson. By pretending to instruct eminent men how to behave in public, Beerbohm takes off their own pompous play-acting and the fatuous adulation of their worshipers. Chesterton criticizes common sense through a paradoxical defense of nonsense; Stevenson bal-

ances opposing views of mankind and then weights the scale in favor of one view, not so much by logical argument as by a careful selection of metaphors.

The essay's wide range of subjects and uses is necessarily matched by a comparable range of technique. Only by using the seemingly imprecise methods of indirection can these writers say precisely and fully what they think about a seriocomic animal like man. And only by attending to their style can we distinguish means from ends, the apparent subject from the real subject.

JONATHAN SWIFT

A Modest Proposal

FOR PREVENTING THE CHILDREN OF IRELAND FROM BEING A BURDEN TO THEIR PARENTS OR COUNTRY

IT IS a melancholy object to those who walk through this great town or travel in the country, when they see the streets, the roads, and cabin-doors crowded with beggars of the female sex, followed by three, four, or six children, all in rags, and importuning every passenger for an alms. These mothers instead of being able to work for their honest livelihood, are forced to employ all their time in strolling to beg sustenance for their helpless infants, who, as they grow up, either turn thieves for want of work, or leave their dear native country, to fight for the Pretender in Spain, or sell themselves to the Barbadoes.

I think it is agreed by all parties, that this prodigious number of children in the arms, or on the backs, or at the heels of their mothers, and frequently of their fathers, is in the present deplorable state of the kingdom a very great additional grievance; and therefore whoever could find out a fair, cheap, and easy method of making these children sound and useful members of the common-wealth, would deserve so well of the public as to have his statue set up for a preserver of the nation.

But my intention is very far from being confined to provide only for the children of professed beggars; it is of a much greater extent, and shall take in the whole number of infants at a certain age, who are born of parents in effect as little able to support them, as those who demand our charity in the streets.

As to my own part, having turned my thoughts, for many years, upon this important subject, and maturely weighed the several schemes of other projectors, I have always found them grossly mistaken in their computation. It is

true, a child just dropt from its dam, may be supported by her milk for a solar year with little other nourishment, at most not above the value of two shillings, which the mother may certainly get, or the value in scraps, by her lawful occupation of begging; and it is exactly at one year old that I propose to provide for them in such a manner, as, instead of being a charge upon their parents, or the parish, or wanting food and raiment for the rest of their lives, they shall, on the contrary, contribute to the feeding and partly to the clothing of many thousands.

There is likewise another great advantage in my scheme, that it will prevent those voluntary abortions, and that horrid practice of women murdering their bastard children, alas! too frequent among us—sacrificing the poor innocent babes, I doubt, more to avoid the expense than the shame—which would move tears and pity in the most savage and inhuman breast.

The number of souls in this kingdom being usually reckoned one million and a half, of these I calculate there may be about two hundred thousand couple whose wives are breeders; from which number I subtract thirty thousand couples, who are able to maintain their own children, although I apprehend there cannot be so many, under the present distresses of the kingdom; but this being granted, there will remain an hundred and seventy thousand breeders. I again subtract fifty thousand, for those women who miscarry, or whose children die by accident or disease within the year. There only remain an hundred and twenty thousand children of poor parents annually born: The question therefore is, How this number shall be reared, and provided for? which, as I have already said, under the present situation of affairs, is utterly impossible by all the methods hitherto proposed; for we can neither employ them in handicraft or agriculture; we neither build houses, (I mean in the country) nor cultivate land: They can very seldom pick up a livelihood by stealing till they arrive at six years old, except where they are of towardly parts, although, I confess, they learn the rudiments much earlier; during which time they can however be properly looked upon only as probationers; as I have been informed by a principal gentleman in the county of Cavan, who protested to me, that he never knew above one or two instances under the age of six, even in a part of the kingdom so renowned for the quickest proficiency in that art.

I am assured by our merchants, that a boy or a girl before twelve years old, is no saleable commodity, and even when they come to this age, they will not yield above three pounds, or three pounds and half a crown at most, on the exchange; which cannot turn to account either to the parents or kingdom, the charge of nutriment and rags having been at least four times that value.

I shall now therefore humbly propose my own thoughts, which I hope will not be liable to the least objection.

I have been assured by a very knowing American of my acquaintance in London, that a young healthy child well nursed is at a year old a most delicious nourishing and wholesome food, whether stewed, roasted, baked, or boiled; and I make no doubt that it will equally serve in a fricassee, or a ragout.

I do therefore humbly offer it to publick consideration, that of the hundred and twenty thousand children, already computed, twenty thousand may be reserved for breed, whereof only one fourth part to be males; which is more

than we allow to sheep, black cattle, or swine, and my reason is, that these children are seldom the fruits of marriage, a circumstance not much regarded by our savages; therefore, one male will be sufficient to serve four females. That the remaining hundred thousand may at a year old be offered in sale to the persons of quality and fortune, through the kingdom, always advising the mother to let them suck plentifully in the last month, so as to render them plump, and fat for a good table. A child will make two dishes at an entertainment for friends, and when the family dines alone, the fore or hind quarter will make a reasonable dish, and seasoned with a little pepper or salt will be very good boiled on the fourth day, especially in winter.

I have reckoned upon a medium, that a child just born will weigh 12 pounds, and in a solar year, if tolerably nursed, encreaseth to 28 pounds.

I grant this food will be somewhat dear, and therefore very proper for landlords, who, as they have already devoured most of the parents seem to have the best title to the children.

Infant's flesh will be in season throughout the year, but more plentiful in March, and a little before and after; for we are told by a grave author, an eminent French physician, that fish being a prolifick dyet, there are more children born in Roman Catholick countries about nine months after Lent, than at any other season; therefore reckoning a year after Lent, the markets will be more glutted than usual, because the number of popish infants, is at least three to one in this kingdom, and therefore it will have one other collateral advantage, by lessening the number of papists among us.

I have already computed the charge of nursing a beggar's child (in which list I reckon all cottagers, labourers, and four fifths of the farmers) to be about two shillings per annum, rags included; and I believe no gentleman would repine to give ten shillings for the carcass of a good fat child, which, as I have said will make four dishes of excellent nutritive meat, when he hath only some particular friend, or his own family to dine with him. Thus the squire will learn to be a good landlord, and grow popular among his tenants; the mother will have eight shillings neat profit, and be fit for work till she produces another child.

Those who are more thrifty (as I must confess the times require) may flay the carcass; the skin of which, artificially dressed, will make admirable gloves for ladies, and summer boots for fine gentlemen.

As to our city of Dublin, shambles may be appointed for this purpose, in the most convenient parts of it, and butchers we may be assured will not be wanting; although I rather recommend buying the children alive, and dressing them hot from the knife, as we do roasting pigs.

A very worthy person, a true lover of his country, and whose virtues I highly esteem, was lately pleased, in discoursing on this matter, to offer a refinement upon my scheme. He said, that many gentlemen of this kingdom, having of late destroyed their deer, he conceived that the want of venison might be well supplied by the bodies of young lads and maidens, not exceeding fourteen years of age, nor under twelve; so great a number of both sexes in every country being now ready to starve, for want of work and service: And

these to be disposed of by their parents if alive, or otherwise by their nearest relations. But with due deference to so excellent a friend, and so deserving a patriot, I cannot be altogether in his sentiments; for as to the males, my American acquaintance assured me from frequent experience, that their flesh was generally tough and lean, like that of our schoolboys, by continual exercise, and their taste disagreeable, and to fatten them would not answer the charge. Then as to the females, it would, I think with humble submission, be a loss to the publick, because they soon would become breeders themselves: And besides it is not improbable that some scrupulous people might be apt to censure such a practice (although indeed very unjustly) as a little bordering upon cruelty, which, I confess, hath always been with me the strongest objection against any project, how well soever intended.

But in order to justify my friend, he confessed, that this expedient was put into his head by the famous Psalmanazar, a native of the island Formosa, who came from thence to London, above twenty years ago, and in conversation told my friend, that in his country when any young person happened to be put to death, the executioner sold the carcass to persons of quality, as a prime dainty, and that, in his time, the body of a plump girl of fifteen, who was crucified for an attempt to poison the Emperor, was sold to his Imperial Majesty's prime minister of state, and other great mandarins of the court, in joints from the gibbet, at four hundred crowns. Neither indeed can I deny, that if the same use were made of several plump young girls in this town, who, without one single groat to their fortunes, cannot stir abroad without a chair, and appear at a play-house and assemblies in foreign fineries which they never will pay for; the kingdom would not be the worse.

Some persons of a desponding spirit are in great concern about that vast number of poor people, who are aged, diseased, or maimed, and I have been desired to employ my thoughts what course may be taken, to ease the nation of so grievous an encumbrance. But I am not in the least pain upon that matter, because it is very well known, that they are every day dying, and rotting, by cold, and famine, and filth, and vermin, as fast as can be reasonably expected. And as to the younger labourers, they are now in almost as hopeful a condition. They cannot get work, and consequently pine away for want of nourishment, to a degree, that if at any time they are accidentally hired to common labour, they have not strength to perform it, and thus the country and themselves are happily delivered from the evils to come.

I have too long digressed, and therefore shall return to my subject. I think the advantages by the proposal which I have made are obvious and many, as well as of the highest importance.

For *first,* as I have already observed, it would greatly lessen the number of papists, with whom we are yearly over-run, being the principal breeders of the nation, as well as our most dangerous enemies, and who stay at home on purpose with a design to deliver the kingdom to the Pretender, hoping to take their advantage by the absence of so many good Protestants, who have chosen rather to leave their country, than stay at home, and pay tithes against their conscience to an episcopal curate.

Secondly, the poorer tenants will have something valuable of their own which by law may be made liable to distress, and help to pay their landlord's rent, their corn and cattle being already seized, and money a thing unknown.

Thirdly, whereas the maintenance of an hundred thousand children, from two years old, and upwards, cannot be computed at less than ten shillings a piece per annum, the nation's stock will be thereby increased fifty thousand pounds per annum, besides the profit of a new dish, introduced to the tables of all gentlemen of fortune in the kingdom who have any refinement in taste, and the money will circulate among our selves, the goods being entirely of our own growth and manufacture.

Fourthly, the constant breeders, besides the gain of eight shillings sterling per annum, by the sale of their children, will be rid of the charge of maintaining them after the first year.

Fifthly, this food would likewise bring great custom to taverns, where the vintners will certainly be so prudent as to procure the best receipts for dressing it to perfection; and consequently have their houses frequented by all the fine gentlemen, who justly value themselves upon their knowledge in good eating; and a skilful cook, who understands how to oblige his guests, will contrive to make it as expensive as they please.

Sixthly, this would be a great inducement to marriage, which all wise nations have either encouraged by rewards, or enforced by laws and penalties. It would encrease the care and tenderness of mothers towards their children, when they were sure of a settlement for life to the poor babes, provided in some sort by the publick, to their annual profit instead of expence; we should soon see an honest emulation among the married women, which of them could bring the fattest child to the market. Men would become as fond of their wives during the time of their pregnancy, as they are now of their mares in foal, their cows in calf, or sows when they are ready to farrow, nor offer to beat or kick them (as is too frequent a practice) for fear of a miscarriage.

Many other advantages might be enumerated. For instance, the addition of some thousand carcasses in our exportation of barreled beef: the propagation of swine's flesh, and improvement in the art of making good bacon, so much wanted among us by the great destruction of pigs, too frequent at our tables, which are no way comparable in taste or magnificence to a well grown, fat yearling child, which roasted whole will make a considerable figure at a Lord Mayor's feast, or any other publick entertainment. But this, and many others, I omit, being studious of brevity.

Supposing that one thousand families in this city, would be constant customers for infant's flesh, besides others who might have it at merry meetings, particularly at weddings and christenings, I compute that Dublin would take off annually about twenty thousand carcasses, and the rest of the kingdom (where probably they will be sold somewhat cheaper) the remaining eighty thousand.

I can think of no one objection, that will possibly be raised against this proposal, unless it should be urged, that the number of people will be thereby much lessened in the kingdom. This I freely own, and 'twas indeed one principal design in offering it to the world. I desire the reader will observe,

that I calculate my remedy for this one individual kingdom of Ireland, and for no other that ever was, is, or, I think, ever can be upon earth. Therefore let no man talk to me of other expedients: of taxing our absentees at five shilling a pound: of using neither cloths, nor household furniture, except what is of our own growth and manufacture: of utterly rejecting the materials and instruments that promote foreign luxury: of curing the expensiveness of pride, vanity, idleness, and gaming in our women: of introducing a vein of parsimony, prudence and temperance: of learning to love our country, wherein we differ even from Laplanders, and the inhabitants of Topinamboo: of quitting our animosities, and factions, nor act any longer like the Jews, who were murdering one another at the very moment their city was taken: of being a little cautious not to sell our country and consciences for nothing: of teaching landlords to have at least one degree of mercy towards their tenants. Lastly, of putting a spirit of honesty, industry, and skill into our shop-keepers, who, if a resolution could now be taken to buy only our native goods, would immediately unite to cheat and exact upon us in the price, the measure, and the goodness, nor could ever yet be brought to make one fair proposal of just dealing, though often and earnestly invited to it.

Therefore I repeat, let no man talk to me of these and the like expedients, till he hath at least some glimpse of hope, that there will ever be some hearty and sincere attempt to put them in practice.

But as to my self, having been wearied out for many years with offering vain, idle, visionary thoughts, and at length utterly despairing of success, I fortunately fell upon this proposal, which as it is wholly new, so it hath something solid and real, of no expense and little trouble, full in our own power, and whereby we can incur no danger in disobliging England. For this kind of commodity will not bear exportation, the flesh being of too tender a consistence, to admit a long continuance in salt, although perhaps I could name a country, which would be glad to eat up our whole nation without it.

After all, I am not so violently bent upon my own opinion, as to reject any offer, proposed by wise men, which shall be found equally innocent, cheap, easy, and effectual. But before something of that kind shall be advanced in contradiction to my scheme, and offering a better, I desire the author or authors, will be pleased maturely to consider two points. *First,* as things now stand, how they will be able to find food and raiment for a hundred thousand useless mouths and backs. And *Secondly,* there being a round million of creatures in human figure throughout this kingdom, whose whole subsistence put into a common stock would leave them in debt two millions of pounds sterling, adding those—who are beggars by profession, to the bulk of farmers, cottagers and labourers, with their wives and children, who are beggars in effect; I desire those politicians, who dislike my overture, and may perhaps be so bold to attempt an answer, that they will first ask the parents of these mortals, whether they would not at this day think it a great happiness to have been sold for food at a year old, in the manner I prescribe, and thereby have avoided such a perpetual scene of misfortunes as they have since gone through, by the oppression of landlords, the impossibility of paying rent without money or trade, the want of common sustenance, with neither house nor clothes to cover them

from the inclemencies of the weather, and the most inevitable prospect of entailing the like, or greater miseries, upon their breed for ever.

I profess in the sincerity of my heart, that I have not the least personal interest in endeavouring to promote this necessary work, having no other motive than the publick good of my country, by advancing our trade, providing for infants, relieving the poor, and giving some pleasure to the rich. I have no children by which I can propose to get a single penny; the youngest being nine years old and my wife past child-bearing.

CHARLES LAMB

Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist

"A CLEAR fire, a clean hearth, and the rigour of the game." This was the celebrated *wish* of old Sarah Battle (now with God), who, next to her devotions, loved a good game of whist. She was none of your lukewarm gamesters, your half-and-half players, who have no objection to take a hand, if you want one to make up a rubber; who affirm that they have no pleasure in winning; that they like to win one game and lose another; that they can while away an hour very agreeably at a card-table, but are indifferent whether they play or no; and will desire an adversary, who has slipped a wrong card, to take it up and play another. These insufferable triflers are the curse of a table. One of these flies will spoil a whole pot. Of such it may be said that they do not play at cards, but only play at playing at them.

Sarah Battle was none of that breed. She detested them, as I do, from her heart and soul, and would not, save upon a striking emergency, willingly seat herself at the same table with them. She loved a thorough-paced partner, a determined enemy. She took, and gave, no concessions. She hated favours. She never made a revoke, nor ever passed it over in her adversary without exacting the utmost forfeiture. She fought a good fight: cut and thrust. She held not her good sword (her cards) "like a dancer." She sate bolt upright; and neither showed you her cards, nor desired to see yours. All people have their blind side—their superstitions; and I have heard her declare, under the rose, that Hearts was her favourite suit.

I never in my life—and I knew Sarah Battle many of the best years of it—saw her take out her snuff-box when it was her turn to play; or snuff a candle in the middle of a game; or ring for a servant, till it was fairly over. She never introduced, or connived at, miscellaneous conversation during its process. As she emphatically observed, cards were cards; and if I ever saw unmingled distaste in her fine last-century countenance, it was at the airs of a young gentleman of a literary turn, who had been with difficulty persuaded to take a hand; and who, in his excess of candour, declared, that he thought there was no harm in unbending the mind now and then, after serious studies, in

recreation of that kind! She could not bear to have her noble occupation, to which she wound up her faculties, considered in that light. It was her business, her duty, the thing she came into the world to do—and she did it. She unbent her mind afterwards—over a book.

Pope was her favourite author: his *Rape of the Lock* her favourite work. She once did me the favour to play over with me (with the cards) his celebrated game of Ombre in that poem; and to explain to me how far it agreed with, and in what points it would be found to differ from, tradrille. Her illustrations were apposite and poignant; and I had the pleasure of sending the substance of them to Mr. Bowles; but I suppose they came too late to be inserted among his ingenious notes upon that author.

Quadrille, she has often told me, was her first love; but whist had engaged her maturer esteem. The former, she said, was showy and specious, and likely to allure young persons. The uncertainty and quick shifting of partners—a thing which the constancy of whist abhors; the dazzling supremacy and regal investiture of Spadille—absurd, as she justly observed, in the pure aristocracy of whist, where his crown and garter give him no proper power above his brother-nobility of the Aces;—the giddy vanity, so taking to the inexperienced, of playing alone; above all, the overpowering attractions of a *Sans Prendre Vole,*—to the triumph of which there is certainly nothing parallel or approaching in the contingencies of whist;—all these, she would say, make quadrille a game of captivation to the young and enthusiastic. But whist was the *solider* game: that was her word. It was a long meal; not like quadrille, a feast of snatches. One or two rubbers might co-extend in duration with an evening. They gave time to form rooted friendships, to cultivate steady enmities. She despised the chance-started, capricious, and ever fluctuating alliances of the other. The skirmishes of quadrille, she would say, reminded her of the petty ephemeral embroilments of the little Italian states, depicted by Machiavel: perpetually changing postures and connections; bitter foes today, sugared darlings tomorrow; kissing and scratching in a breath;—but the wars of whist were comparable to the long, steady, deep-rooted, rational antipathies of the great French and English nations.

A grave simplicity was what she chiefly admired in her favourite game. There was nothing silly in it, like the nob in cribbage—nothing superfluous. No *flushes*—that most irrational of all pleas that a reasonable being can set up:—that anyone should claim four by virtue of holding cards of the same mark and colour, without reference to the playing of the game, or the individual worth or pretensions of the cards themselves! She held this to be a solecism; as pitiful an ambition at cards as alliteration is in authorship. She despised superficiality, and looked deeper than the colours of things. Suits were soldiers, she would say, and must have a uniformity of array to distinguish them: but what should we say to a foolish squire, who should claim a merit from dressing up his tenantry in red jackets, that never were to be marshalled—never to take the field?—She even wished that whist were more simple than it is; and, in my mind, would have stripped it of some appendages, which, in the state of human frailty, may be venially, and even commendably, allowed of. She saw no reason for the deciding of the trump by the turn of the card. Why not

one suit always trumps?—Why two colours, when the mark of the suit would have sufficiently distinguished them without it?

"But the eye, my dear madam, is agreeably refreshed with the variety. Man is not a creature of pure reason—he must have his senses delightfully appealed to. We see it in Roman Catholic countries, where the music and the paintings draw in many to worship, whom your Quaker spirit of unsensualizing would have kept out.—You yourself have a pretty collection of paintings—but confess to me, whether, walking in your gallery at Sandham, among those clear Vandykes, or among the Paul Potters in the ante-room, you ever felt your bosom glow with an elegant delight, at all comparable to *that* you have it in your power to experience most evenings over a well-arranged assortment of the court-cards?—the pretty antic habits, like heralds in a procession—the gay triumph-assuring scarlets—the contrasting deadly-killing sables—the 'hoary majesty of spades'—Pam in all his glory!—

"All these might be dispensed with; and with their naked names upon the drab pasteboard, the game might go on very well, pictureless; but the *beauty* of cards would be extinguished for ever. Stripped of all that is imaginative in them, they must degenerate into mere gambling. Imagine a dull deal board, or drum head, to spread them on, instead of that nice verdant carpet (next to nature's), fittest arena for those courtly combatants to play their gallant jousts and tourneys in!—Exchange those delicately-turned ivory markers—(work of Chinese artist, unconscious of their symbol,—or as profanely slighting their true application as the arrantest Ephesian journeyman that turned out those little shrines for the goddess)—exchange them for little bits of leather (our ancestors' money), or chalk and a slate!"—

The old lady, with a smile, confessed the soundness of my logic; and to her approbation of my arguments on her favourite topic that evening, I have always fancied myself indebted for the legacy of a curious cribbage-board, made of the finest Sienna marble, which her maternal uncle (old Walter Plumer, whom I have elsewhere celebrated) brought with him from Florence:—this, and a trifle of five hundred pounds, came to me at her death.

The former bequest (which I do not least value) I have kept with religious care; though she herself, to confess a truth, was never greatly taken with cribbage. It was an essentially vulgar game, I have heard her say,—disputing with her uncle, who was very partial to it. She could never heartily bring her mouth to pronounce *"Go,"* or *"That's a go."* She called it an ungrammatical game. The pegging teased her. I once knew her to forfeit a rubber (a five-dollar stake) because she would not take advantage of the turn-up knave, which would have given it her, but which she must have claimed by the disgraceful tenure of declaring *"two for his heels."* There is something extremely genteel in this sort of self-denial. Sarah Battle was a gentlewoman born.

Piquet she held the best game at the cards for two persons, though she would ridicule the pedantry of the terms—such as pique—repique—the capot—they savoured (she thought) of affectation. But games for two, or even three, she never greatly cared for. She loved the quadrate or square. She would argue thus:—Cards are warfare: the ends are gain, with glory. But cards are war,

in disguise of a sport: when single adversaries encounter, the ends proposed are too palpable. By themselves, it is too close a fight; with spectators, it is not much bettered. No looker-on can be interested, except for a bet, and then it is a mere affair of money; he cares not for your luck *sympathetically*, or for your play.—Three are still worse; a mere naked war of every man against every man, as in cribbage, without league or alliance; or a rotation of petty and contradictory interests, a succession of heartless leagues, and not much more hearty infractions of them, as in tradrille.—But in square games (*she meant whist*), all that is possible to be attained in card-playing is accomplished. There are the incentives of profit with honour, common to every species—though the *latter* can be but very imperfectly enjoyed in those other games, where the spectator is only feebly a participator. But the parties in whist are spectators and principals too. They are a theatre to themselves, and a looker-on is not wanted. He is rather worse than nothing, and an impertinence. Whist abhors neutrality, or interests beyond its sphere. You glory in some surprising stroke of skill or fortune, not because a cold—or even an interested—bystander witnesses it, but because your *partner* sympathizes in the contingency. You win for two. You triumph for two. Two are exalted. Two again are mortified; which divides their disgrace, as the conjunction doubles (by taking off the invidiousness) your glories. Two losing to two are better reconciled, than one to one in that close butchery. The hostile feeling is weakened by multiplying the channels. War becomes a civil game. By such reasonings as these the old lady was accustomed to defend her favourite pastime.

No inducement could ever prevail upon her to play at any game, where chance entered into the composition, *for nothing*. Chance, she would argue—and here again, admire the subtlety of her conclusion;—chance is nothing, but where something else depends upon it. It is obvious that cannot be *glory*. What rational cause of exultation could it give to a man to turn up size ace a hundred times together by himself? or before spectators, where no stake was depending?—Make a lottery of a hundred thousand tickets with but one fortunate number—and what possible principle of our nature, except stupid wonderment, could it gratify to gain that number as many times successively without a prize? Therefore she disliked the mixture of chance in backgammon, where it was not played for money. She called it foolish, and those people idiots, who were taken with a lucky hit under such circumstances. Games of pure skill were as little to her fancy. Played for a stake, they were a mere system of over-reaching. Played for glory, they were a mere setting of one man's wit,—his memory, or combination-faculty rather—against another's; like a mock-engagement at a review, bloodless and profitless. She could not conceive a *game* wanting the spritely infusion of chance, the handsome excuses of good fortune. Two people playing at chess in a corner of a room, whilst whist was stirring in the centre, would inspire her with insufferable horror and ennui. Those well-cut similitudes of Castles and Knights, the *imagery* of the board, she would argue (and I think in this case justly), were entirely misplaced and senseless. Those hard-head contests can in no instance ally with the fancy. They reject form and colour. A pencil and dry slate (she used to say) were the proper arena for such combatants.

To those puny objectors against cards, as nurturing the bad passions, she would retort, that man is a gaming animal. He must be always trying to get the better in something or other:—that this passion can scarcely be more safely expended than upon a game at cards: that cards are a temporary illusion; in truth, a mere drama; for we do but *play* at being mightily concerned, where a few idle shillings are at stake, yet, during the illusion, we *are* as mightily concerned as those whose stake is crowns and kingdoms. They are a sort of dream-fighting; much ado; great battling, and little bloodshed; mighty means for disproportioned ends: quite as diverting, and a great deal more innoxious, than many of those more serious *games* of life, which men play without esteeming them to be such.

With great deference to the old lady's judgment in these matters, I think I have experienced some moments in my life, when playing at cards *for nothing* has even been agreeable. When I am in sickness, or not in the best spirits, I sometimes call for the cards, and play a game at piquet *for love* with my cousin Bridget—Bridget Elia.

I grant there is something sneaking in it; but with a toothache, or a sprained ankle,—when you are subdued and humble,—you are glad to put up with an inferior spring of action.

There is such a thing in nature, I am convinced, as *sick whist.*

I grant it is not the highest style of man—I deprecate the manes of Sarah Battle—she lives not, alas! to whom I should apologize.

At such times, those *terms* which my old friend objected to, come in as something admissible. I love to get a tierce or a quatorze, though they mean nothing. I am subdued to an inferior interest. Those shadows of winning amuse me.

That last game I had with my sweet cousin (I capotted her)—(dare I tell thee, how foolish I am?)—I wished it might have lasted for ever, though we gained nothing, and lost nothing, though it was a mere shade of play: I would be content to go on in that idle folly for ever. The pipkin should be ever boiling, that was to prepare the gentle lenitive to my foot, which Bridget was doomed to apply after the game was over: and, as I do not much relish appliances, there it should ever bubble. Bridget and I should be ever playing.

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Pulvis et Umbra

WE LOOK for some reward of our endeavours and are disappointed; not success, not happiness, not even peace of conscience, crowns our ineffectual efforts to do well. Our frailties are invincible, our virtues barren; the battle goes sore against us to the going down of the sun. The canting moralist tells us of right and wrong; and we look abroad, even on the face of our small earth, and

find them change with every climate, and no country where some action is not honoured for a virtue and none where it is not branded for a vice; and we look in our experience, and find no vital congruity in the wisest rules, but at the best a municipal fitness. It is not strange if we are tempted to despair of good. We ask too much. Our religions and moralities have been trimmed to flatter us, till they are all emasculate and sentimentalized, and only please and weaken. Truth is of a rougher strain. In the harsh face of life, faith can read a bracing gospel. The human race is a thing more ancient than the ten commandments; and the bones and revolutions of the Kosmos, in whose joints we are but moss and fungus, more ancient still.

I

Of the Kosmos in the last resort, science reports many doubtful things and all of them appalling. There seems no substance to this solid globe on which we stamp: nothing but symbols and ratios. Symbols and ratios carry us and bring us forth and beat us down; gravity that swings the incommensurable suns and worlds through space, is but a figment varying inversely as the squares of distances; and the suns and worlds themselves, imponderable figures of abstraction, NH_3 and H_2O. Consideration dares not dwell upon this view; that way madness lies; science carries us into zones of speculation, where there is no habitable city for the mind of man.

But take the Kosmos with a grosser faith, as our senses give it us. We behold space sown with rotatory islands, suns and worlds and the shards and wrecks of systems: some, like the sun, still blazing; some rotting, like the earth; others, like the moon, stable in desolation. All of these we take to be made of something we call matter: a thing which no analysis can help us to conceive; to whose incredible properties no familiarities can reconcile our minds. This stuff, when not purified by the lustration of fire, rots uncleanly into something we call life; seized through all its atoms with a pediculous malady; swelling in tumours that become independent, sometimes even (by an abhorrent prodigy) locomotory; one splitting into millions, millions cohering into one, as the malady proceeds through varying stages. This vital putrescence of the dust, used as we are to it, yet strikes us with occasional disgust, and the profusion of worms in a piece of ancient turf, or the air of a marsh darkened with insects, will sometimes check our breathing so that we aspire for cleaner places. But none is clean: the moving sand is infected with lice; the pure spring, where it bursts out of the mountain, is a mere issue of worms; even in the hard rock the crystal is forming.

In two main shapes this eruption covers the countenance of the earth: the animal and the vegetable: one in some degree the inversion of the other: the second rooted to the spot; the first coming detached out of its natal mud, and scurrying abroad with the myriad feet of insects, or towering into the heavens on the wings of birds,—a thing so incomprehensible that, if it be well considered, the heart stops. To what passes with the anchored vermin, we have little clue: doubtless they have their joys and sorrows, their delights and killing agonies,—it appears not how. But of the locomotory, to which we ourselves belong, we can tell more. These share with us a thousand miracles: the miracles of sight, of hearing, of the projection of sound, things that bridge space; the

miracles of memory and reason, by which the present is conceived, and when it is gone its image kept living in the brains of man and brute; the miracle of reproduction, with its imperious desires and staggering consequences. And to put the last touch upon this mountain mass of the revolting and the inconceivable, all these prey upon each other, lives tearing other lives in pieces, cramming them inside themselves, and by that summary process growing fat: the vegetarian, the whale, perhaps the tree, not less than the lion of the desert,—for the vegetarian is only the eater of the dumb.

Meanwhile our rotatory island loaded with predatory life, and more drenched with blood, both animal and vegetable, than ever mutinied ship, scuds through space with unimaginable speed, and turns alternate cheeks to the reverberation of a blazing world, ninety million miles away.

II

What a monstrous spectre is this man, the disease of the agglutinated dust, lifting alternate feet or lying drugged with slumber; killing, feeding, growing, bringing forth small copies of himself; grown upon with hair like grass, fitted with eyes that move and glitter in his face; a thing to set children screaming;—and yet looked at nearlier, known as his fellows know him, how surprising are his attributes! Poor soul, here for so little, cast among so many hardships, filled with desires so incommensurate and so inconsistent, savagely surrounded, savagely descended, irremediably condemned to prey upon his fellow lives: who should have blamed him had he been of a piece with his destiny and a being merely barbarous? And we look and behold him instead filled with imperfect virtues: infinitely childish, often admirably valiant, often touchingly kind; sitting down, amidst his momentary life, to debate of right and wrong and the attributes of the deity; rising up to do battle for an egg or die for an idea; singling out his friends and his mate with cordial affection; bringing forth in pain, rearing with long-suffering solicitude, his young. To touch the heart of his mystery, we find in him one thought, strange to the point of lunacy: the thought of duty; the thought of something owing to himself, to his neighbour, to his God: an ideal of decency, to which he would rise if it were possible; a limit of shame, below which, if it be possible, he will not stoop. The design in most men is one of conformity; here and there, in picked natures, it transcends itself and soars on the other side, arming martyrs with independence; but in all, in their degrees, it is a bosom thought:—not in man alone, for we trace it in dogs and cats whom we know fairly well, and doubtless some similar point of honour sways the elephant, the oyster, and the louse, of whom we know so little:—but in man, at least, it sways with so complete an empire that merely selfish things come second, even with the selfish; that appetites are starved, fears are conquered, pains supported; that almost the dullest shrinks from the reproof of a glance, although it were a child's; and all but the most cowardly stand amid the risks of war; and the more noble, having strongly conceived an act as due to their ideal, affront and embrace death. Strange enough if, with their singular origin and perverted practice, they think they are to be rewarded in some future life; stranger still, if they are persuaded of the contrary, and think this blow which they solicit will strike them senseless for eternity. I shall be reminded what a tragedy of misconception and misconduct man at large

presents,—of organized injustice, cowardly violence, and treacherous crime, and of the damning imperfections of the best. They cannot be too darkly drawn. Man is indeed marked for failure in his efforts to do right. But where the best consistently miscarry, how tenfold more remarkable that all should continue to strive; and surely we should find it both touching and inspiriting, that in a field from which success is banished, our race should not cease to labour.

If the first view of this creature, stalking in his rotatory isle, be a thing to shake the courage of the stoutest, on this nearer sight he startles us with an admiring wonder. It matters not where we look, under what climate we observe him, in what state of society, in what depth of ignorance, burthened with what erroneous morality; by camp-fires in Assiniboia, the snow powdering his shoulders, the wind plucking his blanket, as he sits, passing the ceremonial calumet and uttering his grave opinions like a Roman senator; in ships at sea, a man inured to hardship and vile pleasures, his brightest hope a fiddle in a tavern and a bedizened trull who sells herself to rob him, and he for all that simple, innocent, cheerful, kindly like a child, constant to toil, brave to drown, for others; in the slums of cities, moving among indifferent millions to mechanical employment, without hope of change in the future, with scarce a pleasure in the present, and yet true to his virtues, honest up to his lights, kind to his neighbours, tempted perhaps in vain by the bright gin-palace, perhaps long-suffering with the drunken wife that ruins him; in India (a woman this time) kneeling with broken cries and streaming tears, as she drowns her child in the sacred river; in the brothel, the discard of society, living mainly on strong drink, fed with affronts, a fool, a thief, the comrade of thieves, and even here keeping the point of honour and the touch of pity, often repaying the world's scorn with service, often standing firm upon a scruple, and at a certain cost, rejecting riches:—everywhere some virtue cherished or affected, everywhere some decency of thought and carriage, everywhere the ensign of man's ineffectual goodness:—ah! if I could show you this! If I could show you these men and women, all the world over, in every stage of history, under every abuse of error, under every circumstance of failure, without hope, without help, without thanks, still obscurely fighting the lost fight of virtue, still clinging, in the brothel or on the scaffold, to some rag of honour, the poor jewel of their souls! They may seek to escape, and yet they cannot; it is not alone their privilege and glory, but their doom; they are condemned to some nobility; all their lives long, the desire of good is at their heels, the implacable hunter.

Of all earth's meteors, here at least is the most strange and consoling: That this ennobled lemur, this hair-crowned bubble of the dust, this inheritor of a few years and sorrows, should yet deny himself his rare delights, and add to his frequent pains, and live for an ideal, however misconceived. Nor can we stop with man. A new doctrine, received with screams a little while ago by canting moralists, and still not properly worked into the body of our thoughts, lights us a step farther into the heart of this rough but noble universe. For nowadays the pride of man denies in vain his kinship with the original dust. He stands no longer like a thing apart. Close at his heels we see the dog, prince of another genus: and in him too, we see dumbly testified the same cultus of an unattainable ideal, the same constancy in failure. Does it stop with the dog? We look at our feet where the ground is blackened with the swarming ant;

a creature so small, so far from us in the hierarchy of brutes, that we can scarce trace and scarce comprehend his doings; and here also, in his ordered polities and rigorous justice, we see confessed the law of duty and the fact of individual sin. Does it stop, then, with the ant? Rather this desire of well-doing and this doom of frailty run through all the grades of life: rather is this earth, from the frosty top of Everest to the next margin of the internal fire, one stage of ineffectual virtues and one temple of pious tears and perseverance. The whole creation groaneth and travaileth together. It is the common and the god-like law of life. The browsers, the biters, the barkers, the hairy coats of field and forest, the squirrel in the oak, the thousand-footed creeper in the dust, as they share with us the gift of life, share with us the love of an ideal; strive like us—like us are tempted to grow weary of the struggle—to do well; like us receive at times unmerited refreshment, visitings of support, returns of courage; and are condemned like us to be crucified between that double law of the members and the will. Are they like us, I wonder, in the timid hope of some reward, some sugar with the drug? do they, too, stand aghast at unrewarded virtues, at the sufferings of those whom, in our partiality, we take to be just, and the prosperity of such as in our blindness we call wicked? It may be, and yet God knows what they should look for. Even while they look, even while they repent, the foot of man treads them by thousands in the dust, the yelping hounds burst upon their trail, the bullet speeds, the knives are heating in the den of the vivisectionist; or the dew falls, and the generation of a day is blotted out. For these are creatures compared with whom our weakness is strength, our ignorance wisdom, our brief span eternity.

And as we dwell, we living things, in our isle of terror and under the imminent hand of death, God forbid it should be man the erected, the reasoner, the wise in his own eyes—God forbid it should be man that wearies in well-doing, that despairs of unrewarded effort, or utters the language of complaint. Let it be enough for faith, that the whole creation groans in mortal frailty, strives with unconquerable constancy: surely not all in vain.

MAX BEERBOHM

A Point to Be Remembered by Very Eminent Men

ONE OF the things a man best remembers in later years is the first time he set eyes on some illustrious elder whose achievements had already inflamed him to special reverence. In almost every autobiography you will find recorded the thrill of that first sight. With the thrill, perhaps, there was a slight

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shock. Great men are but life-sized. Most of them, indeed, are rather short. No matter to hero-worshipping youth. The shock did but swell the thrill. It did but enlarge the wonder that this was the man himself, the man who—

I was about to say "who had written those inspired books." You see, the autobiographists are usually people with an innate twist towards writing, people whose heroes, therefore, were men of letters; and thus (especially as I myself have that twist) I am apt to think of literary hero-worship as flourishing more than could any other kind. I must try to be less narrow. At first sight of the Lord Chancellor, doubtless, unforgettable emotions rise in the breast of a young man who has felt from his earliest years the passionate desire to be a lawyer. One whose dream it is to excel in trade will have been profoundly stirred at finding himself face to face with Sir Thomas Lipton. At least, I suppose so. I speak without conviction. I am inclined, after all, to think that there is in the literary temperament a special sensibility, whereby these great envisagements mean more to it than to natures of a more practical kind. So it is primarily to men very eminent in literature that I venture to offer a hint for making those envisagements as great as possible.

The hint will serve only in certain cases. There are various ways in which a young man may chance to see his hero for the first time. "One wintry afternoon, not long after I came to London," the autobiographist will tell you, "I happened to be in Cheyne Walk, bent on I know not what errand, when I saw coming slowly along the pavement an old grey-bearded man. He wore a hat of the kind that was called in those days a 'wide-awake,' and he leaned heavily on a stick which he carried in his right hand. I stood reverently aside to let him pass—the man who had first taught me to see, to feel, to think. Yes, it was Thomas Carlyle; and as he went by looking neither to the right nor to the left, my heart stood still within me. What struck me most in that thought-furrowed face was the eyes. I had never, I have never since, seen a pair of eyes which," etc., etc. This is well enough, and I don't say that the writer has exaggerated the force of the impression he received. I say merely that the impression would have been stronger still if he had seen Carlyle in a room. The open air is not really a good setting for a hero. It is too diffuse. It is too impersonal. Four walls, a ceiling, and a floor—these things are needed to concentrate for the worshipper the vision vouchsafed. Even if the room be a public one—a waiting-room, say, at Clapham Junction—it is very helpful. Far more so if it be a room in a private house, where, besides the vision itself, is thrust on the worshipper the dizzy sense of a personal relationship.

Dip with me, for an example, into some other autobiography . . . Here: "Shortly after I came to London"—it is odd that autobiographists never are born or bred there—"one of the houses I found open to me was that of Mrs. T——, a woman whom (so it seemed to me when in later years I studied Italian) the word *simpatica* described exactly, and who, as the phrase is, 'knew everybody.' Calling on her one Sunday afternoon, I noticed among the guests, as I came in, a short, stalwart man with a grey beard. 'I particularly,' my hostess whispered to me, 'want you to know Mr. Robert Browning.' Everything in the room seemed to swim round me, and I had the sensation of literally sinking through the carpet when presently I found my hand held for a mo-

ment—it was only a moment, but it seemed to me an eternity—by the hand that had written 'Paracelsus.' I had a confused impression of something god-like about the man. His brow was magnificent. But the eyes were what stood out. Not that they were prominent eyes, but they seemed to look you through and through, and had a lustre—there is no other word for it—which," I maintain, would have been far less dazzling out in the street, just as the world-sadness of Carlyle's eyes would have been twice as harrowing in Mrs. T——'s drawing-room.

But even there neither of those pairs of eyes could have made its fullest effect. The most terrifically gratifying way of seeing one's hero and his eyes for the first time is to see them in his own home. Anywhere else, believe me, something of his essence is forfeit. "The rose of roses" loses more or less of its beauty in any vase, and rather more than less there in a nosegay of ordinary little blossoms (to which I rather rudely liken Mrs. T——'s other friends). The supreme flower should be first seen growing from its own Sharonian soil.

The worshipper should have, therefore, a letter of introduction. Failing that, he should write a letter introducing himself—a fervid, an idolatrous letter, not without some excuse for the writing of it: the hero's seventieth birthday, for instance, or a desire for light on some obscure point in one of his earlier works. Heroes are very human, most of them; very easily touched by praise. Some of them, however, are bad at answering letters. The worshipper must not scruple to write repeatedly, if need be. Sooner or later he will be summoned to the presence. This, perhaps, will entail a railway journey. Heroes tend to live a little way out of London. So much the better. The adventure should smack of pilgrimage. Consider also that a house in a London street cannot seem so signally its owner's own as can a house in a village or among fields. The one kind contains him, the other enshrines him, breathes of him. The sight of it, after a walk (there should be a longish walk) from the railway station, strikes great initial chords in the worshipper; and the smaller the house, the greater the chords. The worshipper pauses at the gate of the little front-garden, and when he writes his autobiography those chords will be reverberating yet. "Here it was that the greatest of modern spirits had lived and wrought. Here in the fullness of years he abode. With I know not what tumult of thoughts I passed up the path and rang the bell. A bright-faced parlourmaid showed me into a room on the ground-floor, and said she would tell the master I was here. It was a wonderfully simple room; and something, perhaps the writing-table, told me it was his work-room, the very room from which, in the teeth of the world's neglect and misunderstanding, he had cast his spell over the minds of all thinking men and women. When I had waited a few minutes, the door opened and" after that the deluge of what was felt when the very eminent man came in.

Came in, mark you. That is a vastly important point. Had the very eminent man been there at the outset, the worshipper's first sight of him would have been a very great moment, certainly; but not nearly so great as in fact it was. Very eminent men should always, on these occasions, come in. That is the point I ask them to remember.

Honourably concerned with large high issues, they are not students of personal effect. I must therefore explain to them why it is more impressive to come into a room than to be found there.

Let those of them who have been playgoers cast their minds back to their experience of theatres. Can they recall a single play in which the principal actor was "discovered" sitting or standing on the stage when the curtain rose? No. The actor, by the very nature of his calling, does, must, study personal effect. No playwright would dare to dump down his principal actor at the outset of a play. No sensible playwright would wish to do so. That actor's personality is a party of the playwright's material. Playwriting, it has been well said, is an art of preparing. The principal actor is one of the things for which we must be artfully prepared. Note Shakespeare's carefulness in this matter. In his day, the stage had no curtain, so that even the obscure actor who spoke the first lines (Shakespeare himself sometimes, maybe) was not ignominiously "discovered." But an unprepared entry is no good. The audience must first be wrought on, wrought up. Had Shakespeare been also Burbage, it is possible that he would have been even more painstaking than he was in leading up to the leading man. Assuredly, by far the most tremendous stage entries I ever saw were those of Mr. Wilson Barrett in his later days, the days when he had become his own dramatist. I remember particularly a first night of his at which I happened to be sitting next to a clever but not very successful and rather sardonic old actor. I forget just what great historic or mythic personage Mr. Barrett was to represent, but I know that the earlier scenes of the play resounded with rumours of him—accounts of the great deeds he had done, and of the yet greater deeds that were expected of him. And at length there was a procession: white-bearded priests bearing wands; maidens playing upon the sackbut; guards in full armour; a pell-mell of unofficial citizens ever prancing along the edge of the pageant, huzza-ing and hosanna-ing, mostly looking back over their shoulders and shading their eyes; maidens strewing rose-leaves; and at last the orchestra crashing to a climax in the nick of which my neighbour turned to me and, with an assumption of innocent enthusiasm, whispered, "I shouldn't *wonder* if this were Barrett." I suppose (Mr. Barrett at that instant amply appearing) I gave way to laughter; but this didn't matter; the applause would have drowned a thunderstorm, and lasted for several minutes.

My very eminent reader begins to look uncomfortable. Let him take heart. I do not want him to tamper with the simplicity of his household arrangements. Not even the one bright-faced parlourmaid need precede him with strewn petals. All the necessary preparation will have been done by the bare fact that this is *his* room, and that *he* will presently appear. "But," he may say, with a toss of his grey beard, "I am not going to practise any device whatsoever. I am above devices. I shall be in the room when the young man arrives." I assure him that I am not appealing to his vanity, merely to his good-nature. Let him remember that he too was young once, he too thrilled in harmless hero-worship. Let him not grudge the young man an utmost emotion.

Coming into a room that contains a stranger is a definite performance, a deed of which one is conscious—if one be young, and if that stranger be august.

Not to come in awkwardly, not to make a bad impression is here the paramount concern. The mind of the young man as he comes in is clogged with thoughts of self. It is free of these impediments if he shall have been waiting alone in the room. To be come in to is a thing that needs no art and induces no embarrassment. One's whole attention is focussed on the comer-in. One is the mere spectator, the passive and receptive receiver. And even supposing that the young man could come in under his hero's gaze without a thought of self, his first vision would yet lack the right intensity. A person found in a room, if it be a room strange to the arriver, does not instantly detach himself from his surroundings. He is but a feature of the scene. He does not stand out as against a background, in the grand manner of portraiture, but is fused as in an elaborately rendered "interior." It is all the more essential, therefore, that the worshipper shall not have his first sight of hero and room simultaneously. The room must, as it were, be an anteroom, anon converted into a presence-chamber by the hero's entry. And let not the hero be in any fear that he will bungle his entry. He has but to make it. The effect is automatic. He will stand out by merely coming in. I would but suggest that he must not, be he never so hale and hearty, bounce in. The young man must not be startled. If the mountain had come to Mahomet, it would, we may be sure, have come slowly, that the prophet should have time to realise the grandeur of the miracle. Let the hero remember that *his* coming, too, will seem supernatural to the young man. Let him be framed for an instant or so in the doorway—time for his eyes to produce their peculiar effect. And by the way: if he be a wearer of glasses, he should certainly remove these before coming in. He can put them on again almost immediately. It is the first moment that matters.

As to how long an interval the hero should let elapse between the young man's arrival and his own entry, I cannot offer any very exact advice. I should say, roughly, that in ten minutes the young man would be strung up to the right pitch, and that more than twenty minutes would be too much. It is important that expectancy shall have worked on him to the full, but it is still more important that his mood shall not have been chafed to impatience. The danger of over-long delay is well exemplified in the sad case of young Coventry Patmore. In his old age Patmore wrote to Mr. Gosse a description of a visit he had paid, at the age ef eighteen, to Leigh Hunt; and you will find the letter on page 32, vol. I, of Mr. Basil Champneys' biography of him. The circumstances had been most propitious. The eager and sensitive spirit of the young man, his intense admiration for "The Story of Rimini," the letter of introduction from his father to the venerable poet and friend of greater bygone poets, the long walk to Hammersmith, the small house in a square there—all was classically in order. The poet was at home. The visitor was shown in. . . . "I had," he was destined to tell Mr. Gosse, "waited in the little parlour at least two hours, when the door was opened and a most picturesque gentleman, with hair flowing nearly or quite to his shoulders, a beautiful velvet coat and a Vandyck collar of lace about a foot deep, appeared, rubbing his hands, and smiling ethereally, and saying, without a word of preface or notice of my having waited so long, 'This is a beautiful world, Mr. Patmore!' " The young

man was so taken aback by these words that they "eclipsed all memory of what occurred during the remainder of the visit."

Yet there was nothing wrong about the words themselves. Indeed, to any one with any sense of character and any knowledge of Leigh Hunt, they must seem to have been exactly, exquisitely, inevitably the right words. But they should have been said sooner.

G. K. CHESTERTON

A Defence of Nonsense

THERE are two equal and eternal ways of looking at this twilight world of ours: we may see it as the twilight of evening or the twilight of morning; we may think of anything, down to a fallen acorn, as a descendant or as an ancestor. There are times when we are almost crushed, not so much with the load of the evil as with the load of the goodness of humanity, when we feel that we are nothing but the inheritors of a humiliating splendour. But there are other times when everything seems primitive, when the ancient stars are only sparks blown from a boy's bonfire, when the whole earth seems so young and experimental that even the white hair of the aged, in the fine biblical phrase, is like almond-trees that blossom, like the white hawthorn grown in May. That it is good for a man to realize that he is "the heir of all the ages" is pretty commonly admitted; it is a less popular but equally important point that it is good for him sometimes to realize that he is not only an ancestor, but an ancestor of primal antiquity; it is good for him to wonder whether he is not a hero, and to experience ennobling doubts as to whether he is not a solar myth.

The matters which most thoroughly evoke this sense of the abiding childhood of the world are those which are really fresh, abrupt and inventive in any age; and if we were asked what was the best proof of this adventurous youth in the nineteenth century we should say, with all respect to its portentous sciences and philosophies, that it was to be found in the rhymes of Mr. Edward Lear and in the literature of nonsense. . . .

It is true in a certain sense that some of the greatest writers the world has seen—Aristophanes, Rabelais and Sterne—have written nonsense; but unless we are mistaken, it is in a widely different sense. The nonsense of these men was satiric—that is to say, symbolic; it was a kind of exuberant capering round a discovered truth. There is all the difference in the world between the instinct of satire, which, seeing in the Kaiser's moustaches something typical of him, draws them continually larger and larger; and the instinct of nonsense

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which, for no reason whatever, imagines what those moustaches would look like on the present Archbishop of Canterbury if he grew them in a fit of absence of mind. We incline to think that no age except our own could have understood that the Quangle-Wangle meant absolutely nothing, and the Lands of the Jumblies were absolutely nowhere. We fancy that if the account of the knave's trial in "Alice in Wonderland" had been published in the seventeenth century it would have been bracketed with Bunyan's "Trial of Faithful" as a parody on the State prosecutions of the time. . . .

It is altogether advisedly that we quote chiefly from Mr. Lear's "Nonsense Rhymes." To our mind he is both chronologically and essentially the father of nonsense; we think him superior to Lewis Carroll. In one sense, indeed, Lewis Carroll has a great advantage. We know what Lewis Carroll was in daily life: he was a singularly serious and conventional don, universally respected, but very much of a pedant and something of a Philistine. Thus his strange double life in earth and in dreamland emphasizes the idea that lies at the back of nonsense—the idea of *escape,* of escape into a world where things are not fixed horribly in an eternal appropriateness, where apples grow on pear-trees, and any odd man you meet may have three legs. Lewis Carroll, living one life in which he would have thundered morally against any one who walked on the wrong plot of grass, and another life in which he would cheerfully call the sun green and the moon blue, was, by his very divided nature, his one foot on both worlds, a perfect type of the position of modern nonsense. His Wonderland is a country populated by insane mathematicians. We feel the whole is an escape into a world of masquerade; we feel that if we could pierce their disguises, we might discover that Humpty Dumpty and the March Hare were Professors and Doctors of Divinity enjoying a mental holiday. This sense of escape is certainly less emphatic in Edward Lear, because of the completeness of his citizenship in the world of unreason. We do not know his prosaic biography as we know Lewis Carroll's. We accept him as a purely fabulous figure, on his own description of himself:

> His body is perfectly spherical,
> He weareth a runcible hat.

While Lewis Carroll's Wonderland is purely intellectual, Lear introduces quite another element—the element of the poetical and even emotional. Carroll works by the pure reason, but this is not so strong a contrast; for, after all, mankind in the main has always regarded reason as a bit of a joke. Lear introduces his unmeaning words and his amorphous creatures not with the pomp of reason, but with the romantic prelude of rich hues and haunting rhythms.

> Far and few, far and few,
> Are the lands where the Jumblies live,

is an entirely different type of poetry to that exhibited in "Jabberwocky." Carroll, with a sense of mathematical neatness, makes his whole poem a mosaic of new and mysterious words. But Edward Lear, with more subtle and placid effrontery, is always introducing scraps of his own elvish dialect into the middle

of simple and rational statements, until we are almost stunned into admitting that we know what they mean. There is a genial ring of common sense about such lines as,

> For his aunt Jobiska said "Every one knows
> That a Pobble is better without his toes,"

which is beyond the reach of Carroll. The poet seems so easy on the matter that we are almost driven to pretend that we see his meaning, that we know the peculiar difficulties of a Pobble, that we are as old travellers in the "Gromboolian Plain" as he is.

Our claim that nonsense is a new literature (we might almost say a new sense) would be quite indefensible if nonsense were nothing more than a mere æsthetic fancy. Nothing sublimely artistic has ever arisen out of mere art, any more than anything essentially reasonable has ever arisen out of the pure reason. There must always be a rich moral soil for any great aesthetic growth. The principle of *art for art's sake* is a very good principle if it means that there is a vital distinction between the earth and the tree that has its roots in the earth; but it is a very bad principle if it means that the tree could grow just as well with its roots in the air. Every great literature has always been allegorical—allegorical of some view of the whole universe. The "Iliad" is only great because all life is a battle, the "Odyssey" because all life is a journey, the Book of Job because all life is a riddle. There is one attitude in which we think that all existence is summed up in the word "ghosts"; another, and somewhat better one, in which we think it is summed up in the words "A Midsummer Night's Dream." Even the vulgarest melodrama or detective story can be good if it expresses something of the delight in sinister possibilities—the healthy lust for darkness and terror which may come on us any night in walking down a dark lane. If, therefore, nonsense is really to be the literature of the future, it must have its own version of the Cosmos to offer; the world must not only be the tragic, romantic, and religious, it must be nonsensical also. And here we fancy that nonsense will, in a very unexpected way, come to the aid of the spiritual view of things. Religion has for centuries been trying to make men exult in the "wonders" of creation, but it has forgotten that a thing cannot be completely wonderful so long as it remains sensible. So long as we regard a tree as an obvious thing, naturally and reasonably created for a giraffe to eat, we cannot properly wonder at it. It is when we consider it as a prodigious wave of the living soil sprawling up to the skies for no reason in particular that we take off our hats, to the astonishment of the park-keeper. Everything has in fact another side to it, like the moon, the patroness of nonsense. Viewed from that other side, a bird is a blossom broken loose from its chain of stalk, a man is a quadruped begging on its hind legs, a house a gigantesque hat to cover a man from the sun, a chair an apparatus of four wooden legs for a cripple with only two.

This is the side of things which tends most truly to spiritual wonder. It is significant that in the greatest religious poem existent, the Book of Job, the argument which convinces the infidel is not (as has been represented by the merely rational religionism of the eighteenth century) a picture of the ordered beneficence of the Creation; but, on the contrary, a picture of the huge and

undecipherable unreason of it. "Hast Thou sent the rain upon the desert where no man is?" This simple sense of wonder at the shapes of things, and at their exuberant independence of our intellectual standards and our trivial definitions, is the basis of spirituality as it is the basis of nonsense. Nonsense and faith (strange as the conjunction may seem) are the two supreme symbolic assertions of the truth that to draw out the soul of things with a syllogism is as impossible as to draw out Leviathan with a hook. The well-meaning person who, by merely studying the logical side of things, has decided that "faith is nonsense," does not know how truly he speaks; later it may come back to him in the form that nonsense is faith.

ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT

The Archer-Shee Case

FROM time to time, since the turn of the century, there has issued from the press of a publishing house in London and Edinburgh a series of volumes called the *Notable British Trials,* each volume dedicated to some case in the criminal annals of England or Scotland. Each would contain not only the testimony of witnesses, the photographs of exhibits, the arguments of counsel, the dicta from the bench, and the verdict of the jury, but also an introductory essay nicely calculated to enthrall those readers who collect such instances of human violence, much as other madmen collect coins or autographs or stamps.

The cases thus made available range all the way from the trials of the mutineers aboard the *Bounty* to the libel action which, in the twilight of the Victorian era, grew out of a charge of cheating during a card game at a place called Tranby Croft, a gaudy lawsuit which agitated the entire Empire because it dragged into the witness box no less a personage, a bit ruffled and breathing heavily, than H.R.H. the Prince of Wales, who was later to rule and consolidate that empire as Edward VII. But for the most part, of course, the cases thus edited have had their origin in murder most foul, and they constitute not only an indispensable part of every law library but a tempting pastime to all of us whose telltale interest in poison and throat-cutting is revealed in no other aspect of our humdrum, blameless lives.

Now, as an avid subscriber to the series, I have long been both exasperated and puzzled by the fact that it contained no transcript of that trial which, more and more in recent years, has taken definite shape in my own mind as one of the most notable and certainly the most British of them all. Nowhere in England or America is there available in any library a record of the Archer-Shee case. The student eager to master its details must depend on such scattered odds and ends as he can dredge up from contemporary memoirs and

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from the woefully incomplete reports in newspaper files which already moulder to dust at the touch.

But within recent months, by a series of curious chances too fantastic to have been foreseen, a complete private record of the entire case has come into my possession, and it is my present plan, before another year has passed, to put it into print for the use of anyone who needs it as a light or craves it as a tonic. For the Archer-Shee case is a short, sharp, illuminating chapter in the long history of human liberty, and a study of it might, it seems to me, stiffen the purpose of all those who in our own day are freshly resolved that that liberty shall not perish from the earth.

In the fall of 1908, Mr. Martin Archer-Shee, a bank manager in Liverpool, received word, through the commandant of the Royal Naval College at Osborne, that the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty had decided to dismiss his thirteen-year-old son George, who had been proudly entered as a cadet only a few months before. It seems that a five-shilling postal order had been stolen from the locker of one of the boys—stolen, forged, and cashed—and, after a sifting of all the available evidence, the authorities felt unable to escape the conclusion that young Archer-Shee was the culprit. Out of such damaged and unpromising material the Admiralty could scarcely be expected to fashion an officer for His Majesty's Navy. "My Lords deeply regret," the letter went on to say, "that they must therefore request you to withdraw your son from the College." This devastating and puzzling news brought the family hurrying to Osborne. Was it true? No, Father. Then why did the authorities accuse him? What had made them think him guilty? The bewildered boy had no idea. "Well," said the father in effect, "we'll have to see about this," little guessing then, as he was to learn through many a bitter and discouraging month, that that would be easier said than done.

What had made them think the boy a thief? The offish captain could only refer him to the Admiralty, and the Lords of the Admiralty—by not answering letters, evading direct questions, and all the familiar technique of bureaucratic delay—retired behind the tradition that the Navy must be the sole judge of material suitable for the making of a British officer. If once they allowed their dismissal of a cadet to be reviewed by an inevitably outraged family, they would be establishing a costly and regrettable precedent.

What the elder Archer-Shee found blocking the path was no personal devil, no vindictive enemy of his son, no malignant spirit. But he was faced with an opponent as maddening, as cruel, and as destructive. He was entering the lists against the massive, complacent inertia of a government department which is not used to being questioned and does not like to be bothered. He was girding his loins for the kind of combat that takes all the courage and patience and will power a man can summon to his aid. He was challenging a bureaucracy to battle.

At a dozen points in the ensuing struggle, in which he was backed up every day by his first-born, who was a Major and an M.P. and a D.S.O., a less resolute fighter might have been willing to give up, and one of smaller means would have had to. After all, the boy's former teachers and classmates at Stonyhurst, the Catholic college where he was prepared for Osborne, had welcomed

him back with open arms, and, as allusions to the episode began to find their way into print, there were plenty of comfortable old men in clubs who opined loudly that this man Archer-Shee was making a bloody nuisance of himself. But you may also be sure that there were those among the neighbors who implied by their manner that the Navy must know what it was doing, that where there was so much smoke there must be some fire, that if the whole story could be told, and so forth and so forth. I think the father knew in his heart, as surely as anyone can know anything in this world, that his son was innocent. While there was a breath left in his body and a pound in his bank account, he could not let the youngster go out into the world with that stain on his name. He would not give up. Probably he was strengthened by his memory of how bitterly his little boy had wept on the day they took him away from Osborne. The father lived—by no more than a few months—to see the fight through.

The first great step was the retaining of Sir Edward Carson, then at the zenith of his incomparable reputation as an advocate. In his day, Carson was to hold high office—Attorney-General, Solicitor-General—to assume political leadership in the Ulster crisis—leader of the Irish Unionists in the House—to be rewarded with a peerage. It was part of the manifold irony of that crowded and stormy life, which ended in his death at eighty-one in 1935, that probably he will be longest remembered because of that hour of merciless cross-examination, in a libel suit at the Old Bailey, which brought down in ruins the towering and shaky edifice known as Oscar Wilde. But some there are who, when all else is forgotten, will rather hold Carson in highest honor for the good turn he once did to a small boy in trouble. He put all his tremendous power and implacable persistence and passionate hatred of tyranny at the service of Master Archer-Shee.

It was only after he had heard the boy's own story (and raked him with such a bracketing fire of questions as he was famous for directing against a witness) that he agreed to take the case at all. From that interview he rose, saying in effect, "This boy did not steal that postal order. Now, let's get at the facts."

This took a bit of doing. It was the nub of the difficulty that the small embryo officer had, by becoming a cadet, lost the rights of an ordinary citizen without yet reaching that status which would have entitled him to a court-martial. To be sure, the Admiralty by this time had resentfully bestirred itself to make several supplementary inquiries, but these were all *ex parte* proceedings, with the boy unrepresented by counsel, the witnesses unsubjected to the often clarifying fire of cross-examination. Even when the badgered authorities went so far as to submit their findings to the Judge Advocate General for review, they still kept the Archer-Shees cooling their heels in the anteroom.

I am commanded by the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to acknowledge receipt of your letter relative to the case of George Archer-Shee, and my Lords desire me to say that the further enquiry is not one at which a representative of your side in the sense in which you use the word would be appropriate.

Well, even at the horrid risk of following a procedure which might be described as "inappropriate," Carson was determined to get the case into court, to make those witnesses tell their story not to a biased and perhaps comatose representative of the Admiralty but to a jury of ordinary men—above all, to tell it with the public listening. Resisting him in this was Sir Rufus Isaacs, later to become, as Lord Reading, Chief Justice of England, but then—in 1909 and 1910, this was—Solicitor-General and, unbecoming as was the posture into which it threw him, mysteriously compelled by professional tradition to defend the Admiralty's action at every step.

How to get the case into court? Carson finally had recourse to an antique and long-neglected device known as the Petition of Right. First he had to establish the notion that there had been a violation of contract—a failure of the Crown to keep its part of the bargain implied when, at some considerable expense to his folks and with a binding agreement on his own part to serve as an officer in the Navy once he had been trained for the job, the boy matriculated. But, contract or no contract, a subject may sue the King only under certain circumstances. If he approach the throne with a Petition of Right and the King consent to write across it "Let right be done," His Majesty can, in that instance and on that issue, be sued like any commoner.

Instead of welcoming such a course as the quickest way of settling the original controversy and even of finding out what really had happened to that fateful postal order, the Admiralty, perhaps from sheer force of habit, resorted to legal technicalities as a means of delay. Indeed, it was only the human impatience of the justices, to whom a demurrer was carried on appeal, that finally cut through the red tape. They would eventually have to decide whether or not a Petition of Right was the suitable remedy, but in the meantime, they asked, why not let them have the facts? Why not, indeed? It was all Carson was contending for. It was all the Archer-Shees had ever asked for. Later in the House of Commons, where he was to hear the intervention of the demurrer denounced as a tragic error, Sir Rufus took considerable credit to himself for having bowed to this call for the facts, but he was making a virtue of something that had been very like necessity.

Anyway, the trial was ordered. So at long last, on a hot day in July 1910—nearly two years after the postal order was stolen and too late for any hope of finding out who really had stolen it—the case came before a jury in the King's Bench Division, and the witnesses whose stories in the first place had convinced the Osborne authorities that young Archer-Shee was a thief must, with Sir Rufus vigilant to protect them, submit themselves to cross-examination by the most alarming advocate of the English bar.

By this time the case had ceased to be a local squabble, reported as a matter of professional interest in various service journals but showing up in the ordinary newspapers only in an occasional paragraph. Now it was being treated by the press, column after column, as a *cause célèbre,* and all the Empire was following it with bated breath. Carson was on his feet in open court speaking for the Suppliant:

His son was branded as a thief and as a forger, a boy thirteen years old was labeled and ticketed, and has been since labeled and ticketed for all his future life,

as a thief and a forger, and in such investigation as led to that disastrous result, neither his father nor any friend was ever there to hear what was said against a boy of thirteen, who by that one letter, and by that one determination was absolutely deprived of the possibility of any future career either in His Majesty's Service, or indeed in any other Service. Gentlemen, I protest against the injustice to a little boy, a child thirteen years of age, without communication with his parents, without his case ever being put, or an opportunity of its ever being put forward by those on his behalf—I protest against that boy at that early stage, a boy of that character, being branded for the rest of his life by that one act, an irretrievable act that I venture to think could never be got over. That little boy from that day, and from the day that he was first charged, up to this moment, whether it was in the ordeal of being called in before his Commander and his Captain, or whether it was under the softer influences of the persuasion of his own loving parents, has never faltered in the statement that he is an innocent boy.

But these reverberant words had overtones which all Englishmen could hear. Now the case was being followed with painful attention by plain men and women slowly come to the realization that here was no minor rumpus over the discipline and punctilio of the service, indeed no mere matter of a five-shilling theft and a youngster's reputation, but a microcosm in which was summed up all the long history of British liberty. Here in the small visible compass of one boy's fate was the entire issue of the inviolable sovereignty of the individual.

The Archer-Shees had as their advantageous starting point the inherent improbability of the boy's guilt. There seemed no good reason why he *should* steal five shillings when he was in ample funds on which he could lay his hands at will by the simple process of writing a chit. But if, for good measure or out of sheer deviltry, he *had* stolen his classmate's postal order, it seemed odd that instead of cashing it furtively he would not only openly get permission to go to the post office, which was out of bounds, but first loiter about for some time in an effort to get a schoolmate to go along with him for company. But this inherent improbability, so visible from this distance, quite escaped the attention of the college authorities who, by the sheer momentum of prosecution, had hastily reached their own conclusion by another route.

When young Terence Back dolefully reported to the Cadet Gunner that the postal order which had arrived that very morning as a present from some doting relative was missing from his locker, the Chief Petty Officer at once telephoned the post office to find out if it had already been cashed. It had. Oh!

There followed a rush of officialdom to the post office and much questioning of the chief clerk, Miss Anna Clara Tucker, first there and later at the college by Commander Cotton, the officer in charge of the investigation. Now, Miss Tucker, had there been any cadets at the post office that day? Yes, two—one to buy a 15*s.* 6*d.* postal order, the other to buy two totaling 14*s.* 9*d.* And was it one of them who had cashed the stolen order? Yes, it was. Would the postmistress be able to pick him out? No. They all looked so alike, in their uniforms, that she wouldn't know one from the other. But this she could tell, this she *did* remember—the stolen order was cashed by the boy who had bought the postal order for fifteen and six. And which one was that? Well, her

records could answer that question. It was Cadet Archer-Shee. (He had needed that order, by the way, to send for a model engine on which his heart was set, and to purchase the order he had that morning drawn sixteen shillings from his funds on deposit with the Chief Petty Officer, a sum which would not only buy the order but pay for the necessary postage and leave in his pocket some small change for emergencies.)

Thus to Commander Cotton—Richard Greville Arthur Wellington Stapleton Cotton, who, oddly enough, was later to command H.M.S. *Terrible*—thus to Commander Cotton, who reported accordingly to the Captain, and he, through Portsmouth, to the Admiralty, it seemed satisfactorily evident that the postmistress was ineluctably identifying Archer-Shee as the thief, or at least as the villain who had converted the stolen goods into cash.

On her testimony the authorities acted—innocently, if you like, and not without later taking the precaution to support it by the dubious opinion of a handwriting expert. But so muddle-headed was this investigation, and such is the momentum of prosecution the world around, that the very first *précis* of that testimony filed with the Admiralty was careful to omit, as perhaps weakening the evidence against the boy—so swiftly do departmental investigators change from men seeking the truth into men trying to prove a hasty conclusion—was careful to omit the crucial fact that at the college next morning, when six or seven of the cadets were herded past her for inspection, the postmistress had been unable, either by the look of his face or by the sound of his voice, to pick out Archer-Shee. This failure became patently crucial when, two years later on that sweltering July day, Carson, with artfully deceptive gentleness, took over Miss Tucker for cross-examination.

The cashing of the stolen order and the issuing of the order for fifteen and six had taken place at the same time? Well, one transaction after the other. Her records showed that? No, but she remembered. The two took place within what space of time? Well, there might have been interruptions. After all, she was in sole charge of the office at the time? Yes. There was the telephone to answer, telegrams to take down as they came over the wire? Yes, and the mail to sort. These matters often took her away from the window? Yes. Even into the back room? Sometimes. So sometimes, if one cadet should go away from the window and another step into his place during any one of the interruptions, she might not notice the exchange? That was true. And, since they all looked alike to her, one cadet in this very instance *could* have taken the place of another without her realizing, when she returned to the window, that she had not been dealing throughout with the same boy? Possibly. So that now she couldn't say it was Archer-Shee who had cashed the stolen order? She had never said that exactly. Nor could she even be sure, now that she came to think of it, that the stolen order had, in fact, been cashed by the same cadet who bought the order for fifteen and six? Not absolutely sure. That, in effect—here oversimplified in condensation, but in effect—was her testimony.

Well, there it was—a gap in her story wide enough to drive a coach through. As soon as he saw it—it would strike a mere onlooking layman that the Admiralty might well have asked these same questions two years before—Sir

Rufus knew the jig was up. Wherefore, when court opened on the fourth day, he was soon on his feet announcing that he no longer wished to proceed with any question of fact. It takes no great feat of imagination to guess at the breathlessness in that courtroom as the Solicitor-General came to the point:

> As a result of the evidence that has been given during the trial that has been going on now for some days, and the investigation that has taken place, I say now, on behalf of the Admiralty, that I accept the statement of George Archer-Shee that he did not write the name on the postal order, and did not cash it, and consequently that he is innocent of the charge. I say further, in order that there may be no misapprehension about it, that I make that statement without any reserve of any description, intending that it shall be a complete justification of the statement of the boy and the evidence he has given before the Court.

In return—perhaps a fair exchange haggled for behind the scenes—Carson went on record as holding the belief that the responsible persons at Osborne and at the Admiralty had acted in good faith and that not even the disastrous Miss Tucker had been wanting in honesty. He had merely sought to show that she was mistaken.

Then, while the jury swarmed out of the box to shake hands with Carson and with the boy's father, the exhausted advocate turned to congratulate the boy himself, only to find that he wasn't even in court. Indeed, the case was over and court had adjourned before he got the news. When, blushing and grinning from ear to ear and falling all over himself, he went to Carson's room in the Law Courts to thank him, the great advocate ventured to ask how in his hour of triumph the boy had happened to be missing. Well, sir, he got up late. It seems he went to the theater the night before and so had overslept. Overslept! For weeks Carson himself had hardly been able to get any sleep. Overslept! Good God! Hadn't he even been anxious? Oh, no, sir. He had known all along that once the case got into court the truth would come out. Carson mopped his brow. Then he laughed. Perhaps that *was* the best way to take such things.

Thereafter, of course, the boy's was not the only attention that wandered. All England may have been watching, but, after all, other current topics were not without their elements of public interest. For one thing, a new King was on the throne. The Edward who had written "Let right be done" across the Archer-Shee petition now lay in his tomb at Windsor, and his son George was only just beginning the reign which was to prove so unforeseeably eventful. Then, even as the case came to an end, another was ready to overshadow it. Indeed, on the very day when, on behalf of the Admiralty, Sir Rufus acknowledged the boy's innocence, Inspector Dew arrived in Quebec to wait for the incoming *Montrose* and arrest two of her passengers, a fugitive medico named Crippen and his dream-girl, Ethel Le Neve. Even so, thanks to the sounding board known as the House of Commons, neither the public nor the Admiralty was allowed to forget the Archer-Shee case. Indeed, news of its conclusion had hardly reached the House when several members were on their feet giving notice—due notice that England would expect some specific assurance that the lesson had been learned, that never again would a boy be thus cavalierly dismissed from Osborne without notice to his folks or a chance for adequate defense.

In this instance, of course, it was too late for anything but apology and indemnification. "This," one speaker said with apparently unconscious humor, "could be left to the generosity of the Admiralty." Another speaker—the honorable member for the Universities of Glasgow and Aberdeen—put it this way: "I am quite sure the Admiralty will do all in their power to redress the very terrible and almost irreparable wrong done to the boy, on such a wrong being brought to their knowledge." But this confidence proved to be naive. Month followed month with no word of apology, no word even of regret, and, as for indemnification, no offer to pay more than a fraction of what the boy's father had already spent in his defense. Indeed, in the fitful discussion on this point, the Admiralty had even introduced the pretty suggestion that the nipping of young Archer-Shee's naval career in the bud had not been so very injurious, because he was not a promising student anyway. It looks, at this distance, like a bad case of bureaucratic sulks.

So in March and April of the following year the attack was renewed. By the quaint but familiar device of moving that the salary of the First Lord of the Admiralty (Mr. Reginald McKenna) be reduced by one hundred pounds, the honorable member for Kingston (Mr. Cave) started the ball rolling. Although the honorable member for Leicester, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, was so far out of key as to call the motion an attempt to blackmail the Treasury (cries of "Shame! Shame!"), the resulting debate went to the heart of the matter and put in memorable and satisfying words just what many decent and inarticulate men had been wanting to have said about the case all along.

The relative passages in *Hansard* make good reading to this day, because all those who moved to the attack spoke as if nothing in the world could matter more than the question of justice to one small unimportant boy. The wretched legalism of the Admiralty's evasions received its just meed of contempt, with the wits of Sir Rufus Isaacs matched (and a bit more) by that same F. E. Smith who was later to become Lord Birkenhead and who, by the way, was at the time fresh from the defense of Ethel Le Neve at the Old Bailey. These members, together with Lord Charles Beresford and others, firmly jockeyed the unhappy First Lord into the position where he not only gave assurance that thereafter no boy at Osborne would ever be so dealt with—this he had come prepared to do—but went on record, at long reluctant last, as expressing in this case his unqualified regrets. He even consented to pay to the boy's father whatever sum a committee of three (including Carson himself) should deem proper. This ended in a payment of £7120, and with that payment the case may be said to have come to an end.

The case—but not the story. That has an epilogue. The characters? Most of them are gone. I don't know whatever became of poor Miss Tucker, but the elder Archer-Shee is gone, and Isaacs and Carson. Even Osborne is gone—Osborne where Victoria walked with Albert and one day plucked the primroses for Disraeli. At least its Naval College has gone out of existence, swallowed up in Dartmouth.

And the boy himself? Well, when it came to him, the author of the epilogue dipped his pen in irony. To say that much is tantamount to a synopsis. If you will remember that the boy was thirteen when they threw him out of Osborne

and fifteen when his good name was re-established, you will realize that when the Great War began he was old enough to die for King and Country. And did he? Of course. As a soldier, mind you. The lost two years had rather discouraged his ambitions with regard to the Navy. August 1914 found him in America, working in the Wall Street firm of Fisk & Robinson. Somehow he managed to get back to England, join up with the Second Battalion of the South Staffordshire Regiment, win a commission as Second Lieutenant, and get over to France in time to be killed—at Ypres—in the first October of the War.

So that is the story of Archer-Shee, whose years in the land, all told, were nineteen. To me his has always been a deeply moving story, and more and more, as the years have gone by, a significant one. Indeed, I should like to go up and down our own land telling it to young people not yet born when Archer-Shee kept his rendezvous with death. You see, I know no easier way of saying something that is much on my mind. For this can be said about the Archer-Shee case: that it could not happen in any totalitarian state. It is so peculiarly English, this story of a whole people getting worked up about a little matter of principle; above all, the story of the foremost men of the land taking up the cudgels—taking up the cudgels against the state, mind you—because a youngster had been unfairly treated. It would have been difficult to imagine it in the Germany of Bismarck and the Wilhelms. It is impossible to imagine it in the Germany of Adolf Hitler.

E. B. WHITE

Movies

THERE is no movie house in this town so I don't get to many pictures; but I keep in touch with Olympus by reading *Motion Picture* magazine and the daily papers. On the whole this is a higher type of entertainment than seeing the films—although I miss Tarzan and Lamour, and I am not getting ahead very fast with my study of trees in the movies, a work I have been engaged in for some years.

The newspapers of course keep one informed of the marriages, births, deaths, separations, divorces, and salaries of the stars. If Gable weds Lombard, I know about it. When Tone and Crawford reach the end of the road, I am informed. Separations and divorces are scented with the same delicate orange blossoms as marriages and elopements, the same romantic good fellowship. One of the most interesting accomplishments of the film community, it seems to me, is that it has made real for America the exquisite beauty of incompatibility. Divorce among the gods possesses the sweet, holy sadness which has long been associated with marriage among the mortals. There is something infinitely tender about the inability of an actor to get along with an actress.

MOVIES From *One Man's Meat* by E. B. White. Copyright, 1939, by E. B. White. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Brothers, publishers.

When it is all over, and the decree is final, the two are even more attentive toward each other, are seen oftener together, than ever before. It was a writer in *Motion Picture* who expressed the whole thing most eloquently. He was telling the inside story of the marriage of Hedy Lamarr and Gene Markey, a union which, however felicitous in other respects, was unfortunately not solemnized until Mr. Markey's union and disunion with Joan Bennett, described as "Hollywood's perfect marriage," and until after the gift (to Miss Lamarr) of a five-thousand-dollar swimming pool by Mr. Reginald Gardiner, described simply as a five-thousand-dollar swimming pool. The writer is explaining how Mr. Markey, after being given his freedom by Miss Bennett, is again seen around Hollywood in the company of glamorous stars, but not really caring for them half so much as he still cared for his ex-wife. "In the finest Hollywood tradition," says the journalist, "they remain affectionate friends."

This tradition of post-marital affection, which is discernible everywhere, is having its effect, I do not doubt, on the culture of our land. Occasionally a divorce-court judge is heard pouting about it, but the girls and boys of America eat it up. Marriage is becoming just a sort of stepping-stone to the idyllic life which lies ahead for the graduates of the course; the wedding march is just a prelude to the larger music of the spirit which accompanies the communion between ex-spouses.

There is something else which Hollywood has done and is doing. By its adherence, over so long a period of years, to a standard of living well in excess of anything known in the lives of its audience, it has at last communicated to its audience a feeling of actually living in this dream world and a conviction that the standards of this world are the norm. I noticed this phenomenon recently when I was watching a picture called "Dark Victory."

In this film a wealthy young girl named Judith, played by Miss Bette Davis, on discovering that she has only a few months to live, gives up her swank horsey existence on Long Island and goes to dwell peacefully in Vermont with her newly acquired husband, who is referred to as an "eminent doctor." This Vermont home is certainly a lovely place—nicely located and well kept up. But in one scene, when Judith was talking about how happy the new life was making her, she remarked, in approximately these words: "Why do people clutter up their lives with horses and things? There (in Long Island) I had everything and was miserable. Here I have nothing and am happy."

It is this jibe of hers about having "nothing" which I propose to explore. Remember, she was in a remodeled New England farmhouse. At the moment of making the remark she was standing in a kitchen which had been modernized at considerable expense. It contained a large new electric refrigerator worth somewhere around two hundred and fifty dollars, or maybe three hundred. It also had an enamelled stove and (I think) a Monel metal sink. These things run into money, as anybody knows who has ever tried it. With her in the kitchen were two domestic servants and two English setters. One of the maids was a sort of housekeeper, the other was a cook. I should guess that the housekeeper was pulling down around eighty dollars a month; and she was earning every penny of it, too, for in another scene Judith came plunging in with a

tray of nicely prepared food and gave the order to throw it away because she had absentmindedly taken it into the doctor's laboratory and exposed it to germs. That sort of rough and tumble living is tough on housekeepers and they put up with it only if well paid.

All right, we'll say eighty a month for her. The cook was probably getting sixty-five.

Now let's look at the rest of this set-up which Miss Judith tossed off as "nothing." The dwelling was a large Colonial farmhouse which had been restored to make it modern and comfortable. With Vermont the way it is today, full of writers and artists, such houses have quite a market value. I would say that the taxes on the house and land might come to around two or three hundred dollars a year. The insurance would be another two hundred. There would probably be a ninety-dollar annual interest charge on a fifteen-hundred-dollar mortgage which the eminent doctor was carrying either because he had to or because somebody had once told him that a house was more saleable if it had a small mortgage on it.

As for food, heat, light, repairs, etc., I have jotted them down, and on an annual basis they might easily add up to something like this, judging from the glimpses I had of the house, grounds, servants, and general tenor of life there:

Taxes	$ 250.00
Insurance	200.00
Interest	90.00
Heat (15 tons stove and nut mixed @ $16 per ton)	240.00
Light and power (water pump)	184.00
Telephone and telegraph	116.00
Housekeeper	960.00
Cook	780.00
Gardener-chauffeur	1,100.00
Repairs	210.00
Seeds, fertilizer, grain	200.00
Registration on two motor cars, taxes, insurance	120.00
Household furnishings	100.00
Movies, books, medical journals, etc.	200.00
Charity	150.00
Miscellaneous	500.00
Postage, stationery	362.00
Life insurance	350.00
Travel	400.00
Food	1,900.00
Lumber, hardware	60.00
Liquor	150.00
Personal taxes	1,500.00
Veterinary	10.00
Meat, biscuits for two setters	45.00
Laundry, dry cleaning	470.00
Gas and oil	346.00
Clothes	700.00
Total	$11,693.00

I have worked out the above budget carefully and believe it to be conservative and in keeping with what I know of New England property and New England standards in households where there are three in help. So it would seem fairly safe to say that this little establishment where Miss Judith was finding such peace in having "nothing" was costing somebody (probably her eminent doctor) somewhere between eleven and twelve thousand dollars a year.

The interesting and really absorbing thing, to my mind, is that to the members of the audience, sitting there with me in the dark, suffering with Judith through her ill health and sharing her joy in her "simple" surroundings—to them the illusion was perfect: this twelve-thousand-dollar country estate for a brief cinematic moment *was* indeed nothing. It represented the ultimate simplicity, the absolute economic rock bottom. It is disturbing to realize that even after we have been reduced to Hollywood's low, we are still rolling in the sort of luxury which eventually destroyed Rome.

MARGARET MEAD

Sex and Achievement

IN PEACE-TIME the small boy's heroes, whether his own father keeps a grocery store or is the president of a bank, are policemen, firemen, flyers, cowboys, and baseball-players, men who act out in their real life rôles the springing active motor impulses of the small boy's body. His mother alternates between letting him jump on the sofa because the books say children shouldn't be restricted and telling him not to break things. And in her voice, in the voice of the radio announcer who introduces his favourite radio program, in the teacher's voice at school, in the voices of every one around him, the little boy who wants to be a policeman or a baseball-player hears that he will grow up to accept some responsible money-making rôle. He learns that if he wants to argue for choosing the police force or professional baseball, he will have to argue not that this is what he wants to do, but that it is something in which he can make good money and advance. He learns that unless he has a job and a car and a wife and kids, he will never be able to respect himself—because his own self-approval, like his mother's now, will be withdrawn, leaving him lonely and unsatisfied. Life is a job at which he can succeed if he tries. All desirable qualities can be acquired if he pays attention to his looks, his skills, his relation to people. And he also learns that the reward of success is love and approval, light in his mother's eyes, bread and jam and an ice-box with no rules about raiding it, relief and pleasure in his father's

SEX AND ACHIEVEMENT From *Male and Female A Study of the Sexes in a Changing World* by Margaret Mead. Copyright, 1949, by Margaret Mead. Reprinted by permission of William Morrow and Company, Inc.

eyes. Here is no mother who thrills to his war-whoop in an Indian suit—although she bought him an Indian suit because children should have some imaginative play, or because all the other children have them—but rather she thrills to his first good grades, his first earned money. Here is no father whose awareness of his own masculinity makes him feel his small masculine son as a threat and a challenge. The father has long since become a parent, and the success of his son is part of his success as a proper husband and father. He is often, in fact, over-anxious and over-protective towards his son. So, even in wealthy middle-class suburbs, little American boys still have paper routes, and Chief Justices and presidents of companies take those paper routes when their sons are ill in bed so that the boys will not default in their business obligations. In fact, the rewards are so great for displaying to admiring and helpful parents those qualities of initiative, independence, and assertiveness in the workaday world that will ensure success later that even though there is fear of failure, the American child grows up to be exceedingly optimistic, exceedingly responsive to praise, recognition, and acclaim from others. Failure is stylized as a temporary set-back, obstacles are made to be overcome, only a sissy takes defeat as anything but a stimulus to trying harder. "The difficult we do at once, the impossible takes a little longer."

The chief trap for the boy in this pattern of maturation lies in the conditional nature of the whole process. On the one hand he can always win applause by taking the next step, moving from the third team to the second team, from the position of the worst in the class to the position of the next worst, by gaining a pound or growing an inch; the applause is hearty and ungrudging from parents who feel they owe their children every chance to succeed and have a right to take their success as a full repayment for parental sacrifice. On the other hand, none of this acceptance and this applause is final. If the next step up is not taken, then the approval becomes only a remembered happiness, now withdrawn, which must be worked for again. Mother loves you *if* you succeed; Father is grinning and proud if you succeed, something a little ruefully comforting when you fail. But at no time in childhood, often at no time in one's whole life, is it possible to arrive, to win love and praise that are not strictly contemporary and conditional and which can never be taken away from one. This is the background of those American attitudes—failure to admit immigrants, ungenerous state laws about welfare settlement for indigent families—that contrast so sharply with American willingness to help others, to give freely of time and goods and services. It is not that Americans learn, as some peoples do, that the supply of goods is limited and so one man's gain is another man's loss. They rather learn that the number of prizes in the race, the number of A's in the class, are more limited than is the number of contestants. If there are more contestants, the endless race for the A's, for the prizes, becomes that much harder. It is not that the boy learns interest in defeating others, but that he fervently hopes he can beat enough others to be counted a success; the others are incidental, not so much rivals to be worsted as entrants to be outdistanced. His upbringing permits him no admitted glee in open battle, and later, in a competitive world that demands harsh and sometimes savage competition, he takes little pleasure in the game itself. He accepts the behest that he must con-

tinue and continue and continue to succeed, to advance, to keep his place among others. The methods he has to use are just part of it, to be laid aside in a compensatory good-fellowship that is often mixed right into the distasteful competitive relationships. In those relationships between men when the competition can be laid aside altogether, a delicious game of pretended aggression can be played endlessly, with thrust and counter-thrust, harmless and healing.

But the rôle of sisters and girls and wives is a very complex one in this world in which the boy's whole springing masculinity is diverted into the game of success. Because it is the mother's and not the father's voice that gives the principal early approval and disapproval, the nagging voice of conscience is feminine in both sexes—that voice which says, "You are not being the success you ought to be." The man who feels he is failing is a man who is angry with women, and angry with those values for which women stand—social values, social-security legislation, "sentimental schoolmarmish goodness." And it is not only the man who is failing who finds himself angry with women, but also the man who is paying too high a price for his success, and so reiterates over and over how hard he works, how self-made he is, how the modern world is making it too soft for people. The American who is successful without feeling he has paid too high a price will be at ease with himself and his conscience, and give generously to the Community Chest or the union relief fund, send food to starving Europeans, vote for social legislation, even sit on a board to see that his wife's pet charity gets what it needs. But at any moment this easy good nature may shift to an angry assertiveness against the "do-gooders," those who have set his feet on a path he cannot bear, that path which in ruthless competitiveness seems a long way from the task of maintaining a hospital, or raising the salaries of school-teachers, to which he is now asked to give help. Any great yielding to the demands of civic virtue is suspect; a man to be a man must go out to prove he is a man, and then, and only then, can he leave a fortune to the orphans' home. The American ideal career is the poor boy who learned his prayers at his mother's knee, worked his way up against fearful odds, used without womanish softness and without enjoyment the methods appropriate to such a battle, and in the end, a millionaire, leaves his money—not to his children to ruin their characters by denying them a gradient on which at least some sort of success is possible, but—to good works, giving to the town or to the nation schools, libraries, art galleries, and orphan asylums. These are the things his mother told him that he ought to respect while he himself puts his whole effort into being a success. Good women made him what he is, and in the end they get the proceeds for their own ends, and in between he worked hard being the man they told him he ought to want to be. So as the mother's love has become more and more conditional upon success, the mother and the schoolteacher have tended to merge in the child's mind, with the teacher taking on some of the aspects of the bad mother that were once given to the stepmother in the fairy-tales of another age.

The sister in America has a very special rôle in the life of the American boy, geared as he is to succeed on a scale in which he is measured by his age and size against others of like age and size, and rewarded by women rather than by men. The sister becomes a double rival as she grows faster than he, does

her lessons more dutifully, gets into fewer scrapes, learns the woman-taught lessons more easily. Characteristically, the sister in America is the big sister, whose side the parents always take, who is so slick she always wins, who gets away with murder—that is, gets the same rewards with less effort—and the day-dream sister is the little sister, over whom one can win without effort. The habit of American mothers of egging their children on by invidious or challenging comparisons is at its most aggravated in the case of sister, girl-cousin, girl next door. The boy is taught both that he ought to be able to beat her record, as he is a boy, and that it is fair to compare their achievements on the same scale at the same age, because they both ride bicycles or sleep alone on the third floor, or are in the fast-moving section of the fourth grade. They are treated as alike whenever it suits the rest of the world, and as unlike whenever that provides a better goad. If a boy cries, he is scolded more than a girl who doesn't cry; when she outstrips him, he is told it is even worse than if he had been outstripped by a boy, and yet she may be almost twice his size and he has also been told not to hit her because she is a girl. Side by side they sit in the nursery to be compared on table-manners, side by side they sit in school to be compared on neatness and punctuality as well as reading and writing and arithmetic. She sits and challenges him, and beats him at least half the time and often more than half, until high school provides the blessed relief of science and shop, where girls aren't encouraged to succeed any longer. And as he sits and is beaten—at least half the time—he learns both that girls can do most of the things that boys can do for which rewards are meted out and that it is intolerable that they should, because it has been made humiliating.

This is expressed in later life in the relatively high accessibility of most occupations to women, but also in the bitter fight that is put up, even in those fields where women are the best trained, as in some government services, against giving women jobs that carry high salaries or administrative powers over people—the two most usual ways in which men demonstrate their success. Many societies have educated their male children on the simple device of teaching them not to be women, but there is an inevitable loss in such an education, for it teaches a man to fear that he will lose what he has, and to be forever somewhat haunted by this fear. But when in addition to learning that at all costs he must not be a girl, he is continually forced to compete with girls at the very age when girls mature faster than boys, and on women-set tasks to which girls take more easily, a sharper ambivalence is established. American men have to use at least part of their sense of masculine self-esteem as men on beating women, in terms of money and status. And American women agree with them and tend to despise a man who is outdistanced by a woman. When American women do rise to positions of power and status, they have great difficulty in treating their male subordinates with any decent sensitivity—for aren't they failures to be there?—and shrink with horror from making more money than their husbands to the extent that they wish to feel feminine, or throw their success in their husbands' faces to the extent that their own cross-sexual competitiveness has been developed. So we end up with the contradictory picture of a society that appears to throw its doors wide open to women, but trans-

lates her every step towards success as having been damaging—to her own chances of marriage, and to the men whom she passes on the road.

It is just in the middle class, and among those who aspire to middle-class position, that this antagonism waxes strongest, because the middle-class skills are those in which it is easy for women to excel and where men find themselves most fenced in, any rampant masculinity denied and fettered in the interest of saving and postponement of indulgence in impulse. Middle-class mothers, educated and still at home, have a great deal of time to give to moulding their growing children, giving and withholding love as the children display the proper attitudes. And middle-class virtues—saving, thrift, punctuality, foresight, hard work, control of present impulse, respect for the opinion of others, conformity to a code of manners—are virtues that can be learned. Those skills in which the body plays a rôle and in which it is easier for men to attain superiority, such as hunting, riding, or fighting, are absent from the middle-class list. Middle-class virtues learned out of reciprocal relationships between mother and child are patterned originally in the gastro-intestinal tract, taking in, keeping, ordered giving out, in which the male child has all the complication of sorting out the control imposed on elimination from the need to keep somewhat available his impulsive masculinity. The female, although her special feminine characteristics are not evoked, has a lesser problem as she learns to observe the rules of time and place. So all through an American boy's childhood he has to compete, at home and at school, with girls who have an edge in almost all the activities for which reward is given, as one is, for example, rewarded for standing up for oneself but not for fighting. Athletics with their close relationship to bodily strength and vulnerability remains almost the only field from which female competition is barred, and they provide through life a thrilling escape, if only in the pages of a newspaper, for American boys and men. And escape is needed from a game in which all the dice are loaded and yet one must not lose—on penalty of losing love and so self-esteem.

Meanwhile, what is the position of the girl whose easy and successful competition with her brother is assured by the conditions of home and the school system? Seen through male eyes, she is big sister who has it easy, who always gets the breaks. Instead of being told that she mustn't do things because she is a girl, that she must cross her legs and lower her eyes and sit on a cushion and sew a fine seam, she is told that she must learn the same things as a boy. The boy is told that he ought to be ashamed to be beaten by a girl, and outworn symbols of sheer male physical superiority are invoked for such routine tasks as remembering to brush one's teeth or do one's lessons. The male age-old feeling that to be sexually successful he must be strong is invoked in the interest of activities that have lost their immediate relevance. But at the same time the girl is told that she ought to be doing better than her brother, not because she will be humiliated if she fails, but because it is easier for girls to be good. This paradox of boy-girl competition was summed up in Whittier's "In School Days," one of the first poems to celebrate the pleasures and the penalties of co-education, which tells the story of the girl who worsted the boy in spelling:

"I'm sorry that I spelt the word:
I hate to go above you,
Because,"—the brown eyes lower fell,—
"Because, you see, I love you!"

And it is significant that the poet—a male—while writing so sweetly and wistfully about her, moralizing so nicely on how her attitude contrasts with most people's—

He lived to learn, in life's hard school,
How few who pass above him
Lament their triumph and his loss,
Like her,—because they love him.—

also very deftly and definitely kills the lady off:

Dear girl! the grasses on her grave
Have forty years been growing!

Just so the New Guinea native tells the story of the woman who hands to men the symbols by which they can compensate themselves for their inferiority to her, and then adds that they had better kill her. Love on such terms is unbearable. So there is built into the girl in America a conflict of another order. She too must do her lessons and obey her mother, or she will lose her mother's love, her teacher's approval, and the rewards that are accorded to the successful. She too likes bread generously spread with jam and an icebox that is always open. These are hers, almost for the asking. "For all little girls," reads the sign in a New York candy-shop window, "and for good little boys." Hers, by natural right, but at what a price! If she learns the rules well, if she gets good marks, wins scholarships, gets the cub reporter's job, by so much she has done an unforgivable thing, in her own eyes and in the eyes of all of those around her. Each step forward in work as a successful American regardless of sex means a step back as a woman, and also, inferentially, a step back imposed on some male. For maleness in America is not absolutely defined, it has to be kept and re-earned every day, and one essential element in the definition is beating women in every game that both sexes play, in every activity in which both sexes engage.

To the extent that the little girl shares the attitudes of Whittier's dead heroine, she rejects the dilemma. True, she may have to spell the word now, in the third grade, for failure is too bitter for her small, success-oriented soul to bear. But later she will shift the field and get out of the unfair competition, go away from the game of loaded dice, and be a success in a different field, as a wife and a mother. The desperate need for success remains; it is not as strong as for the boy, because for the girl success is demanded only as it is demanded of all human beings, and not with a threat that if she does not succeed she will not be regarded as a true female. Boys are unsexed by failure; girls, if they are also pretty, may be more desirable if they need a male Galahad to help them with their lessons. But this is becoming steadily less true. Subtly the demand for the same kind of character structure for men and for women is spreading throughout the country. In a 1946 *Fortune* poll, men were asked which of three girls equally good-looking a man would prefer to marry: a girl

who had never held a job, a girl who had held a job and been moderately successful at it, or a girl who had held a job and been extremely successful. The preferences ran: 33.8 per cent for the moderately successful, 21.5 per cent for the extremely successful, and only 16.2 per cent for the girl who had never held a job. The moderately successful are still preferred, but with this preference goes increasing pressure on a girl to work before marriage, perhaps to work until the first child comes, and to "begin doing something," if it is only volunteer work or vigorously pursuing a hobby, as soon as her children are in school. Men want their wives both to reassure them by being less successful than they are and to gratify their competitive aspirations, vicariously, by "being successful." It is probably safe to say that the introspective distance between the words "moderately" and "extremely" means "at some one else's expense by playing in another league" as against "beating me at my own game," with the over-all emphasis on success gradually winning out. A girl who has never held a job is becoming increasingly suspect. Maybe she couldn't get a job; maybe if she had tried she would have been a failure, and who wants a wife, however personally pliant and reassuring, who might have been a failure? It is interesting also that in the female replies, 42.2 per cent of the women thought men would prefer a moderately successful girl, only 12.1 per cent thought a man would prefer the girl who had never held a job, and only 17.4 per cent thought they would prefer the exceedingly successful. The *Fortune* commentators go on to say:

"Evidently men are not as afraid of capable girls as women think they are. This is especially true of poor men, of whom 25% think that the extremely successful girl would make the most desirable wife. Poor women also give an unusually high vote for the extremely successful girl (24.7%), while women in the upper middle class give her very little backing, only 12.3%." And note that it is in the upper middle class that girls are treated most like boys in their education, compete with men most directly during childhood, and experience most directly the pressures I have been discussing.

So throughout her education and her development of vocational expectancy, the girl is faced with the dilemma that she must display enough of her abilities to be considered successful, but not too successful; enough ability to get and keep a job, but without the sort of commitment that will make her either too successful or unwilling to give up the job entirely for marriage and motherhood. "Two steps forward and one step back" is the dance-call she must obey. Or take the consequences. And what are the consequences? Failure to marry? If that were all, it might not be so serious. There are more women than men in the world, and societies have found it very possible to stylize vows of celibacy and poverty and still give women dignified lives. The nun who offers her potential wifehood and motherhood to God on behalf of all mankind, and who substitutes prayer and care for the children of God for the creation of particular children, can feel herself a part of God's plan, fulfilling the duty of human beings to "cherish and protect the lives of men and the life of the world." In the crowded bus or cars of the subway, where men now let women stand with children in their arms—because women make money, don't they?—seats are still given to Sisters of Charity and Mercy.

But the woman in the United States who chooses a career instead of marriage is accorded no such satisfying and accredited place in the world. The same feeling that makes Americans, so often generous almost without parallel in the world, vote against the entrance of a few thousand homeless orphans, plus the feeling that any success in a woman calls men's manliness into account, defeats the possibility of her rôle's being fully rewarding. If she succeeds in a profession like school-teaching, men either desert it altogether, or are driven to such appalling expedients as rules that women are incapable of teaching second-year American history, so that the very enactment of the defensive measure further lowers them in their own eyes. No one, neither the men themselves nor the women with whom they compete successfully, thinks it is a good thing for an inadequate man to get the job of principal of a school over the heads of five better-equipped women. Neither sex is made happy by the situation, neither the women, able, conscientious, and hard-working, who may be 80 per cent of the contestants, nor the men who may constitute the other 20 per cent, a large proportion of whom suspect that the real reason for the promotion was just because "they wanted a man."

Perhaps this situation in which able women see themselves perpetually passed over in favour of a man after spending their lives in a "service" profession, a profession in which the womanly virtues of detailed imagination and patience with children are very heavily called for, is one important reason why women are leaving these professions for factory work and business, where they cannot be passed over so easily. And here they can use other weapons. For where the weapons of the school-teacher and the social worker are the weapons of mother's voice and the persistent demand that men be good, the weapons of the woman in business in the United States may include those of the woman who uses her sex to attain her ambitious ends. Ilka Chase's *In Bed We Cry* is a tragedy of just this situation, of the menace that the successful business woman is to herself and to the man she loves. The little girl who hears the call of success more sharply than the call of her future wifehood and maternity hears a call to competitive action in which no holds are barred. Her brother has been better schooled than she has been for this expected behaviour in a competitive world. Fair play, no bullying, do not throw your weight around, are part of the ethics both she and he learned on the playing-fields, but here the pretence that all boys are stronger than all girls was kept up. Some of her very drive for success may come from this comparison, this statement that boys should always outdistance girls; some of her drive may come from doors barred to her because "women always leave and get married," some from a sneer from a brother or a father that "girls have no heads for figures." However this may be, she has been defined as weaker, and there are no rules in American life for the good behaviour of under-dogs. To the extent that American women—most American women—follow the rules of fair play and give-and-take and no alimony, they do so because they think of themselves as strong human beings, human like the men of whom they refuse to take an advantage. But to the woman who makes a success in a man's field, good behaviour is almost impossible, because her whole society has defined it so. A woman who succeeds better than a man—and in a man's field there is no other

practical alternative to beating a certain number of men—has done something hostile and destructive. To the extent that as a woman she has beauty or attractiveness of any sort, her behaviour is that much more destructive. The mannish woman, the ugly woman, may be treated as a man in disguise, and so forgiven her successes. But for the success of a feminine woman there are no alibis; the more feminine she is, the less can she be forgiven. This does not mean that every woman who enters business or fields where she is in an extreme minority is hostile and destructive. But it does mean that any woman who in the course of her childhood had an extra amount of destructiveness developed and repressed is in psychological danger when she is placed in a rôle that is so destructively defined. To the woman whose maternal attitudes are highly developed, the position may be wholly intolerable.

So brother and sister, boy and girl, educated together, learn what each wishes from and what each can give to the other. The girl learns to discipline and mute an ambition that her society continually stimulates, as all girls working in white-collar jobs are said to have "careers," and careers are glamorous, while most men with similar skills merely have jobs. And we have the situation that looks so strange on the surface, that as more and more women work, women seem on the whole less interested in the battle that permits them to succeed professionally. A half-century ago the eyes of the specially able girl who went to college faced ahead towards a profession, towards a career. The idea of marriage was often pushed aside as a handicap. Today, the girl of the same ability is usually willing to admit that she wants to marry, and seems more willing to sacrifice her career to marriage than to sacrifice a chance for marriage to her career. Because it is now more and more accepted that girls should work until they marry—and if one is unlucky, this means all one's life—girls work hard at acquiring skills and professions. If they have brains and ability, sheer virtuosity plus the need to succeed may lead them to become engrossed in their work, but seldom so engrossed that the desire for marriage is blocked out.

Nor will society today treat the woman who is not chosen with the simple pity accorded the wallflower of a century ago. Less kindly verdicts—"She must be neurotic," "She doesn't pay attention," "She hasn't made the most of her chances"—come all too easily to the lips of the young unmarried woman when she speaks of the older one. Success for a woman means success in finding and keeping a husband. This is much more true than it was a generation ago, when men were still supposed to do the seeking, and some women found their new freedom outside the home so intoxicating that they could abandon themselves to their work. Nor is this surprising in a world where the unmarried man is also looked upon as a failure in human relations, a queer bird who, in spite of all of the girls there are to marry, never succeeded in finding one, some one who is just too lazy, too do-less, to make an effort. But the more successful a man is in his job, the more certain every one is that he will make a desirable husband; the more successful a woman is, the more most people are afraid she may not be a successful wife. The *Fortune* survey summarized the reasons people gave why men should prefer extremely successful girls—

their greater efficiency and understanding of money and their ability to help their husbands, and it adds: "Very few look upon her intelligence as an asset, and practically none say that she would be easier to get along with." The well-worn phrase "even the best cooks are men" should be footnoted by a recognition that American men are not reared to enjoy being the husbands of successful chefs.

LYNN WHITE, JR.

Making Coeducation Co-

FEW Americans realize the extent of the contrast between the pattern of higher education on the Northeast seaboard and that of the rest of the country. The Atlantic states take for granted the desirability of separate colleges for men and women. Yet west of the Appalachians there are only five non-Catholic liberal arts colleges exclusively for men: Kenyon, Wabash, Westminster, Tulane and Claremont. Non-Catholic women's colleges are likewise rare. On the Pacific Coast, for example, there are only two: Scripps and Mills.

This marked regional difference is the result of the impact of the women's rights movement on two different social situations. The Eastern colleges stemming from the colonial period, many of which had been founded primarily to train the clergy, refused entrance to women; so the women built their own colleges. In the West, however, academic tradition was less crystallized and the social influence of women was greater than in the East. Few women's colleges were founded because few college doors were closed to women. Thus west of the mountains coeducation became not merely the dominant but almost the sole arrangement for higher education. Indeed, viewing the country as a whole, separate education is hardly more than a local eccentricity of the Northeast.

There is no "best" system of education, and the only really bad kind is one which is uniform and standardized. We must maintain great universities and small colleges; institutions for men, for women and coeducational; tax supported and privately endowed; under both religious and secular control; conservative, to preserve ancient values which may momentarily be out of fashion, and experimental, to push into the unknown. Each has its native virtues and pays for them with corresponding weaknesses. But anyone who hopes to influence or improve the American academic world must recognize from the beginning that wherever his pilot-plant may be located, the main job must be done within the framework of coeducation. Whatever his seed, the coeducational colleges and universities are the great field to be sown and harvested.

MAKING COEDUCATION CO- From *Educating Our Daughters* by Lynn White, Jr., copyright, 1950. Reprinted by permission of Harper & Brothers, publishers.

The prevalence of coeducation in this country would be no disaster if coeducation lived up to its name and claims. But it is not *co-*. As it is practiced today, so-called coeducation is not only a fraud so far as women are concerned: it is one of the chief means by which the masculine dominance is maintained.

No woman has ever been president of a coeducational institution. Few women are to be found on the boards of trustees of such colleges and universities, and in the rare cases when a token woman is admitted to so august a body, she is often bypassed in important decisions. In the administration women have no authoritative voice. Formerly, to be sure, there was a Dean of Women who had immediate access to the President at all times and who was in a position to fight the battle for feminine interests at the top level. In recent years, however, it has been increasingly the style to have a Dean of Students, who needless to say is a man, with a Women's Counsellor on his staff. This means that the only woman who ever had a chance to influence policy in a coeducational college has been pushed down a notch. She must now clear her ideas through a man before she can try to undermine the perverse male prejudices of her masculine President.

The results of this administrative structure are seen in faculty, curriculum and extra-curricular activities. It is a rare coeducational institution in which women compose as much as five percent of the number of full professors, that is, of the top rank of the academic hierarchy. The struggle of a woman scholar for recognition and advancement, once she has grudgingly been given a toehold on the academic ladder, usually turns her into either a saint or a shrew. And just as every minority is judged by its worst representatives, so it is chiefly the hoydens whose records are cited when the next woman applies for a job. On one such occasion the typical academic attitude was expressed with more than customary bluntness by an otherwise enlightened historian who remarked, "It's bad enough when one's male colleagues get the menopause." It is no wonder that since about 1930, when the enthusiasm of the older feminism began to wear thin, proportionately fewer women have been going into college teaching: too often it has turned out to be a professional dead end.

Most women's colleges keep a considerable number of men on their faculties, on the ground that it is important for their students to know how men's minds work. Our American higher education will not have reached maturity until similar mixed faculties are taken for granted not merely on coeducational campuses but in the men's colleges as well. While living first at Harvard and then at Princeton some years ago, I found a curious limitation in the attitudes of their undergraduates. The students had nearly all come from preparatory schools staffed by men. There were, of course, no women on the faculty of either university. As a result these young men had never sat at the feet of a learned woman whose mind was probing in a woman's way into some basic problem. Their experience had taught them to respect the minds of many men, but never that of a woman. Consequently, although they did not put it into words, they unconsciously assumed that rigorous thought and keen intellectual insight are confined to the male. It is sad that the most expensively educated men in America should be so badly educated in this respect, for their

misconception of the minds of women can hardly fail to warp their dealings with half the human race, and more particularly with their wives and daughters.

The girl attending a women's college has at least the advantage of watching first-rate women's minds at work in the faculty, and even though many of our women professors have been badly defeminized by the masculine attitudes and values which dominate the educational world, the spectacle of them undoubtedly helps a girl towards pride in her sex. On the other hand, in coeducational colleges as they are now run a girl student sees only a handful of women on the faculty and these, even after years of service, generally in the minor positions, the academic proletariat. Unless she understands the strange misogyny which permeates the academic world, she too is likely to assume that the brains of women are not so good as those of men, and this will not build self-respect in her. For obvious reasons of family involvement there will always be fewer women than men among professional scholars. Nevertheless if coeducational colleges are to fulfill their responsibilities to the feminine part of the population, those who form their policies must open their faculties to competent women according to their individual merits and abandon the present shameful discrimination against them.

In curriculum as well, coeducational colleges seem indifferent to feminine interests even though the fees of the coeds are an important part of their revenue. Such colleges are run by men for men, and the women are there on men's terms. The "fundamental" courses (as one may discover in any faculty meeting) are those attractive primarily to men. When women's concerns insinuate themselves, as occasionally they do, the curricular results are "frills" to be cut out when next the budget gets tight. And academic budgets are habitually tight. The effect of such attitudes on the mind of a woman student is subtly corrosive. The atmosphere surrounding her studies constantly implies that many of the things which most interest her are not really important, that she is a sort of citizen-second-class of the student world. This need not be so in coeducation, but at present it is so.

Even more unfortunate in influencing a girl's feeling about herself is the way in which extra-curricular affairs are handled in coeducational colleges. Automatically in every organization a man is president and a woman is vice-president, maybe. The one really valid argument in favor of sororities is that here at least is something for the girls to run in their own way. In everything else they are subordinate to men. On the campuses of women's colleges extra-curricular activities, far from undermining a girl's self-respect, help to build it. If there is a job to be done, the girls immediately take over responsibility and get on with the business in a way that is stirring to watch. Once again there is nothing to prevent student affairs in a coeducational college from being run on a basis of sex equality; indeed such equality would seem to be inherent in the ideal of coeducation. But at present it is not so.

Coeducation will remain the usual pattern of American higher education. The fact that its practice belies its professions, that it is permeated not merely with indifference but with antagonism towards woman, need not be accepted

as permanent. To make certain that it shall not be permanent is one of the chief tasks of American women.

In addition to basic attitudes which must be changed, there is one almost mechanical defect in the present operation of coeducation which handicaps women. Anyone who has taught mixed classes in either the first or second years of college knows that the girls as a group are much better students than the boys. It is astonishing that neither educational theory nor practice has yet adapted itself to a fact long known to physiologists and psychologists: that girls develop much more rapidly than boys. Judged by such objective standards as the degree of calcification of bones, a girl baby at birth is normally several weeks "older" than a boy conceived the same day. She rapidly increases her lead, until at five she is probably as much as a year ahead in terms of development. By the time she goes to college she is likely to be eighteen months more mature than a boy of the same chronological age. And this maturity is not merely a matter of body but of the ability to use her intelligence, of motivation; in a word, of personality. The fact that adolescent girls normally pair up for social purposes with boys a couple of years older is grounded less in social convention than in their discovery that equality is the best basis of comradeship. Boys develop rapidly in college, and at about twenty or twenty-one they seem to catch up with the girls in degree of maturity. Incidentally, the fact that boys reach college as kids and graduate as men gives the faculty an exhilarating sense of accomplishment and a conviction that in teaching the fine masculine mind you "get results" which seem deplorably lacking with women.

One hesitates in the United States to cite Russian precedent; but even the most ardent red-baiters seldom accuse the Communists of stupidity. During the Revolution of 1917 the Bolsheviks abolished the separate education of the Czarist regime on the ground that it was a device for keeping women in a subordinate position, which it undoubtedly was. In 1943, in the midst of their struggle with Nazism, they completely reversed their position and abolished coeducation throughout the Soviet Union below the university level, which would correspond roughly to the junior year of an American college. As their chief reason, they explained that since girls develop faster than boys, mixed classes of boys and girls of equal age handicap the girls because the boys slow down the work of the class.

Here in America we are obviously not going to abolish coeducation; nevertheless we cannot afford to disregard forever the differential tendencies in the development of boys and girls. The simplest solution would be to start girls in school at the age of five and boys at six. This would help all levels of instruction, including the collegiate, by associating younger girls with older boys almost as they mix naturally for social purposes. By increasing the tempo of classwork it would keep bright girls from getting lazy. By exposing boys to an academic competition which they are prepared to meet, it would prevent development of a hen-pecked, those-girls-are-too-damned-smart resentment against women which later in life may threaten the harmony of marriage.

There are, then, no insuperable obstacles to making coeducation co-. However, there is little present basis for optimism. Institutional inertia, coupled

with the deep antipathy towards women which is found in the faculties and administrations of almost all coeducational colleges, makes it probable that for decades and even generations to come the task of formulating and elaborating a type of higher education truly appropriate to women will be carried on primarily in the women's colleges. These must serve as testtubes for experiments from which the dominant system of coeducation may profit in the long run.

But let's be candid. Our women's colleges sprang historically from the older feminism and are rooted in its assumption that for educational purposes a woman is a man in disguise. Our few women scholars have had to fight so hard for professional acceptance that as a rule they have passionately embraced the male standards of accomplishment according to which they were required to strive for recognition. So profoundly masculine is our whole tradition of higher education that at the present time a woman tends to be defeminized in proportion as she is educated.

What has brought about this curious state of affairs? Where does this masculine tradition come from?

Institutions and patterns of thought and feeling can no more escape their past than can individuals. Our American colleges and universities are lineally descended from the universities of the later Middle Ages: they have always been, and today remain, essentially guilds (*universitates*) of clerks. Many of their peculiarities, both superficial and fundamental, can be understood only in terms of their historical origins. When professors dress up for parade they put on black clerical cassocks, monastic hoods and a headgear which can be demonstrated to be a priest's berretta rather than a hat: one wears it in church, removing it only during prayer. Until recently our diplomas were in Latin, and the degrees granted were still medieval. To be sure, in the United States we got a bit mixed up in this matter. During the Middle Ages, since the *universitas* was a guild, it gave a journeyman's—or bachelor's—degree, and a master's sometimes called the doctorate because it entitled one to teach (*docere*). The former term became habitual in Britain, and the latter on the Continent. Since this country was subjected to two waves of educational colonization, one from England and the other from Germany, we decided to out-medievalize the Middle Ages, and ended by granting three degrees instead of two: the bachelor's, the master's and the doctor's. No one has yet really decided what our American master's degree means. The main point is that we have tended to compound our educational tradition rather than to rethink it.

In more basic matters the legacy of the Middle Ages is equally evident. Before the later fifteenth century, books, since they were written by hand, were too expensive for the ordinary student. As a result professors developed the lecture system primarily to convey bodies of information. Probably half the members of our faculties are still teaching in a manner which was not only legitimate but necessary before Gutenberg, but which has been indefensible for the past five hundred years: they are still using lectures to pass out information which could be got by the student more rapidly and accurately from printed books. Clearly the post-Gutenbergian lecture should be devoted to

evaluation, interpretation and, if possible, to discussion between professor and students. But the hand of the past is heavy upon us.

At still a deeper level one sees the legacy of the priests in the self-dedication of scholars to concerns unrelated to individual profit or even to communal interest. The tone of our education is like that of religion because its pitch was given by the clergy. Religion is big business and has political implications, but it ceases to be pure religion if either business or political considerations gain real influence in it. Similarly, higher education is big business, and it has a duty normally to buttress the social order, if at times chiefly by objective criticism. Nevertheless the academic world, notorious among the laity for its "impracticality" and "lack of political realism," is devoted with a fervor which an outsider can scarcely comprehend to the proposition that there are bankruptcies other than financial, and that treason to truth is more heinous than failure to support a corrupt or tyrannous regime. During the Middle Ages every university student was legally a clerk, subject to the courts Christian rather than to secular law. Psychologically our faculties are still in Orders—the robes they wear are not a masquerade—and those who wish our society to remain free, mobile and capable of self-criticism may well be thankful.

Our American system of higher education, then, bears the marks of its medieval inheritance throughout its anatomy. But the central fact about it is that the ground plan was laid out strictly in terms of a specialized type of training needed not merely by a male clergy but by a celibate clergy suspicious of women and their works. Studies for the bachelor's degree were divided into the verbal arts of the *trivium* (grammar, rhetoric and logic) and the mathematical arts of the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy and music, this last conceived as tonal proportion). By a gradual process of division and subdivision our present elaborate curricula in humanities, including the social studies, and sciences have emerged from these two categories of the liberal arts, and much of this growth is recent. But despite all changes, the basic masculine and celibate presuppositions about what constitutes a proper subject of study, and how a respectable scholar goes about studying it, have never really been reexamined.

So powerful—indeed unchallenged—has been the influence of this tradition, that our women's colleges have done little more than our coeducational institutions to explore and develop a distinctively feminine higher education. Indeed, the women's colleges are a remarkable illustration of the pervasiveness of the masculine dominance in our society. It may have been necessary in the historical context of the past century to prove that women were intellectually tough enough to undertake the same studies men did, and certainly the proof was produced. But it is clear that the leaders of women's higher education on the Northeast seaboard thought that they were doing their full duty in making women's colleges as much like men's colleges as possible. The symbol of this attitude is the blessed word *euthenics* (presumably a label for family studies—although no Greek would have understood it so!) behind which Vassar tried to conceal its belated and embarrassed recognition of the fact that it is girls who study at Poughkeepsie. That Radcliffe, which is in curricular bondage to Harvard and which got around only in the autumn of 1948 to

appointing the first woman professor to its faculty, should be regarded by otherwise perspicacious women as anything but a piteous example of female docility, indicates how rudimentary our thinking in these matters remains. Clearly the task of constructing a higher education completely fitted to the needs and aptitudes of women is not only difficult but overdue.

STEPHEN POTTER

Gamesmanship

WHAT IS IT?

Origins. What is gamesmanship? Most difficult of questions to answer briefly. "The Art of Winning Games Without Actually Cheating"—that is my personal "working definition." What is its object? There have been five hundred books written on the subject of games. Five hundred books on play and the tactics of play. Not one on the art of winning.

I well remember the gritty floor and the damp roller-towels of the changing-room where the idea of writing this book came to me. Yet my approach to the thing had been gradual.

There had been much that had puzzled me—I am speaking now of 1928—in the tension of our games of ping-pong at the Meynells'. Before that there had been the ardours and endurances of friendly lawn tennis at the Farjeons' house near Forest Hill, where Farjeon had wrought such havoc among so many visitors, by his careful construction of a "home court," by the use he made of the net with the unilateral sag, or with a back line at the hawthorn end so nearly, yet not exactly, six inches wider than the back line at the sticky end. There had been a great deal of hard thinking on both sides during the wavering tide of battle, ending slightly in my favour, of the prolonged series of golf games between E. Lansbury and myself.

8th June 1931. But it was in that changing-room after a certain game of lawn tennis in 1931 that the curtain was lifted, and I began to see. In those days I used to play lawn tennis for a small but progressive London College—Birkbeck, where I lectured. It happened that my partner at that time was C. Joad, the celebrated gamesman, who in his own sphere is known as metaphysician and educationist. Our opponents were usually young men from the larger colleges, competing against us not only with the advantage of age but also with a decisive advantage in style. They would throw the service ball very high in the modern manner: the back-hands, instead of being played from the navel, were played, in fact, on the back-hand, weight on right foot, in the ex-

GAMESMANSHIP From *The Theory and Practice of Gamesmanship* by Stephen Potter. Reproduced by permission of Henry Holt and Company, Inc.

aggerated copy-book style of the time—a method of play which tends to reduce all games, as I believe, to a barrack-square drill by numbers; but, nevertheless, of acknowledged effectiveness.

In one match we found ourselves opposite a couple of particularly tall and athletic young men of this type from University College. We will call them Smith and Brown. The knock-up showed that, so far as play was concerned, Joad and I, playing for Birkbeck, had no chance. U. C. won the toss. It was Smith's service, and he cracked down a cannonball to Joad which moved so fast that Joad, while making some effort to suggest by his attitude that he had thought the ball was going to be a fault, nevertheless was unable to get near with his racket, which he did not even attempt to move. Score: fifteen-love. Service to me. I had had time to gauge the speed of this serve, and the next one did, in fact, graze the edge of my racket-frame. Thirty-love. Now

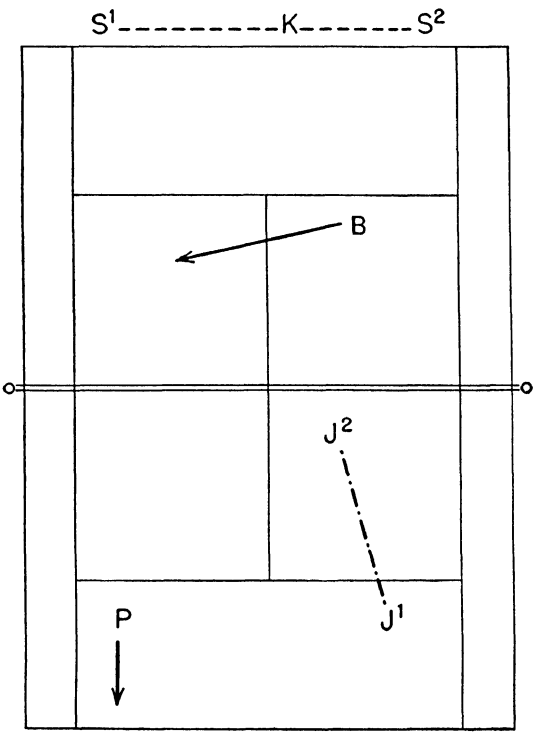


FIG. 1. *Key*: P = Potter, J = Joad, S = Smith, B = Brown. The dotted line represents Smith's path from S^1 to S^2. K represents the point he has reached on the cross-over when Joad has moved along the line (dot and dash) J^1 (where he had tried to return Smith's service) to J^2. Smith having arrived at, but not further than, the point K on the line S^1–S^2, J (Joad) speaks.

Smith was serving again to Joad—who this time, as the ball came straight towards him, was able, by grasping the racket firmly with both hands, to receive the ball on the strings, whereupon the ball shot back to the other side and volleyed into the stop-netting near the ground behind Brown's feet.

Now here comes the moment on which not only this match, but so much of the future of British sport was to turn. Score: forty-love. Smith at S^1 (see Fig. 1) is about to cross over to serve to me (at P). When Smith gets to a point (K) *not less than one foot and not more than two feet* beyond the centre of the court (I know now what I only felt then—that timing is everything in this gambit), Joad (standing at J^2) called across the net, in an even tone:

"Kindly say clearly, please, whether the ball was in or out."

Crude to our ears, perhaps. A Stone-Age implement. But beautifully accurate gamesmanship for 1931. For the student must realise that these two young men were both in the highest degree charming, well-mannered young men, perfect in their sportsmanship and behaviour. Smith (at point K) stopped dead.

SMITH: I'm so sorry—I *thought* it was out. (*The ball had hit the back netting twelve feet behind him before touching the ground.*) But what did you think, Brown?

BROWN: I *thought* it was out—but do let's have it again.

JOAD: No, I don't want to have it again. I only want you to say clearly, if you will, whether the ball is in or out.

There is nothing more putting off to young university players than a slight suggestion that their etiquette or sportsmanship is in question. How well we know this fact, yet how often we forget to make use of it. Smith sent a double fault to me, and another double fault to Joad. He did not get in another ace service till halfway through the third set of a match which incidentally we won.

That night I thought hard and long. Could not this simple gambit of Joad's be extended to include other aspects of the game—to include all games? For me, it was the birth of gamesmanship. . . .

THE GAME ITSELF

East wind dhu blëow
En-tout-cas dhu gëow.
—ESSEX SAYING

Some Basic Plays. "How to win Games Without Being Able to Play Them." Reduced to the simplest terms, that is the formula, and the student must not at first try flights too far away from this basic thought.

To begin with, let him, say, carry on the "flurry" motive. Let him aim at tension. Let him, for instance, invent some "train which he would rather like to catch if the game was over by then," but "doesn't want to hurry."

Sportsmanship play. Remember the slogan: "THE GOOD GAMESMAN IS THE GOOD SPORTSMAN." The use of sportsmanship is, of course, most important. In gen-

eral, with the athletic but stupid player, ex-rowing or ex-boxing, perhaps, who is going to take it out of you, by God, if he suspects you of being unsporting, extreme sportingness is the thing, and the instant waiving of any rule which works in your favour is the procedure.

On the other hand, playing against the introvert crusty cynical type, remember that sportingness will be wasted on him. There must be no unsportingness on your part, of course; but a keen knowledge of little-known rules and penalties will cause him to feel he is being beaten at his own game. (See under "Croquet, rulesmanship in.")

When questioned about the etiquette of gamesmanship—so important for the young player—I talk about Fidgets. If your adversary is nervy, and put off by the mannerisms of his opponent, it is unsporting, and therefore not gamesmanship, to go in, e.g., for a loud noseblow, say, at billiards, or to chalk your cue squeakingly, when he is either making or considering a shot.

On the other hand, a basic play, in perfect order, can be achieved by, say, whistling fidgetingly *while playing yourself*. And I once converted two down into two up when playing golf against P. Beard, known also as the leader of an orchestra, by constantly whistling a phrase from the Dorabella Variation with one note—always the same note—wrong.[1]

A good general attack can be made by talking to your opponent about his own job, in the character of the kind of man who always tries to know more about your own profession than you know yourself.

Playing-for-fun play. The good gamesman, like the good sportsman, never plays for large sums of money. But something can usually be made out of the situation if your opponent expresses a wish to play for the "usual half-crown," or a wish not to do so. It is obviously easy for the gamesman to make his opponent feel awkward by countering his suggestion that they should play for stakes with a frank "Come, let's play for the fun of the game." Alternatively, if your opponent refuses your offer to play for half a crown here is a neat counter:

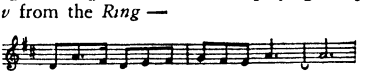
LAYMAN: Half a crown on it? No, I'm not particularly anxious to play for money. What *is* the point? If one starts worrying about the pennies . . .

GAMESMAN: Exactly. If money is important to you, much better not.

LAYMAN: But I meant—

GAMESMAN: (*Friendly.*) Of course.

[1] It may be worth recalling that Elgar himself, when playing croquet against fellow-musicians, made use of the Horn *motiv* from the *Ring* —



He would whistle this correctly except for the second note, substituting for A some inappropriate variant, often a slightly flattened D sharp, *sliding* up to it, from the opening note of the phrase:—



A voice from the past indeed. Yet have any of our modern experts in the music ploy really improved on this phrase, devised before Gamesmanship was formulated or even described?

Nice chapmanship. A bigger subject which may be introduced here revolves round the huge question of nice chapmanship and its uses. (I refuse to use the hideous neologism "nicemanship" which I see much in evidence lately.)

Here is the general principle: that Being a Nice Chap *in certain circumstances* is valuable when playing against extremely young, public schooly players who are genuinely nice. A train of thought can be started in their minds to the effect that "it would be rather a rotten trick to beat old G. by too much." Thereby that fatal "letting up" is inaugurated which can be the undoing of so many fine players. R. Lodge, at sixty-five, always said that he had never been beaten, in a key match, by any decently brought up boy under twenty-five, and that he could always "feel 'em out by their phizzes."

Audience play. Nice chapmanship is, of course, closely associated with sportsmanship, especially in its relation to the question of playing or not playing to the audience. There is obviously some value in a good hearty "Have it again" early in the game (of darts, for instance), or the lawn tennis ball slammed into the net after the doubtful decision, especially if this is done so that your opponent can see through the ploy[2] but the onlookers cannot.

But the experienced gamesman knows that if he is playing to a small audience he must make up his mind whether he is going to play *to* the audience, or whether he is going to retire behind an impersonal mask of modesty.

In general, the rule holds—*let your attitude be the antithesis of your opponent's;* and let your manner of emphasising this different attitude put him in the wrong.

For example, if your opponent is a great showman, assume (e.g., at snooker) an air of modest anonymity; be appreciative, even, of his antics; then quietly play your shot, so that the audience begins to say, "I prefer G.'s game. He gets on with it, anyhow."

Per contra, when in play against a dour opponent, who studiously avoids all reaction to the audience, implying that "this is a match"—*then,* by all means be the "chap who doesn't care a damn" . . . though "Of course—sh!—old L. is taking this devilish seriously so I must keep a straight face."

(There is some danger of counter-gamesmanship here. The layman, if he is wise, will pursue his poker-faced policy and you may find your assumption of ill-suppressed gaiety wearing thin. I have myself experienced a partial paralysis in this situation.)

So much for some of the principal general ploys. Now for some common technical phrases.

Ruggership and ruggership counter-play. Under the heading of "Ruggership" comes all that great interplay of suggestion summarised in the phrase "Of course, this isn't my game," with the implication that "this game is rather an amusing game, but not grand, dangerous and classical like my game. . . ." If "my game" is rugger or polo or tennis (see under "Tennis players, how to press home advantage of, over lawn tennis players"), then very good work can be done with this gambit.

[2] Sub-plays, or individual manoeuvres of a gambit, are usually referred to as "ploys." It is not known why this is.

But it has severe weaknesses, and a promising gamesman in his second year may be able to counter with some such simple enquiry as this:

COUNTER-GAMESMAN (*with interest*): When did you *last play* rugger?
GAMESMAN: Oh! How long since actually playing? I wonder. . . . I was talking to Leggers the other day—
COUNTER-GAMESMAN: Yes, but how long is it since you played yourself? I mean what date, roughly, was it when you last held a ball in your hand?
GAMESMAN (*hard-pressed*): 1913.
COUNTER-GAMESMAN: A bit of a time. But that, I imagine, is one of the grand things about rugger. If you've ever kicked a rugger ball, at a prep school or home club, you feel that you're a rugger player for the rest of your life.

Much exaggerated praise has been churned out in honour of gamesmanship and its part in the building of the British character. Still, if we study the records, they do reveal not a little of courage in the overcoming of apparently hopeless odds. I am thinking, of course, of G. Tearle—not the actor, but the croquet-player. And, indeed, some of the prettiest effects of gamesmanship are to be seen when an expert in, say, croquet, plays golf, it may be, off the same handicap, against a real expert in, say, rugger—a man who really has played rugger, twice capped for England. The rugger man certainly starts with a tremendous advantage. His name is a legend, his game is glorious. Croquet is considered, by the lay world, to be piddling. The two meet on the common ground of golf; and even golf, to the rugger man, is considered fairly piddling. Yet I have seen Tearle not only break down this view *but reverse it,* so that in the end the Rugger international would sometimes even be heard claiming that he came from croquet people, but that his character "was not suited to the game."

Tearle by long practice actually made capital out of croquet. And let me add that Tearle's triumph demonstrates once again that it is in these long-drawn-out reversal tactics that training and the proper diet stand you in such good stead.

Counterpoint. This phrase, now used exclusively in music, originally stood for Number Three of the general Principles of Gamesmanship. *"Play against your opponent's tempo."* This is one of the oldest of gambits and is now almost entirely used in the form "My Slow to your Fast." E.g., at billiards, or snooker, or golf especially, against a player who makes a great deal of "wanting to get on with the game," the technique is (1) to agree (Jeffreys always adds here "as long as we don't hurry on the shot"); (2) to hold things up by fifteen to twenty disguised pauses. Peg-top tees for golf were introduced by Samuel in '33 for this use. The technique is to tee the ball, frame up for the shot, and then at the last moment stop, pretend to push the peg a little further in or pull it a little further out, and then start all over again. At the next hole vary this with Samuel's "Golden Perfecto" peg tee, made in such a way that the ball, after sitting still in the cup for two to three seconds, rolls off. (Fig. 4.)

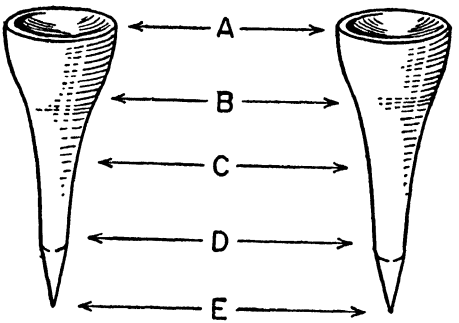


FIG. 4. Samuel's "Championship" (2d.) and "Golden Perfecto" (4/6) golf tees. A = "Cup," B = "Neck," C = "Upper Shaft," D = "Lower Shaft," E = Point or "Plungebill."

Through the green, the usual procedure is to frame up for the shot and then decide on another club at the last moment.

NOTE—*Do not attempt to irritate partner by spending too long looking for your lost ball.* This is unsporting. But good gamesmanship which is also very good sportsmanship can be practised if the gamesman makes a great and irritatingly prolonged parade of spending extra time looking for his *opponent's* ball.

At billiards, the custom of arranging to be summoned to the telephone on fake calls, so as to break your opponent's concentration, is out of date now and interesting only as a reminder of the days when "couriers" were paid to gallop up to the old billiard halls for the same purpose. In snooker, the usual practice is to walk quickly up to the table, squat half down on the haunches to look at sight-lines, move to the other end of the table to look at sight-lines of balls which may come in to play later on in the break which you are supposed to be planning. Decide on the shot. Frame up for it, and then at the last moment see some obvious red shot which you had "missed," and which your opponent and everybody else will have noticed before you moved to the table, and which they know is the shot you are going to play in the end anyhow.

For chess tempos see "Chess, tempi."

"My tomorrow's match." In a Key Friendly, or any individual match which you are particularly anxious to win, the best general approach (Rule IV) is the expression of *anxiety to play today, because of the match tomorrow.* Construct a story that you are playing A. J. du C. Masterman.[3] Or perhaps the name should be A. C. Swinburne (your opponent will feel he has vaguely heard of this name). Go on to say (if the game is golf)—"Do you mind if I practise using my Number One iron today?"—(no need to use it or even have one)—"as I want to know whether to take it tomorrow." Take one prac-

[3] "Names impress according to the square of their initials."

tice shot after having picked up your ball, at a lost hole. Seek the advice of opponent. Ask him "What *he* would do if he found himself playing against a *really* long driver, like A. C. Swinburne."

Game leg (also known as "crocked ankle play," or "gamesman's leg"[4]). "Limpmanship," as it used to be called, or the exact use of minor injury, not only for the purpose of getting out of, but for actually winning difficult contests, is certainly as old as the mediaeval tourneys, the knightly combats, of ancient chivalry. Yet, nowadays, no device is more clumsily used, no gambit more often muffed. "I hope I shall be able to give you a game," says the middle-aged golfer to his young opponent, turning his head from side to side and hunching up his shoulders. "My back was a bit seized up yesterday . . . this wind." How wretchedly weak. "O.K. My youth *versus* your age," says the young counter-gamesman to himself, and rubs this thought in with a variety of subsequent slanting references: "You ought to take it easy for a week or two," etc. No, if use the hackneyed ankle gambit you must, let the injury be the result of a campaign in one of the wars, or a quixotic attempt to stop a runaway horse, at least.

But, here as so often, it is the *reply,* the counter, wherein the ploy of the gamesman can be used to best effect. Indeed, there is nothing prettier than the right use of an opponent's injury. There is the refusal to be put off even if the injury is genuine. There is the adoption of a game which, though apparently ignoring and indeed even favouring your opponent's disability, will yet benefit you in the end. In their own different ways, the "Two F's," Frier and Frith-Morteroy, were the greatest masters of the art of "Countering the Crock." No one who heard them will ever forget their apologies for sending a short one to the man with the twisted ankle, their excuses for the accidental lob in the sun against an opponent with sensitive eyes. But the Frith-Morteroy counter, though not for beginners, has more of grace, and needs more of explanation. Let it be lawn tennis—Frith's game. Frith against "Novice Gamesman," we will call him.

Novice Gamesman is limping slightly. "Hopes he can give F.-M. a game, but his rugger knee has just been prodded back into place by old Coutts of Welbeck Street." Right. F.-M. is full of sympathy. F.-M. sends not a single short one. In fact he does nothing whatever. His supporters become anxious—and then—during, say, the *first* game of the *second* set, while they are changing sides Frith is heard to say (on arriving at point K—see Fig. 5) "Ooo!" sharply.

NOVICE GAMESMAN: What's that?
FRITH-MORTEROY: Nothing. Nothing. I thought—
N. G. (*further away*): What did you say?
F.-M.: Nothing.

The game continues. But at that next cross over, Frith says "Ow!" (point S, Fig. 5). He pauses a minute, and stands as if lost in thought.

[4] Usually shortened now into "Game Leg."

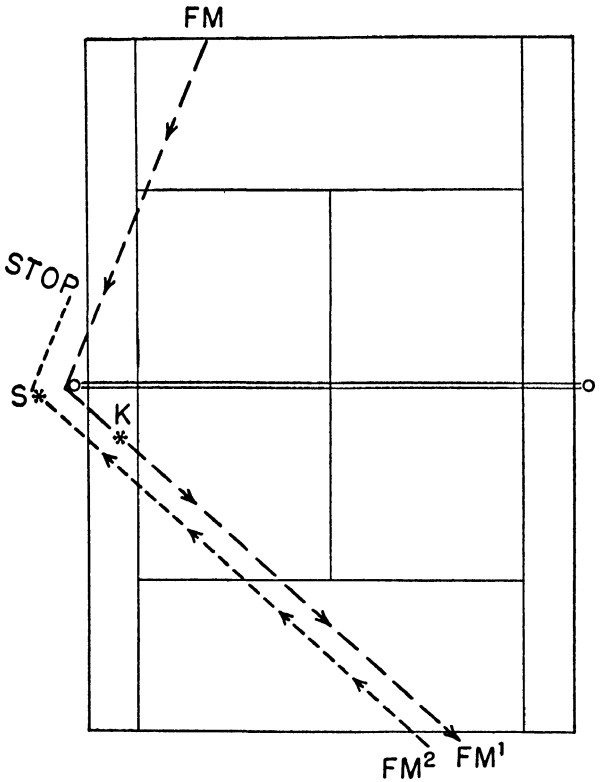


FIG. 5. Diagram of tennis court to show Frith-Morteroy's path of changing, and the position S from which he makes his "echo" attack, in Morteroy Counter Game Leg play. Point K on the line FM–FM^1 is the position from which the demi-cry is made (see text). At point S, on the line FM^2, the full cry is made (see text). "STOP" marks the usual position for the actual verbal interchange or "parlette."

N. G.: What's up?
F.-M.: Nothing. Half a moment.
N. G.: Something wrong?
F.-M.: (*rubs his chest with his knuckles*): No. No. It's only the old pump.
N. G.: Pump?
F.-M.: Yes. The ancient ticker.
N. G.: What—heart?
F.-M.: I'm supposed not to be using it full out at the moment. Only a tem porary thing.
N. G.: Good Lord.
F.-M.: It's all right now!
N. G.: Good.

F.-M.: Couple of crocks!
N. G.: Well. Shall we get on?

"*Couple* of crocks." Observe the triple thrust against the Novice Gamesman. (1) Frith establishes the fact that he, also, labours under a handicap; (2) the atmosphere which Novice Gamesman has built up with so much restraint, but so much labour—the suggestion of silent suffering—is the precise climate in which Frith is now going to prosper, and (3)—most important of all—Frith has won the gamesmanship part of the contest already, set and match, by sportingly waiting, say twenty-five minutes, before revealing his own somewhat worse disability. Novice Gamesman having mentioned his rugger knee—a stale type of infliction anyhow—is made to look a fool and a fusser. More, he is made to look unsporting.

I believe it is true to say that once Frith-Morteroy had achieved this position, he was never known to lose a game. He made a special study of it—and I believe much of his spare time was spent reading the medical books on the subject of minor cardiac weaknesses.

Jack Rivers Opening. After this most successful of basic plays, may I dare to end this chapter with a very simple but favourite gambit of my own?

I call it the Jack Rivers Opening. I have written elsewhere of the sporting-unsporting approach, always to be revered as the parent of modern gamesman play. But if sporting-unsporting is vaguely regarded as a thing of the past, the gamesman knows that it is a habit of thought still rooted in many British players.

Perhaps the most difficult type for the gamesman to beat is the man who indulges in pure play. He gets down to it, he gets on with it, he plays each shot according to its merits, and his own powers, without a trace of exhibitionism, and no by-play whatever. In golf, croquet or ping-pong—golf especially—he is liable to wear you down by playing the "old aunty" type of game.

My only counter to this, which some have praised, is to invent, early in the game or before it has started, an imaginary character called "Jack Rivers." I speak of his charm, his good looks, his fine war record and his talent for games—and, "by the way, he is a first-class pianist as well." Then, a little later: "I like Jack Rivers's game," I say. "He doesn't care a damn whether he wins or loses so long as he has a good match."

Some such rubbish as this, although at first it may not be effective, often wears down the most successfully cautious opponent, *if the method is given time to soak in.* Allow your opponent to achieve a small lead, perhaps, by his stone-walling methods; and the chances are that—even if he has only been hearing about Jack Rivers for thirty minutes—he will begin to think: "Well, perhaps I am being a bit of a stick-in-the-mud." He feels an irrational desire to play up to what appears to be your ideal of a good fellow. After all, he remembers, hadn't he been once chaffed for breaking a window with a cricket-ball when he was on holiday at Whitby? He himself was a bit mad once. Soon he is throwing away point after point by adopting a happy-go-lucky, hit-or-miss method which doesn't suit his game in the least.

Meanwhile *you* begin to play with pawky steadiness, and screen this fact by redoubling your references to Jack Rivers. You talk of the way in which Jack, too, loved to open his shoulders for a mighty smite, landing him in trouble as often as not; but the glorious thing about him was that he didn't care two hoots for that . . . and so long as he had a good smack, and a good game . . . , etc.

So much for the Principal Plays, in gamesmanship. Now for the other gambits which must be brought into play as the game progresses.

CRITICISM

INTRODUCTION

THE CRITICAL essays in this section were selected primarily to help the reader in interpreting the major types of literature which college students read.

These essays also go some way in representing various kinds of critical writing. Virginia Woolf's discussion of biography is an example of the serious review, one that reaches beyond comment on a particular book to reflections about a type of literary art. The essays by Stauffer and Bentley on poetry and drama show how general theory and specific analysis can strengthen each other. The selections from James, Conrad, and Maugham enable us to hear notable writers talking seriously about their own work.

A college student cannot be expected, of course, to match the learning and authority of these writers, but he can very well imitate one of the most important qualities which they have in common as critics. That quality is their freedom from polite oh-ing and ah-ing about literature, their ability to come to the point and to give a fresh, honest report of their own reactions.

Biography

VIRGINIA WOOLF

The Art of Biography

THE ART of biography, we say—but at once go on to ask, Is biography an art? The question is foolish perhaps, and ungenerous certainly, considering the keen pleasure that biographers have given us. But the question asks itself so often that there must be something behind it. There it is, whenever a new biography is opened, casting its shadow on the page; and there would seem to be something deadly in that shadow, for after all, of the multitude of lives that are written, how few survive!

But the reason for this high death rate, the biographer might argue, is that biography, compared with the arts of poetry and fiction, is a young art. Interest in our selves and in other people's selves is a late development of the human mind. Not until the eighteenth century in England did that curiosity express itself in writing the lives of private people. Only in the nineteenth century was biography fully grown and hugely prolific. If it is true that there have been only three great biographers,—Johnson, Boswell, and Lockhart,—the reason, he argues, is that the time was short; and his plea, that the art of biography has had but little time to establish itself and develop itself, is certainly borne out by the textbooks. Tempting as it is to explore the reason,—why, that is, the self that writes a book of prose came into being so many centuries after the self that writes a poem, why Chaucer preceded Henry James,—it is better to leave that insoluble question unasked, and so pass to his next reason for the lack of masterpieces. It is that the art of biography is the most restricted of all the arts. He has his proof ready to hand. Here it is in the preface in which Smith, who has written the life of Jones, takes this opportunity of thanking old friends who have lent letters, and "last but not least" Mrs. Jones, the widow, for that help "without which," as he puts it, "this biography could not have been written." Now the novelist, he points out, simply says in his foreword, "Every character in this book is fictitious." The novelist is free; the biographer is tied.

There, perhaps, we come within hailing distance of that very difficult, again perhaps insoluble, question: What do we mean by calling a book a work of art? At any rate, here is a distinction between biography and fiction—a proof that they differ in the very stuff of which they are made. One is made with the

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help of friends, of facts; the other is created without any restrictions save those that the artist, for reasons that seem good to him, chooses to obey. That is a distinction; and there is good reason to think that in the past biographers have found it not only a distinction but a very cruel distinction.

The widow and the friends were hard taskmasters. Suppose, for example, that the man of genius was immoral, ill-tempered, and threw the boots at the maid's head. The widow would say, "Still I loved him—he was the father of my children; and the public, who love his books, must on no account be disillusioned. Cover up; omit." The biographer obeyed. And thus the majority of Victorian biographies are like the wax figures now preserved in Westminster Abbey that were carried in funeral processions through the streets—effigies that have only a smooth superficial likeness to the body in the coffin.

Then, towards the end of the nineteenth century, there was a change. Again for reasons not easy to discover, widows became broader-minded, the public keener-sighted; the effigy no longer carried conviction or satisfied curiosity. The biographer certainly won a measure of freedom. At least he could hint that there were scars and furrows on the dead man's face. Froude's Carlyle is by no means a wax mask painted rosy red. And following Froude there was Sir Edmund Gosse, who dared to say that his own father was a fallible human being. And following Edmund Gosse in the early years of the present century came Lytton Strachey.

The figure of Lytton Strachey is so important a figure in the history of biography that it compels a pause. For his three famous books, *Eminent Victorians, Queen Victoria,* and *Elizabeth and Essex,* are of a stature to show both what biography can do and what biography cannot do. Thus they suggest many possible answers to the question whether biography is an art, and if not why it fails.

Lytton Strachey came to birth as an author at a lucky moment. In 1918, when he made the first attempt, biography, with its new liberties, was a form that offered great attractions. To a writer like himself, who had wished to write poetry or plays but was doubtful of his creative power, biography seemed to offer a promising alternative. For at last it was possible to tell the truth about the dead; and the Victorian age was rich in remarkable figures many of whom had been grossly deformed by the effigies that had been plastered over them. To recreate them, to show them as they really were, was a task that called for gifts analogous to the poet's or the novelist's, yet did not ask that inventive power in which he found himself lacking.

It was well worth trying. And the anger and the interest that his short studies of Eminent Victorians aroused showed that he was able to make Manning, Florence Nightingale, Gordon, and the rest live as they had not lived since they were actually in the flesh. Once more they were the centre of a buzz of discussion. Did Gordon really drink, or was that an invention? Had Florence Nightingale received the Order of Merit in her bedroom or in her sitting room? He stirred the public, even though a European war was raging, to an astonishing interest in such minute matters. Anger and laughter mixed; and editions multiplied.

But these were short studies with something of the overemphasis and the foreshortening of caricatures. In the lives of the two great Queens, Elizabeth and Victoria, he attempted a far more ambitious task. Biography had never had a fairer chance of showing what it could do. For it was now being put to the test by a writer who was capable of making use of all the liberties that biography had won: he was fearless; he had proved his brilliance; and he had learned his job. The result throws great light upon the nature of biography. For who can doubt after reading the two books again, one after the other, that the *Victoria* is a triumphant success, and that the *Elizabeth* by comparison is a failure? But it seems too, as we compare them, that it was not Lytton Strachey who failed; it was the art of biography. In the *Victoria* he treated biography as a craft; he submitted to his limitations. In the *Elizabeth* he treated biography as an art; he flouted its limitations.

But we must go on to ask how we have come to this conclusion and what reasons support it. In the first place it is clear that the two Queens present very different problems to their biographer. About Queen Victoria everything was known. Everything she did, almost everything she thought, was a matter of common knowledge. No one has ever been more closely verified and exactly authenticated than Queen Victoria. The biographer could not invent her, because at every moment some document was at hand to check his invention. And, in writing of Victoria, Lytton Strachey submitted to the conditions. He used to the full the biographer's power of selection and relation, but he kept strictly within the world of fact. Every statement was verified; every fact was authenticated. And the result is a life which, very possibly, will do for the old Queen what Boswell did for the old dictionary maker. In time to come Lytton Strachey's Queen Victoria will be Queen Victoria, just as Boswell's Johnson is now Dr. Johnson. The other versions will fade and disappear. It was a prodigious feat, and no doubt, having accomplished it, the author was anxious to press further. There was Queen Victoria, solid, real, palpable. But undoubtedly she was limited. Could not biography produce something of the intensity of poetry, something of the excitement of drama, and yet keep also the peculiar virtue that belongs to fact—its suggestive reality, its own proper creativeness?

Queen Elizabeth seemed to lend herself perfectly to the experiment. Very little was known about her. The society in which she lived was so remote that the habits, the motives, and even the actions of the people of that age were full of strangeness and obscurity. "By what art are we to worm our way into those strange spirits? those even stranger bodies? The more clearly we perceive it, the more remote that singular universe becomes," Lytton Strachey remarked on one of the first pages. Yet there was evidently a "tragic history" lying dormant, half revealed, half concealed, in the story of the Queen and Essex. Everything seemed to lend itself to the making of a book that combined the advantages of both worlds, that gave the artist freedom to invent, but helped his invention with the support of facts—a book that was not only a biography but also a work of art.

Nevertheless, the combination proved unworkable; fact and fiction refused to mix. Elizabeth never became real in the sense that Queen Victoria had been real, yet she never became fictitious in the sense that Cleopatra or Falstaff is

fictitious. The reason would seem to be that very little was known—he was urged to invent; yet something was known—his invention was checked. The Queen thus moves in an ambiguous world, between fact and fiction, neither embodied nor disembodied. There is a sense of vacancy and effort, of a tragedy that has no crisis, of characters that meet but do not clash.

If this diagnosis is true we are forced to say that the trouble lies with biography itself. It imposes conditions, and those conditions are that it must be based upon fact. And by fact in biography we mean facts that can be verified by other people besides the artist. If he invents facts as an artist invents them—facts that no one else can verify—and tries to combine them with facts of the other sort, they destroy each other.

Lytton Strachey himself seems in the *Queen Victoria* to have realized the necessity of this condition, and to have yielded to it instinctively. "The first forty-two years of the Queen's life," he wrote, "are illuminated by a great and varied quantity of authentic information. With Albert's death a veil descends." And when with Albert's death the veil descended and authentic information failed, he knew that the biographer must follow suit. "We must be content with a brief and summary relation," he wrote; and the last years are briefly disposed of. But the whole of Elizabeth's life was lived behind a far thicker veil than the last years of Victoria. And yet, ignoring his own admission, he went on to write, not a brief and summary relation, but a whole book about those strange spirits and even stranger bodies of whom authentic information was lacking. On his own showing, the attempt was doomed to failure.

It seems, then, that when the biographer complained that he was tied by friends, letters, and documents he was laying his finger upon a necessary element in biography; and that it is also a necessary limitation. For the invented character lives in a free world where the facts are verified by one person only—the artist himself. Their authenticity lies in the truth of his own vision. The world created by that vision is rarer, intenser, and more wholly of a piece than the world that is largely made of authentic information supplied by other people. And because of this difference the two kinds of fact will not mix; if they touch they destroy each other. No one, the conclusion seems to be, can make the best of both worlds; you must choose, and you must abide by your choice.

But though the failure of *Elizabeth and Essex* leads to this conclusion, that failure, because it was the result of a daring experiment carried out with magnificent skill, leads the way to further discoveries. Had he lived, Lytton Strachey would no doubt himself have explored the vein that he had opened. As it is, he has shown us the way in which others may advance. The biographer is bound by facts—that is so; but, if it is so, he has the right to all the facts that are available. If Jones threw boots at the maid's head, had a mistress at Islington, or was found drunk in a ditch after a night's debauch, he must be free to say so—so far at least as the law of libel and human sentiment allow.

But these facts are not like the facts of science—once they are discovered, always the same. They are subject to changes of opinion; opinions change as the times change. What was thought a sin is now known, by the light of facts

won for us by the psychologists, to be perhaps a misfortune; perhaps a curiosity; perhaps neither one nor the other, but a trifling foible of no great importance one way or the other. The accent on sex has changed within living memory. This leads to the destruction of a great deal of dead matter still obscuring the true features of the human face. Many of the old chapter headings—life at college, marriage, career—are shown to be very arbitrary and artificial distinctions. The real current of the hero's existence took, very likely, a different course.

Thus the biographer must go ahead of the rest of us, like the miner's canary, testing the atmosphere, detecting falsity, unreality, and the presence of obsolete conventions. His sense of truth must be alive and on tiptoe. Then again, since we live in an age when a thousand cameras are pointed, by newspapers, letters, and diaries, at every character from every angle, he must be prepared to admit contradictory versions of the same face. Biography will enlarge its scope by hanging up looking glasses at odd corners. And yet from all this diversity it will bring out, not a riot of confusion, but a richer unity. And again, since so much is known that used to be unknown, the question now inevitably asks itself, whether the lives of great men only should be recorded. Is not anyone who has lived a life, and left a record of that life, worthy of biography—the failures as well as the successes, the humble as well as the illustrious? And what is greatness? And what smallness? He must revise our standards of merit and set up new heroes for our admiration.

Biography thus is only at the beginning of its career; it has a long and active life before it, we may be sure—a life full of difficulty, danger, and hard work. Nevertheless, we can also be sure that it is a different life from the life of poetry and fiction—a life lived at a lower degree of tension. And for that reason its creations are not destined for the immortality which the artist now and then achieves for his creations.

There would seem to be certain proof of that already. Even Dr. Johnson as created by Boswell will not live as long as Falstaff as created by Shakespeare. Micawber and Miss Bates we may be certain will survive Lockhart's Sir Walter Scott and Lytton Strachey's Queen Victoria. For they are made of more enduring matter. The artist's imagination at its most intense fires out what is perishable in fact; he builds with what is durable; but the biographer must accept the perishable, build with it, imbed it in the very fabric of his work. Much will perish; little will live. And thus we come to the conclusion that he is a craftsman, not an artist; and his work is not a work of art, but something betwixt and between.

Yet on that lower level the work of the biographer is invaluable; we cannot thank him sufficiently for what he does for us. For we are incapable of living wholly in the intense world of the imagination. The imagination is a faculty that soon tires and needs rest and refreshment. But for a tired imagination the proper food is not inferior poetry or minor fiction,—indeed they blunt and debauch it,—but sober fact, that "authentic information" from which, as Lytton Strachey has shown us, good biography is made. When and where did the real man live; how did he look; did he wear laced boots or elastic-sided; who were

his aunts, and his friends; how did he blow his nose; whom did he love, and how; and when he came to die did he die in his bed like a Christian, or . . .

By telling us the true facts, by sifting the little from the big, and shaping the whole so that we perceive the outline, the biographer does more to stimulate the imagination than any poet or novelist save the very greatest. For few poets and novelists are capable of that high degree of tension which gives us reality. But almost any biographer, if he respects facts, can give us much more than another fact to add to our collection. He can give us the creative fact; the fertile fact; the fact that suggests and engenders. Of this, too, there is certain proof. For how often, when a biography is read and tossed aside, some scene remains bright, some figure lives on in the depths of the mind, and causes us, when we read a poem or a novel, to feel a start of recognition, as if we remembered something that we had known before.

Fiction

HENRY JAMES

The Art of Fiction

. . . IT IS equally excellent and inconclusive to say that one must write from experience; to our suppositious aspirant such a declaration might savor of mockery. What kind of experience is intended, and where does it begin and end? Experience is never limited, and it is an immense sensibility, a kind of huge spider-web of the finest silken threads suspended in the chamber of consciousness, and catching every air-borne particle in its tissue. It is the very atmosphere of the mind; and when the mind is imaginative—much more when it happens to be that of a man of genius—it takes to itself the faintest hints of life, it converts the very pulses of the air into revelations. The young lady living in a village has only to be a damsel upon whom nothing is lost to make it quite unfair (as it seems to me) to declare to her that she shall have nothing to say about the military. Greater miracles have been seen than that, imagination assisting, she should speak the truth about some of these gentlemen. I remember an English novelist, a woman of genius, telling me that she was much commended for the impression she had managed to give in one of her tales of the nature and way of life of the French Protestant youth. She had been asked where she learned so much about this recondite being, she had been congratulated on her peculiar opportunities. These opportunities consisted in her having once, in Paris, as she ascended a staircase, passed an open door where, in the household of a *pasteur,* some of the young Protestants were seated

at table round a finished meal. The glimpse made a picture; it lasted only a moment, but that moment was experience. She had got her direct personal impression, and she turned out her type. She knew what youth was, and what Protestantism; she also had the advantage of having seen what it was to be French, so that she converted these ideas into a concrete image and produced a reality. Above all, however, she was blessed with the faculty which when you give it an inch takes an ell, and which for the artist is a much greater source of strength than any accident of residence or of place in the social scale. The power to guess the unseen from the seen, to trace the implication of things, to judge the whole piece by the pattern, the condition of feeling life in general so completely that you are well on your way to knowing any particular corner of it—this cluster of gifts may almost be said to constitute experience, and they occur in country and in town, and in the most differing stages of education. If experience consists of impressions, it may be said that impressions are experience, just as (have we not seen it?) they are the very air we breathe. Therefore, if I should certainly say to a novice, "Write from experience and from experience only," I should feel that this was rather a tantalizing monition if I were not careful immediately to add, "Try to be one of the people on whom nothing is lost!"

I am far from intending by this to minimize the importance of exactness—of truth of detail. One can speak best from one's own taste, and I may therefore venture to say that the air of reality (solidity of specification) seems to me to be the supreme virtue of a novel—the merit on which all its other merits helplessly and submissively depend. If it be not there they are all as nothing, and if these be there, they owe their effect to the success with which the author has produced the illusion of life. The cultivation of this success, the study of this exquisite process, form, to my taste, the beginning and the end of the art of the novelist. They are his inspiration, his despair, his reward, his torment, his delight. It is here in very truth that he competes with life; it is here that he competes with his brother the painter in *his* attempts to render the look of things, the look that conveys their meaning, to catch the color, the relief, the expression, the surface, the substance of the human spectacle. He cannot possibly take too many [notes], he cannot possibly take enough. All life solicits him, and to "render" the simplest surface, to produce the most momentary illusion, is a very complicated business. But this, I fear, he can never learn in any manual; it is the business of his life. He has to take a great many [notes] in order to select a few, he has to work them up as he can, and even the guides and philosophers who might have most to say to him must leave him alone when it comes to the application of precepts, as we leave the painter in communion with his palette. That his characters "must be clear in outline"—he feels that down to his boots; but how he shall make them so is a secret between his good angel and himself. It would be absurdly simple if he could be taught that a great deal of "description" would make them so, or that on the contrary the absence of description and the cultivation of dialogue, or the absence of dialogue and the multiplication of "incident," would rescue him from his difficulties. Nothing, for instance, is more possible than that he be of a turn of mind for which this odd, literal opposition of description and dialogue, incident

and description, has little meaning and light. People often talk of these things as if they had a kind of internecine distinctness, instead of melting into each other at every breath, and being intimately associated parts of one general effort of expression. I cannot imagine composition existing in a series of blocks, nor conceive, in any novel worth discussing at all, of a passage of description that is not in its intention narrative, a passage of dialogue that is not in its intention descriptive, a touch of truth of any sort that does not partake of the nature of incident, or an incident that derives its interest from any other source than the general and only source of the success of a work of art—that of being illustrative. A novel is a living thing, all one and continuous, like any other organism, and in proportion as it lives will it be found, I think, that in each of the parts there is something of each of the other parts. The critic who over the close texture of a finished work shall pretend to trace a geography of items will mark some frontiers as artificial, I fear, as any that have been known to history. There is an old-fashioned distinction between the novel of character and the novel of incident which must have cost many a smile to the intending fabulist who was keen about his work. It appears to me as little to the point as the equally celebrated distinction between the novel and the romance—to answer as little to any reality. There are bad novels and good novels, as there are bad pictures and good pictures; but that is the only distinction in which I see any meaning, and I can as little imagine speaking of a novel of character as I can imagine speaking of a picture of character. When one says picture one says of character, when one says novel one says of incident, and the terms may be transposed at will. What is character but the determination of incident? What is incident but the illustration of character? What is either a picture or a novel that is not of character? What else do we seek in it and find in it? It is an incident for a woman to stand up with her hand resting on a table and look at you in a certain way; or if it be not an incident I think it will be hard to say what it is. At the same time it is an expression of character. If you say you don't see it (character in *that—allons donc!*), this is exactly what the artist who has reasons of his own for thinking he does see it undertakes to show you. When a young man makes up his mind that he has not faith enough after all to enter the Church as he intended, that is an incident, though you may not hurry to the end of the chapter to see whether perhaps he doesn't change once more. I do not say that these are extraordinary or startling incidents. I do not pretend to estimate the degree of interest proceeding from them, for this will depend upon the skill of the painter. It sounds almost puerile to say that some incidents are intrinsically much more important than others, and I need not take this precaution after having professed my sympathy for the major ones in remarking that the only classification of the novel that I can understand is into that which has life and that which has it not.

Nothing, of course, will ever take the place of the good old fashion of "liking" a work of art or not liking it: the most improved criticism will not abolish that primitive, that ultimate test. . . . As people feel life, so they will feel the art that is most closely related to it. This closeness of relation is what we should never forget in talking of the effort of the novel. Many people speak of it as a factitious, artificial form, a product of ingenuity, the business of which

it is to alter and arrange the things that surround us, to translate them into conventional, traditional moulds. This, however, is a view of the matter which carries us but a very short way, condemns the art to an eternal repetition of a few familiar clichés, cuts short its development, and leads us straight up to a dead wall. Catching the very note and trick, the strange irregular rhythm of life, that is the attempt whose strenuous force keeps Fiction upon her feet.

I cannot see what is meant by talking as if there were a part of a novel which is the story and part of it which for mystical reasons is not—unless indeed the distinction be made in a sense in which it is difficult to suppose that any one should attempt to convey anything. "The story," if it represents anything, represents the subject, the idea, the *donnée* of the novel; and there is surely no "school" which urges that a novel should be all treatment and no subject. There must assuredly be something to treat; every school is intimately conscious of that. This sense of the story being the idea, the starting-point, of the novel, is the only one that I see in which it can be spoken of as something different from its organic whole; and since in proportion as the work is successful the idea permeates and penetrates it, informs and animates it, so that every word and every punctuation-point contribute directly to the expression, in that proportion do we lose our sense of the story being a blade which may be drawn more or less out of its sheath. The story and the novel, the idea and the form, are the needle and thread, and I never heard of a guild of tailors who recommended the use of the thread without the needle, or the needle without the thread.

I have left the question of the morality of the novel till the last, and at the last I find I have used up my space. It is a question surrounded with difficulties, as witness the very first that meets us, in the form of a definite question, on the threshold. Vagueness, in such a discussion, is fatal, and what is the meaning of your morality and your conscious moral purpose? Will you not define your terms and explain how (a novel being a picture) a picture can be either moral or immoral? You wish to paint a moral picture or carve a moral statue: will you not tell us how you would set about it? We are discussing the Art of Fiction; questions of art are questions (in the widest sense) of execution; questions of morality are quite another affair, and will you not let us see how it is that you find it so easy to mix them up? . . . There is one point at which the moral sense and the artistic sense lie very near together; that is in the light of the very obvious truth that the deepest quality of a work of art will always be the quality of the mind of the producer. In proportion as that intelligence is fine will the novel, the picture, the statue partake of the substance of beauty and truth. To be constituted of such elements is, to my vision, to have purpose enough. No good novel will ever proceed from a superficial mind; that seems to me an axiom which, for the artist in fiction, will cover all needful moral ground.

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

The Short Story

. . . THOUGH but one of a multitude of writers my practice is doubtless common to most, so that I may be permitted to give another instance of it. I was once asked to meet at dinner two persons, a husband and wife, of whom I was told only what the reader will shortly read. I think I never knew their names. I should certainly not recognise them if I met them in the street. Here are the notes I made at the time: "A stout, rather pompous man of fifty, with pince-nez, grey-haired, a florid complexion, blue eyes, a neat grey moustache. He talks with assurance. He is Resident of an outlying district and is somewhat impressed with the importance of his position. He despises the men who have let themselves go under the influence of the climate and the surroundings. He has travelled extensively during his short leaves in the East and knows Java, the Philippines, the coast of China and the Malay Peninsula. He is very British, very patriotic; he takes a great deal of exercise. He has been a very heavy drinker and always took a bottle of whisky to bed with him. His wife has entirely cured him and now he drinks nothing but water. She is a little insignificant woman, with sharp features, thin, with a sallow skin and a flat chest. She is very badly dressed. She has all the prejudices of an Englishwoman. All her family for generations have been in second-rate regiments. Except that you know that she has caused her husband to cease drinking entirely, you would think her quite colourless and unimportant." On these materials I invented the story which is called *Before the Party*. I do not believe that any candid person could think that these two people had cause for complaint because they had been made use of. It is true that I should never have thought of the story if I had not met them, but anyone who takes the trouble to read it will see how insignificant was the incident (the taking of the bottle to bed) that suggested it and how differently the two characters have in the course of writing developed from the brief sketch which was their foundation.

"Critics are like horse-flies which prevent the horse from ploughing," said Chekov. "For over twenty years I have read criticisms of my stories, and I do not remember a single remark of any value or one word of valuable advice. Only once Skabichevsky wrote something which made an impression on me. He said I would die in a ditch, drunk." Chekov was writing for twenty-five years, and during that time his writing was constantly attacked. I do not know whether the critics of the present day are naturally of a less ferocious temper; I must allow that on the whole the judgment that has been passed on the

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stories in this volume, when from time to time a collection has been published in book form, has been favourable. One epithet, however, has been much applied to them, which has puzzled me: they have been described with disconcerting frequency as "competent." Now on the face of it I might have thought this laudatory, for to do a thing competently is certainly more deserving of praise than to do it incompetently, but the adjective has been used in a disparaging sense and, anxious to learn and if possible to improve, I have asked myself what was in the mind of the critics who made this use of it. Of course none of us is liked by everybody and it is necessary that a man's writing, which is so intimate a revelation of himself, should be repulsive to persons who are naturally antagonistic to the creature he is. This should leave him unperturbed. But when an author's work is fairly commonly found to have a quality that is unattractive to many people, it is sensible of him to give the matter his attention. There is evidently something that a number of people do not like in my stories, and it is this they try to express when they damn them with the faint praise of competence. I have a notion that it is the definiteness of their form. I hazard the suggestion (perhaps unduly flattering to myself) because this particular criticism has never been made in France, where my stories have had with the critics and the public much greater success than they have had in England. The French, with their classical sense and their orderly minds, demand a precise form and are exasperated by a work in which the ends are left lying about, themes are propounded and not resolved, and a climax is foreseen and then eluded. This precision on the other hand has always been slightly antipathetic to the English. Our great novels have been shapeless and this, far from disconcerting their readers, has given them a sense of security. This is the life we know, they have thought, with its arbitrariness and inconsequence; we can put out of our minds the irritating thought that two and two make four. If I am right in this surmise, I can do nothing about it and I must resign myself to being called competent for the rest of my life. My prepossessions in the arts are on the side of law and order. I like a story that fits. I did not take to writing stories seriously till I had had much experience as a dramatist, and this experience taught me to leave out everything that did not serve the dramatic value of my story. It taught me to make incident follow incident in such a manner as to lead up to the climax I had in mind. I am not unaware of the disadvantages of this method. It gives a tightness of effect that is sometimes disconcerting. You feel that life does not dovetail into its various parts with such neatness. In life stories straggle, they begin nowhere and tail off without a point. That is probably what Chekov meant when he said that stories should have neither a beginning nor an end. It is certain that sometimes it gives you a sensation of airlessness when you see persons who behave so exactly according to character and incidents that fall into place with such perfect convenience. The story-teller of this kind aims not only at giving his own feelings about life, but at a formal decoration. He arranges life to suit his purposes. He follows a design in his mind, leaving out this and changing that; he distorts facts to his advantage, according to his plan; and when he attains his object produces a work of art. It may be that life slips through his fingers; then he has failed;

it may be that he seems sometimes so artificial that you cannot believe him, and when you do not believe a story-teller he is done. When he succeeds he has forced you for a time to accept his view of the universe and has given you the pleasure of following out the pattern he has drawn on the surface of chaos. But he seeks to prove nothing. He paints a picture and sets it before you. You can take it or leave it.

JOSEPH CONRAD

Preface to *Victory*

NOTE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE last word of this novel was written on the 29th of May, 1914. And that last word was the single word of the title.

Those were the times of peace. Now that the moment of publication approaches I have been considering the discretion of altering the title-page. The word Victory, the shining and tragic goal of noble effort, appeared too great, too august, to stand at the head of a mere novel. There was also the possibility of falling under the suspicion of commercial astuteness deceiving the public into the belief that the book had something to do with war.

Of that, however, I was not afraid very much. What influenced my decision most were the obscure promptings of that pagan residuum of awe and wonder which lurks still at the bottom of our old humanity. Victory was the last word I had written in peace time. It was the last literary thought which had occurred to me before the doors of the Temple of Janus flying open with a crash shook the minds, the hearts, the consciences of men all over the world. Such coincidence could not be treated lightly. And I made up my mind to let the word stand, in the same hopeful spirit in which some simple citizen of Old Rome would have "accepted the Omen."

The second point on which I wish to offer a remark is the existence (in the novel) of a person named Schomberg.

That I believe him to be true goes without saying. I am not likely to offer pinchbeck wares to my public consciously. Schomberg is an old member of my company. A very subordinate personage in Lord Jim as far back as the year 1899, he became notably active in a certain short story of mine published in 1902. Here he appears in a still larger part, true to life (I hope), but also true to himself. Only, in this instance, his deeper passions come into play, and thus his grotesque psychology is completed at last.

I don't pretend to say that this is the entire Teutonic psychology; but it is indubitably the psychology of a Teuton. My object in mentioning him here is

PREFACE TO VICTORY From *Victory*, edited by Edward Garnett, copyright, 1937. By permission of J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., publishers.

to bring out the fact that, far from being the incarnation of recent animosities, he is the creature of my old, deep-seated and, as it were, impartial conviction.

J. C.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

On approaching the task of writing this Note for "Victory" the first thing I am conscious of is the actual nearness of the book, its nearness to me personally, to the vanished mood in which it was written and to the mixed feelings aroused by the critical notices the book obtained when first published almost exactly a year after the beginning of the great war. The writing of it was finished in 1914 long before the murder of an Austrian Archduke sounded the first note of a warning for a world already full of doubts and fears.

The contemporaneous very short Author's Note which is preserved in this edition bears sufficient witness to the feelings with which I consented to the publication of the book. The fact of the book having been published in the United States early in the year made it difficult to delay its appearance in England any longer. It came out in the thirteenth month of the war, and my conscience was troubled by the awful incongruity of throwing this bit of imagined drama into the welter of reality, tragic enough in all conscience but even more cruel than tragic and more inspiring than cruel. It seemed awfully presumptuous to think there would be eyes to spare for those pages in a community which in the crash of the big guns and in the din of brave words expressing the truth of an indomitable faith could not but feel the edge of a sharp knife at its throat.

The unchanging Man of history is wonderfully adaptable cloth by his power of endurance and in his capacity for detachment. The fact seems to be that the play of his destiny is too great for his fears and too mysterious for his understanding. Were the trump of the Last Judgment to sound suddenly on a working day the musician at his piano would go on with his performance of Beethoven's Sonata and the cobbler at his stall stick to his last in undisturbed confidence in the virtues of the leather. And with perfect propriety. For what are we to let ourselves be disturbed by an angel's vengeful music too mighty for our ears and too awful for our terrors? Thus it happens to us to be struck suddenly by the lightning of wrath. The reader will go on reading if the book pleases him and the critic will go on criticizing with that faculty of detachment born perhaps from a sense of infinite littleness and which is yet the only faculty that seems to assimilate man to the immortal gods.

It is only when the catastrophe matches the natural obscurity of our fate that even the best representative of the race is liable to lose his detachment. It is very obvious that on the arrival of the gentlemanly Mr. Jones, the single-minded Ricardo and the faithful Pedro, Heyst, the man of universal detachment, loses his mental self-possession, that fine attitude before the universally irremediable which wears the name of stoicism. It is all a matter of proportion. There should have been a remedy for that sort of thing. And yet there is no remedy. Behind this minute instance of life's hazards Heyst sees the power of blind destiny. Besides, Heyst in his fine detachment had lost the habit of asserting himself. I don't mean the courage of self-assertion, either moral or physical, but the mere way of it, the trick of the thing, the readiness of mind and the turn of

the hand that come without reflection and lead the man to excellence in life, in art, in crime, in virtue and for the matter of that, even in love. Thinking is the great enemy of perfection. The habit of profound reflection, I am compelled to say, is the most pernicious of all the habits formed by the civilized man.

But I wouldn't be suspected even remotely of making fun of Axel Heyst. I have always liked him. The flesh and blood individual who stands behind the infinitely more familiar figure of the book I remember as a mysterious Swede right enough. Whether he was a baron, too, I am not so certain. He himself never laid a claim to that distinction. His detachment was too great to make any claims big or small on one's credulity. I will not say where I met him because I fear to give my readers a wrong impression, since a marked incongruity between a man and his surroundings is often a very misleading circumstance. We became very friendly for a time and I would not like to expose him to unpleasant suspicions though, personally, I am sure he would have been indifferent to suspicions as he was indifferent to all the other disadvantages of life. He was not the whole Heyst of course; he is only the physical and moral foundation of my Heyst laid on the ground of a short acquaintance. That it was short was certainly not my fault, for he had charmed me by the mere amenity of his detachment which, in this case, I cannot help thinking he had carried to excess. He went away from his rooms without leaving a trace. I wondered where he had gone to—but now I know. He vanished from my ken only to drift into this adventure that, unavoidable, waited for him in a world which he persisted in looking upon as a malevolent shadow spinning in the sunlight. Often in the course of years an expressed sentiment, the particular sense of a phrase heard casually, would recall him to my mind so that I have fastened on to him many words heard on other men's lips and belonging to other men's less perfect, less pathetic moods.

The same observation will apply *mutatis mutandis* to Mr. Jones, who is built on a much slenderer connection. Mr. Jones (or whatever his name was) did not drift away from me. He turned his back on me and walked out of the room. It was in a little hotel in the Island of St. Thomas in the West Indies (in the year '75) where we found him one hot afternoon extended on three chairs, all alone in the loud buzzing of flies to which his immobility and his cadaverous aspect gave a most gruesome significance. Our invasion must have displeased him because he got off the chairs brusquely and walked out leaving with me an indelibly weird impression of his thin shanks. One of the men with me said that the fellow was the most desperate gambler he had ever come across. I said: "A professional sharper?" and got for answer: "He's a terror; but I must say that up to a certain point he will play fair. . . ." I wonder what the point was. I never saw him again because I believe he went straight on board a mail-boat which left within the hour for other ports of call in the direction of Aspinall. Mr. Jones's characteristic insolence belongs to another man of a quite different type. I will say nothing as to the origins of his mentality because I don't intend to make any damaging admissions.

It so happened that the very same year Ricardo—the physical Ricardo—was a fellow passenger of mine on board an extremely small and extremely dirty

little schooner, during a four days' passage between two places in the Gulf of Mexico whose names don't matter. For the most part he lay on deck aft as it were at my feet, and raising himself from time to time on his elbow would talk about himself and go on talking, not exactly to me or even at me (he would not even look up but kept his eyes fixed on the deck) but more as if communing in a low voice with his familiar devil. Now and then he would give me a glance and make the hairs of his stiff little moustache stir quaintly. His eyes were green, and to this day every cat I see reminds me of the exact contour of his face. What he was travelling for or what was his business in life he never confided to me. Truth to say the only passenger on board that schooner who could have talked openly about his activities and purposes was a very snuffy and conversationally delightful friar, the Superior of a convent, attended by a very young lay brother, of a particularly ferocious countenance. We had with us also, lying prostrate in the dark and unspeakable cuddy of that schooner, an old Spanish gentleman, owner of much luggage and, as Ricardo assured me, very ill indeed. Ricardo seemed to be either a servant or the confidant of that aged and distinguished-looking invalid, who early on the passage held a long murmured conversation with the friar, and after that did nothing but groan feebly, smoke cigarettes and now and then call for Martin in a voice full of pain. Then he who has become Ricardo in the book would go below into that beastly and noisome hole, remain there mysteriously, and coming up on deck again with a face on which nothing could be read, would as likely as not resume for my edification the exposition of his moral attitude toward life illustrated by striking particular instances of the most atrocious complexion. Did he mean to frighten me? Or seduce me? Or astonish me? Or arouse my admiration? All he did was to arouse my amused incredulity. As scoundrels go he was far from being a bore. For the rest my innocence was so great then that I could not take his philosophy seriously. All the time he kept one ear turned to the cuddy in the manner of a devoted servant, but I had the idea that in some way or other he had imposed the connection on the invalid for some end of his own. The reader therefore won't be surprised to hear that one morning I was told without any particular emotion by the padrone of the schooner that the "Rich man" down there was dead: He had died in the night. I don't remember ever being so moved by the desolate end of a complete stranger. I looked down the skylight, and there was the devoted Martin busy cording cowhide trunks belonging to the deceased whose white beard and hooked nose were the only parts I could make out in the dark depths of a horrible stuffy bunk.

As it fell calm in the course of the afternoon and continued calm during all that night and the terrible, flaming day, the late "Rich man" had to be thrown overboard at sunset, though as a matter of fact we were in sight of the low, pestilential, mangrove-lined coast of our destination. The excellent Father Superior mentioned to me with an air of immense commiseration: "The poor man has left a young daughter." Who was to look after her I don't know, but I saw the devoted Martin taking the trunks ashore with great care just before I landed myself. I would perhaps have tracked the ways of that man of immense sincerity for a little while but I had some of my own very pressing business to attend to, which in the end got mixed up with an earthquake and so

I had no time to give to Ricardo. The reader need not be told that I have not forgotten him, though.

My contact with the faithful Pedro was much shorter and my observation of him was less complete but incomparably more anxious. It ended in a sudden inspiration to get out of his way. It was in a hovel of sticks and mats by the side of a path. As I went in there only to ask for a bottle of lemonade I have not to this day the slightest idea what in my appearance or actions could have roused his terrible ire. It became manifest to me less than two minutes after I had set eyes on him for the first time, and though immensely surprised of course I didn't stop to think it out. I took the nearest short cut—through the wall. This bestial apparition and a certain enormous buck nigger encountered in Haiti only a couple of months afterwards, have fixed my conception of blind, furious, unreasoning rage, as manifested in the human animal, to the end of my days. Of the nigger I used to dream for years afterwards. Of Pedro never. The impression was less vivid. I got away from him too quickly.

It seems to me but natural that those three buried in a corner of my memory should suddenly get out into the light of the world—so natural that I offer no excuse for their existence. They were there, they had to come out; and this is a sufficient excuse for a writer of tales who had taken to his trade without preparation, or premeditation and without any moral intention but that which pervades the whole scheme of this world of senses.

Since this Note is mostly concerned with personal contacts and the origins of the persons in the tale, I am bound also to speak of Lena, because if I were to leave her out it would look like a slight; and nothing would be further from my thoughts than putting a slight on Lena. If of all the personages involved in the "mystery of Samburan" I have lived longest with Heyst (or with him I call Heyst) it was at her, whom I call Lena, that I have looked the longest and with a most sustained attention. This attention originated in idleness for which I have a natural talent. One evening I wandered into a café, in a town not of the tropics but of the South of France. It was filled with tobacco smoke, the hum of voices, the rattling of dominoes and the sounds of strident music. The orchestra was rather smaller than the one that performed at Schomberg's hotel, had the air more of a family party than of an enlisted band, and, I must confess, seemed rather more respectable than the Zangiacomo musical enterprise. It was less pretentious also, more homely and familiar, so to speak, insomuch that in the intervals when all the performers left the platform one of them went amongst the marble tables collecting offerings of sous and francs in a battered tin receptacle recalling the shape of a sauceboat. It was a girl. Her detachment from her task seems to me now to have equalled or even surpassed Heyst's aloofness from all the mental degradations to which a man's intelligence is exposed in its way through life. Silent and wide-eyed she went from table to table with the air of a sleep-walker and with no other sound but the slight rattle of the coins to attract attention. It was long after the sea-chapter of my life had been closed but it is difficult to discard completely the characteristics of half a life-time, and it was in something of the jack-ashore spirit that I dropped a five-franc piece into the sauceboat; whereupon the sleepwalker turned her head to gaze at me and said "Merci, Monsieur," in a tone in which

there was no gratitude but only surprise. I must have been idle indeed to take the trouble to remark on such slight evidence that the voice was very charming and when the performers resumed their seats I shifted my position slightly in order not to have that particular performer hidden from me by the little man with the beard who conducted, and who might for all I know have been her father, but whose real mission in life was to be a model for the Zangiacomo of "Victory." Having got a clear line of sight I naturally (being idle) continued to look at the girl through all the second part of the programme. The shape of her dark head inclined over the violin was fascinating, and, while resting between the pieces of that interminable programme she was, in her white dress and with her brown hands reposing in her lap, the very image of dreamy innocence. The mature, bad-tempered woman at the piano might have been her mother, though there was not the slightest resemblance between them. All I am certain of in their personal relation to each other is that cruel pinch on the upper part of the arm. That I am sure I have seen! There could be no mistake. I was in a too idle mood to imagine such a gratuitous barbarity. It may have been playfulness, yet the girl jumped up as if she had been stung by a wasp. It may have been playfulness. Yet I saw plainly poor "dreamy innocence" rub gently the affected place as she filed off with the other performers down the middle aisle between the marble tables in the uproar of voices, the rattling of dominoes, through a blue atmosphere of tobacco smoke. I believe that those people left the town next day.

Or perhaps they had only migrated to the other big café, on the other side of the Place de la Comédie. It is very possible. I did not go across to find out. It was my perfect idleness that had invested the girl with a peculiar charm, and I did not want to destroy it by any superfluous exertion. The receptivity of my indolence made the impression so permanent that when the moment came for her meeting with Heyst I felt that she would be heroically equal to every demand of the risky and uncertain future. I was so convinced of it that I let her go with Heyst, I won't say without a pang but certainly without misgivings. And in view of her triumphant end what more could I have done for her rehabilitation and her happiness?

1920. J. C.

Drama

ERIC BENTLEY

Comedy and The Importance of Being Earnest

THEORISTS have thought out all manner of quasi-final definitions of comedy. The procedure is either to legislate *a priori,* "The essence of comedy is A, B, and C," or, if the inductive method has more scientific associations, to generalize from a particular school of practice—the one the theorist likes best—and to say: "The essence of comedy is D, E, and F." Both methods give an assured answer, and that is a sufficient reason for adopting neither. Nor shall we find a key to the art of comedy in the psychology of laughter. Henri Bergson's splendid little book, it should be recalled, is entitled *Laughter.* Its primary subject, accordingly, is not comedy but a common by-product of comedy. Its primary aim is the analysis of human nature, not the evaluation of works of art. What is comedy as a dramatic art? To answer such a question we would have to ponder the various phenomena which have been called comedy and consider what they have in common, if anything, that justifies their common name. Critical terms can never be more than approximations and conveniences. When they become battlegrounds, when someone wants to know which of the varieties is the *real thing,* we have tumbled from rational discourse into superstition.

Thinking over a large number of plays known as tragedies and comedies, we can see much good sense in one of Bergson's dichotomies. The tragic writer has generally been concerned with last things, with death, with the meaning of life as a whole, with "destiny" or "fate," with Man in relation to the universe and under the aspect of eternity. In relation to such concerns, at any rate, we could analyze the tragic endeavors of Sophocles, Shakespeare, Strindberg, and O'Neill. Comedy on the other hand has dealt more with the social, the historical, the temporal. Where the tragic writer has sought to portray the individual and to see in him universal Man, the comic writer has tried to portray types, groups, and classes, and therefore to display differences among men.

From such divergencies of preoccupation we might elaborate two opposing schemes of life, the one religious, or quasi-religious, postulating an ultimate

COMEDY AND THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST From *The Playwright as Thinker,* copyright, 1946, by Eric Bentley. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

meaning in life, the other secular and ethical, postulating an immediate moral meaning in life. Tragedy, we might say, begins with calamity and ends in beauty, reconciliation, and hope; comedy begins with laughter and ends in judgment, reproof, and perhaps bitterness. . . .

The Importance of Being Earnest (1895) is a variant, not of domestic drama like *Candida* or of melodrama like *Brassbound,* but of farce, a genre which, being the antithesis of serious, is not easily put to serious uses. In fact nothing is easier than to handle this play without noticing what it contains. It is so consistently farcical in tone, characterization, and plot that very few care to root out any more serious content. The general conclusion has been that Wilde merely decorates a silly play with a flippant wit. Like Shaw he is dismissed as "not really a dramatist at all." Unlike Shaw he does not have any such dramatic structure to offer in refutation of his critics as underlies a *Major Barbara* or a *Candida.* We cannot turn to him for the dialectical steel frame of a Molière or a Shaw. Yet we shall only display our own insensitivity if we dismiss him.

Insensitivity to slight and delicate things is insensitivity *tout court.* That is what Wilde meant when he declared that the man who despises superficiality is himself superficial. His best play is connected with this idea. As its title confesses, it is about *earnestness,* that is, Victorian solemnity, that kind of false seriousness which means priggishness, hypocrisy, and lack of irony. Wilde proclaims that earnestness is less praiseworthy than the ironic attitude to life which is regarded as superficial. His own art, and the comic spirit which Congreve embodied and which Meredith had described, were thereby vindicated. Wilde calls *The Importance of Being Earnest* "a trivial comedy for serious people" meaning, in the first place, a comedy which will be thought negligible by the earnest and, in the second, a *comedy of surface* for connoisseurs. The latter will perceive that Wilde is as much of a moralist as Bernard Shaw but that, instead of presenting the problems of modern society directly, he flits around them, teasing them, declining to grapple with them. His wit is no searchlight into the darkness of modern life. It is a flickering, a coruscation, intermittently revealing the upper class of England in a harsh bizarre light. This upper class could feel about Shaw that at least he took them seriously, no one more so. But the outrageous Oscar (whom they took care to get rid of as they had got rid of Byron) refused to see the importance of being earnest.

One does not find Wilde's satire embedded in plot and character as in traditional high comedy. It is a running accompaniment to the play, and this fact, far from indicating immaturity, is the making of a new sort of comedy. The plot is one of those Gilbertian absurdities of lost infants and recovered brothers which can only be thought of to be laughed at. Yet the dialogue which sustains the plot, or is sustained by it, is an unbroken stream of comment on all the themes of life which the plot is so far from broaching. Perhaps *comment* is too flat and downright a conception. Wildean "comment" is a pseudo-irresponsible jabbing at all the great problems, and we would be justified in removing the prefix "pseudo" if the Wildean satire, for all its naughtiness, had not a cumulative effect and a paradoxical one. Flippancies

repeated, developed, and, so to say, elaborated almost into a system amount to something in the end—and thereby cease to be flippant. What begins as a prank ends as a criticism of life. What begins as intellectual high-kicking ends as intellectual sharp-shooting.

The margins of an annotated copy of *The Importance* would show such headings as: death; money and marriage; the nature of style; ideology and economics; beauty and truth; the psychology of philanthropy; the decline of aristocracy; nineteenth-century morals; the class system. The possibility of such notations in itself means little. But if we bear in mind that Wilde is skimming steadily over mere topics all through *The Importance,* we can usefully turn to a particular page to see precisely how this works. To choose the opening page is not to load the dice in a dramatist's favor, since that page is usually either heavy-going exposition or mere patter which allows the audience to get seated. Here is Wilde's first page:

ALGERNON. Did you hear what I was playing, Lane?

LANE. I didn't think it polite to listen, sir.

ALGERNON. I'm sorry for that, for your sake. I don't play accurately—anyone can play accurately—but I play with wonderful expression. As far as the piano is concerned sentiment is my forte. I keep science for life.

LANE. Yes, sir.

ALGERNON. And, speaking of the science of life, have you got the cucumber sandwiches cut for Lady Bracknell?

LANE. Yes, sir.

ALGERNON. Oh! . . . by the way, Lane, I see from your book that on Thursday night, when Lord Sherman and Mr. Worthing were dining with me, eight bottles of champagne are entered as having been consumed.

LANE. Yes, sir; eight bottles and a pint.

ALGERNON. Why is it that at a bachelor's establishment the servants invariably drink the champagne? I ask merely for information.

LANE. I attribute it to the superior quality of the wine, sir. I have often observed that in married households the champagne is rarely of a first-rate brand.

ALGERNON. Good Heavens! Is marriage so demoralizing as that?

LANE. I believe it *is* a very pleasant state, sir. I have had very little experience of it myself up to the present. I have only been married once. That was in consequence of a misunderstanding between myself and a young person.

ALGERNON. I don't know that I am much interested in your family life, Lane.

LANE. No, sir. It is not a very interesting subject. I never think of it myself.

ALGERNON. Very natural, I am sure. That will do, Lane, thank you.

LANE. Thank you, sir. (*He goes out.*)

ALGERNON. Lane's views on marriage seem somewhat lax. Really, if the lower orders don't set us a good example, what on earth is the use of them? They seem, as a class, to have absolutely no sense of moral responsibility.

This passage is enough to show the way in which Wilde attaches a serious and satirical allusion to every remark. The butler's "I didn't think it polite to listen, sir" is a prelude to the jokes against class society which run through the play. Algernon's first little speech touches on the foolish opposition of life and sentiment, science and art. Talk of science and life leads by Wildean transition back to the action and the cucumber sandwiches. Champagne takes

the action to speculation on servants and masters, and thence to marriage and morals. A little dialectical climax is reached with the answer to the question: "Is marriage so demoralizing as that?" when Lane coolly replies: "I believe it *is* a very pleasant state, sir," and adds, by way of an explanation no less disconcerting by Victorian standards, "I have had very little experience of it myself up to the present. I have only been married once." Which is followed by the explanation of the explanation: "That was in consequence of a misunderstanding. . . ." It cannot be said that marriage in this passage receives the "staggering blows" which the ardent reformer is wont to administer. But does it not receive poisoned pin pricks that are just as effective? Are not the inversions and double inversions of standards managed with dexterous delicacy "No, sir. It is not a very interesting subject." A delicious turn in the argument! And then the little moralistic summing-up of Algernon's: "Lane's views on marriage seem somewhat lax. Really, if the lower orders don't set us a good example . . ." And so it ripples on.

We are accustomed to plays in which a serious plot and theme are enlivened —"dramatized," as we say—by comic incident and witticism. Such plays are at best sweetened pills. "Entertainment value" is added as an afterthought, reminding one of the man who, having watched for weeks the construction of a modern Gothic building, cried one day: "Oh, look, they're putting the architecture on now!" Oscar Wilde's procedure is the opposite of all this. He has no serious plot, no credible characters. His witticisms are, not comic, but serious relief. They are in ironic counterpoint with the absurdities of the action. This counterpoint is Wilde's method. It is what gives him his peculiar voice and his peculiar triumph. It is what makes him hard to catch: the fish's tail flicks, flashes, and disappears. Perhaps *The Importance* should be defined as "almost a satire." As the conversations in *Alice in Wonderland* hover on the frontier of sense without ever quite crossing it, so the dialogue in *The Importance* is forever on the frontier of satire, forever on the point of breaking into bitter criticism. It never breaks. The ridiculous action constantly steps in to prevent the break. That is its function. Before the enemy can denounce Wilde the agile outburst is over and we are back among the cucumber sandwiches.

The counterpoint or irony of Wilde's play expresses itself theatrically in the contrast between the elegance and *savoir-faire* of the actors and the absurdity of what they actually do. This contrast too can be dismissed as mere Oscarism and frivolity. Actually it is integral to an uncommonly rich play. The contrast between smooth, assured appearances and inner emptiness is, moreover, nothing more nor less than a fact of sociology and history. Wilde knew his England. He knew her so well that he could scarcely be surprised when she laughed off his truisms as paradoxes and fastened a humorless and baleful eye on all his flights of fancy. Wilde had his own solution to the problem stated by Meredith, the problem of finding a vantage point for satire in an unaristocratic age. It was the solution of Bohemianism. For Wilde the Bohemian attitude was far from being a philosophy in itself—a point which most of his friends and enemies, beginning at the Wilde trail, seem to have missed.

Bohemianism was for Wilde a mask. To wear masks was Wilde's personal adjustment to modern life, as it was Nietzsche's. Hence we are right in talking of his pose as we are right in talking of Nietzsche's vanity. The mistake is in believing that these men deceived themselves. If we patronize them the joke is on us. If Wilde seems shallow when we want depth, if he seems a liar when we want truth, we should recall his words: "A Truth in Art is that whose contradictory is also true. The Truths of metaphysics are the Truths of masks."

Poetry

DONALD A. STAUFFER

The Nature of Poetry

FEW PEOPLE have ever been brave enough to define poetry. Not many among those few have felt happy with their definitions. Yet most of us have experienced poetry, and many of us believe that we can recognize it when we see it, just as we can recognize life when we see it, although we cannot satisfactorily define it. Like life, poetry exists in so many forms and on so many levels that it triumphantly defies description. Keats has written of poetry as the realms of gold, and has noted its many goodly states and kingdoms, its many islands held in fealty to Apollo. The metaphor is a good one, though it hardly goes far enough. There are more poems than there are islands in the Caribbean, or the Mediterranean; and they vary more in shape, size, color, contour, and human habitability.

Furthermore, any individual poem, as Keats wrote of Homer's *Iliad,* may in itself be a complete domain, illimitable as the Pacific, ruled by its own king and creator, a wide expanse arched over by a pure and serene air. Or—and here is the rub—it may not be like that at all. It may be as small and limited as an epigram by Martial, as precipitous and rocky as a lyric by Donne, as barely above sea level as a poem by Edgar Guest. And it might be quite different from any now known. Surely there is good reason to avoid a definition of poetry. The clearer and more concise the definition is, the more poems it leaves out.

If we are to understand the nature of poetry, we must view the realms of gold from many points of vantage. We must travel on various single quests across many islands. At the start we must take certain bearings and ask cer-

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tain questions. Are we to consider the *medium* of words in which poetry is composed? Or the *subjects* which poetry treats? Or the *purposes* for which the subjects are being used? Or the *forms* created in that verbal medium in order to give expression to certain subjects and purposes? The first of these possibilities will occupy us in later paragraphs. The second need not detain us, for the answer, if we judge by actual practice, is that any subject matter may furnish raw materials for poets, from Chaucer, who used warts and running sores, to T. S. Eliot, who uses statistics. The last two possibilities present the further question: Are we to consider poetry or poems? Poetry, of course, may serve as a generic name for a group of poems or for all poems taken together. Often, however, the word is used to describe the spirit or mood which may find expression in a poem but may also find expression in, say, a painting or a piece of music. Many critical battles and misunderstandings have arisen because one man was viewing the qualities of the *poetic spirit* and his opponent was seeing only the qualities of a *poem*. We might at this point decide on a procedure: to consider first those elements which most usually combine in the poetic spirit; and then, more narrowly, the technical and formal elements which shape words into a poem.

Poetry labors under the further handicap of being the most misunderstood of all the arts. And yet of all the arts, poetry should afford to the greatest number of people the most delight. Actually it does nothing of the kind. Instead, the average adolescent or adult (for children know what poetry is) feels uncomfortable or irritated or bored when he confronts a poem. Partly this defect in sympathy may be attributed to the many easy substitutes that now satisfy everyone's natural craving for esthetic experience—the comic strips and the movies, the detective stories and the weekly magazines, the soap opera on the radio and the trip in the car. A debased currency will always drive out the genuine article, and there are plenty of ways today to get others to do our thinking and our feeling for us. Partly the misunderstanding springs from the amount of rapid reading we do, skimming newspapers and billboards and novels, so that we are impatient when anything demands close scrutiny. We have also had little practice in taking in through the ear esthetically ordered words. The eye has displaced the ear as the instrument for literary communication, although it is quite possible that the radio, some day in the future, may help to restore the enjoyment of poetry as a verbal pattern of meaningful *sounds*.

But the main cause of the popular uneasiness before poetry lies in the very medium which this art uses—the medium of words. We are accustomed to using words almost solely for the practical purposes of living. We cannot understand without an effort—or better still, without long experience—that in poetry words are used in a different way and serve different purposes. Poetry alone among the arts suffers this serious handicap. We understand that almost all the other arts are not aiming at the practical. No one supposes that ballet dancers are building up their muscles for military service or are running to the store to buy a loaf of bread. A painting and a symphony concert cannot readily be considered to be of immediate practical usefulness, and there is

little likelihood of approaching them with dangerously wrong expectations. But let us imagine for a moment that from childhood we had constantly used square or rectangular surfaces solely as dining tables, writing tables, or checkerboards. A painting might then fill us with contempt because it would be so poorly designed to satisfy what we felt to be its natural functions. Or suppose from the cradle up we had sipped our milk and drunk our coffee from receptacles resembling saxophones. Would it not then seem to us ludicrous to see a man blowing into his cup in order to make it produce inedible and therefore unedifying saxophonic sounds?

We need not resort to such far-fetched parables when we turn to poetry. We are already in the midst of a comedy, or tragedy, of errors. Continually we use words to say "Please pass the butter," or "I think free trade is obviously the solution," or "I hear Marjorie has given up Steve for Dick." And when the words of poetry fail to say similar things satisfying similar purposes, we are irked or bewildered. Or worse, we try to force them into our ordinary modes of practical or logical thought. We are constantly coming out with the wrong answers. We call poetry a means of escape—as if we actually lived all the time, or even most of the time, in the practical and active world, and never among dreams, aspirations, values, and the sheer sensations of being alive. Even when we know that there are other ways of life than the business of the world, we fail to look for them in poetry, for the barrier of words is still there, and words in our experience are used for immediate utilitarian purposes. And therefore we collect a small handful of commonplace notions and facts from the rich mines of poetry. We feel that we have settled Hardy's business when we label him pessimistic and fatalistic, we consider *Macbeth* simply as a tract to show that too much ambition is a bad thing, we read *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* because it deals with travels through Europe and an actual battle of Waterloo, or we abstain from *Paradise Lost* because Milton was a Puritan who took the story of Adam and Eve literally. Poetry, we feel, contains some history and some facts, but the *World Almanac* organizes them more efficiently.

Another of our misapprehensions is that reason is the prime distinction of man and that poetry is inferior intellectually to mathematics or philosophy. One of America's most notable critics, John Crowe Ransom, finds the distinguishing mark of poetry to lie in the logical irrelevancy of its local details; to most readers this would immediately appear a flaw in poetry resulting from the ignorance or perversity of poets. That there are other modes of thought and of knowledge than the logical and the practical is not one of our habitual assumptions.

The first necessity, therefore, is to present an approach to poetry as poetry, to show how poets use words. The notion is difficult to express and to grasp, but it is also, I think inevitably, the basic assumption for any further profitable discussion. Stated in its simplest terms, this notion rests on the assumption that a poem is like a person. We can classify persons as Vermonters or Italians, just as we can classify poems as elegies, ballads, and the rest; but perhaps such categories do little to help us understand either personality or

poetry. The first safe generalization to make about persons is that each one of them is individual, unmistakable, unduplicable, and that if he were not—if there were any identical substitute for him—he would not be a person. The same is true of a poem, of any poem. I have tried to express this notion in the phrase: "Poetry is exact." The phrase is not good enough: its very failure proves the point I am attempting to establish. A poem, through its overtones, its suggestions, the relations between its words and motifs, and its other complexities, may express with complete adequacy a definite and unique experience. But the limited language of analysis, in such a phrase as "Poetry is exact," does not satisfactorily "cover" its subject. Even in this first sketching of the idea, without amplification or illustration or qualification, I must at least point out that the exactness of poetic language is not the logical invariability of a mathematical proposition; rather, it is the unmistakability by which we recognize one person as different from another, depending upon a multiplicity of traits, features, and qualities, material and immaterial, which defy complete analysis. The mere fact that the words of a poem can *not* be analyzed and described exhaustively does not make it less exact; instead, it constitutes the peculiar "exactness," the particularity, the uniqueness, of that poem. Wherever we find poetry, we find also this pleasure in recognizing the unique.

The same voice is not speaking in

> The curfew tolls the knell of parting day

that speaks in

> For God's sake, hold your tongue and let me love,

and there is no good in trying to make them sound alike. Even when the same poet speaks, he may speak in various moods. We should not bring the temper of the "Elegy in a Country Churchyard" to a reading of

> Ruin seize thee, ruthless King!
> Confusion on thy banners wait!

All of this is only a way of saying that the first enjoyment we may get from poetry comes from accepting it for what it is and not for something else. We do not enjoy a friend by reducing him to a set of categories: age, 30; hair, dark brown; nationality, U. S.; religion, Methodist. And the better we know the friend, the less we are satisfied to ticket him as 30% justice; 30% cantankerousness; 20% amiability; 15% laziness; and 5% hot temper. Instead, we take pleasure in recognizing that

> I must confess it could not choose but be
> Profane to think thee anything but thee.

A poem, just as clearly, is a fusion of innumerable elements, large and small, in many fields of experience, obvious or subtle or even not consciously noticed or describable. Experienced fully as a poem, it is not made up of separable or interchangeable parts, and its exactness lies in this unique wholeness.

We may grasp completely the meaning of a scientific law such as "For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction" when that law is stated in other

words. But we have lost something when we take the last line of Dante's *Divine Comedy,*

L'amor che move il sole e l' altre stelle,

and translate it literally as

The love which moves the sun and the other stars.

Furthermore, in the Italian, that line gains its full illumination, its precision of meaning, only in its relation to all the rest of the poem with its great weight and glory of details.

The poetic world is the world seen through the eyes of an individual and expressed in his words. Even when that world appears most abstracted and generalized, the poetic view is still unique, and cannot be changed or added to or translated into other terms, as can the propositions in the communal and rational world of science. A poem is an individual imaginative experience recorded as faithfully as possible by an individual poet.

Suppose we accept as the necessary first approach to poetry this recognition that poetic exactness consists in the unique individuality of each complete poetic expression. Does it follow, then, that any further observations on the nature of poetry are rendered impossible because each separate poem is a law unto itself? Does anarchy or multiplicity crowd out order? By no means. But the order cannot be mechanical, for a poem is comparable to a living organism. The art of poetry is not the exclusive possession of any century or school or age or race or nation. The range of poetry is immense, and good poems are inexhaustible in number and in variety.

A poem is like a person. Now a person does not lose his personality because he is subject to certain general laws: of gravity, of chemistry, of heredity, or of Nemesis. If one considers the laws governing poetry not as grim fiats, but as descriptions of what usually happens in a poem, as generalizations based on experience, they need not seem stern and inflexible and forbidding. The nature of poetry is fluid, so that the laws of poetry, like the laws of nature, may be deduced as great guiding principles within which individual entities move easily, in accordance with their own particular natures, and with no sense of let or hindrance. The biological laws of intussusception and of senescence apply equally to an Anopheles mosquito, an oak tree, and an elephant, but they do not compel the mosquito to be the elephant. Similarly, the qualities of poetry are found as constants in all poetry, yet are uniquely embodied in each particular poem. No one law of poetry reveals all its secrets; and only open, comprehensive, tolerant minds will save us from clamping poetry in too narrow a cage.

The second point is that poetry is intense. It rests on the premise that to create any work of art requires strenuous effort, and that only an experience of more than average intensity is strong enough to compel an artist to reproduce that experience as exactly as poetry requires. The more traditional way of stating the fact of poetic intensity would be to say that poetry is emotional or passionate. Calling poetry emotional, however, suggests to some people that poetry gushes and sentimentalizes. So it does, when it wishes, and still it remains poetry: far too many modern critics and readers assume that senti-

ment and even sentimentality are no fit parts of human experience. But romantic sentiment is not the only way of expressing feeling; restraint and understatement can produce equally powerful emotional effects. Profound thought, no less than smiles and tears, may stamp passion upon a poem; and following the convolutions of a controlled argument may produce an exhilaration and an awareness which cannot be distinguished from emotion. Nevertheless, to avoid the popular limitations set upon the word "emotion," I have chosen to speak of the *intensity* of poetry. Even the idea of intensity must be considered closely to prevent misunderstanding. It might imply that the sensation of poetry is comparable to an electric shock or an exploding firecracker; it is necessary, in consequence, to show how intensity may be secured through diffusion as well as through compression, through simple serious statement as well as through distortion and hyperbole, through repetition as well as through epigram. For again, though the goal of intensity is single for all poems, it may be reached by various individual paths.

A man does not write a poem in a typhoon or on the bier of his child. He must be at least detached enough from any intense experience to express satisfactorily its meaning for him. The third point is that poetry is significant. The care to put exact words in right places, the intensity evoked by the poet and felt by the reader—these could not exist if the poet did not believe that he was being exact and intense about *something*. Art is not an end in itself, an ivory tower walled off from and raised beyond the world of common sense. In part also, since poetry presents one man's consciousness as he regards his material, and since his material is usually human life, poetry almost inescapably contains judgments on human values. The discussion, therefore, again argues the venerable case, now somewhat unfashionable, that the end of art is to teach, and that the significance of poetry is primarily a moral significance. Poetry may even be considered as the most effective of moral agents, since it presents not bloodless propositions, but one man's answer to particular situations. In other words, it affords useful examples, for each of us must reach his own moral decisions under similar circumstances of particularity. Such a position demands that many warning signs be set up to show that moral beliefs need not be expressed directly; that poetry is now narrow, rigid, and crude in dogmatism; and that a poem, though it strives toward meaning as intently as a sermon, a legal brief, or a scientific journal, possesses a significance different in kind and different in expression.

In developing this argument, the fourth point naturally follows: "Poetry is concrete." Its significance is embodied in the symbols of all the senses; and moral statements, abstract speculations, convictions, hopes, and tenuous emotions, are all set forth to walk in images and actions. Like the ordinary man, the poet naturally grasps an idea in terms of an example. He "sees" his thought. His pictures and vivid instances convey his sense of the immediacy, the tangibility, the actuality, of the world and of his own existence. The gorgeous galleries of poetry afford ample illustrations that the typical poet thinks in images, and there is little further to do except to point out that even philosophical or reflective or didactic poetry possesses, to a remarkable degree, this quality of concreteness.

The fifth point should surprise no one: "Poetry is complex." The earlier principles are, I think, applicable to all poetry; each is quite able to get along independently; each differs from the others; yet how are they to subsist simultaneously in the same poem? Words must be set down in a satisfying and inevitable order; figures and panoramas and symbols must be summoned up before the mind's eye; the dance of the words and figures must not be meaningless, but must rouse in the reader a sense of significance; and thought, words, images, must not clog each other, nor interfere with the sense of heightened experience, of intensity, which gives to art its life and joyousness. The various modes of living—in sensation, in intellect, in emotion, in desire, in conscience—must be allowed full and harmonious interplay. This is the miracle of poetry. This is the mystery of unity-achieved-through-variety which again makes inevitable the comparison: a poem is like a person. The four first points express merely a few of the great guiding general principles in poetry; there are innumerable smaller laws and local ordinances and temporary edicts and proclamations in time of emergency. Fortunately the immense domains of poetry can never be reduced to mathematical or legal order; and this fifth point is not so much a law as a description, a recognition, of the complexity of poetry. In art, and perhaps only in art, are the full possibilities of man's existence imaginatively realized, so that life may be apprehended, for a moment, at its highest and its most complete.

Although the illustrations for the first five points may be drawn almost solely from poems, and from poems in English, the principles themselves might well apply, with changes in emphasis, to any of the arts. They represent the artist's way of looking at the world; they try to catch the qualities in his nature. The last two points narrow consideration to the specific artistic qualities of the poetic spirit when it uses words as its medium of expression. This was also considered in the first section, although there the focus was primarily on the quality of poetic words rather than on their formal arrangement. Stated in other terms, the first five points consider primarily the *qualities* of poetry, the last two (and to some extent the first) consider the qualities of *a poem*.

The sixth point holds that poetry is rhythmic. A poem maintains its life by walking the knife-edge between rhythmical formlessness on one side and mechanical meter on the other. These verbal patterns in sound show how sheer technical achievements may be devoted to clarifying and intensifying the substance of the poem.

Finally, "Poetry is formal." The word is forbidding in its stiffness, but here we are dealing with the most purely esthetic aspects of our subject, the most strictly poetic. And we find that poetry is not only a way of looking at the world, but a way of speaking about it. Though the subject is limited then, it affords an apt climax and conclusion, and an adequate balance to the first point, or return to that initial argument: for no one can enjoy a poem to the full who does not take it on its own incomparable terms, not only in its unique words and images and rhythms, but also in its form. The structures of poems are as beautiful in themselves as the structures of music or architecture. That poems may appeal to us on so many additional levels is no adequate reason

for neglecting or minimizing the delight they afford through the sheer beauty of their forms. We may agree with Plato and with Spenser that

> Soule is forme, and doth the bodie make.

But conversely, we arrive at the highest and purest pleasures of poetry by observing the control, the shape, the harmony, which the artist's activity has brought into being; we may be

> Transported with celestiall desyre
> Or those faire formes.

This, then, is the progressive argument which this essay outlines. The nature of poetry is not mechanical. Its laws are not edicts, but observations; they are not forced upon poetry, but derived from it. In all fairness, I should offer here, in very brief compass, an illustration. Let us take a short poem by Housman:

> Into my heart an air that kills
> From yon far country blows:
> What are those blue remembered hills,
> What spires, what farms are those?
>
> That is the land of lost content,
> I see it shining plain,
> The happy highways where I went
> And cannot come again.

The voice is unmistakably Housman's: even a parody of it, though it might catch salient traits, would destroy some of the nuances that give it its *exactness*. No word can be changed without changing the effect of the whole. If we substitute "distant countries" for "yon far country," we not only destroy Housman's characteristic sense of the past underlying the present, which he manages to suggest through the use of the slightly archaic word "yon," but we also lose the almost concrete action of pointing which "yon" gives, and we weaken the unity of the stanza by canceling the echoing "far" and "farms." We might say also that literally the air is not "killing" anything; the image would be closer to possible sensations if we substituted "an air that chills." But "kills" is the more exact word, for it can suggest the emotional *intensity* of Housman's intuition, which he has made even more poignant by the statement, meaningless in the actual world of matter, that the killing air blows into his heart. This intensity he makes specific by speaking of the content, the shining happiness, which now is lost. Few of us would miss his *significance* —that youth is irrecoverable, or that ecstasy, once past, cannot be recaptured; many of us would feel that judgments of value are also implicit: that content and happiness are good, and that if we cannot have them, it is good at least to see clearly what we have lost, and to recognize time as evil, truth and self-control as good. Any such values are not stated in abstract propositions, but with *concreteness,* in controlled and harmonized images, so that we are made to feel the air, the country, the hills, the spires, the farms, the land, and the highways of Shropshire, perhaps even the plains. *Complexity* is evident enough in the working together of these disparate elements. "Far," for instance, conveys in the thought the years between past and present; in the emotion, re-

gret; in the image, the distant panorama; in the sound, a link with "farms" and other words. Complexity arises from those ambiguities which, to a greater or less degree, all readers find in a poem. If they heard it read orally, many readers might sense as the prime meaning of the sixth line, "I see *its* shining *plain";* and is this panoramic overtone lacking even when we see that it is not grammatically permissible in the printed version? "Spires," for me at least, is better than "towers" because it makes me think of "aspiring" and "suspiration." Such complexities are not controlled, but will vary from reader to reader; so long as they remain relevant to the whole, they enrich the poem.

We respond to the complex nature of poetry, our imaginations becoming eager and alert, because of the formal qualities of the poem itself. *Rhythm* has a powerful emotional effect, rousing and quieting at the same time, so that we take delight, usually an unconscious delight, in points in the pattern—the alternate rhymes, and the alternating line lengths which compel a pause after each even-numbered line to fill it up to the rhythmical length of its odd-numbered predecessor. Variations from the rhythmical pattern are here not only pleasing in themselves but aid in successful expression: the two inverted first feet—"In my heart" and "What are those blue"—suggest spontaneous emotion, and the extra accented syllables—"yón fár country," "What spires, what fárms"—add power to the thought and emotion, extension to the landscape. And finally, the perfect *form* of the whole, the echoes, repetitions, and balances, the contrast between the question of the first stanza and the answer of the second, make all these materials into a poem. And the poem, as distinct from its poetic qualities and potentialities, consists precisely in *these* words, *this* rhythm, *this* form. Therein lies its esthetic delight, so that we would not trade the eight lines themselves for eight bushel baskets of such analyses as this. Nevertheless, developing one's power to analyze increases one's capacity to enjoy.

THE RESEARCH PAPER

INTRODUCTION

IT IS FAIR to ask why one should hope to arouse or revive interest in the research paper with the aid of an essay by a mature scholar like Harbage, whose knowledge and opportunities for research cannot be matched by college undergraduates. The answer lies in the fact that the research paper, on any level, has always looked like a prehistoric monster whenever it has become solemn and pretentious. The student will soon see that Harbage's learning does not prevent him from being

clear, candid, and hard-headed. Those are the qualities that give life and point to investigation, and they are certainly not beyond the ability of an undergraduate. The subject itself must necessarily be determined by the knowledge and interests of the writer and by the availability of evidence. The detailed form of footnotes and bibliography must be agreed on by the writer and his publisher, by the student and his teacher. Forms vary from field to field; what shall be italicized, and whether periods or commas, arabic or roman numerals shall be used are matters arbitrarily decided by editors and printers. The student may take Harbage's essay as his model, or he may use a reputable book or journal in the general field of his subject. Documentation should be clear and complete enough to convince a skeptic or to assist the reader who wishes to go further into the subject, but it is not an end in itself. The point is not to look learned but to set up and investigate a suitable problem.

ALFRED HARBAGE

Shakespeare's Audience: What Kind of People?

SOME future age may take the satirical portraits which our journalism has produced—of traveling salesman, social butterfly, collegiate youth, and the like—and attempt to recreate our audiences. The results will be peculiar. Audiences never are assemblies of caricatures. We are obviously in error if we people the Globe with multiples of Davies' Inns-of-Courtier, Dekker's Gull, Beaumont's Apprentice, and Fitzgeffrey's Bobadil.[1] Only one alternative is open to us: we must think of the many thousands of Londoners and the many factors governing their selection of pastimes—such factors as purchasing power, available time, religious scruples, age, sex, and personal tastes. Thus we may obtain some idea of the several thousand representatives sent forth from the city to gather about *Hamlet* one weekday afternoon a long time ago.

The theatres, I have estimated, were within walking distance of 160,000 people in 1605, of slightly fewer in 1601. These thousands were divided into various classes. Lamenting in 1616 that the weakness of men and the "pride of women" drew many people from the country "because the new fashion is to bee had no where but in London," King James made a summary pronouncement: "And now out of my owne mouth I declare vnto you . . . that the Courtiers, Citizens, and Lawyers, and those that belong vnto them, and others as haue Pleas in Terme time, are onely necessary persons to remaine about this Citie;

[1] The "types" are pleasantly assembled by Byrne, "Shakespeare's Audience," in Shakespeare Association, *A Series of Papers on Shakespeare and the Theatre*, pp. 186-216

SHAKESPEARE'S AUDIENCE: WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE? Reprinted from Alfred Harbage, *Shakespeare's Audience*. Copyright, 1941, by Columbia University Press

others must get them into the Countrey."[2] Had the order been obeyed, the term "Citizens" read literally, the London area would have been largely depopulated. A more useful idea of the major divisions of urban population is provided by a muster roll of 1608,[3] classifying the men between twenty and sixty years of age in the towns of Gloucester, Tewkesbury, and Cirencester. The following is a simplified analysis showing the percentage of each classification:

Gentry, professional men, and officials	6.3
Dealers and retailers	19.3
Craftsmen	52.0
Laborers, carriers, etc.	*c.*15.0
Servants and miscellaneous	*c.*7.4

The classification is only suggestive, even as applied to the towns of Gloucester county, and has no authority for London; nevertheless, it gives us a starting point. In the London area, the presence of the court with all its administrative offices—particularly the law courts with their appendages, the Inns of Court and Chancery—and the standing of the city in the world of fashion would have raised the proportion of "Gentry, professional men, and officials" perhaps to as high as 10 percent. At the other end of the scale there is a category wholly unaccounted for in the muster roll—what Gregory King was later to call "Transitory People"—cashiered soldiers and seamen ashore, as well as vagrants, paupers, thieves, and peddlers. Shakespeare's London probably succeeded in submerging more than the traditional tenth.

But when all adjustments are made, the group remaining by all odds the largest, although not so large as 52 percent of the whole, will be the "Craftsmen"—the carpenters, masons, bookbinders, and button makers, with their helpers, the whole contingent of artisans, or "handicraft men," and those who were dependent upon them. It is with this group that we had better begin.

In 1601 the average weekly wage for artisans in England, master workmen and helpers together, was about 5*s.* 3½*d.* per man; a bricklayer or mason received 1*s.* a day, his helper 10*d.*[4] Artisans in London, however, were paid above the average. Between 1593 and 1602 the masons working on London Bridge received between 14*d.* and 16*d.* a day[5] as compared with the national average of 12*d.* Since the building crafts paid somewhat more poorly than the newer industries,[6] we may take the higher figure, or 16*d.*, as representing the average daily wage of master workmen in London. This is 33⅓ percent more than the national average; hence the weekly wage of London workmen generally may be put at 33⅓ percent more than the national average of 5*s.* 3½*d.* Exactitude in the matter is scarcely possible, but we shall err by very little, and probably on the side of generosity, if we place the average weekly wage of London workmen at 7*s.* in the year of *Hamlet.*

Fortunately, my task is not to explain how workmen lived and reared their children. That prices had terribly outdistanced wages by 1601 is common

[2] "A Speach in the Starre-Chamber," June 20, in *Political Works,* ed. McIlwain, p. 344.

[3] Tawney and Tawney, "An Occupational Census of the Seventeenth Century," *Economic History Review,* V (1934-35), 36.

[4] Rogers, *History of Agriculture and Prices in England,* V, 664-65, 826.

[5] Knoop and Jones, *Mediaeval Mason,* p. 236.

[6] Nef, "Prices and Industrial Capitalism in France and England, 1540-1640," *Economic History Review,* VII (1936-37), 164.

knowledge. For Dekker, despite the breadth of his sympathies, workmen were "Stinkards": herrings and onions, alas, were among the few foods they could afford to buy; bread was an expensive luxury. As we review the cost of other pleasures as compared with that of theatregoing, it will be helpful to keep in mind the earnings of workmen today as a relative gauge. Skilled craftsmen, such as earned 16*d.* a day in Shakespeare's London, no longer form a large percentage of wage earners; they are now, deservedly, a highly paid aristocracy. The most appropriate figure to use for equation is the average weekly wage of the millions of contemporary industrial workers. In America, in the month of the present investigation, that wage is $25.46 or 98.2 percent of the 1923-25 norm.[7] The norm appears to be $25.93 as the average weekly wage of modern American industrial workers, as compared with the 7*s.* average weekly wage of workmen in Shakespeare's London. Considered as a proportion of income, each penny spent by a workmen then was equivalent to each 31 cents spent by a workman now. The wage earner of that time, therefore, could go to the theatre almost as cheaply as his modern counterpart can go to the movies. We shall see that he could purchase no other pleasures at modern rates. I am speaking, of course, of commercialized pleasures: fortunately, the Elizabethan could walk into the country and "drink the waters of the crisped spring."

Nashe gives the following alternatives for spending a vacant afternoon in London: "that pleasure they deuide (howe vertuously it skils not) either into gameing, following of harlots, drinking, or seeing a Playe."[8] An earlier pamphleteer lists as "the places of expense" the taverns, the alehouses, The Theatre and Curtain, and Paris Garden.[9] With the following of harlots we need not linger, except to remark that the terms "sixe-penny whoredome" and "six-pennie damnation"[10] give an idea of the minimum rate. Paris Garden was the center of bearbaiting; and bearbaiting, like cockfighting and even bowling, tennis, and archery, attracted spectators chiefly interested in gambling. The cost of passing the time at such activities, as at dice and cards themselves, must remain problematical. No doubt it was high. Expense accounts of the time, recording gains and losses, yield familiar information: in the long run the amateur always lost.

When it comes to taverns and alehouses, we are on surer ground. In his *Survey* of 1603, Stow wrote, "quaffing . . . is mightily encreased, though greatly qualified among the poorer sort, not of any holy abstinencie, but of meer necessitie, Ale and Beere being small, and Wines in price aboue their reach."[11] An afternoon in a tavern over a quart of sack—assuming that Falstaff's two gallons were not the normal requirement—would have cost our workman at least 8*d.* If he believed that a quart of ale was "a dish for a king," he could have had it at a minimum rate of 4*d.*; or if alehouse company would have compensated him for base drink, he could have had painfully small beer

[7] U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Monthly Labor Review*, LI (1940), 474.

[8] *Pierce Penilesse, His Supplication to the Divell* (1592), in McKerrow, ed., *Works*, I, 212.

[9] T. F., *Newes from the North* (1585), quoted in Graves, "Some References to Elizabethan Theaters," *Studies in Philology*, XIX (1922), 317.

[10] Nashe, *Christs Teares over Ierusalem* (1593) and *Pierce Penilesse, His Supplication to the Divell* (1592), in McKerrow, ed., *Works*, II, 148, and I, 217. Dekker also, as I recall, uses the phrase. Nashe (*Christs Teares over Ierusalem* [1593], in *ibid.*, II, 149) says that about a half crown is the "sette pryce of a strumpets soule" (i.e., first offense?).

[11] *Survey of London*, ed. Kingsford, I, 83.

at 1*d.* a quart. A reckless bachelor, anxious to ape the gentry, might have smoked tobacco—at the rate of 3*d.* for each small pipeload.[12]

Dining in public might have appealed to some workman (or his wife) as an anniversary luxury. The threepenny ordinary is the cheapest I have encountered—for "your London Usurer, your stale Bachilor, and your thrifty Atturney . . . the roomes as full of company as a Iaile." [13] Observe that artisans were not looked for even in these niggardly surroundings. Sixpenny ordinaries were not lavish. Eightpenny ordinaries were, in 1631, for your country attorneys willing to "endure the Vnwholesome ayre." [14] Twelvepenny ordinaries were fashionable, and eighteenpenny ordinaries were, in 1592, for "Caualiers and braue courtiers." [15]

I shall add at random the cost of a few other nonessentials. Two printed broadsides, usually containing ballads, cost 1*d.*, a prose romance of about 180 pages octavo 1*s.*,[16] a ride in a wherry from Paul's Wharf to Westminster 3*d.*,[17] more or less, depending on the waterman's powers in debate. The cheapest place in the private playhouse in Blackfriars could be had for 6*d.* We may now tabulate these prices, indicating the modern equivalents:

	Cost to Elizabethan workman (pence)	*Cost to modern workman at Elizabethan rates (dollars)*	*Actual cost of modern equivalent (dollars)*	
Low price, public theatre	1	.31	.29	(average movie ticket)
Middle price, public theatre	2	.62		
High, but not highest, price, public theatre	3	.93		
Low price, private theatre	6	1.86	.55	(theatre)
Quart of sack	8	2.48	1.25	(gin)
Quart of ale	4	1.24	.20	(beer)
Quart of small beer	1	.31		(no sale)
Pipeload of tobacco	3	.93	.01	
Cheapest dinner, table d'hôte	3	.93	.40	
Transportation fare	3	.93	.075	
Two printed sheets	1	.31	.03	(newspaper)
Small book	12	3.72	.05	(magazine)

[12] Sack cost 8*d* a quart in London in 1595 (Rogers, *History of Agriculture and Prices in England,* VI, 415). Falstaff, paying 5*s.* 8*d* for his two gallons, was not cheated, Shakespeare's prices being anachronistic Sack at Eton in 1608 cost 11*d* per quart (Beveridge, *Prices and Wages in England,* p. 113). In 1584, in spite of the injunction that ale or strong beer was to be sold at 1*d.* a quart, small beer at 1*d.* a pottle (2 quarts) in sealed measures, the actual selling price in Castle Baynard Ward was 3 farthings for a short pint ("Aleconners Complaint," in Stow, *Survey of London,* ed. Kingsford, I, lxiv-lxv). In 1614 Dame Ursla (Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair,* Act II, Scene ii) gets 6*d.* for a bottle of frothed ale, between 2*d* and 3*d.* a quart for beer, and 3*d.* a pipeload for adulterated tobacco. She was a profiteer, but, except that her tobacco was mixed with coltsfoot, her charge for this item was not above average.

[13] Dekker, *Guls Horne-Booke* (1609), in Grosart, ed., *Non-Dramatic Works,* II, 244-45.

[14] Thomas Powell, *Tom of All Trades* (1631), ed Furnivall, New Shakspere Society Publications, Ser. VI, No. II, p 141.

[15] Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse, His Supplication to the Diuell* (1592), in McKerrow, ed., *Works,* I, 170.

[16] Plant, *English Book Trade,* p. 220.

[17] This was the official rate, and it seems to have been roughly adhered to: see "for Gibson . . . his boate hier four times between Lambeth and Ivy Bridge xii*d.*" in Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Rutland MSS,* IV, 419-20.

That a penny was a considerable sum of money and that theatregoing was one of the few commercialized pleasures within the workman's means may readily be seen. In fact, the Elizabethan artisan paid so much more proportionately for necessities—food, clothing, fuel—that a penny for pleasure must have been more thoughtfully laid out than even its thirty-one cent equivalent need be at the present time. It is possible, however, that the high cost of living worked in favor of the theatres in one way: if the penny spent on food meant only an additional cucumber or two, one might as well squander it on a play. "Sights" in general were cheaper than material commodities in an age of scarcity. A penny fee would admit one to a puppet show,[18] a conducted tour of the monuments in Westminster Abbey, a view from the roof of St. Paul's Cathedral, a glimpse of a six-legged calf, or other "monster," or of the lions in the tower; by 1641, at least, it would purchase a stroll in a private garden where a nosegay was given as a souvenir.[19] But these were evanescent joys, to be tasted now and then, whereas beer, ballads, plays, and animal fights were staples. A play meant over two hours' entertainment in impressive surroundings—entertainment of a quality not to be found in the beer and ballads. Craftsmen, then, with their families, journeymen, and apprentices, must have composed the vast majority of "groundlings." Many were highly skilled, performing functions now allotted to the chemist, architect, and engineer. Let us not be too much influenced by contemptuous allusions to how the "barmy Jacket of a Beer-brewer" [20] contaminated the public theatres. London craftsmen were the best in the country. Those at the Globe had chosen playgoing in preference to boozing and animalbaiting.

After the "Craftsmen" the next largest group in the London area was composed of the "Dealers and retailers." A few of these were merchants, wealthy and powerful, importing great cargoes and manipulating great sums. They would have been able to order without extravagance £10 dramatic performances in their homes. The greater number were, however, simply shopkeepers. In 1688 Gregory King reckoned the income of tradesmen as a class at only 12.5 percent higher than that of craftsmen. If the proportion held in 1601, the average shopkeeper earned 7*s.* 11*d.* weekly to the craftsman's 7*s.* and should have been grateful for penny admissions. Of course, many shopkeepers, and craftsmen too, could have afforded seats in the galleries and would have been pleased with the added penny's worth of comfort and dignity—especially when they brought their wives.

Among the "Gentry, professional men, and officials" the range of income was wide. In the professional group, teachers made least [21] (somewhat less than artisans), lawyers most. The witnesses are unanimous that in litigious London the lawyer prospered. Authors could make a living if they wrote for the stage. In 1599 about £35 passed into the hands of Thomas Dekker,[22] as compared with £18 4*s.* for the average artisan, but Dekker wrote in that year all of three plays and parts of six more. "Gentry," of course, is scarcely an occupational term. Those who were not professional men, officials, or heads of their own

[18] *Bartholomew Fair,* Act V, Scene 1 Twopence were asked of "gentlefolk"
[19] Peacham, *Worth of a Penny* (1647 for 1641), in Arber, ed., *English Garner,* VI, 245-88.
[20] Marston, *Jack Drum's Entertainment* (1600), Act V, Scene i, in Wood, ed., *Plays.*
[21] [illegible] *lish Book Trade,* p 42.
[22] [illegible] *Diary,* ed. Greg, I, 100-117. Some payments may not be recorded.

households were usually "serving men"—attendants at court or in the households of nobles or other gentlemen. Since living was provided, stipends in most cases may be considered as spending money. Dekker speaks of "bare forty shillings a yeere (seruing-mens wages)," [23] and when we consider that a groom of the chamber for Queen Elizabeth received £2 13*s.* 4*d.*, the rate seems not improbable. On the other hand, Elizabeth's gentlemen of the privy chamber received £50 and perquisites.[24] Forty shillings a year meant nine pence and a farthing in weekly spending money. The twopenny gallery, for all its bourgeois flavor, might well have been considered expensive enough by the younger or lesser gentry. Money was scarce among the majority of all classes. I am not speaking, to be sure, of the income of elder sons who had come into their estates. I am not speaking, either, of knights, baronets, and temporal lords. But of these no more than a sprinkling could be looked for in any audience: there weren't enough in all England to fill the Globe.

A great lord was expected to pay more for all things than lesser men. There follows a few illustrative items from the personal expense account of the Earl of Rutland in 1598-99:

Item for Sir Ph. Sidneys *Arcadia* [3d ed.?], ix*s.*
Item for my Lorde's supper at Courte, 28 *Octoberis,* ix*s.* ii*d.* . . . the cooke in the pryvy kitchen, x*s.* . . . tobacco pipes, viii*d.*
Item, 28 September, my Lorde's boatehier to Lambeth and back againe, xviii*d.* . . . boatehire 1 October, for his Lordship and his men, and the play, and James his going to Lambeth to see Capten Whitlock, viii*s.*
Item the foteman's boatehire to Lambeth and to the play howse sondry tymes, ii*s.* iiii*d.*
Item, 28 *Julii,* an oz. of ball tobacco, v*s.;* boatehier for his Lordship that day, xii*d.;* to the buttery at Nonesuch, v*s.*
Item, 18 November, for an oz of tobacco, ii*s.* vi*d.* . . . boatehier and a play, vi*s.*[25]

Playhouse prices were not designed for earls. Although his lordship seems to have paid above the highest rate, plays were still the least of his extravagances. It appears that on one occasion a regular theatre party for himself and an unspecified number of retainers, besides boat hire and miscellaneous expenses, cost Rutland only 8*s.*, or 3*s.* more than he later paid for one ounce of tobacco, 2*s.* less than he had previously tipped the queen's cook.

Descending now to the opposite end of the scale, to those below the rank of artisan—to the carman, the peddler, the ditcher, and the household drudge—most of these could have found a holiday penny not urgently needed to keep body and soul together:

Nay many poore pincht, needie creatures, that liue of almes, and that haue scarce neither cloath to their backe, nor foode for the belley, yet wil make hard shift but they will see a Play, let wife & children begge, languish in penurie, and all they can rappe and rend, is little enough to lay vpon such vanitie.[26]

But their numbers at any one performance would have been limited indeed.

[23] *Worke for Armourours* (1609), in Grosart, ed., *Non-Dramatic Works,* IV, 130.
[24] Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage,* I, 50.
[25] Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Rutland MSS,* IV, 419-20.
[26] Crosse, *Vertues Common-Wealth; or, The High-Way to Honour* (1603), signature Q^{v}.

Any amusement over the admission prices to Shakespeare's theatre is apt to disappear upon a scrutiny of the facts. Actually the 1*d*., 2*d*., and 3*d*. range, with a few removed places at 6*d*. and 12*d*., was designed to fit the purses of London. These prices were truly popular. The only improvement one might have suggested would have been additional places at a farthing. Cheap labor and high prices insure great profits and stimulate commercial enterprise; periods of "price inflation" have been accredited with various triumphs, including, whimsically one supposes, the plays of Shakespeare. It is true that the theatres were built in the midst of that period of expansion marked by high prices and low wages, but the theatrical industry, before the advent of the "private" theatres, may be pointed out as an exception to, as well as an exemplification of, the inflationary tendencies of the period. Admission prices were calculated, as prices in general were not, to what workmen could afford to pay. We must conclude, first, that audiences were composed largely of shopkeepers and craftsmen, people of low income taking advantage of the almost unique opportunity to get their money's worth; and, second, that those who limited their expenditure to 1*d*. and remained "groundlings" must not be thought of as a rabble. Another thing is certain. When the "private" theatres opened and placed the minimum charge at 6*d*., no more effective means could have been devised for excluding utterly the great majority of the former audience. This was price inflation with a vengeance. The thrifty citizen who has blundered into Salisbury Court Theatre in 1629 is made to say:

> I will hasten to the money Box
> And take my shilling out again, for now
> I have considered that it is too much;
> I'll go to th' Bull, or Fortune, and there see
> A Play for two pense, with a Jig to boot.[27]

He is portrayed as ridiculous, but he was completely right: a shilling was indeed too much. And the price inflation at the private theatres begat no second Shakespeare.

Factors other than expense affect theatrical attendance. That only two in fifteen Elizabethan Londoners went to the theatre weekly, as compared with the ten in fifteen modern Americans who go to the movies, was partly due to the scarcity of pennies. It was partly due also to the scarcity of leisure. Plays were performed, not two or three times a day, at the public's convenience, but usually only once, and then during working hours. Drama competed with labor in the use of daylight, and opportunity for playgoing was accordingly limited. In our day, many housewives and young people during the afternoon, and workers generally during the evening, are free agents. Shakespeare's actors had to look forward to holidays, and theatres were built huge to accommodate holiday crowds. The analogy between the modern movie and the Elizabethan theatre is in many ways a poor one. Mechanical reproduction now makes possible a constantly varied bill. In any city and in most towns one may go to the movies every day in the week without seeing the same picture twice. In "Middletown" with a population of between thirty-five and forty thousand,

[27] Praeludium, *The Careless Shepherdess.*

nine movies were offering twenty-two programs and three hundred performances each week in 1923.[28] Our eighty-five million weekly spectators are made up largely of those who go from two to four times a week.[29] In Shakespeare's time, one visit a week would more than have exhausted the possibilities of the theatres so far as mere novelty was concerned. We live in an age of expert salesmanship, and, whereas Elizabethans had to go to the theatres, the movies come to us. There are seventeen thousand movie theatres in the United States —roofed, comfortably heated (sometimes even cooled), and usually "palatial." This means about one theatre for every 7,647 inhabitants. To equal these facilities, London of the year of *Hamlet* would have needed over twenty "neighborhood" theatres dotting every locality from Lambeth to Mile End.[30] Actually there were four in operation, rigidly restricted to particular districts. London was small in area; nevertheless, the average citizen had to walk more than a mile to reach the Rose or the Globe. The distance from St. Paul's Cathedral was about a mile and a half; from Wapping, two miles; from St. James Clerkenwell, over two miles; from Westminster, three miles and a half. Of course, one might ride the Thames, but that meant additional expense.

Standards of convenience are, however, relative. Official London considered the theatres damnably convenient, and unofficial London considered them commodious and magnificent. "Commedies," lamented Gosson, "are neither chargable to ye beholders purse, nor painful to his body; partly, because he may sit out of the raine to viewe the same, when many other pastimes are hindred by wether."[31] Under harder conditions of life, mere shelter may seem a luxury. The conflict of playtime with working hours was the more serious obstacle. Nashe speaks of "the after-noone beeing the idlest time of the day; wherein men that are their owne masters (as Gentlemen of the Court, the Innes of the Courte, and the number of Captaines and Souldiers about London) do wholy bestow themselues vpon pleasure."[32] The vast majority did not belong to this select company. Shopkeepers to a degree were their own masters, workmen less so, although not so completely regimented by time clocks as now. The workday varied in length from about eight hours in midwinter to about twelve hours in midsummer, consisting of the period of clear daylight with dinnertime and drinking time off.[33] Possibly one could pool his time off and use it to go to the theatre. The leathersellers agreed that work was to cease early on Saturdays, vigils, and festivals.[34] Vigils and festivals were many, and they varied for various crafts; the various crafts imitated the practice if not the precept of the leathersellers. Individual workmen had their

[28] Lynd and Lynd, *Middletown*, p. 263.

[29] Although eighty-five million attend the movies weekly, only forty million, about 30 percent of our population, are said to "really have the movie habit." See Thorp, *America at the Movies*, p. 3.

[30] They were larger, of course, than the average movie theatre. A seat is said to be available for every twelve Americans. In the theatres operating in 1601, I should say that there was a space available for every twenty-three Londoners.

[31] *Playes Confuted in Fiue Actions* (1582), in Hazlitt, ed., *English Drama and Stage*, p. 202.

[32] *Pierce Penilesse, His Supplication to the Diuell* (1592), in McKerrow, ed., *Works*, I, 212.

[33] Knoop and Jones, *Mediaeval Mason*, p. 236.

[34] Dunlop, *English Apprenticeship and Child Labour*, p. 45.

private holidays, and there were intermissions between one job and the next. Beyond a certain point restraint upon human conduct becomes impossible. That they drew workmen from their work was one of the chief of the official counts against plays. Schoolboys and apprentices must have been given, or must have taken, their times of recreation. We may assume that the idler classes formed a higher percentage of audiences than of the population generally but never that they composed more than a minority.

Personal and religious scruples kept some Londoners away from the theatres but fewer than we are apt to suppose. If the theatres were respectable enough to be frequented by the Earl of Rutland and his class, we might assume that the average citizen would not shrink from them; however, it may be best to make no assumptions about the sense of propriety of the English middle classes. Actually there has been much misunderstanding about the association of the playhouses with brothels and about their location in the sinister suburbs. If there were playhouses in the suburbs, there were also numerous churches; certainly the wardens of St. Saviour's did not think the neighborhood of Southwark a blight upon the drama.[35] If there were brothels in Shoreditch and Southwark, there were brothels also elsewhere. The royal suburb of Westminster was notorious for them. The slums were in the suburbs, but the suburbs were not the slums. Many substantial households were established there. A dweller in the intramural city who refused to go into them would have been a virtual prisoner, cut off from the innocent pleasures of the open fields and from much of his everyday business. The intramural city itself was not uniformly a place for the fastidious.

Religious scruples require a more extended consideration. It is certain that an increasing number of Londoners stayed away from plays on moral and religious grounds and that this number by 1642 had become formidable. The strict Calvinist William Perkins had more delicate consciences in his keeping than any other Elizabethan, and Perkins had decided that plays were not permissible.[36] This particular venality, I should say however, drew fire only from his lighter artillery. So far as I can discover, nothing ever came of the attempt, partly inspired by pressure from the pulpits, to force masters and wardens of the London companies to forbid their apprentices, servants, and journeymen to go to plays;[37] nor have I ever heard of articles of apprenticeship outlawing playgoing, although cardplaying and tavernhaunting were invariably forbidden. The very strict regulations of the Merchant Adventurers of Bristol forbidding apprentices to "daunce dice carde mum or use any musick eyther by night or day in the streetes"[38] are silent about the mere witnessing of amusements. The very shrillness of the pulpit attacks upon playgoing suggests frustration. The people found the ministers "sumwhat too sour in preaching awey theyr pastime." We can hear them argue back:

[35] For their protest against the presence of the theatres, see Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, IV, 325.

[36] "Cases of Conscience," *The Workes of that Famous and Worthy Minister of Christ in the University of Cambridge, Mr. William Perkins* (1613), II, 140.

[37] "Dramatic Records of the City of London. the Repertories, Journals, and Letter Books," in *Malone Society Collections*, II, Part III, 313.

[38] Dunlop, *English Apprenticeship and Child Labour*, p. 189.

they wil saie, you are a man of the Sabboth you are verie precise; you wil allowe vs nothing; you wil haue nothing but the worde of God: you wil permit vs no recreation, but haue men like Asses, who neuer rest but when they are eating.

Seeke to withdrawe these felowes from the Theater vnto the sermon, they wil saie, By the preacher they maie be edified, but by the plaier both edified and delighted.[39]

Comparison of plays with sermons as edification the preachers found especially infuriating. The people must have found equally so the preachers' tendency to define recreation as the fifteen-minute rest periods allowed to harvesters.

The preachers themselves, individual pietists, and small congregations of sectaries—small, that is, in Shakespeare's time and in London—would have stayed away from plays on religious grounds, but not the rank and file of otherwise faithful parishioners. An analogy may be found in the habits of the eight million American Methodists who, until it was recently amended, honored their "Discipline" (forbidding dancing and cardplaying) chiefly in the breach. We must concede, of course, that Puritanism is no longer a rising tide. Milton had no objection to the well-trod stage, to Jonson's learned sock, and to Shakespeare's wood-notes wild. The attitude of John Chamberlain toward worldly vanities was stiff, and, when he saw Tobie Matthew on his way to a play, he thought that "playeng and Fridayes fasting agree not so well together as prayeing in a man of so much profession."[40] Yet he himself was not "so sowre nor severe" but that he would unbend occasionally: in 1597, when the new "play of humors" was "in very great request," he "was drawn alonge to yt by the common applause";[41] and, in 1614, hearing that the rebuilt Globe playhouse was the "fayrest that ever was in England," he planned to look in at it.[42]

Tobie Matthew was a Roman Catholic convert, his conduct an object of general interest. Like their fellow nonconformists, the extreme Puritans, the Catholics were expected to adhere to the strict way of life. Amusing evidence of their attitude toward the theatres exists in manuscript.[43] On March 9, 1617 [1618?], William Harrison, Archpriest, "Forasmuch as there haue been seueral complaincts made, & aduertisement giuen, that not a few are scanalised, and more disedified by the goeing of certain Priests to playes, acted by common plaiers upon common stages" prohibited "all, & euery" of the priests under his direction from going to the theatres on penalty of the loss of "his or theyr faculties." On April 25, 1618, one Thomas Leke protested, raising the issue of "Ecclesiastical libertie" and objecting that the prohibition ran "generallie against all plaies, & not rather with a limitation against scurril playes, or wherein religion is disgraced." This drew forth a rejoinder, presumably from Harrison. It is lengthy and partly *ad hominem*. He says that the prohibition was put in general terms only to save the face of Leke himself, with two other chief

[39] *Second and Third Blast of Retrait from Plaies and Theaters* (1580), in Hazlitt, ed., *English Drama and Stage*, pp 139-40.

[40] February 7, 1618. *Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. McClure, II. 137.

[41] *Ibid.*, I, 32.

[42] *Ibid.*, p. 544.

[43] Manuscript in the Folger Shakespeare Library: Prohibition of William Harison, Archpriest, wherein English secular priests are forbidden to attend the theatres, March 9, 1617, with Thomas Leke's protest against the prohibition, April 25, 1618, and Harison's (?) answer to Leke.

offenders, Mr. Thules and Mr. Canon. He explains that the prohibition was against "going to theatres," not against "seeing plays," and that attendance at performances at court, the universities, the Inns of Court, and gentlemen's houses was not forbidden. Of public performances he is more than distrustful:

For such playes are made to sport, and delight the auditorie, which consisting most of young gallants, and Protestants (for no true Puritanes will endure to bee present at playes) how unlikely is it, but that there are, and must bee, at least some passages in the playes, which may relish, and tickle the humor of such persons, or else good night to the players.[44]

Harrison was obviously a practical thinker. Leke had observed that the Jesuits and Benedictines made no objection to plays and that: "Wee knowe, that most of the principal Catholicks about London doe goe to playes, and all for ye most part of my ghostly children do knowe that I sometimes goe, and are not scandalised." To which Harrison rejoined: "the Catholicks that use to playes are the young of both sexes, and neither matrons, nor graue, or sage man is there seen." On this note of conflict in the testimony we must leave the matter, recognizing, however, that Father Leke had a more intimate knowledge of audiences than had Father Harrison. We know of one "ghostly child" who went to the playhouse and was there subjected to the amorous attentions of no less a person than the Venetian ambassador.[45] She must have been young, but Tobie Matthew was past fifty and an ordained priest on that fasting day when Chamberlain met him on his way to the theatre.

On moral grounds the theatres were defended as well as attacked—as well they might have been in view of the general character of the plays and of the freedom of the premises from gambling, the national vice. Taverns and alehouses were afflicted with dicing and cardplaying; sporting events, even bowling and tennis matches, with betting. Drunkenness was already a common vice. We learn from the Overburian characters that only the playhouses can keep the waterman sober;[46] from Nashe, that only the playhouses can heal the debauchee:

Faith, when Dice, Lust, and Drunkennesse, and all haue dealt vpon him, if there be neuer a Playe for him to goe too for his pennie, he sits melancholie in his Chamber, deuising vpon felonie or treason, and howe he may best exalt himselfe by mischiefe.[47]

Heywood's *Apology for Actors* bases its defence partly upon the grounds of public morality, and each of the writers of commendatory verses for the volume comes forth with his personal testimonial:

> Have I not knowne a man, that to be hyr'd
> Would not for any treasure see a play,
> Reele from a taverne?

asks Robert Pallant.

[44] Folio 13.
[45] Public Record Office, *Calendar of State Papers, Venice and Northern Italy*, 1615-1617, XIV, 593.
[46] Overbury, *Overburian Characters*, Percy Reprints, No XIII, p 68.
[47] *Pierce Penilesse, His Supplication to the Divell* (1592), in McKerrow, ed., *Works*, I, 214.

> Thou that do'st raile at me for seeing a play,
> How wouldst thou have me spend my idle houres?
> Wouldst have me in a taverne drinke all day? . . .
> To drabbe, to game, to drinke, all these I hate,

says Richard Perkins, who affirms moreover that he is proud to sit "even in the stages front" where all may see him. Arthur Pallant is even more emphatic:

> To call to church Campanus bels did make;
> Playes, dice and drink invite men to forsake.[48]

The professional moralists were unwilling to make concessions; one of them, nevertheless, after showing scant regard for the theatres, is forced to conclude: "notwithstanding, if we marke how young men spend the latter end of the day in gaming, drinking, whoring, it were better to tollerate Playes."[49] We must be careful not to assume that the theatres were the particular haunt of the irreligious or the debased.

Neither cost, nor inconvenience, nor a belief that the playhouses were contaminative would have kept large sectors of the populace from plays. What of delicacy or shyness, such as might be supposed to influence the habits of women? It is surprising, in view of the evidence to the contrary, how many authoritative works convey the impression that few women went to the Elizabethan public theatres. We read in A. W. Ward that "no respectable woman might appear at a playhouse except with her face concealed under a mask."[50] Now it is certain that women generally did not wear masks at the plays. In Restoration times wearing masks became common and allusions to them legion. In Elizabethan times allusions are hard to find—an unlikely concomitant of so conspicuous and vulnerable a custom—and such few as exist do not associate masks with respectability.[51] We read in Ashley H. Thorndike that at Shakespeare's first play "the galleries contained a fair proportion of women" (the galleries only?) and that "in the early days . . . there were few women and no young girls."[52] I do not know to what early days the statement can apply. Even before the regular theatres were built, the audiences in London innyards were said to offer occasion for "inveglynge and alleurynge of maides speciallye orphanes, and good Cityzens Children vnder Age, to previe and vnmete Contractes,"[53] and in 1579 Gosson's *Schoole of Abuse* contained a special epistle "To the Gentlewomen Citizens of London" beseeching them to withdraw their patronage from plays. We read in Sir Edmund Chambers that: "The galleries were full of light women who found them a profitable haunt, but whose presence did not altogether prevent that of ladies of position, probably in the private rooms, and possibly masked."[54] Wholly disregarded here

[48] Heywood, *Apology for Actors* (1612), Shakespeare Society Publications, No III, pp. 8-11.
[49] Joseph Wyburne, *New Age of Old Names* (1609), p 53.
[50] *History of English Dramatic Literature*, I, 477
[51] It is "the light-tayldc huswiues," the sirens and Circes, who wear masks at the "Bank-sides round-house" in John Lane's *Tom Tell-Troths Message, and His Pens Complaint* (1600), ed. Furnivall, New Shakespeare Society Publications, Ser VI, No II, p 133.
[52] *Shakespeare's Theater*, pp. 404, 409.
[53] "Dramatic Records from the Lansdowne Manuscripts," in *Malone Society Collections*, I, Part II, 175.
[54] *Elizabethan Stage*, II, 549.

is a feminine category, large in any age we trust, composed of neither "ladies of position" nor "light women." Either there is a lode of information uncited and unknown to me, or the authorities have decided that Shakespeare's theatre was no place for a lady and are imposing their own sense of decorum upon the Elizabethans.

The "light women" will concern us in the next chapter. At the moment we shall consider those who merit a presumption of innocence, who came from all classes of society, and who sometimes may have stood in the pit, side by side with their menfolk although all naturally would prefer the galleries. That there were women in the pit is suggested by one of Robert Greene's anecdotes of 1592. A young "nip" is in a packed theatre observing the technique of a master cutpurse. The youth, the expert, and a young woman are pressed close among "a company of seemly men":

> In short time the deed [stealing the purse] was performed, but how, the young nip could not easily discern, only he felt him shift his hand toward his trug, to convey the purse to her, but she, being somewhat mindful of the play, because a merriment was then on the stage, gave no regard.[55]

The "nip," less susceptible to the appeal of drama, substituted his own hand and edged off with the purse. Now, unless there had been other women among the throng, the value of the "trug" as receiver would have been nil. My representative of female groundlings is none too respectable, but I am thinking of those who covered her presence.

In London the women outnumbered men thirteen to ten, although more than the reverse would have been true in the upper crust.[56] There were fewer than thirty women among Queen Elizabeth's fifteen hundred courtiers,[57] and in the Inns of Court and among fashionable sojourners males of course predominated. Some of the male courtiers, to be sure, had families established in Westminster or London; the women of fashion were numerous enough, and their numbers rapidly increasing. English women, high and low, were great "gadders abroad." On this point natives and foreigners agreed. Chamberlain writes dryly to Alice Carleton that he has tried to see her married sister twice, but the first time she was away at a neighbor's house playing cards, the second time at the Globe.[58] England, said the foreigners, was "a woman's paradise." Platter describes how "they have more liberty than in other lands, and know how to make good use of it," going constantly abroad while "the men must put up with such ways, and may not punish them for it." [59] It is hard to believe his statement that "what is particularly curious is that the women as well as

[55] *Thirde and Last Part of Connycatching* (1592), in Judges, ed., *Elizabethan Underworld*, p 195.

[56] I assume that the proportion at the end of the century (see Gregory King, "Natural and Political Observations," in Barnett, ed., *Two Tracts by Gregory King*, p 22) held good for the beginning. King refines his analysis further: husbands and wives, 37 percent, widows and widowers (mostly widows then as now), 9 percent, children, 33 percent, servants, 13 percent; sojourners, etc., 8 percent.

[57] Cheyney, *History of England*, I, 18-19, 47.

[58] June 30, 1614. *Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. McClure, I, 544.

[59] *Thomas Platter's Travels in England, 1599*, pp. 181-82.

the men, in fact more often than they, will frequent the taverns or alehouses for enjoyment." [60]

Whatever their attitude toward taverns, the women of London displayed little shyness about going to theatres. It is for the wives and daughters of ordinary citizens that Stephen Gosson was especially concerned in 1579. When he says finally, "I have seene many of you whiche were wont to sporte your selues, at Theaters, when you perceiued the abuse of those places, schoole your selues, and of your owne accorde abhorre Playes," [61] he is resorting to cajolery. Female attendance did not fall off, and in 1617 Robert Anton wrote bitterly of the theatres' attracting "Swarmes of Wiues." [62] The most objective descriptions of Elizabethan theatres have come to us from foreign visitors, and on one subject these visitors were agreed. Said Platter in 1599:

> With these and many more amusements the English pass their time, learning at the play what is happening abroad; *indeed men and womenfolk visit such places without scruple,* since the English for the most part do not travel much, but prefer to learn foreign matters and take their pleasures at home.[63]

And Philip Julius in 1602:

> there are always a good many people present, *including many respectable women [auch viele ehrbare Frauens]* because useful arguementa, and many good doctrines, as we were told, are brought forward there.[64]

And Father Busino in 1614:

> *These theatres are frequented by a number of respectable and handsome ladies, who come freely and seat themselves among the men without the slightest hesitation.*[65]

The second statement applies to the public as well as the private theatres, the first and third specifically to public theatres. Together they seem to me conclusive. The proportion of men and women is now irrecoverable, but it is worth noting that the only contemporary "sampling" of an audience which has survived—a casualty list after the collapse of Paris Garden in 1583—yields five men, four women, and one child.[66] They were assembled at a bearbaiting.

Young men and maids, husbands and wives, went to the theatres together, sometimes in family parties. The ground lease for the earliest of the theatres stipulated that, provided "Gyles [Alleyn] hys wyfe and familie doe com and take ther places before they shalbe taken vpp by any others," [67] they might see any play free of charge. Jonson's *Every Man out of His Humor* (1599) offers

[60] *Ibid*, p 170.

[61] *Schoole of Abuse* (1579), ed Arber, English Reprints, No. III, p. 58.

[62] *Vices Anotimie Scourged and Corrected,* cited in Graves, "Notes on Puritanism and the Stage," *Studies in Philology,* XVIII (1921), 146.

[63] *Thomas Platter's Travels in England, 1599,* p 170 (italics mine).

[64] "Diary of the Journey of Philip Julius, Duke of Stettin-Pomerania, through England in the Year 1602," eds. G von Bulow and W. Powell, in *Royal Historical Society Transactions,* New Series, VI, 29 (italics mine).

[65] "Diaries and Despatches of the Venetian Embassy at the Court of King James I, in the Years 1617, 1618," *Quarterly Review,* CII (1857), 416 (italics mine).

[66] The list is given on p. 247.

[67] Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage,* II, 387.

a sop, uncommon with the writer, to the "graue, wise citizen, or modest matron" [68] lest they take offense at the portrait of Delro and his wife. Examples might be multiplied. No one need be reminded of George the Grocer, Goodwife Nell, and Ralph the Apprentice in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle.*

About 20 percent of the metropolitan population was under ten years of age, about 30 percent under sixteen years of age.[69] A few children would have been taken to the theatres by their parents, but it is doubtful if many could have commanded both the freedom and the penny that would make them independent playgoers until they were sixteen—the age at which girls were marriageable and boys ready to enter their apprenticeship. If we let the age at which Londoners began going to plays hover between ten and sixteen, we eliminate 25 percent of the population and come upon the first major restriction upon a concept of the audience as a mere cross section of London humanity. The restriction does not lessen the probability that Shakespeare's audience was youthful. It was about as true in 1601 as in 1696 that "the Males & Females in the Kingdome in General are Aged one with another 27½ years." [70] Mean ages are, however, deceptive at best and especially so in those earlier times when such large numbers failed to survive childhood. There are better reasons for speaking of the youthfulness of Shakespeare's audience.

Standing for several hours or bustling for a place in the galleries would have diminished in appeal as a man grew older. At a popular play one could obtain a good place only by coming early and enduring a long wait. The arduousness of playgoing rather than the frivolity seems to have acted as a restraint upon the elderly John Chamberlain. The drama, in any case, has always made its first call to youth. Two groups are mentioned again and again in contemporary allusions to the theatres—the students of the Inns of Court and the apprentices of London.

London was the third university city of the kingdom. About 1595 we hear that

> the clamorous frie of Innes of Court
> Filles vp the priuate roomes of greater prise: [71]

Before and after 1595, we come upon constant reminders that the plays were a magnet for the students. The number of these was not great. In 1574 there were 593 students in the four Inns, in addition to the 51 benchers and 125 utter barristers.[72] In the reign of James the number had risen to about 720 students, in addition to about 80 benchers and 240 utter barristers.[73] But it was not unusual for the students to have young friends and relatives lodging with them, and what the group lacked in total numbers was counterbalanced by

[68] Grex, Act II.

[69] I base this percentage on the figures of King, "Natural and Political Observations," in Barnett, ed., *Two Tracts by Gregory King*, pp. 22-23. The child population in London was smaller per capita than in the rest of the kingdom, so that I have modified the percentages obtainable in the table at the head of p. 23 according to the proportions indicated for "children" in London and in the rest of the kingdom in the table at the foot of p. 22.

[70] "Natural and Political Observations," in Barnett, ed., *Two Tracts by Gregory King*, p. 23.

[71] Sir John Davies, "In Sillam," Epigram No. 28, in Grosart, ed., *Complete Poems*, II, 27-28.

[72] *Calendar of Inner Temple Records*, ed. Inderwick, I, 468-69.

[73] Wheatley, *London, Past and Present*, II, 261.

the large proportion of those numbers possessing the money, leisure, and inclination for playgoing. A student at the Inns of Court was a well-born, affluent, university-educated young man in his earlier twenties. He lived in a society devoted to intellectual pursuits and well disposed towards belles-lettres. He must have made a good spectator. We cannot generalize too far, of course, and an epigram by Davies will serve to shade our portrait:

> Publius student at the Common-law
> Oft leaves his Bookes, and for his recreation,
> To Paris-garden doth himselfe withdrawe,
> Where he is rauisht with such delectation,
> As downe among the beares and dogges he goes;
> Where, whilst he skipping cries "to head to head,"
> His satten doublet and his veluet hose
> Are all with spittle from aboue be-spread.[74]

Turning now from gown to town, we must recognize that the apprentices of London would have outnumbered the students ten to one. They had no income except what spending money was allowed them by parents or masters, and theoretically they had no weekday leisure, but by hook or crook they flocked to the theatres. Their tastes are often supposed to be reflected in Jonson's familiar lines:

> He rather prayes, you will be pleas'd to see
> One such, to day, as other playes should be.
> Where neither Chorus wafts you ore the seas,
> Nor creaking throne comes downe the boyes to please; [75]

and their habits in accounts like the following:

> The little devils are the apprentices, alias shopboys, who, on two days of the year, which prove fatal to them, Shrove Tuesday and the first of May, are so riotous and outrageous, that in a body, three or four thousand strong, they go committing excesses in every direction, killing human beings and demolishing houses.[76]

This portrait has too much shade. The Shrove Tuesday riot of 1617, for which the apprentice saturnalia furnished only a pretext, explains the horrified tone of the writer. Normally apprentices were well behaved: they had to be.

Apprentices were not all "boyes." They were compelled by statute to be twenty-four years of age before coming out of their apprenticeship, so that most of those in London were between seventeen and twenty-four—single, native-born, and mentally and physically fit. They formed, indeed, a superior class. The sons of unskilled laborers and husbandmen were generally barred from apprenticeship, and certain guilds insisted upon property qualifications in the parents and educational qualifications in the boy. Gentle birth was not uncommon. The apprentices were lodged with householders; they were soberly dressed (with cropped hair) and compelled to walk a chalk line.[77] But in

[74] "In Publium," Epigram No. 43, in Grosart, ed., *Complete Poems*, II, 40-41.

[75] Prologue, *Every Man in His Humor* (1598), in Herford and Simpson, eds., *Ben Jonson*.

[76] "Diaries and Despatches of the Venetian Embassy at the Court of King James I, in the years 1617, 1618," *Quarterly Review*, CII (1857), 413-14.

[77] Dunlop, *English Apprenticeship and Child Labour*, pp. 52, 55-56.

London they walked with the pride of possession: some of them would become lord mayors, dining magnificently foreign noblemen and receiving visits in state by the Archbishop of Canterbury. Many of them, perhaps the majority, had about as much formal education as Shakespeare himself. They, like the students, should have made pretty good spectators. One of the bourgeois traits of Beaumont's apprentice, Ralph, is that he recites at length from Shakespeare—with somewhat fewer errors than would be made by a modern college student. The term "apprentice," of course, is loosely used to designate all the boys of London, among whom no doubt there were plenty of ragamuffins.

We have now glanced at all of the major factors controlling theatrical attendance—save one. None of these factors except that of age can be said conclusively to have kept from the theatres more than a fraction of the available public. Together they help to explain why only two in fifteen Londoners went to the theatres weekly, but they fail to explain why from sixty to seventy thousand "adult" Londoners never went to the theatres at all.[78] The explanation of that phenomenon lies in the one factor not hitherto examined. It is obvious enough. Many people stayed away from the theatres because they did not care for plays. A dramatic and poetic age confers no universal taste for poetry and drama. Elizabethans could be Philistines, and thousands of them were.

Purely external considerations argue for the heterogeneity of the audience, for little selection on the basis of class, occupation, sex, respectability (or its opposite), and the like. The argument is sustained by the cataloguing descriptions of the audiences which the age produced. I shall set these down without comment, asking the reader to take each with reserve, in view of the angry or satirical mood of the speakers, but to let all together form the synthesis:

Anno 1582

the common people which resorte to Theatres being but an assemblie of Tailers, Tinkers, Cordwayners, Saylers, olde Men, yong Men, Women, Boyes, Girles, and such like.[79]

Anno 1583

Mentioned as killed, injured, or miraculously saved when Paris Garden collapsed while a thousand people were watching a bearbaiting on Sunday:

Adam Spencer, a felmonger of Southwark.
William Cockram, a baker of Shoreditch.
John Burton, a clerk of St. Marie Wolmers in Lombard St.
Mathew Mason, a servant with Master Garland of Southwark.
Thomas Peace, a servant with Rob. Tasker of Clerkenwell.
Alice White, a servant to a pursemaker without Cripplegate.
Marie Harrison, daughter to John, a water-bearer of Lombard St.
Mrs. Webb, wife of a pewterer of Limestreet.
An unidentified woman and her small child [80]

[78] Taking the estimated population of 160,000 in 1605 and subtracting 25 percent for the underage group leaves 120,000. Subtracting the probable number of playgoers, no greater in 1605 than 50,000 to 60,000 (see pp. 43-44), we have 60,000 to 70,000 left

[79] Gosson, *Playes Confuted in Fiue Actions,* in Hazlitt, ed., *English Drama and Stage,* p. 184.

[80] John Field, *A Godly Exhortation,* quoted in Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage,* IV, 220.

Anno 1595

For, as we see at all the play-house doores,
When ended is the play, the dance, and song,
A thousand Townesmen, gentlemen, and whores,
Porters and serving-men together throng.[81]

Anno 1597

They are the ordinary places for vagrant persons, Maisterles men, thieves, horse stealers, whoremongers, Coozeners, Conycatchers, contrivers of treason and other idele and daungerous persons to meet together. . . . They maintaine idlenes in such persons as haue no vocation & draw apprentices and other seruants from theire ordinary workes and all sorts of people from the resort vnto sermons and other Christian exercises to the great hinderance of traides & pphanation of religion.[82]

Anno 1608

The wise, and many headed Bench, that sits
Upon the Life and Death of playes, and Wits,
Compos'd of Gamester, Captain, Knight, Knight's man,
Lady or Pusill that wears mask or fan,
Velvet, or Taffata cap, rank'd in the dark
With the shops Foreman, or some such brave spark.[83]

Anno 1609

[Dramatic cakes]
fit for ladies: some for lords, knights, squires,
Some for your waiting wench, and city-wires,
Some for youn men, and daughters of white-Friars.[84]

Anno 1624

I doubt not but you have heard of our famous play of Gondomar, which hath been followed with extraordinarie concourse, and frequented by all sorts of people old and younge, rich and poore, masters and servants, papists and puritans, wise men *et ct.*, churchmen and statesmen as Sir Henry Wotton, Sir Albert Morton, Sir Benjamin Ruddier, Sir Thomas Lake, and a world besides; the Lady Smith wold have gon yf she could have persuaded me to go with her. I am not so sowre nor severe but that I wold willingly have attended her, but I could not sit so long, for we must have ben there before one a clocke at farthest to find any roome.[85]

Anno 1641

[Plays are] First for strangers, who can desire no better recreation than to come and see a play: then for Citizens to feast their wits: then for Gallants who otherwise perhaps would spend their money in drunkennesse and lasciviousnesse, [and] doe find a great delight and delectation to see a Play: then for the learned it does

[81] Sir John Davies, "In Cosmun," Epigram No. 17, in Grosart, ed., *Complete Poems*, II, 18.
[82] "Dramatic Records of the City of London· The Remembrancia," in *Malone Society Collections*, I, Part I, 80.
[83] Jonson's commendatory verses to *The Faithful Shepherdess*.
[84] Prologue, *Epicoene* (1609), in Herford and Simpson, eds., *Ben Jonson*.
[85] Chamberlain to Carleton, August 21. See *Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. McClure, II, 577-78.

increase and adde wit constructively to wit: then for Gentlewomen, it teacheth them how to deceive idlenesse: then for the ignorant it does augment their knowledge.[86]

The descriptions fused into one composite portrait give us, I believe, the truth about the kind of people in Shakespeare's audience. If the descriptions seem to make the type of spectators appear more genteel as time passes, it is partly because of the accident that some of the later writers were thinking primarily about that portion of the general theatrical public patronizing "private" theatres after 1599, more of which in a moment. The last description mentions a category of playgoers numerically few but of considerable interest: the "strangers." London was renowned through Europe for its theatres, and foreign visitors always saw a play or two, even when they could not understand the language. "Playing," said Heywood, "is an ornament to the city, which strangers of all nations repairing hither report of in their countries, beholding them here with some admiration." [87] Fortunately some of the reports survive, and to travelers like Kiechel of Ulm, De Witt of Utrecht, Platter of Basle, Busino of Venice, and Paul Hentzner we owe our most revealing descriptions of the English theatres.[88] Some were men of consequence: Prince Lewis of Anhalt-Cothen, Prince Lewis Frederick of Wurttemberg, and Duke Philip Julius of Stettin-Pomerania, who visited the playhouses three times during a week's stay in London in 1602. The foreign embassies also provided playhouse patrons. We hear of the French ambassador and his wife going to the Globe to see *Pericles*,[89] of the Spanish ambassador with all his train going to the Fortune and then banqueting with the players,[90] of the Venetian ambassador going to the Curtain and there behaving so much like the rude multitude that in Florentine eyes at least he was "pantalonissima." [91] The foreigners show no particular preference for the private as opposed to the public playhouses; probably the public playhouses had the more pronounced local color that would interest visitors from abroad.

Thus far I have said little about the audiences of the private playhouses as such—and for good reason: Shakespeare had little experience with them. His audience was that of the Rose, The Theatre, the Curtain, and the Globe. The King's Men began using Blackfriars as a winter house only after 1608, and even from that late date until he left London, the recorded performances of Shakespeare's plays were all at the Globe. His last play, *Henry VIII*, was certainly first brought out there. Some misapprehension must lie behind a statement like the following: "While Shakespeare, unconsciously writing for all time, kept in his mind's eye the approval of lordly patrons of Blackfriars, Thomas Heywood and his kind catered to apprentices and shopkeepers who haunted the Red Bull." [92] We cannot have the thing both ways. If Heywood

[86] *Stage-Players Complaint* (1641), in Hazlitt, ed., *English Drama and Stage*, pp. 256-57.

[87] *Apology for Actors* (1612), Shakespeare Society Publications, No. III, p. 52.

[88] See Rye, *England as Seen by Foreigners*, *passim*, Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, *passim*, and citations in the present study.

[89] Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, II, 549.

[90] July 21; 1621. See *Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. McClure, II, 391.

[91] Chambers, "Elizabethan Stage Gleanings," *Review of English Studies*, I (1925), 186. I have mentioned earlier the playhouse adventures of Ambassador Foscarini.

[92] Wright, *Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England*, p. 18.

wrote for apprentices and shopkeepers, so also did Shakespeare; or if Shakespeare wrote for "lordly patrons," so also did Heywood. A source of confusion exists in the different types of audience vaguely perceived to have existed in or about Shakespeare's time. The matter requires clarification, and a preliminary word must be said about the "private" audiences.

As soon as the playhouses at Paul's and Blackfriars began to rival the Globe and Fortune, we hear that a man need no longer "be choakte with the stench of Garlicke" for at Paul's "Tis a good gentle Audience,"[93] while at Blackfriars there are "Select, and most respected Auditours,"[94] and plays can count on

> gentle presence, and the Sceans suckt up
> By calme attention of choyce audience.[95]

The playwrights later discovered that the attention was neither uniformly, nor choice; however, at the rates charged, it continued "gentle." In the reign of James, multitudes of coaches were causing traffic congestions outside Blackfriars; and in that of Charles, traffic regulations were discommoding "diverse persons of great quality, especially Ladies and Gentlewomen"[96] on their way to the theatre. In 1636 the Duke of Lenox and the Lord Chamberlain were disputing over possession of a Blackfriars box. Between 1631 and 1641, Sir Humphrey Mildmay, during his sojourns in London, records fifty-seven visits to the theatres, usually Blackfriars, with his wife or in polite theatrical parties "with good Company." On one occasion, at least, "good Company" palled: "To dynner came Sr Chr: Abdy & wente to the Newe playe with my wife. J wente abroade by my selfe to worse places alone."[97] After the theatres were closed in 1642, a spokesman for the Phoenix, Salisbury Court, and Blackfriars affirmed that at these houses "none use to come but the best of the Nobility and Gentry" and disclaims with high disdain "boystrous Butchers, cutting Coblers, hardhanded Masons, and the like."[98] The gentility of the private playhouse audiences we dare not question.

But the private playhouses between 1599 and 1642 did not create this audience. They merely segregated and perhaps augmented it. It had been segregated once before in some slight degree, as evidenced by Lyly's allusions in the eighties to the advantages of "presenting our studies before Gentlemen" at Paul's,[99] and to the "woonted courtisies" of the spectators at Blackfriars.[100] It existed during the nineties but was then merged with other elements from the population to form the universal audience of the public theatres. We should distinguish among three Elizabethan audiences, recognizing that various occasions and various theatres would obscure our distinction: there was the genteel audience of the private theatres; there was the plebeian audience of

[93] Marston, *Jack Drum's Entertainment* (1600), Act V, Scene ii, in Wood, ed., *Plays*.
[94] Marston, Prologue, *Antonio and Mellida* (1599-1600).
[95] Marston, *Antonio's Revenge* (1599-1601), Act V, Scene vi, ed. Greg, Malone Society Reprints
[96] Adams, *Shakespearean Playhouses*, p. 231.
[97] December 13, 1635. The dramatic extracts from Mildmay's journal (Harl. MS 454) appear in Bentley, "The Diary of a Caroline Theatregoer," *Modern Philology*, XXXV (1937-38), 61-72
[98] *Actors Remonstrance or Complaint* (1643), in Hazlitt, ed., *English Drama and Stage*, p. 261.
[99] Prologue, *Midas* (c. 1589), in Bond, ed., *Complete Works*.
[100] Prologue, *Campaspe* (c. 1584), in *ibid.* See also the Prologue to *Sapho and Phao* (c. 1584), in *ibid.*

such theatres as the Red Bull and perhaps the Fortune after the private houses had filched the gentry away; and then there was that audience both genteel and plebeian, or neither, of the nineties and, because of its peculiar prestige, of the Globe in the early decades of the seventeenth century. It was the audience for which nearly all the great Elizabethan plays were written. It was Shakespeare's audience.

All that we can say of the composition of Shakespeare's audience, other than that it was a cross section of the London population of his day, is that youth may have predominated somewhat over age, male over female, the worldly over the pious, and, of course without the "perhaps," the receptive over the unreceptive. Although the more leisured classes would have been better represented than by their pro rata of the population, it was predominantly a working-class audience because of the greater numerical superiority of the working classes in the London area and because theatrical tariffs had been designed largely for them. It was not much different from the assemblage which gathered to hear the sermons at Paul's Cross. Stephen Gosson, the one really likable antagonist of the Elizabethan stage, says with a kind of weary resignation: "Indeede I must confesse there comes to Playes of all sortes, old and young; it is hard to say that all offend"—then his higher nature triumphs —"yet I promise you, I wil sweare for none." [101]

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[101] *Schoole of Abuse* (1579), ed Arber, English Reprints, No. III, p 60.

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BIOGRAPHY

COUNTLESS readers agree with Virginia Woolf in her essay on the art of biography, reprinted on page 201, that Lytton Strachey was a very skillful performer in a difficult art and that *Queen Victoria* is his masterpiece. The freer temper that came into existence after World War I made it possible, as Mrs. Woolf explains, "to tell the truth about the dead; and the Victorian age was rich in remarkable figures many of whom had been grossly deformed by the effigies that had been plastered over them." She adds that a biographer of Victoria was particularly able to take advantage of this freer temper because "About Queen Victoria everything was known."

Strachey made it clear in the Preface to *Eminent Victorians* (1918), his first essays in nineteenth-century biography, that he was conscious of both the opportunities and the difficulties of working freely with so great an accumulation of evidence. "The history of the Victorian Age will never be written: we know too much about it. For ignorance is the first requisite of the historian—ignorance, which simplifies and clarifies, which selects and omits." He wished to avoid the shapeless length and the uncritical eulogy of The Standard Biography, "those two fat volumes, with which it is our custom to commemorate the dead—who does not know them, with their ill-digested masses of material, their slipshod style, their tone of tedious panegyric, their lamentable lack of selection, of detachment, of design?" The positive aims of the biographer, then, should be "to preserve a becoming brevity, which excludes everything that is redundant and nothing that is significant"; and "to maintain his own freedom of spirit, to lay bare the facts."

Most of us, if we are candid, must admit as we begin to read *Queen Victoria* that we are not well enough informed about her life and times to evaluate the accuracy of Strachey's facts and his judgment of what is significant. We can, however, increase our enjoyment of a skillful performance by watching how the artist creates a pattern that orders and interprets his material. Since Strachey first implies rather than explains what he is doing, the pattern becomes progressively clear as we read on. Near the beginning of Chapter III, for example, Strachey reports that "What, above all, struck everybody with overwhelming force was the contrast between Queen Victoria and her uncles. The nasty old men, debauched and selfish, pig-headed and ridiculous, with their perpetual bur-

den of debts, confusions, and disreputabilities—they had vanished like the snows of winter, and here at last, crowned and radiant, was the spring." This statement clarifies the strategy of the first two chapters, in which the uncles have been portrayed as nasty old men indeed. Are the portraits oversimplified? We may reflect that individuals in real life are always more complex than these uncles, and that therefore Strachey probably omitted some information about them, but we can now see that flat characters were needed as a contrasting foil for Victoria. We may foresee, too, that the image of Victoria as spring will be a useful foil for Victoria as the image of middle-aged respectability.

Within the larger patterns are smaller-scale devices for subordinating, emphasizing, and clarifying. In the second section of Chapter II, for example, is a picture of Victoria, "the little girl at Kensington. She alone stood between the country and her terrible uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, the hideous embodiment of reaction. . . . It was certain that the young Princess would be brought up in the way that she should go; yet there, close behind the throne, waiting, sinister, was the Duke of Cumberland." The wicked uncle is straight from the land of fairy tales, and the little defender of progress and country stalked by the sinister villain is straight from an old-fashioned melodrama. They are not the whole truth, doubtless, but they are useful means to Strachey's goal of lucid design. Theatrical suspense is in fact Strachey's chief method of ordering and enlivening the heavy lump of facts about the succession to the throne. Will Victoria win? By the way the evidence is presented this is made a dramatic question rather than a cold fact.

Much is omitted, obviously, from Strachey's portrait of Victoria, and much more from the picture of her age; but the omissions are intentional. They imply, of course, that other, different portraits of the same subject are possible; they also help to produce the clear and shapely pattern at which Strachey aimed and which gives pleasure to his readers. We may double that pleasure by becoming conscious of the skill with which he works.

LYTTON STRACHEY

Queen Victoria

I. ANTECEDENTS

ON NOVEMBER 6, 1817, died the Princess Charlotte, only child of the Prince Regent, and heir to the crown of England. Her short life had hardly been a happy one. By nature impulsive, capricious, and vehement, she had always longed for liberty; and she had never possessed it. She had been brought up among violent family quarrels, had been early separated from her disreputable and eccentric mother, and handed over to the care of her disreputable and selfish father. When she was seventeen, he decided to marry her off to the Prince of Orange; she, at first, acquiesced; but, suddenly falling in love with Prince Augustus of Prussia, she determined to break off the engagement. This was not her first love affair, for she had previously carried on a clandestine correspondence with a Captain Hess. Prince Augustus was already married, morganatically, but she did not know it, and he did not tell her. While she was spinning out the negotiations with the Prince of Orange, the allied sovereigns—it was June, 1814—arrived in London to celebrate their victory. Among them, in the suite of the Emperor of Russia, was the young and handsome Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg. He made several attempts to attract the notice of the Princess, but she, with her heart elsewhere, paid very little attention. Next month the Prince Regent, discovering that his daughter was having secret meetings with Prince Augustus, suddenly appeared upon the scene and, after dismissing her household, sentenced her to a strict seclusion in Windsor Park. "God Almighty grant me patience!" she exclaimed, falling on her knees in an agony of agitation: then she jumped up, ran down the back-stairs and out into the street, hailed a passing cab, and drove to her mother's house in Bayswater. She was discovered, pursued, and at length, yielding to the persuasions of her uncles, the Dukes of York and Sussex, of Brougham, and of the Bishop of Salisbury, she returned to Carlton House at two o'clock in the morning. She was immured at Windsor, but no more was heard of the Prince of Orange. Prince Augustus, too, disappeared. The way was at last open to Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg.

This Prince was clever enough to get round the Regent, to impress the Ministers, and to make friends with another of the Princess's uncles, the Duke of Kent. Through the Duke he was able to communicate privately with the Princess, who now declared that he was necessary to her happiness. When, after Waterloo, he was in Paris, the Duke's aide-de-camp carried letters back-

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wards and forwards across the Channel. In January 1816 he was invited to England, and in May the marriage took place.

The character of Prince Leopold contrasted strangely with that of his wife. The younger son of a German princeling, he was at this time twenty-six years of age; he had served with distinction in the war against Napoleon; he had shown considerable diplomatic skill at the Congress of Vienna; and he was now to try his hand at the task of taming a tumultuous Princess. Cold and formal in manner, collected in speech, careful in action, he soon dominated the wild, impetuous, generous creature by his side. There was much in her, he found, of which he could not approve. She quizzed, she stamped, she roared with laughter; she had very little of that self-command which is especially required of princes; her manners were abominable. Of the latter he was a good judge, having moved, as he himself explained to his niece many years later, in the best society of Europe, being in fact "what is called in French *de la fleur des pois*." There was continual friction, but every scene ended in the same way. Standing before him like a rebellious boy in petticoats, her body pushed forward, her hands behind her back, with flaming cheeks and sparkling eyes, she would declare at last that she was ready to do whatever he wanted. "If you wish it, I will do it," she would say. "I want nothing for myself," he invariably answered; "when I press something on you, it is from a conviction that it is for your interest and for your good"

Among the members of the household at Claremont, near Esher, where the royal pair were established, was a young German physician, Christian Friedrich Stockmar. He was the son of a minor magistrate in Coburg, and, after taking part as a medical officer in the war, he had settled down as a doctor in his native town. Here he had met Prince Leopold, who had been struck by his ability, and, on his marriage, brought him to England as his personal physician. A curious fate awaited this young man; many were the gifts which the future held in store for him—many and various—influence, power, mystery, unhappiness, a broken heart. At Claremont his position was a very humble one; but the Princess took a fancy to him, called him "Stocky," and romped with him along the corridors. Dyspeptic by constitution, melancholic by temperament, he could yet be lively on occasion, and was known as a wit in Coburg. He was virtuous, too, and observed the royal *ménage* with approbation. "My master," he wrote in his diary, "is the best of all husbands in all the five quarters of the globe; and his wife bears him an amount of love, the greatness of which can only be compared with the English national debt." Before long he gave proof of another quality—a quality which was to color the whole of his life—cautious sagacity. When, in the spring of 1817, it was known that the Princess was expecting a child, the post of one of her physicians-in-ordinary was offered to him, and he had the good sense to refuse it. He perceived that his colleagues would be jealous of him, that his advice would probably not be taken, but that, if anything were to go wrong, it would be certainly the foreign doctor who would be blamed. Very soon, indeed, he came to the opinion that the low diet and constant bleedings, to which the unfortunate Princess was subjected, were an error; he drew the Prince aside, and begged him to communicate this opinion to the English

doctors; but it was useless. The fashionable lowering treatment was continued for months. On November 5, at nine o'clock in the evening, after a labor of over fifty hours, the Princess was delivered of a dead boy. At midnight her exhausted strength gave way. Then, at last, Stockmar consented to see her; he went in, and found her obviously dying, while the doctors were plying her with wine. She seized his hand and pressed it. "They have made me tipsy," she said. After a little he left her, and was already in the next room when he heard her call out in her loud voice: "Stocky! Stocky!" As he ran back the death-rattle was in her throat. She tossed herself violently from side to side; then suddenly drew up her legs, and it was over.

The Prince, after hours of watching, had left the room for a few moments' rest; and Stockmar had now to tell him that his wife was dead. At first he could not be made to realize what had happened. On their way to her room he sank down on a chair while Stockmar knelt beside him: it was all a dream; it was impossible. At last, by the bed, he, too, knelt down and kissed the cold hands. Then rising and exclaiming, "Now I am quite desolate. Promise me never to leave me," he threw himself into Stockmar's arms.

II

The tragedy at Claremont was of a most upsetting kind. The royal kaleidoscope had suddenly shifted, and nobody could tell how the new pattern would arrange itself. The succession to the throne, which had seemed so satisfactorily settled, now became a matter of urgent doubt.

George III was still living, an aged lunatic, at Windsor, completely impervious to the impressions of the outer world. Of his seven sons, the youngest was of more than middle age, and none had legitimate offspring. The outlook, therefore, was ambiguous. It seemed highly improbable that the Prince Regent, who had lately been obliged to abandon his stays, and presented a preposterous figure of debauched obesity, could ever again, even on the supposition that he divorced his wife and re-married, become the father of a family. Besides the Duke of Kent, who must be noticed separately, the other brothers, in order of seniority, were the Dukes of York, Clarence, Cumberland, Sussex, and Cambridge; their situations and prospects require a brief description. The Duke of York, whose escapades in times past with Mrs. Clarke and the army had brought him into trouble, now divided his life between London and a large, extravagantly ordered and extremely uncomfortable country house where he occupied himself with racing, whist, and improper stories. He was remarkable among the princes for one reason: he was the only one of them—so we are informed by a highly competent observer—who had the feelings of a gentleman. He had been long married to the Princess Royal of Prussia, a lady who rarely went to bed and was perpetually surrounded by vast numbers of dogs, parrots, and monkeys. They had no children. The Duke of Clarence had lived for many years in complete obscurity with Mrs. Jordan, the actress, in Bushey Park. By her he had had a large family of sons and daughters, and had appeared, in effect, to be married to her, when he suddenly separated from her and offered to marry Miss Wykeham, a crazy woman of large fortune, who, however, would have nothing to say to him. Shortly afterwards Mrs. Jordan

died in distressed circumstances in Paris. The Duke of Cumberland was probably the most unpopular man in England. Hideously ugly, with a distorted eye, he was bad-tempered and vindictive in private, a violent reactionary in politics, and was subsequently suspected of murdering his valet and of having carried on an amorous intrigue of an extremely scandalous kind. He had lately married a German Princess, but there were as yet no children by the marriage. The Duke of Sussex had mildly literary tastes and collected books. He had married Lady Augusta Murray, by whom he had two children, but the marriage, under the Royal Marriages Act, was declared void. On Lady Augusta's death, he married Lady Cecilia Buggin; she changed her name to Underwood; but this marriage also was void. Of the Duke of Cambridge, the youngest of the brothers, not very much was known. He lived in Hanover, wore a blonde wig, chattered and fidgeted a great deal, and was unmarried.

Besides his seven sons, George III had five surviving daughters. Of these, two—the Queen of Wurttemberg and the Duchess of Gloucester—were married and childless. The three unmarried princesses—Augusta, Elizabeth, and Sophia—were all over forty.

III

The fourth son of George III was Edward, Duke of Kent. He was now fifty years of age—a tall, stout, vigorous man, highly colored, with bushy eyebrows, a bald top to his head, and what hair he had carefully dyed a glossy black. His dress was extremely neat, and in his whole appearance there was a rigidity which did not belie his character. He had spent his early life in the army—at Gibraltar, in Canada, in the West Indies—and, under the influence of military training, had become at first a disciplinarian and at last a martinet. In 1802, having been sent to Gibraltar to restore order in a mutinous garrison, he was recalled for undue severity, and his active career had come to an end. Since then he had spent his life regulating his domestic arrangements with great exactitude, busying himself with the affairs of his numerous dependents, designing clocks, and struggling to restore order to his finances, for, in spite of his being, as some one said who knew him well *"réglé comme du papier à musique,"* and in spite of an income of £24,000 a year, he was hopelessly in debt. He had quarreled with most of his brothers, particularly with the Prince Regent, and it was only natural that he should have joined the political Opposition and become a pillar of the Whigs.

What his political opinions may actually have been is open to doubt; it has often been asserted that he was a Liberal, or even a Radical; and, if we are to believe Robert Owen, he was a necessitarian Socialist. His relations with Owen—the shrewd, gullible, high-minded, wrong-headed, illustrious and preposterous father of Socialism and Coöperation—were curious and characteristic. He talked of visiting the Mills at New Lanark; he did, in fact, preside at one of Owen's public meetings; he corresponded with him on confidential terms, and he even (so Queen assures us) returned, after his death, from "the sphere of spirits" to give encouragement to the Owenites on earth. "In an especial manner," says Owen, "I have to name the very anxious feelings of the spirit of his Royal Highness the late Duke of Kent (who early informed me there were no titles in the spiritual spheres into which he had entered), to benefit, not a

class, a sect, a party, or any particular country, but the whole of the human race through futurity." "His whole spirit-proceeding with me has been most beautiful," Owen adds, "making his own appointments; and never in one instance has this spirit not been punctual to the minute he had named." But Owen was of a sanguine temperament. He also numbered among his proselytes President Jefferson, Prince Metternich, and Napoleon; so that some uncertainty must still linger over the Duke of Kent's views. But there is no uncertainty about another circumstance: his Royal Highness borrowed from Robert Owen, on various occasions, various sums of money which were never repaid and amounted in all to several hundred pounds.

After the death of the Princess Charlotte it was clearly important, for more than one reason, that the Duke of Kent should marry. From the point of view of the nation, the lack of heirs in the reigning family seemed to make the step almost obligatory; it was also likely to be highly expedient from the point of view of the Duke. To marry as a public duty, for the sake of the royal succession, would surely deserve some recognition from a grateful country. When the Duke of York had married he had received a settlement of £25,000 a year. Why should not the Duke of Kent look forward to an equal sum? But the situation was not quite simple. There was the Duke of Clarence to be considered; he was the elder brother, and, if *he* married, would clearly have the prior claim. On the other hand, if the Duke of Kent married, it was important to remember that he would be making a serious sacrifice: a lady was involved.

The Duke, reflecting upon all these matters with careful attention, happened, about a month after his niece's death, to visit Brussels, and learnt that Mr. Creevey was staying in the town. Mr. Creevey was a close friend of the leading Whigs and an inveterate gossip; and it occurred to the Duke that there could be no better channel through which to communicate his views upon the situation to political circles at home. Apparently it did not occur to him that Mr. Creevey was malicious and might keep a diary. He therefore sent for him on some trivial pretext, and a remarkable conversation ensued.

After referring to the death of the Princess, to the improbability of the Regent's seeking a divorce, to the childlessness of the Duke of York, and to the possibility of the Duke of Clarence marrying, the Duke adverted to his own position. "Should the Duke of Clarence not marry," he said, "the next prince in succession is myself, and although I trust I shall be at all times ready to obey any call my country may make upon me, God only knows the sacrifice it will be to make, whenever I shall think it my duty to become a married man. It is now seven-and-twenty years that Madame St. Laurent and I have lived together: we are of the same age, and have been in all climates, and in all difficulties together, and you may well imagine, Mr. Creevey, the pang it will occasion me to part with her. I put it to your own feelings—in the event of any separation between you and Mrs. Creevey. . . . As for Madame St. Laurent herself, I protest I don't know what is to become of her if a marriage is to be forced upon me; her feelings are already so agitated upon the subject." The Duke went on to describe how, one morning, a day or two after the Princess Charlotte's death, a paragraph had appeared in the *Morning Chronicle,* alluding to the possibility of his marriage. He had received the newspaper at breakfast together with his

letters, and "I did as is my constant practice, I threw the newspaper across the table to Madame St. Laurent, and began to open and read my letters. I had not done so but a very short time, when my attention was called to an extraordinary noise and a strong convulsive movement in Madame St. Laurent's throat. For a short time I entertained serious apprehensions for her safety; and when, upon her recovery, I enquired into the occasion of this attack, she pointed to the article in the *Morning Chronicle*."

The Duke then returned to the subject of the Duke of Clarence. "My brother the Duke of Clarence is the elder brother, and has certainly the right to marry if he chooses, and I would not interfere with him on any account. If he wishes to be king—to be married and have children, poor man—God help him! let him do so. For myself—I am a man of no ambition, and wish only to remain as I am. . . . Easter, you know, falls very early this year—the 22nd of March. If the Duke of Clarence does not take any step before that time, I must find some pretext to reconcile Madame St. Laurent to my going to England for a short time. When once there, it will be easy for me to consult with my friends as to the proper steps to be taken. Should the Duke of Clarence do nothing before that time as to marrying it will become my duty, no doubt, to take some measures upon the subject myself." Two names, the Duke said, had been mentioned in this connection—those of the Princess of Baden and the Princess of Saxe-Coburg. The latter, he thought, would perhaps be the better of the two, from the circumstance of Prince Leopold being so popular with the nation; but before any other steps were taken, he hoped and expected to see justice done to Madame St. Laurent. "She is," he explained, "of very good family, and has never been an actress, and I am the first and only person who ever lived with her. Her disinterestedness, too, has been equal to her fidelity. When she first came to me it was upon £100 a year. That sum was afterwards raised to £400, and finally to £1000; but when my debts made it necessary for me to sacrifice a great part of my income, Madame St. Laurent insisted upon again returning to her income of £400 a year. If Madame St. Laurent is to return to live amongst her friends, it must be in such a state of independence as to command their respect. I shall not require very much, but a certain number of servants and a carriage are essentials." As to his own settlement, the Duke observed that he would expect the Duke of York's marriage to be considered the precedent. "That," he said, "was a marriage for the succession, and £25,000 for income was settled, in addition to all his other income, purely on that account. I shall be contented with the same arrangement, without making any demands grounded on the difference of the value of money in 1792 and at present. As for the payment of my debts," the Duke concluded, "I don't call them great. The nation, on the contrary, is greatly my debtor." Here a clock struck, and seemed to remind the Duke that he had an appointment; he rose, and Mr. Creevey left him.

Who could keep such a communication secret? Certainly not Mr. Creevey. He hurried off to tell the Duke of Wellington, who was very much amused, and he wrote a long account of it to Lord Sefton, who received the letter "very apropos," while a surgeon was sounding his bladder to ascertain whether he had a stone. "I never saw a fellow more astonished than he was," wrote Lord

Sefton in his reply, "at seeing me laugh as soon as the operation was over. Nothing could be more first-rate than the royal Edward's ingenuousness. One does not know which to admire most—the delicacy of his attachment to Madame St. Laurent, the refinement of his sentiments towards the Duke of Clarence, or his own perfect disinterestedness in pecuniary matters."

As it turned out, both the brothers decided to marry. The Duke of Kent, selecting the Princess of Saxe-Coburg in preference to the Princess of Baden, was united to her on May 29, 1818. On June 11, the Duke of Clarence followed suit with a daughter of the Duke of Saxe-Meiningen. But they were disappointed in their financial expectations; for though the Government brought forward proposals to increase their allowances, together with that of the Duke of Cumberland, the motions were defeated in the House of Commons. At this the Duke of Wellington was not surprised. "By God!" he said, "there is a great deal to be said about that. They are the damnedest millstones about the necks of any Government that can be imagined. They have insulted—*personally* insulted—two-thirds of the gentlemen of England, and how can it be wondered at that they take their revenge upon them in the House of Commons? It is their only opportunity, and I think, by God! they are quite right to use it." Eventually, however, Parliament increased the Duke of Kent's annuity by £6000.

The subsequent history of Madame St. Laurent has not transpired.

IV

The new Duchess of Kent, Victoria Mary Louisa, was a daughter of Francis, Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld, and a sister of Prince Leopold. The family was an ancient one, being a branch of the great House of Wettin, which since the eleventh century had ruled over the March of Meissen on the Elbe. In the fifteenth century the whole possessions of the House had been divided between the Albertine and Ernestine branches: from the former descended the electors and kings of Saxony; the latter, ruling over Thuringia, became further subdivided into five branches, of which the duchy of Saxe-Coburg was one. This principality was very small, containing about 60,000 inhabitants, but it enjoyed independent and sovereign rights. During the disturbed years which followed the French Revolution, its affairs became terribly involved. The Duke was extravagant, and kept open house for the swarms of refugees, who fled eastward over Germany as the French power advanced. Among these was the Prince of Leiningen, an elderly beau, whose domains on the Moselle had been seized by the French, but who was granted in compensation the territory of Amorbach in Lower Franconia. In 1803 he married the Princess Victoria, at that time seventeen years of age. Three years later Duke Francis died a ruined man. The Napoleonic harrow passed over Saxe-Coburg. The duchy was seized by the French, and the ducal family were reduced to beggary, almost to starvation. At the same time the little principality of Amorbach was devastated by the French, Russian, and Austrian armies, marching and counter-marching across it. For years there was hardly a cow in the country, nor enough grass to feed a flock of geese. Such was the desperate plight of the family which, a generation later, was to have gained a foothold in half the reigning Houses of

Europe. The Napoleonic harrow had indeed done its work; the seed was planted; and the crop would have surprised Napoleon. Prince Leopold, thrown upon his own resources at fifteen, made a career for himself and married the heiress of England. The Princess of Leiningen, struggling at Amorbach with poverty, military requisitions, and a futile husband, developed an independence of character and a tenacity of purpose which were to prove useful in very different circumstances. In 1814, her husband died, leaving her with two children and the regency of the principality. After her brother's marriage with the Princess Charlotte, it was proposed that she should marry the Duke of Kent; but she declined, on the ground that the guardianship of her children and the management of her domains made other ties undesirable. The Princess Charlotte's death, however, altered the case; and when the Duke of Kent renewed his offer, she accepted it. She was thirty-two years old—short, stout, with brown eyes and hair, and rosy cheeks, cheerful and voluble, and gorgeously attired in rustling silks and bright velvets.

She was certainly fortunate in her contented disposition; for she was fated, all through her life, to have much to put up with. Her second marriage, with its dubious prospects, seemed at first to be chiefly a source of difficulties and discomforts. The Duke, declaring that he was still too poor to live in England, moved about with uneasy precision through Belgium and Germany, attending parades and inspecting barracks in a neat military cap, while the English notabilities looked askance, and the Duke of Wellington dubbed him the Corporal. "God damme!" he exclaimed to Mr. Creevey, "d'ye know what his sisters call him? By God! they call him Joseph Surface!" At Valenciennes, where there was a review and a great dinner, the Duchess arrived with an old and ugly lady-in-waiting, and the Duke of Wellington found himself in a difficulty. "Who the devil is to take out the maid of honor?" he kept asking; but at last he thought of a solution. "Damme, Freemantle, find out the mayor and let him do it." So the Mayor of Valenciennes was brought up for the purpose, and—so we learn from Mr. Creevey—"a capital figure he was." A few days later, at Brussels, Mr. Creevey himself had an unfortunate experience. A military school was to be inspected—before breakfast. The company assembled; everything was highly satisfactory; but the Duke of Kent continued for so long examining every detail and asking meticulous question after meticulous question, that Mr. Creevey at last could bear it no longer, and whispered to his neighbor that he was damned hungry. The Duke of Wellington heard him, and was delighted. "I recommend you," he said, "whenever you start with the royal family in a morning, and particularly with *the Corporal*, always to breakfast first." He and his staff, it turned out, had taken that precaution, and the great man amused himself, while the stream of royal inquiries poured on, by pointing at Mr. Creevey from time to time with the remark, "Voilà le monsieur qui n'a pas déjeuné!"

Settled down at last at Amorbach, the time hung heavily on the Duke's hands. The establishment was small, the country was impoverished; even clock-making grew tedious at last. He brooded—for in spite of his piety the Duke was not without a vein of superstition—over the prophecy of a gypsy at Gibraltar who told him that he was to have many losses and crosses, that he

was to die in happiness, and that his only child was to be a great queen. Before long it became clear that a child was to be expected: the Duke decided that it should be born in England. Funds were lacking for the journey, but his determination was not to be set aside. Come what might, he declared, his child must be English-born. A carriage was hired, and the Duke himself mounted the box. Inside were the Duchess, her daughter Feodora, a girl of fourteen, with maids, nurses, lap-dogs, and canaries. Off they drove—through Germany, through France: bad roads, cheap inns, were nothing to the rigorous Duke and the equable, abundant Duchess. The Channel was crossed, London was reached in safety. The authorities provided a set of rooms in Kensington Palace; and there, on May 24, 1819, a female infant was born.

II. CHILDHOOD

THE CHILD who, in these not very impressive circumstances, appeared in the world, received but scant attention. There was small reason to foresee her destiny. The Duchess of Clarence, two months before, had given birth to a daughter; this infant, indeed, had died almost immediately; but it seemed highly probable that the Duchess would again become a mother; and so it actually fell out. More than this, the Duchess of Kent was young, and the Duke was strong; there was every likelihood that before long a brother would follow, to snatch her faint chance of the succession from the little princess.

Nevertheless, the Duke had other views: there were prophecies. . . . At any rate, he would christen the child Elizabeth, a name of happy augury. In this, however, he reckoned without the Regent, who, seeing a chance of annoying his brother, suddenly announced that he himself would be present at the baptism, and signified at the same time that one of the godfathers was to be the Emperor Alexander of Russia. And so when the ceremony took place, and the Archbishop of Canterbury asked by what name he was to baptize the child, the Regent replied "Alexandria." At this the Duke ventured to suggest that another name might be added. "Certainly," said the Regent; "Georgina?" "Or Elizabeth?" said the Duke. There was a pause, during which the Archbishop, with the baby in his lawn sleeves, looked with some uneasiness from one Prince to the other. "Very well, then," said the Regent at last, "call her after her mother. But Alexandrina must come first." Thus, to the disgust of her father, the child was christened Alexandrina Victoria.

The Duke had other subjects of disgust. The meager grant of the Commons had by no means put an end to his financial distresses. It was to be feared that his services were not appreciated by the nation. His debts continued to grow. For many years he had lived upon £7000 a year; but now his expenses were exactly doubled; he could make no further reductions; as it was, there was not a single servant in his establishment who was idle for a moment from morning to night. He poured out his griefs in a long letter to Robert Owen, whose sympathy had the great merit of being practical. "I now candidly state," he wrote, "that, after viewing the subject in every possible way, I am satisfied that, to continue to live in England, even in the quiet way in which we are going on, *without splendor,* and *without show, nothing short of doubling the seven thousand pounds will do,* REDUCTION BEING IMPOSSIBLE." It was clear that

he would be obliged to sell his house for £51,300: if that failed, he would go and live on the Continent. "If my services are useful to my country, it surely becomes *those who have the power* to support me in substantiating those just claims I have for the very extensive losses and privations I have experienced, during the very long period of my professional servitude in the Colonies; and if this is not attainable, *it is a clear proof to me that they are not appreciated;* and under that impression I shall not scruple, in *due* time, to resume my retirement abroad, when the Duchess and myself shall have fulfilled our duties in establishing the *English* birth of my child, and giving it material nutriment on the soil of Old England; and which we shall certainly repeat, if Providence destines to give us any further increase of family."

In the meantime, he decided to spend the winter at Sidmouth, "in order," he told Owen, "that the Duchess may have the benefit of tepid sea bathing, and our infant that of sea air, on the fine coast of Devonshire, during the months of the year that are so odious in London." In December the move was made. With the new year, the Duke remembered another prophecy. In 1820, a fortune-teller had told him, two members of the Royal Family would die. Who would they be? He speculated on the various possibilities: the King, it was plain, could not live much longer; and the Duchess of York had been attacked by a mortal disease. Probably it would be the King and the Duchess of York; or perhaps the King and the Duke of York; or the King and the Regent. He himself was one of the healthiest men in England. "My brothers," he declared, "are not so strong as I am; I have lived a regular life. I shall outlive them all. The crown will come to me and my children." He went out for a walk, and got his feet wet. On coming home, he neglected to change his stockings. He caught cold, inflammation of the lungs set in, and on January 22 he was a dying man. By a curious chance, young Dr. Stockmar was staying in the house at the time; two years before, he had stood by the death-bed of the Princess Charlotte; and now he was watching the Duke of Kent in his agony. On Stockmar's advice, a will was hastily prepared. The Duke's earthly possessions were of a negative character; but it was important that the guardianship of the unwitting child, whose fortunes were now so strangely changing, should be assured to the Duchess. The Duke was just able to understand the document, and to append his signature. Having inquired whether his writing was perfectly clear, he became unconscious, and breathed his last on the following morning. Six days later came the fulfillment of the second half of the gypsy's prophecy. The long, unhappy, and inglorious life of George the Third of England was ended.

II

Such was the confusion of affairs at Sidmouth, that the Duchess found herself without the means of returning to London. Prince Leopold hurried down, and himself conducted his sister and her family, by slow and bitter stages, to Kensington. The widowed lady, in her voluminous blacks, needed all her equanimity to support her. Her prospects were more dubious than ever. She had £6000 a year of her own; but her husband's debts loomed before her like a mountain. Soon she learnt that the Duchess of Clarence was once more expecting a child. What had she to look forward to in England? Why should

she remain in a foreign country, among strangers, whose language she could not speak, whose customs she could not understand? Surely it would be best to return to Amorbach, and there, among her own people, bring up her daughters in economical obscurity. But she was an inveterate optimist; she had spent her life in struggles, and would not be daunted now. And besides, she adored her baby. "C'est mon bonheur, mes délices, mon existence," she declared; the darling should be brought up as an English princess, whatever lot awaited her. Prince Leopold came forward nobly with an offer of an additional £3000 a year; and the Duchess remained at Kensington.

The child herself was extremely fat, and bore a remarkable resemblance to her grandfather. "C'est l'image du feu Roi!" exclaimed the Duchess. "C'est le Roi Georges en jupons," echoed the surrounding ladies, as the little creature waddled with difficulty from one to the other.

Before long, the world began to be slightly interested in the nursery at Kensington. When, early in 1821, the Duchess of Clarence's second child, the Princess Elizabeth, died within three months of its birth, the interest increased. Great forces and fierce antagonisms seemed to be moving, obscurely, about the royal cradle. It was a time of faction and anger, of violent repression and profound discontent. A powerful movement, which had for long been checked by adverse circumstances, was now spreading throughout the country. New passions, new desires, were abroad; or rather old passions and old desires, reincarnated with a new potency: love of freedom, hatred of injustice, hope for the future of man. The mighty still sat proudly in their seats, dispensing their ancient tyranny; but a storm was gathering out of the darkness, and already there was lightning in the sky. But the vastest forces must needs operate through frail human instruments; and it seemed for many years as if the great cause of English liberalism hung upon the life of the little girl at Kensington. She alone stood between the country and her terrible uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, the hideous embodiment of reaction. Inevitably, the Duchess of Kent threw in her lot with her husband's party; Whig leaders, Radical agitators, rallied round her; she was intimate with the bold Lord Durham, she was on friendly terms with the redoubtable O'Connell himself. She received Wilberforce—though, to be sure, she did not ask him to sit down. She declared in public that she put her faith in "the liberties of the People." It was certain that the young Princess would be brought up in the way that she should go; yet there, close behind the throne, waiting, sinister, was the Duke of Cumberland. Brougham, looking forward into the future in his scurrilous fashion, hinted at dreadful possibilities. "I never prayed so heartily for a Prince before," he wrote, on hearing that George IV had been attacked by illness. "If he had gone, all the troubles of these villains [the Tory Ministers] went with him, and they had Fred. I [the Duke of York] their own man for his life. . . . He [Fred. I] won't live long either; that Prince of Blackguards, 'Brother William,' is as bad a life, so we come in the course of nature to be *assassinated* by King Ernest I or Regent Ernest [the Duke of Cumberland]." Such thoughts were not peculiar to Brougham; in the seething state of public feeling, they constantly leapt to the surface; and, even so late as the year previous to her accession, the Radical

newspapers were full of suggestions that the Princess Victoria was in danger from the machinations of her wicked uncle.

But no echo of these conflicts and forebodings reached the little Drina—for so she was called in the family circle—as she played with her dolls, or scampered down the passages, or rode on the donkey her uncle York had given her along the avenues of Kensington Gardens. The fair-haired, blue-eyed child was idolized by her nurses, and her mother's ladies, and her sister Feodora; and for a few years there was danger, in spite of her mother's strictness, of her being spoilt. From time to time, she would fly into a violent passion, stamp her little foot, and set every one at defiance; whatever they might say, she would not learn her letters—no, she *would not;* afterwards, she was very sorry, and burst into tears; but her letters remained unlearnt. When she was five years old, however, a change came, with the appearance of Fraulein Lehzen. This lady, who was the daughter of a Hanoverian clergyman and had previously been the Princess Feodora's governess, soon succeeded in instilling a new spirit into her charge. At first, indeed, she was appalled by the little Princess's outbursts of temper; never in her life, she declared, had she seen such a passionate and naughty child. Then she observed something else; the child was extraordinarily truthful; whatever punishment might follow, she never told a lie. Firm, very firm, the new governess yet had the sense to see that all the firmness in the world would be useless, unless she could win her way into little Drina's heart. She did so, and there were no more difficulties. Drina learnt her letters like an angel; and she learnt other things as well. The Baroness de Spath taught her how to make little board boxes and decorate them with tinsel and painted flowers; her mother taught her religion. Sitting in the pew every Sunday morning, the child of six was seen listening in rapt attention to the clergyman's endless sermon, for she was to be examined upon it in the afternoon. The Duchess was determined that her daughter, from the earliest possible moment, should be prepared for her high station in a way that would commend itself to the most respectable; her good, plain, thrifty German mind recoiled with horror and amazement from the shameless junketings at Carlton House; Drina should never be allowed to forget for a moment the virtues of simplicity, regularity, propriety, and devotion. The little girl, however, was really in small need of such lessons, for she was naturally simple and orderly, she was pious without difficulty, and her sense of propriety was keen. She understood very well the niceties of her own position. When, a child of six, Lady Jane Ellice was taken by her grandmother to Kensington Palace, she was put to play with the Princess Victoria, who was the same age as herself. The young visitor, ignorant of etiquette, began to make free with the toys on the floor, in a way which was a little too familiar; but "You must not touch those," she was quickly told, "they are mine; and I may call you Jane, but you must not call me Victoria." The Princess's most constant playmate was Victoire, the daughter of Sir John Conroy, the Duchess's major-domo. The two girls were very fond of one another; they would walk hand in hand together in Kensington Gardens. But little Drina was perfectly aware for which of them it was that they were followed, at a respectful distance, by a gigantic scarlet flunkey.

Warm-hearted, responsive, she loved her dear Lehzen, and she loved her dear Feodora, and her dear Victoire, and her dear Madame de Spath. And her dear Mamma . . . of course, she loved her too; it was her duty; and yet—she could not tell why it was—she was always happier when she was staying with her Uncle Leopold at Claremont. There old Mrs. Louis, who, years ago, had waited on her Cousin Charlotte, petted her to her heart's content; and her uncle himself was wonderfully kind to her, talking to her seriously and gently, almost as if she were a grown-up person. She and Feodora invariably wept when the too short visit was over, and they were obliged to return to the dutiful monotony, and the affectionate supervision of Kensington. But sometimes when her mother had to stay at home, she was allowed to go out driving all alone with her dear Feodora and her dear Lehzen, and she could talk and look as she liked, and it was very delightful.

The visits to Claremont were frequent enough; but one day, on a special occasion, she paid one of a rarer and more exciting kind. When she was seven years old, she and her mother and sister were asked by the King to go down to Windsor. George IV, who had transferred his fraternal ill-temper to his sister-in-law and her family, had at last grown tired of sulking, and decided to be agreeable. The old rip, bewigged and gouty, ornate and enormous, with his jeweled mistress by his side and his flaunting court about him, received the tiny creature who was one day to hold in those same halls a very different state. "Give me your little paw," he said; and two ages touched. Next morning, driving in his phaeton with the Duchess of Gloucester, he met the Duchess of Kent and her child in the Park. "Pop her in," were his orders, which, to the terror of the mother and the delight of the daughter, were immediately obeyed. Off they dashed to Virginia Water, where there was a great barge, full of lords and ladies fishing, and another barge with a band; and the King ogled Feodora, and praised her manners, and then turned to his own small niece. "What is your favorite tune? The band shall play it." "God Save the King, sir," was the instant answer. The Princess's reply has been praised as an early example of a tact which was afterwards famous. But she was a very truthful child, and perhaps it was her genuine opinion.

III

In 1827 the Duke of York, who had found some consolation for the loss of his wife in the sympathy of the Duchess of Rutland, died, leaving behind him the unfinished immensity of Stafford House and £200,000 worth of debts. Three years later George IV also disappeared, and the Duke of Clarence reigned in his stead. The new Queen, it was now clear, would in all probability never again be a mother; the Princess Victoria, therefore, was recognized by Parliament as heir-presumptive; and the Duchess of Kent, whose annuity had been doubled five years previously, was now given an additional £10,000 for the maintenance of the Princess, and was appointed regent, in case of the death of the King before the majority of her daughter. At the same time a great convulsion took place in the constitution of the State. The power of the Tories, who had dominated England for more than forty years, suddenly began to crumble. In the tremendous struggle that followed, it seemed for a moment

as if the tradition of generations might be snapped, as if the blind tenacity of the reactionaries and the determined fury of their enemies could have no other issue than revolution. But the forces of compromise triumphed: the Reform Bill was passed. The center of gravity in the constitution was shifted towards the middle classes; the Whigs came into power; and the complexion of the Government assumed a Liberal tinge. One of the results of this new state of affairs was a change in the position of the Duchess of Kent and her daughter. From being the *protégées* of an opposition clique, they became assets of the official majority of the nation. The Princess Victoria was henceforward the living symbol of the victory of the middle classes.

The Duke of Cumberland, on the other hand, suffered a corresponding eclipse: his claws had been pared by the Reform Act. He grew insignificant and almost harmless, though his ugliness remained; he was the wicked uncle still—but only of a story.

The Duchess's own liberalism was not very profound. She followed naturally in the footsteps of her husband, repeating with conviction the catchwords of her husband's clever friends and the generalizations of her clever brother Leopold. She herself had no pretensions to cleverness; she did not understand very much about the Poor Law and the Slave Trade and Political Economy; but she hoped that she did her duty; and she hoped—she ardently hoped—that the same might be said of Victoria. Her educational conceptions were those of Dr. Arnold, whose views were just then beginning to permeate society. Dr. Arnold's object was, first and foremost, to make his pupils "in the highest and truest sense of the words, Christian gentlemen"; intellectual refinements might follow. The Duchess felt convinced that it was her supreme duty in life to make quite sure that her daughter should grow up into a Christian queen. To this task she bent all her energies; and, as the child developed, she flattered herself that her efforts were not unsuccessful. When the Princess was eleven, she desired the Bishops of London and Lincoln to submit her daughter to an examination, and report upon the progress that had been made. "I feel the time to be now come," the Duchess explained, in a letter obviously drawn up by her own hand, "that what has been done should be put to some test, that if anything has been done in error of judgment it may be corrected, and that the plan for the future should be open to consideration and revision. . . . I attend almost always myself every lesson, or a part; and as the lady about the Princess is a competent person, she assists Her in preparing Her lessons, for the various masters, as I resolved to act in that manner so as to be Her Governess myself. . . . When she was at a proper age she commenced attending Divine Service regularly with me, and I have every feeling that she has religion at Her heart, that she is morally impressed with it to that degree, that she is less liable to error by its application to her feelings as a Child capable of reflection." "The general bent of Her character," added the Duchess, "is strength of intellect, capable of receiving with ease, information, and with a peculiar readiness in coming to a very just and benignant decision on any point Her opinion is asked on. Her adherence to truth is of so marked a character that I feel no apprehension of that Bulwark being broken down by any circumstances." The Bishops attended at the Palace, and the result of their

examination was all that could be wished. "In answering a great variety of questions proposed to her," they reported, "the Princess displayed an accurate knowledge of the most important features of Scripture History, and of the leading truths and precepts of the Christian Religion as taught by the Church of England, as well as an acquaintance with the Chronology and principal facts of English History remarkable in so young a person. To questions in Geography, the use of the Globes, Arithmetic, and Latin Grammar, the answers which the Princess returned were equally satisfactory." They did not believe that the Duchess's plan of education was susceptible of any improvement; and the Archbishop of Canterbury, who was also consulted, came to the same gratifying conclusion.

One important step, however, remained to be taken. So far, as the Duchess explained to the Bishops, the Princess had been kept in ignorance of the station that she was likely to fill. "She is aware of its duties, and that a Sovereign should live for others; so that when Her innocent mind receives the impression of Her future fate, she receives it with a mind formed to be sensible of what is to be expected from Her, and it is to be hoped, she will be too well grounded in Her principles to be dazzled with the station she is to look to." In the following year it was decided that she should be enlightened on this point. The well-known scene followed: the history lesson, the genealogical table of the Kings of England slipped beforehand by the governess into the book, the Princess's surprise, her inquiries, her final realization of the facts. When the child at last understood, she was silent for a moment, and then she spoke: "I will be good," she said. The words were something more than a conventional protestation, something more than the expression of a superimposed desire; they were, in their limitation and their intensity, their egotism and their humility, an instinctive summary of the dominating qualities of a life. "I cried much on learning it," her Majesty noted long afterwards. No doubt, while the others were present, even her dear Lehzen, the little girl kept up her self-command; and then crept away somewhere to ease her heart of an inward, unfamiliar agitation, with a handkerchief, out of her mother's sight.

But her mother's sight was by no means an easy thing to escape. Morning and evening, day and night, there was no relaxation of the maternal vigilance. The child grew into the girl, the girl into the young woman; but still she slept in her mother's bedroom; still she had no place allowed her where she might sit or work by herself. An extraordinary watchfulness surrounded her every step: up to the day of her accession, she never went downstairs without some one beside her holding her hand. Plainness and regularity ruled the household. The hours, the days, the years passed slowly and methodically by. The dolls—the innumerable dolls, each one so neatly dressed, each one with its name so punctiliously entered in the catalogue—were laid aside, and a little music and a little dancing took their place. Taglioni came, to give grace and dignity to the figure, and Lablache, to train the piping treble upon his own rich bass. The Dean of Chester, the official preceptor, continued his endless instruction in Scripture history, while the Duchess of Northumberland, the official governess, presided over every lesson with becoming solemnity. Without doubt, the Princess's main achievement during her schooldays was linguistic. German was

naturally the first language with which she was familiar; but English and French quickly followed; and she became virtually trilingual, though her mastery of English grammar remained incomplete. At the same time, she acquired a working knowledge of Italian and some smattering of Latin. Nevertheless, she did not read very much. It was not an occupation that she cared for; partly, perhaps, because the books that were given her were all either sermons, which were very dull, or poetry, which was incomprehensible. Novels were strictly forbidden. Lord Durham persuaded her mother to get her some of Miss Martineau's tales, illustrating the truths of Political Economy, and they delighted her; but it is to be feared that it was the unaccustomed pleasure of the story that filled her mind, and that she never really mastered the theory of exchanges or the nature of rent.

It was her misfortune that the mental atmosphere which surrounded her during these years of adolescence was almost entirely feminine. No father, no brother, was there to break in upon the gentle monotony of the daily round with impetuosity, with rudeness, with careless laughter and wafts of freedom from the outside world. The Princess was never called by a voice that was loud and growling; never felt, as a matter of course, a hard rough cheek on her own soft one; never climbed a wall with a boy. The visits to Claremont—delicious little escapes into male society—came to an end when she was eleven years old and Prince Leopold left England to be King of the Belgians. She loved him still; he was still "il mio secondo padre—or, rather, *solo* padre, for he is indeed like my real father, as I have none"; but his fatherliness now came to her dimly and indirectly, through the cold channel of correspondence. Henceforward female duty, female elegance, female enthusiasm, hemmed her completely in; and her spirit, amid the enclosing folds, was hardly reached by those two great influences, without which no growing life can truly prosper—humor and imagination. The Baroness Lehzen—for she had been raised to that rank in the Hanoverian nobility by George IV before he died—was the real center of the Princess's world. When Feodora married, when Uncle Leopold went to Belgium, the Baroness was left without a competitor. The Princess gave her mother her dutiful regards; but Lehzen had her heart. The voluble, shrewd daughter of the pastor in Hanover, lavishing her devotion on her royal charge, had reaped her reward in an unbounded confidence and a passionate adoration. The girl would have gone through fire for her "*precious* Lehzen," the "best and truest friend," she declared, that she had had since her birth. Her journal, begun when she was thirteen, where she registered day by day the small succession of her doings and her sentiments, bears on every page of it the traces of the Baroness and her circumambient influence. The young creature that one sees there, self-depicted in ingenuous clarity, with her sincerity, her simplicity, her quick affections and pious resolutions, might almost have been the daughter of a German pastor herself. Her enjoyments, her admirations, her *engouements* were of the kind that clothed themselves naturally in underlinings and exclamation marks. "It was a *delightful* ride. We cantered a good deal. SWEET LITTLE ROSY WENT BEAUTIFULLY!! We came home at a ¼ past 1. . . . At 20 minutes to 7 we went out to the Opera. . . . Rubini came on and sang a song out of 'Anna Boulena' *quite beautifully*. We came home at ½ past 11." In her com-

ments on her readings, the mind of the Baroness is clearly revealed. One day, by some mistake, she was allowed to take up a volume of memoirs by Fanny Kemble. "It is certainly very pertly and oddly written. One would imagine by the style that the authoress must be very pert, and not well bred; for there are so many vulgar expressions in it. It is a great pity that a person endowed with so much talent, as Mrs. Butler really is, should turn it to so little account and publish a book which is so full of trash and nonsense which can only do her harm. I stayed up till 20 minutes past 9." Madame de Sévigné's letters, which the Baroness read aloud, met with more approval. "How truly elegant and natural her style is! It is so full of *naiveté,* cleverness, and grace." But her highest admiration was reserved for the Bishop of Chester's *Exposition of the Gospel of St. Matthew.* "It is a very fine book indeed. Just the sort of one I like; which is just plain and comprehensible and full of truth and good feeling. It is not one of those learned books in which you have to cavil at almost every paragraph. Lehzen gave it me on the Sunday that I took the Sacrament." A few weeks previously she had been confirmed, and she described the event as follows: "I felt that my confirmation was one of the most solemn and important events and acts in my life; and that I trusted that it might have a salutary effect on my mind. I felt deeply repentant for all that I had done which was wrong and trusted in God Almighty to strengthen my heart and mind; and to forsake all that is bad and follow all that is virtuous and right. I went with the firm determination to become a true Christian, to try and comfort my dear Mamma in all her griefs, trials, and anxieties, and to become a dutiful and affectionate daughter to her. Also to be obedient to *dear* Lehzen, who has done so much for me. I was dressed in a white lace dress, with a white crape bonnet with a wreath of white roses round it. I went in the chariot with my dear Mamma and the others followed in another carriage." One seems to hold in one's hand a small smooth crystal pebble, without a flaw and without a scintillation, and so transparent that one can see through it at a glance.

Yet perhaps, after all, to the discerning eye, the purity would not be absolute. The careful searcher might detect, in the virgin soil, the first faint traces of an unexpected vein. In that conventual existence visits were exciting events; and, as the Duchess had many relatives, they were not infrequent; aunts and uncles would often appear from Germany, and cousins too. When the Princess was fourteen she was delighted by the arrival of a couple of boys from Wurttemberg, the Princes Alexander and Ernst, sons of her mother's sister and the reigning duke. "They are both *extremely tall,*" she noted; "Alexander is *very handsome,* and Ernst has a *very kind expression.* They are both extremely *amiable.*" And their departure filled her with corresponding regrets. "We saw them get into the barge, and watched them sailing away for some time on the beach. They were so amiable and so pleasant to have in the house; they were *always satisfied, always good-humored:* Alexander took such care of me in getting out of the boat, and rode next to me; so did Ernst." Two years later, two other cousins arrived, the Princes Ferdinand and Augustus. "Dear Ferdinand," the Princess wrote, "has elicited universal admiration from all parties. . . . He is so very unaffected, and has such a very distinguished appearance and carriage. They are both very dear and charming young men. Augustus is very

amiable, too, and, when known, shows much good sense." On another occasion, "Dear Ferdinand came and sat near me and talked so dearly and sensibly. I do *so* love him. Dear Augustus sat near me and talked with me, and he is also a dear good young man, and is very handsome." She could not quite decide which was the handsomer of the two. On the whole, she concluded, "I think Ferdinand handsomer than Augustus, his eyes are so beautiful, and he has such a lively clever expression; *both* have such a sweet expression; Ferdinand has something *quite beautiful* in his expression when he speaks and smiles, and he is *so* good." However, it was perhaps best to say that they were "both very handsome and *very dear*." But shortly afterwards two more cousins arrived, who threw all the rest into the shade. These were the Princes Ernest and Albert, sons of her mother's eldest brother, the Duke of Saxe-Coburg. This time the Princess was more particular in her observations. "Ernest," she remarked, "is as tall as Ferdinand and Augustus; he has dark hair, and fine dark eyes and eyebrows, but the nose and mouth are not good; he has a most kind, honest and intelligent expression in his countenance, and has a very good figure. Albert, who is just as tall as Ernest but stouter, is extremely handsome; his hair is about the same color as mine; his eyes are large and blue, and he has a beautiful nose and a very sweet mouth with fine teeth; but the charm of his countenance is his expression, which is most delightful; *c'est à la fois* full of goodness and sweetness, and very clever and intelligent." "Both my cousins," she added, "are so kind and good; they are much more *formés* and men of the world than Augustus; they speak English very well, and I speak it with them. Ernest will be 18 years old on the 21st of June, and Albert 17 on the 26th of August. Dear Uncle Ernest made me the present of a most delightful *Lory,* which is so tame that it remains on your hand and you may put your finger into its beak, or do anything with it, without its ever attempting to bite. It is larger than Mamma's gray parrot." A little later, "I sat between my dear cousins on the sofa and we looked at drawings. They both draw very well, particularly Albert, and are both exceedingly fond of music; they play very nicely on the piano. The more I see them the more I am delighted with them, and the more I love them. . . . It is delightful to be with them; they are so fond of being occupied too; they are quite an example for any young person." When, after a stay of three weeks, the time came for the young men and their father to return to Germany, the moment of parting was a melancholy one. "It was our last HAPPY HAPPY breakfast, with this dear Uncle and those *dearest* beloved cousins, whom I *do* love so VERY VERY dearly; *much more dearly* than any other cousins in the *world.* Dearly as I love Ferdinand, and also good Augustus, I love Ernest and Albert *more* than them, oh yes, MUCH *more.* . . . They have both learnt a good deal, and are very clever, naturally clever, particularly Albert, who is the most reflecting of the two, and they like very much talking about serious and instructive things and yet are so *very very* merry and gay and happy, like young people ought to be; Albert always used to have some fun and some clever witty answer at breakfast and everywhere; he used to play and fondle Dash so funnily too. . . . Dearest Albert was playing on the piano when I came down. At 11 dear Uncle, my *dearest beloved* cousins, and Charles, left us, accompanied by Count Kolowrat. I embraced both my dearest cousins most warmly, as also

my dear Uncle. I cried bitterly, very bitterly." The Princes shared her ecstasies and her italics between them; but it is clear enough where her secret preference lay. "Particularly Albert"! She was just seventeen; and deep was the impression left upon that budding organism by the young man's charm and goodness and accomplishments, and his large blue eyes and beautiful nose, and his sweet mouth and fine teeth.

IV

King William could not away with his sister-in-law, and the Duchess fully returned his antipathy. Without considerable tact and considerable forbearance their relative positions were well calculated to cause ill-feelings; and there was very little tact in the composition of the Duchess, and no forbearance at all in that of his Majesty. A bursting, bubbling old gentleman, with quarter-deck gestures, round rolling eyes, and a head like a pineapple, his sudden elevation to the throne after fifty-six years of utter insignificance had almost sent him crazy. His natural exuberance completely got the best of him; he rushed about doing preposterous things in an extraordinary manner, spreading amusement and terror in every direction, and talking all the time. His tongue was decidedly Hanoverian, with its repetitions, its catchwords—"That's quite another thing! That's quite another thing!"—its rattling indomitability, its loud indiscreetness. His speeches, made repeatedly at the most inopportune junctures, and filled pell-mell with all the fancies and furies that happened at the moment to be whisking about in his head, were the consternation of Ministers. He was one part blackguard, people said, and three parts buffoon; but those who knew him better could not help liking him—he meant well; and he was really good-humored and kind-hearted, if you took him the right way. If you took him the wrong way, however, you must look out for squalls, as the Duchess of Kent discovered.

She had no notion of how to deal with him—could not understand him in the least. Occupied with her own position, her own responsibilities, her duty, and her daughter, she had no attention to spare for the peppery susceptibilities of a foolish, disreputable old man. She was the mother of the heiress of England; and it was for him to recognize the fact—to put her at once upon a proper footing—to give her the precedence of a dowager Princess of Wales, with a large annuity from the privy purse. It did not occur to her that such pretensions might be galling to a king who had no legitimate child of his own, and who yet had not altogether abandoned the hope of having one. She pressed on, with bulky vigor, along the course she had laid out. Sir John Conroy, an Irishman with no judgment and a great deal of self-importance, was her intimate counselor, and egged her on. It was advisable that Victoria should become acquainted with the various districts of England, and through several summers a succession of tours—in the West, in the Midlands, in Wales —were arranged for her. The intention of the plan was excellent, but its execution was unfortunate. The journeys, advertised in the Press, attracting enthusiastic crowds, and involving official receptions, took on the air of royal progresses. Addresses were presented by loyal citizens; the delighted Duchess, swelling in sweeping feathers and almost obliterating the diminutive Princess, read aloud, in her German accent, gracious replies prepared beforehand

by Sir John, who, bustling and ridiculous, seemed to be mingling the rôles of major-domo and Prime Minister. Naturally the King fumed over his newspaper at Windsor. "That woman is a nuisance!" he exclaimed. Poor Queen Adelaide, amiable though disappointed, did her best to smooth things down, changed the subject, and wrote affectionate letters to Victoria; but it was useless. News arrived that the Duchess of Kent, sailing in the Solent, had insisted that whenever her yacht appeared it should be received by royal salutes from all the men-of-war and all the forts. The King declared that these continual poppings must cease; the Premier and the First Lord of the Admiralty were consulted; and they wrote privately to the Duchess, begging her to waive her rights. But she would not hear of it; Sir John Conroy was adamant. "As her Royal Highness's *confidential adviser,*" he said, "I cannot recommend her to give way on this point." Eventually the King, in a great state of excitement, issued a special Order in Council, prohibiting the firing of royal salutes to any ships except those which carried the reigning sovereign or his consort on board.

When King William quarreled with his Whig Ministers the situation grew still more embittered, for now the Duchess, in addition to her other shortcomings, was the political partisan of his enemies. In 1836 he made an attempt to prepare the ground for a match between the Princess Victoria and one of the sons of the Prince of Orange, and at the same time did his best to prevent the visit of the young Coburg princes to Kensington. He failed in both these objects; and the only result of his efforts was to raise the anger of the King of the Belgians, who, forgetting for a moment his royal reserve, addressed an indignant letter on the subject to his niece. "I am really *astonished,*" he wrote, "at the conduct of your old Uncle the King; this invitation of the Prince of Orange and his sons, this forcing him on others, is very extraordinary. . . . Not later than yesterday I got a half-official communication from England, insinuating that it would be *highly* desirable that the visit of *your* relatives *should not take place this year*—qu'en dites-vous? The relations of the Queen and the King, therefore, to the God-knows-what degree, are to come in shoals and rule the land, when *your relations* are to be *forbidden* the country, and that when, as you know, the whole of your relations have ever been very dutiful and kind to the King. Really and truly I never heard or saw anything like it, and I hope it will a *little rouse your spirit;* now that slavery is even abolished in the British Colonies, I do not comprehend *why your lot alone should be to be kept a white little slavey in England,* for the pleasure of the Court, who never bought you, as I am not aware of their ever having gone to any expense on that head, or the King's ever having *spent a sixpence for your existence.* . . . Oh, consistency and political or *other honesty,* where must one look for you!"

Shortly afterwards King Leopold came to England himself, and his reception was as cold at Windsor as it was warm at Kensington. "To hear dear Uncle speak on any subject," the Princess wrote in her diary, "is like reading a highly instructive book; his conversation is so enlightened, so clear. He is universally admitted to be one of the first politicians now extant. He speaks so mildly, yet firmly and impartially, about politics. Uncle tells me that Belgium

is quite a pattern for its organization, its industry, and prosperity; the finances are in the greatest perfection. Uncle is so beloved and revered by his Belgian subjects, that it must be a great compensation for all his extreme trouble." But her other uncle by no means shared her sentiments. He could not, he said, put up with a water-drinker; and King Leopold would touch no wine. "What's that you're drinking, sir?" he asked him one day at dinner. "Water, sir." "God damn it, sir!" was the rejoinder. "Why don't you drink wine? I never allow anybody to drink water at my table."

It was clear that before very long there would be a great explosion; and in the hot days of August it came. The Duchess and the Princess had gone down to stay at Windsor for the King's birthday party, and the King himself, who was in London for the day to prorogue Parliament, paid a visit at Kensington Palace in their absence. There he found that the Duchess had just appropriated, against his express orders, a suite of seventeen apartments for her own use. He was extremely angry, and, when he returned to Windsor, after greeting the Princess with affection, he publicly rebuked the Duchess for what she had done. But this was little to what followed. On the next day was the birthday banquet; there were a hundred guests; the Duchess of Kent sat on the King's right hand, and the Princess Victoria opposite. At the end of the dinner, in reply to the toast of the King's health, he rose, and, in a long, loud, passionate speech, poured out the vials of his wrath upon the Duchess. She had, he declared, insulted him—grossly and continually; she had kept the Princess away from him in the most improper manner; she was surrounded by evil advisers, and was incompetent to act with propriety in the high station which she filled; but he would bear it no longer; he would have her to know he was King; he was determined that his authority should be respected; henceforward the Princess should attend at every Court function with the utmost regularity; and he hoped to God that his life might be spared for six months longer, so that the calamity of a regency might be avoided, and the functions of the Crown pass directly to the heiress-presumptive instead of into the hands of the "person now near him," upon whose conduct and capacity no reliance whatever could be placed. The flood of vituperation rushed on for what seemed an interminable period, while the Queen blushed scarlet, the Princess burst into tears, and the hundred guests sat aghast. The Duchess said not a word until the tirade was over and the company had retired; then in a tornado of rage and mortification, she called for her carriage and announced her immediate return to Kensington. It was only with the utmost difficulty that some show of a reconciliation was patched up, and the outraged lady was prevailed upon to put off her departure till the morrow.

Her troubles, however, were not over when she had shaken the dust of Windsor from her feet. In her own household she was pursued by bitterness and vexation of spirit. The apartments at Kensington were seething with subdued disaffection, with jealousies and animosities virulently intensified by long years of propinquity and spite.

There was a deadly feud between Sir John Conroy and Baroness Lehzen. But that was not all. The Duchess had grown too fond of her Major-Domo. There were familiarities, and one day the Princess Victoria discovered the

fact. She confided what she had seen to the Baroness, and to the Baroness's beloved ally, Madame de Späth. Unfortunately, Madame de Spath could not hold her tongue, and was actually foolish enough to reprove the Duchess; whereupon she was instantly dismissed. It was not so easy to get rid of the Baroness. That lady, prudent and reserved, maintained an irreproachable demeanor. Her position was strongly entrenched; she had managed to secure the support of the King; and Sir John found that he could do nothing against her. But henceforward the household was divided into two camps. The Duchess supported Sir John with all the abundance of her authority; but the Baroness, too, had an adherent who could not be neglected. The Princess Victoria said nothing, but she had been much attached to Madame de Spath, and she adored her Lehzen. The Duchess knew only too well that in this horrid embroilment her daughter was against her. Chagrin, annoyance, moral reprobation, tossed her to and fro. She did her best to console herself with Sir John's affectionate loquacity, or with the sharp remarks of Lady Flora Hastings, one of her maids of honor, who had no love for the Baroness. The subject lent itself to satire; for the pastor's daughter, with all her airs of stiff superiority, had habits which betrayed her origin. Her passion for carraway seeds, for instance, was uncontrollable. Little bags of them came over to her from Hanover, and she sprinkled them on her bread and butter, her cabbage, and even her roast beef. Lady Flora could not resist a caustic observation; it was repeated to the Baroness, who pursed her lips in fury; and so the mischief grew.

V

The King had prayed that he might live till his niece was of age; and a few days before her eighteenth birthday—the date of her legal majority—a sudden attack of illness very nearly carried him off. He recovered, however, and the Princess was able to go through her birthday festivities—a state ball and a drawing-room—with unperturbed enjoyment. "Count Zichy," she noted in her diary, "is very good-looking in uniform, but not in plain clothes. Count Waldstein looks remarkably well in his pretty Hungarian uniform." With the latter young gentleman she wished to dance, but there was an insurmountable difficulty. "He could not dance quadrilles, and, as in my station I unfortunately cannot valse and gallop, I could not dance with him." Her birthday present from the King was of a pleasing nature, but it led to a painful domestic scene. In spite of the anger of her Belgian uncle, she had remained upon good terms with her English one. He had always been very kind to her, and the fact that he had quarreled with her mother did not appear to be a reason for disliking him. He was, she said, "odd, very odd and singular," but "his intentions were often ill interpreted." He now wrote her a letter, offering her an allowance of £10,000 a year, which he proposed should be at her own disposal, and independent of her mother. Lord Conyngham, the Lord Chamberlain, was instructed to deliver the letter into the Princess's own hands. When he arrived at Kensington, he was ushered into the presence of the Duchess and the Princess, and, when he produced the letter, the Duchess put out her hand to take it. Lord Conyngham begged her Royal Highness's pardon, and repeated the K[illegible]mmands. Thereupon the Duchess drew back, and the Princess took

the letter. She immediately wrote to her uncle, accepting his kind proposal. The Duchess was much displeased; £4000 a year, she said, would be quite enough for Victoria; as for the remaining £6000, it would be only proper that she should have that herself.

King William had thrown off his illness, and returned to his normal life. Once more the royal circle at Windsor—their Majesties, the elder Princesses, and some unfortunate Ambassadress or Minister's wife—might be seen ranged for hours round a mahogany table, while the Queen netted a purse, and the King slept, occasionally waking from his slumbers to observe, "Exactly so, ma'am, exactly so!" But this recovery was of short duration. The old man suddenly collapsed; with no specific symptoms besides an extreme weakness, he yet showed no power of rallying; and it was clear to every one that his death was now close at hand.

All eyes, all thoughts, turned towards the Princess Victoria; but she still remained, shut away in the seclusion of Kensington, a small, unknown figure, lost in the large shadow of her mother's domination. The preceding year had in fact been an important one in her development. The soft tendrils of her mind had for the first time begun to stretch out towards unchildish things. In this King Leopold encouraged her. After his return to Brussels, he had resumed his correspondence in a more serious strain; he discussed the details of foreign politics; he laid down the duties of kingship; he pointed out the iniquitous foolishness of the newspaper press. On the latter subject, indeed, he wrote with some asperity. "If all the editors," he said, "of the papers in the countries where the liberty of the press exists were to be assembled, we should have a *crew* to which you would *not* confide a dog that you would value, still less your honor and reputation." On the functions of a monarch, his views were unexceptionable. "The business of the highest in a State," he wrote, "is certainly, in my opinion, to act with great impartiality and a spirit of justice for the good of all." At the same time the Princess's tastes were opening out. Though she was still passionately devoted to riding and dancing, she now began to have a genuine love of music as well, and to drink in the roulades and arias of the Italian opera with high enthusiasm. She even enjoyed reading poetry—at any rate, the poetry of Sir Walter Scott.

When King Leopold learnt that King William's death was approaching, he wrote several long letters of excellent advice to his niece. "In every letter I shall write to you," he said, "I mean to repeat to you, as a *fundamental rule, to be courageous, firm, and honest, as you have been till now.*" For the rest, in the crisis that was approaching, she was not to be alarmed, but to trust in her "good natural sense and the *truth*" of her character; she was to do nothing in a hurry; to hurt no one's *amour-propre,* and to continue her confidence in the Whig administration. Not content with letters, however, King Leopold determined that the Princess should not lack personal guidance, and sent over to her aid the trusted friend whom, twenty years before, he had taken to his heart by the death-bed at Claremont. Thus, once again, as if in accordance with some preordained destiny, the figure of Stockmar is discernible—inevitably present at a momentous hour.

On June 18, the King was visibly sinking. The Archbishop of Canterbury was by his side, with all the comforts of the church. Nor did the holy words fall upon a rebellious spirit; for many years his Majesty had been a devout believer. "When I was a young man," he once explained at a public banquet, "as well as I can remember, I believed in nothing but pleasure and folly—nothing at all. But when I went to sea, got into a gale, and saw the wonders of the mighty deep, then I believed; and I have been a sincere Christian ever since." It was the anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo, and the dying man remembered it. He should be glad to live, he said, over that day; he would never see another sunset. "I hope your Majesty may live to see many," said Dr. Chambers. "Oh! that's quite another thing, that's quite another thing," was the answer. One other sunset he did live to see; and he died in the early hours of the following morning. It was on June 20, 1837.

When all was over, the Archbishop and the Lord Chamberlain ordered a carriage, and drove post-haste from Windsor to Kensington. They arrived at the Palace at five o'clock, and it was only with considerable difficulty that they gained admittance. At six the Duchess woke up her daughter, and told her that the Archbishop of Canterbury and Lord Conyngham were there, and wished to see her. She got out of bed, put on her dressing-gown, and went, alone, into the room where the messengers were standing. Lord Conyngham fell on his knees, and officially announced the death of the King; the Archbishop added some personal details. Looking at the bending, murmuring dignitaries before her, she knew that she was Queen of England. "Since it has pleased Providence," she wrote that day in her journal, "to place me in this station, I shall do my utmost to fulfill my duty towards my country; I am very young, and perhaps in many, though not in all things, inexperienced, but I am sure that very few have more real good will and more real desire to do what is fit and right than I have." But there was scant time for resolutions and reflections. At once, affairs were thick upon her. Stockmar came to breakfast, and gave some good advice. She wrote a letter to her uncle Leopold, and a hurried note to her sister Feodora. A letter came from the Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, announcing his approaching arrival. He came at nine, in full court dress, and kissed her hand. She saw him alone, and repeated to him the lesson which, no doubt, the faithful Stockmar had taught her at breakfast. "It has long been my intention to retain your Lordship and the rest of the present Ministry at the head of affairs"; whereupon Lord Melbourne again kissed her hand and shortly after left her. She then wrote a letter of condolence to Queen Adelaide. At eleven, Lord Melbourne came again; and at half-past eleven she went downstairs into the red saloon to hold her first Council. The great assembly of lords and notables, bishops, generals, and Ministers of State, saw the doors thrown open and a very short, very slim girl in deep plain mourning come into the room alone and move forward to her seat with extraordinary dignity and grace; they saw a countenance, not beautiful, but prepossessing—fair hair, blue prominent eyes, a small curved nose, an open mouth revealing the upper teeth, a tiny chin, a clear complexion, and, over all, the strangely mingled signs of innocence, of gravity, of youth, and of composure; they heard a high unwavering voice reading aloud with perfect clarity; and then, the

ceremony was over, they saw the small figure rise and, with the same consummate grace, the same amazing dignity, pass out from among them, as she had come in, alone.

III. LORD MELBOURNE

THE NEW queen was almost entirely unknown to her subjects. In her public appearances her mother had invariably dominated the scene. Her private life had been that of a novice in a convent: hardly a human being from the outside world had ever spoken to her; and no human being at all, except her mother and the Baroness Lehzen, had ever been alone with her in a room. Thus it was not only the public at large that was in ignorance of everything concerning her; the inner circles of statesmen and officials and high-born ladies were equally in the dark. When she suddenly emerged from this deep obscurity, the impression that she created was immediate and profound. Her bearing at her first Council filled the whole gathering with astonishment and admiration; the Duke of Wellington, Sir Robert Peel, even the savage Croker, even the cold and caustic Greville—all were completely carried away. Everything that was reported of her subsequent proceedings seemed to be of no less happy augury. Her perceptions were quick, her decisions were sensible, her language was discreet; she performed her royal duties with extraordinary facility. Among the outside public there was a great wave of enthusiasm. Sentiment and romance were coming into fashion; and the spectacle of the little girl-queen, innocent, modest, with fair hair and pink cheeks, driving through her capital, filled the hearts of the beholders with raptures of affectionate loyalty. What, above all, struck everybody with overwhelming force was the contrast between Queen Victoria and her uncles. The nasty old men, debauched and selfish, pig-headed and ridiculous, with their perpetual burden of debts, confusions, and disreputabilities—they had vanished like the snows of winter, and here at last, crowned and radiant, was the spring. Lord John Russell, in an elaborate oration, gave voice to the general sentiment. He hoped that Victoria might prove an Elizabeth without her tyranny, an Anne without her weakness. He asked England to pray that the illustrious Princess who had just ascended the throne with the purest intentions and the justest desires might see slavery abolished, crime diminished, and education improved. He trusted that her people would henceforward derive their strength, their conduct, and their loyalty from enlightened religious and moral principles, and that, so fortified, the reign of Victoria might prove celebrated to posterity and to all the nations of the earth.

Very soon, however, there were signs that the future might turn out to be not quite so simple and roseate as a delighted public dreamed. The "illustrious Princess" might perhaps, after all, have something within her which squared ill with the easy vision of a well-conducted heroine in an edifying story-book. The purest intentions and the justest desires? No doubt; but was that all? To those who watched closely, for instance, there might be something ominous in the curious contour of that little mouth. When, after her first Council, she crossed the ante-room and found her mother waiting for her, she said, "And now, Mamma, am I really and truly Queen?" "You see, my dear, that it is so." "Then, dear Mamma, I hope you will grant me the first request I make to

you, as Queen. Let me be by myself for an hour." For an hour she remained in solitude. Then she reappeared, and gave a significant order: her bed was to be moved out of her mother's room. It was the doom of the Duchess of Kent. The long years of waiting were over at last; the moment of a lifetime had come; her daughter was Queen of England; and that very moment brought her own annihilation. She found herself, absolutely and irretrievably, shut off from every vestige of influence, of confidence, of power. She was surrounded, indeed, by all the outward signs of respect and consideration; but that only made the inward truth of her position the more intolerable. Through the mingled formalities of Court etiquette and filial duty, she could never penetrate to Victoria. She was unable to conceal her disappointment and her rage. "Il n'y a plus d'avenir pour moi," she exclaimed to Madame de Lieven; "je ne suis plus rien." For eighteen years, she said, this child had been the sole object of her existence, of her thoughts, her hopes, and now—no! she would not be comforted, she had lost everything, she was to the last degree unhappy. Sailing, so gallantly and so pertinaciously, through the buffeting storms of life, the stately vessel, with sails still swelling and pennons flying, had put into harbor at last; to find there nothing—a land of bleak desolation.

Within a month of the accession, the realities of the new situation assumed a visible shape. The whole royal household moved from Kensington to Buckingham Palace, and, in the new abode, the Duchess of Kent was given a suite of apartments entirely separate from the Queen's. By Victoria herself the change was welcomed, though, at the moment of departure, she could afford to be sentimental. "Though I rejoice to *go* into B. P. for many reasons," she wrote in her diary, "it is not without feelings of regret that I shall bid adieu *for ever* to this my birthplace, where I have been born and bred, and to which I am really attached!" Her memory lingered for a moment over visions of the past: her sister's wedding, pleasant balls and *delicious* concerts . . . and there were other recollections. "I have gone through painful and disagreeable scenes here, 'tis true," she concluded, "but still I am fond of the poor old palace."

At the same time she took another decided step. She had determined that she would see no more of Sir John Conroy. She rewarded his past services with liberality: he was given a baronetcy and a pension of £3000 a year; he remained a member of the Duchess's household, but his personal intercourse with the Queen came to an abrupt conclusion.

II

It was clear that these interior changes—whatever else they might betoken—marked the triumph of one person—the Baroness Lehzen. The pastor's daughter observed the ruin of her enemies. Discreet and victorious, she remained in possession of the field. More closely than ever did she cleave to the side of her mistress, her pupil, and her friend; and in the recesses of the palace her mysterious figure was at once invisible and omnipresent. When the Queen's Ministers came in at one door, the Baroness went out by another; when they retired, she immediately returned. Nobody knew—nobody ever will know—the precise extent and the precise nature of her influence. She herself declared

that she never discussed public affairs with the Queen, that she was concerned with private matters only—with private letters and the details of private life. Certainly her hand is everywhere discernible in Victoria's early correspondence. The Journal is written in the style of a child; the Letters are not so simple; they are the work of a child, rearranged—with the minimum of alteration, no doubt, and yet perceptibly—by a governess. And the governess was no fool: narrow, jealous, provincial, she might be; but she was an acute and vigorous woman, who had gained by a peculiar insight, a peculiar ascendancy. That ascendancy she meant to keep. No doubt it was true that technically she took no part in public business; but the distinction between what is public and what is private is always a subtle one; and in the case of a reigning sovereign—as the next few years were to show—it is often imaginary. Considering all things —the characters of the persons, and the character of the times—it was something more than a mere matter of private interest that the bedroom of Baroness Lehzen at Buckingham Palace should have been next door to the bedroom of the Queen.

But the influence wielded by the Baroness, supreme as it seemed within its own sphere, was not unlimited; there were other forces at work. For one thing, the faithful Stockmar had taken up his residence in the palace. During the twenty years which had elapsed since the death of the Princess Charlotte his experiences had been varied and remarkable. The unknown counselor of a disappointed princeling had gradually risen to a position of European importance. His devotion to his master had been not only whole-hearted but cautious and wise. It was Stockmar's advice that had kept Prince Leopold in England during the critical years which followed his wife's death, and had thus secured to him the essential requisite of a *point d'appui* in the country of his adoption. It was Stockmar's discretion which had smoothed over the embarrassments surrounding the Prince's acceptance and rejection of the Greek crown. It was Stockmar who had induced the Prince to become the constitutional Sovereign of Belgium. Above all, it was Stockmar's tact, honesty, and diplomatic skill which, through a long series of arduous and complicated negotiations, had led to the guarantee of Belgian neutrality by the Great Powers. His labors had been rewarded by a German barony and by the complete confidence of King Leopold. Nor was it only in Brussels that he was treated with respect and listened to with attention. The statesmen who governed England—Lord Grey, Sir Robert Peel, Lord Palmerston, Lord Melbourne—had learnt to put a high value upon his probity and his intelligence. "He is one of the cleverest fellows I ever saw," said Lord Melbourne—"the most discreet man, the most well-judging, and most cool man." And Lord Palmerston cited Baron Stockmar as the only absolutely disinterested man he had come across in life. At last he was able to retire to Coburg, and to enjoy for a few years the society of the wife and children whom his labors in the service of his master had hitherto only allowed him to visit at long intervals for a month or two at a time. But in 1836 he had been again entrusted with an important negotiation, which he had brought to a successful conclusion in the marriage of Prince Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg, a nephew of King Leopold's, with Queen Maria II of Portugal. The House of Coburg was beginning to spread over

Europe; and the establishment of the Baron at Buckingham Palace in 1837 was to be the prelude of another and a more momentous advance.

King Leopold and his counselor provide in their careers an example of the curious diversity of human ambitions. The desires of man are wonderfully various; but no less various are the means by which those desires may reach satisfaction: and so the work of the world gets done. The correct mind of Leopold craved for the whole apparatus of royalty. Mere power would have held no attractions for him; he must be an actual king—the crowned head of a people. It was not enough to do; it was essential also to be recognized; anything else would not be fitting. The greatness that he dreamt of was surrounded by every appropriate circumstance. To be a Majesty, to be a cousin of Sovereigns, to marry a Bourbon for diplomatic ends, to correspond with the Queen of England, to be very stiff and very punctual, to found a dynasty, to bore ambassadresses into fits, to live, on the highest pinnacle, an exemplary life devoted to the public service—such were his objects, and such, in fact, were his achievements. The "Marquis Peu-à-peu," as George IV called him, had what he wanted. But this would never have been the case if it had not happened that the ambition of Stockmar took a form exactly complementary to his own. The sovereignty that the Baron sought for was by no means obvious. The satisfaction of his essential being lay in obscurity, in invisibility—in passing, unobserved, through a hidden entrance, into the very central chamber of power, and in sitting there, quietly, pulling the subtle strings that set the wheels of the whole world in motion. A very few people, in very high places, and exceptionally well-informed, knew that Baron Stockmar was a most important person: that was enough. The fortunes of the master and the servant, intimately interacting, rose together. The Baron's secret skill had given Leopold his unexceptionable kingdom; and Leopold, in his turn, as time went on, was able to furnish the Baron with more and more keys to more and more back doors.

Stockmar took up his abode in the Palace partly as the emissary of King Leopold, but more particularly as the friend and adviser of a queen who was almost a child, and who, no doubt, would be much in need of advice and friendship. For it would be a mistake to suppose that either of these two men was actuated by a vulgar selfishness. The King, indeed, was very well aware on which side his bread was buttered; during an adventurous and checkered life he had acquired a shrewd knowledge of the world's workings; and he was ready enough to use that knowledge to strengthen his position and to spread his influence. But then, the firmer his position and the wider his influence, the better for Europe; of that he was quite certain. And besides, he was a constitutional monarch; and it would be highly indecorous in a constitutional monarch to have any aims that were low or personal. As for Stockmar, the disinterestedness which Palmerston had noted was undoubtedly a basic element in his character. The ordinary schemer is always an optimist; and Stockmar, racked by dyspepsia and haunted by gloomy forebodings, was a constitutionally melancholy man. A schemer, no doubt, he was; but he schemed distrustfully, splenetically, to do good. To do good! What nobler end could a man scheme for? Yet it is perilous to scheme at all.

With Lehzen to supervise every detail of her conduct, with Stockmar in the next room, so full of wisdom and experience of affairs, with her Uncle Leopold's letters, too, pouring out so constantly their stream of encouragements, general reflections, and highly valuable tips, Victoria, even had she been without other guidance, would have stood in no lack of private counselors. But other guidance she had; for all these influences paled before a new star, of the first magnitude, which, rising suddenly upon her horizon, immediately dominated her life.

III

William Lamb, Viscount Melbourne, was fifty-eight years of age, and had been for the last three years Prime Minister of England. In every outward respect he was one of the most fortunate of mankind. He had been born into the midst of riches, brilliance, and power. His mother, fascinating and intelligent, had been a great Whig hostess, and he had been bred up as a member of that radiant society which, during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, concentrated within itself the ultimate perfections of a hundred years of triumphant aristocracy. Nature had given him beauty and brains; the unexpected death of an elder brother brought him wealth, a peerage, and the possibility of high advancement. Within that charmed circle, whatever one's personal disabilities, it was difficult to fail; and to him, with all his advantages, success was well-nigh unavoidable. With little effort, he attained political eminence. On the triumph of the Whigs he became one of the leading members of the Government; and when Lord Grey retired from the premiership he quietly stepped into the vacant place. Nor was it only in the visible signs of fortune that Fate had been kind to him. Bound to succeed, and to succeed easily, he was gifted with so fine a nature that his success became him. His mind, at once supple and copious, his temperament, at once calm and sensitive, enabled him not merely to work, but to live with perfect facility and with the grace of strength. In society he was a notable talker, a captivating companion, a charming man. If one looked deeper, one saw at once that he was not ordinary, that the piquancies of his conversation and his manner—his free-and-easy vaguenesses, his abrupt questions, his lollings and loungings, his innumerable oaths—were something more than an amusing ornament, were the outward manifestation of an individuality that was fundamental.

The precise nature of this individuality was very difficult to gauge: it was dubious, complex, perhaps self-contradictory. Certainly there was an ironical discordance between the inner history of the man and his apparent fortunes. He owed all he had to his birth, and his birth was shameful; it was known well enough that his mother had passionately loved Lord Egremont, and that Lord Melbourne was not his father. His marriage, which had seemed to be the crown of his youthful ardors, was a long, miserable, desperate failure: the incredible Lady Caroline,

> . . . with pleasures too refined to please,
> With too much spirit to be e'er at ease,
> With too much quickness to be ever taught,
> With too much thinking to have common thought,

was very nearly the destruction of his life. When at last he emerged from the anguish and confusion of her folly, her extravagance, her rage, her despair, and her devotion, he was left alone with endless memories of intermingled farce and tragedy, and an only son, who was an imbecile. But there was something else that he owed to Lady Caroline. While she whirled with Byron in a hectic frenzy of love and fashion, he had stayed at home in an indulgence bordering on cynicism, and occupied his solitude with reading. It was thus that he had acquired those habits of study, that love of learning, and that wide and accurate knowledge of ancient and modern literature, which formed so unexpected a part of his mental equipment. His passion for reading never deserted him; even when he was Prime Minister he found time to master every new important book. With an incongruousness that was characteristic, his favorite study was theology. An accomplished classical scholar, he was deeply read in the Fathers of the Church; heavy volumes of commentary and exegesis he examined with scrupulous diligence; and at any odd moment he might be found turning over the pages of the Bible. To the ladies whom he most liked he would lend some learned work on the Revelation, crammed with marginal notes in his own hand, or Dr. Lardner's "Observations upon the Jewish Errors with respect to the Conversion of Mary Magdalene." The more pious among them had high hopes that these studies would lead him into the right way; but of this there were no symptoms in his after-dinner conversations.

The paradox of his political career was no less curious. By temperament an aristocrat, by conviction a conservative, he came to power as the leader of the popular party, the party of change. He had profoundly disliked the Reform Bill, which he had only accepted at last as a necessary evil; and the Reform Bill lay at the root of the very existence, of the very meaning, of his government. He was far too skeptical to believe in progress of any kind. Things were best as they were—or rather, they were least bad. "You'd better try to do no good," was one of his dictums, "and then you'll get into no scrapes." Education at best was futile; education of the poor was positively dangerous. The factory children? "Oh, if you'd only have the goodness to leave them alone!" Free Trade was a delusion; the ballot was nonsense; and there was no such thing as a democracy. Nevertheless, he was not a reactionary; he was simply an opportunist. The whole duty of government, he said, was "to prevent crime and to preserve contracts." All one could really hope to do was to carry on. He himself carried on in a remarkable manner—with perpetual compromises, with fluctuations and contradictions, with every kind of weakness, and yet with shrewdness, with gentleness, even with conscientiousness, and a light and airy mastery of men and of events. He conducted the transactions of business with extraordinary nonchalance. Important persons, ushered up for some grave interview, found him in a touseled bed, littered with books and papers, or vaguely shaving in a dressing-room; but, when they went downstairs again, they would realize that somehow or other they had been pumped. When he had to receive a deputation, he could hardly ever do so with becoming gravity. The worthy delegates of the tallow-chandlers, or the Society for the Abolition of Capital Punishment, were distressed and morti-

fied when, in the midst of their speeches, the Prime Minister became absorbed in blowing a feather, or suddenly cracked an unseemly joke. How could they have guessed that he had spent the night before diligently getting up the details of their case? He hated patronage and the making of appointments—a feeling rare in Ministers. "As for the Bishops," he burst out. "I positively believe they die to vex me." But when at last the appointment was made, it was made with keen discrimination. His colleagues observed another symptom—was it of his irresponsibility or his wisdom? He went to sleep in the Cabinet.

Probably, if he had been born a little earlier, he would have been a simpler and a happier man. As it was, he was a child of the eighteenth century whose lot was cast in a new, difficult, unsympathetic age. He was an autumn rose. With all his gracious amenity, his humor, his happy-go-lucky ways, a deep disquietude possessed him. A sentimental cynic, a skeptical believer, he was restless and melancholy at heart. Above all, he could never harden himself; those sensitive petals shivered in every wind. Whatever else he might be, one thing was certain: Lord Melbourne was always human, supremely human—too human, perhaps.

And now, with old age upon him, his life took a sudden, new, extraordinary turn. He became, in the twinkling of an eye, the intimate adviser and the daily companion of a young girl who had stepped all at once from a nursery to a throne. His relations with women had been, like everything else about him, ambiguous. Nobody had ever been able quite to gauge the shifting, emotional complexities of his married life; Lady Caroline vanished; but his peculiar susceptibilities remained. Female society of some kind or other was necessary to him, and he did not stint himself; a great part of every day was invariably spent in it. The feminine element in him made it easy, made it natural and inevitable for him to be the friend of a great many women; but the masculine element in him was strong as well. In such circumstances it is also easy, it is even natural, perhaps it is even inevitable, to be something more than a friend. There were rumors and combustions. Lord Melbourne was twice a co-respondent in a divorce action; but on each occasion he won his suit. The lovely Lady Brandon, the unhappy and brilliant Mrs. Norton . . . the law exonerated them both. Beyond that hung an impenetrable veil. But at any rate it was clear that, with such a record, the Prime Minister's position in Buckingham Palace must be a highly delicate one. However, he was used to delicacies, and he met the situation with consummate success. His behavior was from the first moment impeccable. His manner towards the young Queen mingled, with perfect facility, the watchfulness and the respect of a statesman and a courtier with the tender solicitude of a parent. He was at once reverential and affectionate, at once the servant and the guide. At the same time the habits of his life underwent a surprising change. His comfortable, unpunctual days became subject to the unaltering routine of a palace; no longer did he sprawl on sofas; not a single "damn" escaped his lips. The man of the world who had been the friend of Byron and the regent, the talker whose paradoxes had held Holland House enthralled, the cynic whose ribaldries had enlivened so many deep potations, the lover whose soft words had captivated such beauty

and such passion and such wit, might now be seen, evening after evening, talking with infinite politeness to a schoolgirl, bolt upright, amid the silence and the rigidity of Court etiquette.

IV

On her side, Victoria was instantaneously fascinated by Lord Melbourne. The good report of Stockmar had no doubt prepared the way; Lehzen was wisely propitiated; and the first highly favorable impression was never afterwards belied. She found him perfect; and perfect in her sight he remained. Her absolute and unconcealed adoration was very natural; what innocent young creature could have resisted, in any circumstances, the charm and the devotion of such a man? But, in her situation, there was a special influence which gave a peculiar glow to all she felt. After years of emptiness and dullness and suppression, she had come suddenly, in the heyday of youth, into freedom and power. She was mistress of herself, of great domains and palaces; she was Queen of England. Responsibilities and difficulties she might have, no doubt, and in heavy measure; but one feeling dominated and absorbed all others—the feeling of joy. Everything pleased her. She was in high spirits from morning till night. Mr. Creevey, grown old now, and very near his end, catching a glimpse of her at Brighton, was much amused, in his sharp fashion, by the ingenuous gayety of "little Vic."—"A more homely little being you never beheld, *when she is at her ease,* and she is evidently dying to be always more so. She laughs in real earnest, opening her mouth as wide as it can go, showing not very pretty gums. . . . She eats quite as heartily as she laughs, I think I may say she gobbles. . . . She blushes and laughs every instant in so natural a way as to disarm anybody." But it was not merely when she was laughing or gobbling that she enjoyed herself; the performance of her official duties gave her intense satisfaction. "I really have immensely to do," she wrote in her Journal a few days after her accession; "I receive so many communications from my Ministers, but I like it very much." And again, a week later, "I repeat what I said before that I have *so many* communications from the Ministers, and from me to them, and I get so many papers to sign every day, that I have always a *very great* deal to do. I *delight* in this work." Through the girl's immaturity the vigorous predestined tastes of the woman were pushing themselves into existence with eager velocity, with delicious force.

One detail of her happy situation deserves particular mention. Apart from the splendor of her social position and the momentousness of her political one, she was a person of great wealth. As soon as Parliament met, an annuity of £385,000 was settled upon her. When the expenses of her household had been discharged, she was left with £68,000 a year of her own. She enjoyed besides the revenues of the Duchy of Lancaster, which amounted annually to over £27,000. The first use to which she put her money was characteristic: she paid off her father's debts. In money matters, no less than in other matters, she was determined to be correct. She had the instincts of a man of business; and she never could have borne to be in a position that was financially unsound.

With youth and happiness gilding every hour, the days passed merrily enough ' ' each day hinged upon Lord Melbourne. Her diary shows us,

with undiminished clarity, the life of the young sovereign during the early months of her reign—a life satisfactorily regular, full of delightful business, a life of simple pleasures, mostly physical—riding, eating, dancing—a quick, easy, highly unsophisticated life, sufficient unto itself. The light of the morning is upon it; and, in the rosy radiance, the figure of "Lord M." emerges, glorified and supreme. If she is the heroine of the story, he is the hero; but indeed they are more than hero and heroine, for there are no other characters at all. Lehzen, the Baron, Uncle Leopold, are unsubstantial shadows—the incidental supers of the piece. Her paradise was peopled by two persons, and surely that was enough. One sees them together still, a curious couple, strangely united in those artless pages, under the magical illumination of that dawn of eighty years ago: the polished high fine gentleman with the whitening hair and whiskers and the thick dark eyebrows and the mobile lips and the big expressive eyes; and beside him the tiny Queen—fair, slim, elegant, active, in her plain girl's dress and little tippet, looking up at him earnestly, adoringly, with eyes blue and projecting, and half-open mouth. So they appear upon every page of the Journal; upon every page Lord M. is present, Lord M. is speaking, Lord M. is being amusing, instructive, delightful, and affectionate at once, while Victoria drinks in the honied words, laughs till she shows her gums, tries hard to remember, and runs off, as soon as she is left alone, to put it all down. Their long conversations touched upon a multitude of topics. Lord M. would criticize books, throw out a remark or two on the British Constitution, make some passing reflections on human life, and tell story after story of the great people of the eighteenth century. Then there would be business—a despatch perhaps from Lord Durham in Canada, which Lord M. would read. But first he must explain a little. "He said that I must know that Canada originally belonged to the French, and was only ceded to the English in 1760, when it was taken in an expedition under Wolfe: 'a very daring enterprise,' he said. Canada was then entirely French, and the British only came afterwards. . . . Lord M. explained this very clearly (and much better than I have done) and said a good deal more about it. He then read me Durham's despatch, which is a very long one and took him more than ½ an hour to read. Lord M. read it beautifully with that fine soft voice of his, and with so much expression, so that it is needless to say I was much interested by it." And then the talk would take a more personal turn. Lord M. would describe his boyhood, and she would learn that "he wore his hair long, as all boys then did, till he was 17 (*how* handsome he must have looked!)." Or she would find out about his queer tastes and habits—how he never carried a watch, which seemed quite extraordinary. "'I always ask the servant what o'clock it is, and then he tells me what he likes,' said Lord M." Or, as the rooks wheeled about round the trees, "in a manner which indicated rain," he would say that he could sit looking at them for an hour, and "was quite surprised at my disliking them. . . . Lord M. said, 'The rooks are my delight.'"

The day's routine, whether in London or at Windsor, was almost invariable. The morning was devoted to business and Lord M. In the afternoon the whole Court went out riding. The Queen, in her velvet riding-habit and a top-hat with a veil draped about the brim, headed the cavalcade; and Lord M. rode

beside her. The lively troupe went fast and far, to the extreme exhilaration of Her Majesty. Back in the Palace again, there was still time for a little more fun before dinner—a game of battledore and shuttlecock perhaps, or a romp along the galleries with some children. Dinner came, and the ceremonial decidedly tightened. The gentleman of highest rank sat on the right hand of the Queen; on her left—it soon became an established rule—sat Lord Melbourne. After the ladies had left the dining-room, the gentlemen were not permitted to remain behind for very long; indeed, the short time allowed them for their wine-drinking formed the subject—so it was rumored—of one of the very few disputes between the Queen and her Prime Minister; but her determination carried the day, and from that moment after-dinner drunkenness began to go out of fashion. When the company was reassembled in the drawing-room the etiquette was stiff. For a few moments the Queen spoke in turn to each one of her guests; and during these short uneasy colloquies the aridity of royalty was apt to become painfully evident. One night Mr. Greville, the Clerk of the Privy Council, was present; his turn soon came; the middle-aged, hard-faced *viveur* was addressed by his young hostess. "Have you been riding today, Mr. Greville?" asked the Queen. "No, Madam, I have not," replied Mr. Greville. "It was a fine day," continued the Queen. "Yes, Madam, a very fine day," said Mr. Greville. "It was rather cold, though," said the Queen. "It *was* rather cold, Madam," said Mr. Greville. "Your sister, Lady Frances Egerton, rides, I think, doesn't she?" said the Queen. "She does ride sometimes, Madam," said Mr. Greville. There was a pause, after which Mr. Greville ventured to take the lead, though he did not venture to change the subject. "Has your Majesty been riding today?" asked Mr. Greville. "Oh, yes, a very long ride," answered the Queen with animation. "Has your Majesty got a nice horse?" said Mr. Greville. "Oh, a very nice horse," said the Queen. It was over. Her Majesty gave a smile and an inclination of the head, Mr. Greville a profound bow, and the next conversation began with the next gentleman. When all the guests had been disposed of, the Duchess of Kent sat down to her whist, while everybody else was ranged about the round table. Lord Melbourne sat beside the Queen, and talked pertinaciously—very often *à propos* to the contents of one of the large albums of engravings with which the round table was covered—until it was half-past eleven and time to go to bed.

Occasionally, there were little diversions: the evening might be spent at the opera or at the play. Next morning the royal critic was careful to note down her impressions. "It was Shakespeare's tragedy of *Hamlet,* and we came in at the beginning of it. Mr. Charles Kean (son of old Kean) acted the part of Hamlet, and I must say beautifully. His conception of this very difficult, and I may almost say incomprehensible, character is admirable; his delivery of all the fine long speeches quite beautiful; he is excessively graceful and all his actions and attitudes are good, though not at all good-looking in face. . . . I came away just as *Hamlet* was over." Later on, she went to see Macready in *King Lear.* The story was new to her; she knew nothing about it, and at first she took very little interest in what was passing on the stage; she preferred to chatter and laugh with the Lord Chamberlain. But, as the play went on, her mood changed; her attention was fixed, and then she laughed no more.

Yet she was puzzled; it seemed a strange, a horrible business. What did Lord M. think? Lord M. thought it was a very fine play, but to be sure, "a rough, coarse play, written for those times, with exaggerated characters." "I'm glad you've seen it," he added. But, undoubtedly, the evenings which she enjoyed most were those on which there was dancing. She was always ready enough to seize any excuse—the arrival of cousins—a birthday—a gathering of young people—to give the command for that. Then, when the band played, and the figures of the dancers swayed to the music, and she felt her own figure swaying too, with youthful spirits so close on every side—then her happiness reached its height, her eyes sparkled, she must go on and on into the small hours of the morning. For a moment Lord M. himself was forgotten.

V

The months flew past. The summer was over: "the pleasantest summer I EVER passed in *my life,* and I shall never forget this first summer of my reign." With surprising rapidity, another summer was upon her. The coronation came and went—a curious dream. The antique, intricate, endless ceremonial worked itself out as best it could, like some machine of gigantic complexity which was a little out of order. The small central figure went through her gyrations. She sat; she walked; she prayed; she carried about an orb that was almost too heavy to hold; the Archbishop of Canterbury came and crushed a ring upon the wrong finger, so that she was ready to cry out with the pain; old Lord Rolle tripped up in his mantle and fell down the steps as he was doing homage; she was taken into a side chapel, where the altar was covered with a table-cloth, sandwiches, and bottles of wine; she perceived Lehzen in an upper box and exchanged a smile with her as she sat, robed and crowned, on the Confessor's throne. "I shall ever remember this day as the *proudest* of my life," she noted. But the pride was soon merged once more in youth and simplicity. When she returned to Buckingham Palace at last she was not tired; she ran up to her private rooms, doffed her splendors, and gave her dog Dash its evening bath.

Life flowed on again with its accustomed smoothness—though, of course, the smoothness was occasionally disturbed. For one thing, there was the distressing behavior of Uncle Leopold. The King of the Belgians had not been able to resist attempting to make use of his family position to further his diplomatic ends. But, indeed, why should there be any question of resisting? Was not such a course of conduct, far from being a temptation, simply *selon les règles?* What were royal marriages for, if they did not enable sovereigns, in spite of the hindrances of constitutions, to control foreign politics? For the highest purposes, of course; that was understood. The Queen of England was his niece—more than that—almost his daughter; his confidential agent was living, in a position of intimate favor, at her court. Surely, in such circumstances, it would be preposterous, it would be positively incorrect, to lose the opportunity of bending to his wishes by means of personal influence, behind the backs of the English Ministers, the foreign policy of England.

He set about the task with becoming precautions. He continued in his letters his admirable advice. Within a few days of her accession, he recommended the young Queen to lay emphasis, on every possible occasion, upon her English

birth; to praise the English nation; "the Established Church I also recommend strongly; you cannot, without *pledging* yourself to anything *particular, say too much on the subject.*" And then "before you decide on anything important I should be glad if you would consult me; this would also have the advantage of giving you time"; nothing was more injurious than to be hurried into wrong decisions unawares. His niece replied at once with all the accustomed warmth of her affection; but she wrote hurriedly—and, perhaps, a trifle vaguely too. "*Your* advice is always of the *greatest importance* to me," she said.

Had he, possibly, gone too far? He could not be certain; perhaps Victoria *had* been hurried. In any case, he would be careful; he would draw back—*pour mieux sauter,* he added to himself with a smile. In his next letters he made no reference to his suggestion of consultations with himself; he merely pointed out the wisdom, in general, of refusing to decide upon important questions off-hand. So far, his advice was taken; and it was noticed that the Queen, when applications were made to her, rarely gave an immediate answer. Even with Lord Melbourne, it was the same; when he asked for her opinion upon any subject, she would reply that she would think it over, and tell him her conclusions next day.

King Leopold's counsels continued. The Princess de Lieven, he said, was a dangerous woman; there was reason to think that she would make attempts to pry into what did not concern her; let Victoria beware. "A rule which I cannot sufficiently recommend is *never to permit* people to speak on subjects concerning yourself or your affairs, without you having yourself desired them to do so." Should such a thing occur, "change the conversation, and make the individual feel that he has made a mistake." This piece of advice was also taken; for it fell out as the King had predicted. Madame de Lieven sought an audience, and appeared to be verging towards confidential topics; whereupon the Queen, becoming slightly embarrassed, talked of nothing but commonplaces. The individual felt that she had made a mistake.

The King's next warning was remarkable. Letters, he pointed out, are almost invariably read in the post. This was inconvenient, no doubt; but the fact, once properly grasped, was not without its advantages. "I will give you an example: we are still plagued by Prussia concerning those fortresses; now to tell the Prussian Government many things, which we *should not like* to tell them officially, the Minister is going to write a despatch to our man at Berlin, sending it *by post;* the Prussians *are sure* to read it, and to learn in this way what we wish them to hear." Analogous circumstances might very probably occur in England. "I tell you the *trick,*" wrote His Majesty, "that you should be able to guard against it." Such were the subtleties of constitutional sovereignty.

It seemed that the time had come for another step. The King's next letter was full of foreign politics—the situation in Spain and Portugal, the character of Louis Philippe; and he received a favorable answer. Victoria, it is true, began by saying that she had shown the *political part* of his letter to Lord Melbourne; but she proceeded to a discussion of foreign affairs. It appeared that she was not unwilling to exchange observations on such matters with her uncle. So far so good. But King Leopold was still cautious; though a crisis was impending

in his diplomacy, he still hung back; at last, however, he could keep silence no longer. It was of the utmost importance to him that, in his maneuverings with France and Holland, he should have, or at any rate appear to have, English support. But the English Government appeared to adopt a neutral attitude; it was too bad; not to be for him was to be against him—could they not see that? Yet, perhaps, they were only wavering, and a little pressure upon them from Victoria might still save all. He determined to put the case before her, delicately yet forcibly—just as he saw it himself. "All I want from your kind Majesty," he wrote, "is, that you will *occasionally* express to your Ministers, and particularly to good Lord Melbourne, that, as far as it is *compatible* with the interests of *your own* dominions, you do *not* wish that your Government should take the lead in such measures as might in a short time bring on the *destruction* of this country, as well as that of your uncle and his family." The result of this appeal was unexpected; there was dead silence for more than a week. When Victoria at last wrote, she was prodigal of her affection—"it would, indeed, my dearest Uncle, be *very wrong* of you, if you thought my feelings of warm and devoted attachment to you, and of great affection for you, could be changed—*nothing* can ever change them"—but her references to foreign politics, though they were lengthy and elaborate, were non-committal in the extreme; they were almost cast in an official and diplomatic form. Her Ministers, she said, entirely shared her views upon the subject; she understood and sympathized with the difficulties of her beloved uncle's position; and he might rest assured "that both Lord Melbourne and Lord Palmerston are most anxious at all times for the prosperity and welfare of Belgium." That was all. The King in his reply declared himself delighted, and reechoed the affectionate protestations of his niece. "My dearest and most beloved Victoria," he said, "you have written me a *very dear* and long letter, which has given me *great pleasure and satisfaction*." He would not admit that he had had a rebuff.

A few months later the crisis came. King Leopold determined to make a bold push, and to carry Victoria with him, this time, by a display of royal vigor and avuncular authority. In an abrupt, an almost peremptory letter, he laid his case, once more, before his niece. "You know from experience," he wrote, "that I *never ask anything of you*. . . . But, as I said before, if we are not careful we may see serious consequences which may affect more or less everybody, and *this* ought to be the object of our most anxious attention. I remain, my dear Victoria, your affectionate uncle, Leopold R." The Queen immediately despatched this letter to Lord Melbourne, who replied with a carefully thought-out form of words, signifying nothing whatever, which, he suggested, she should send to her uncle. She did so, copying out the elaborate formula, with a liberal scattering of "dear Uncles" interspersed; and she concluded her letter with a message of "affectionate love to Aunt Louise and the children." Then at last King Leopold was obliged to recognize the facts. His next letter contained no reference at all to politics. "I am glad," he wrote, "to find that you like Brighton better than last year. I think Brighton very agreeable at this time of the year, till the east winds set in. The pavilion, besides, is comfortable; that cannot be denied. Before my marriage, it was there that I met the Regent. Charlotte afterwards came with old Queen Charlotte. How distant all this

already, but still how present to one's memory." Like poor Madame de Lieven, His Majesty felt that he had made a mistake.

Nevertheless, he could not quite give up all hope. Another opportunity offered, and he made another effort—but there was not very much conviction in it, and it was immediately crushed. "My dear Uncle," the Queen wrote, "I have to thank you for your last letter which I received on Sunday. Though you seem not to dislike my political sparks, I think it is better not to increase them, as they might finally take fire, particularly as I see with regret that upon this one subject we cannot agree. I shall, therefore, limit myself to my expressions of very sincere wishes for the welfare and prosperity of Belgium." After that, it was clear that there was no more to be said. Henceforward there is audible in the King's letters a curiously elegiac note. "My dearest Victoria, your *delightful* little letter has just arrived and went like *an arrow to my heart.* Yes, my beloved Victoria! I *do love you tenderly* . . . I love you *for yourself,* and I love in you the dear child whose welfare I tenderly watched." He had gone through much; yet, if life had its disappointments, it had its satisfactions too. "I have all the honors that can be given, and I am, politically speaking, very solidly established." But there were other things besides politics; there were romantic yearnings in his heart. "The only longing I still have is for the Orient, where I perhaps shall once end my life, rising in the west and setting in the east." As for his devotion to his niece, that could never end. "I never press my services on you, nor my councils, though I may say with some truth that from the extraordinary fate which the higher powers had ordained for me, my experience, both political and of private life, is great. I am *always ready* to be useful to you *when and where* it may be, and I repeat it, *all I want in return is some little sincere affection from you.*"

VI

The correspondence with King Leopold was significant of much that still lay partly hidden in the character of Victoria. Her attitude towards her uncle had never wavered for a moment. To all his advances she had presented an absolutely unyielding front. The foreign policy of England was not his province; it was hers and her Ministers'; his insinuations, his entreaties, his struggles—all were quite useless; and he must understand that this was so. The rigidity of her position was the more striking owing to the respectfulness and the affection with which it was accompanied. From start to finish the unmoved Queen remained the devoted niece. Leopold himself must have envied such perfect correctitude; but what may be admirable in an elderly statesman is alarming in a maiden of nineteen. And privileged observers were not without their fears. The strange mixture of ingenuous light-heartedness and fixed determination, of frankness and reticence, of childishness and pride, seemed to augur a future that was perplexed and full of dangers. As time passed the less pleasant qualities in this curious composition revealed themselves more often and more seriously. There were signs of an imperious, a peremptory temper, an egotism that was strong and hard. It was noticed that the palace etiquette, far from relaxing, grew ever more and more inflexible. By some, this was attributed to Lehzen's influence; but, if that was so, Lehzen had a willing pupil; for the

slightest infringements of the freezing rules of regularity and deference were invariably and immediately visited by the sharp and haughty glances of the Queen. Yet Her Majesty's eyes, crushing as they could be, were less crushing than her mouth. The self-will depicted in those small projecting teeth and that small receding chin was of a more dismaying kind than that which a powerful jaw betokens; it was a self-will imperturbable, impenetrable, unintelligent; a self-will dangerously akin to obstinacy. And the obstinacy of monarchs is not as that of other men.

Within two years of her accession, the storm-clouds which, from the first, had been dimly visible on the horizon, gathered and burst. Victoria's relations with her mother had not improved. The Duchess of Kent, still surrounded by all the galling appearances of filial consideration, remained in Buckingham Palace a discarded figure, powerless and inconsolable. Sir John Conroy, banished from the presence of the Queen, still presided over the Duchess's household, and the hostilities of Kensington continued unabated in the new surroundings. Lady Flora Hastings still cracked her malicious jokes; the animosity of the Baroness was still unappeased. One day, Lady Flora found the joke was turned against her. Early in 1839, traveling in the suite of the Duchess, she had returned from Scotland in the same carriage with Sir John. A change in her figure became the subject of an unseemly jest; tongues wagged; and the jest grew serious. It was whispered that Lady Flora was with child. The state of her health seemed to confirm the suspicion; she consulted Sir James Clark, the royal physician, and, after the consultation, Sir James let his tongue wag, too. On this, the scandal flared up sky-high. Every one was talking; the Baroness was not surprised; the Duchess rallied tumultuously to the support of her lady; the Queen was informed. At last the extraordinary expedient of a medical examination was resorted to, during which Sir James, according to Lady Flora, behaved with brutal rudeness, while a second doctor was extremely polite. Finally, both physicians signed a certificate entirely exculpating the lady. But this was by no means the end of the business. The Hastings family, socially a very powerful one, threw itself into the fray with all the fury of outraged pride and injured innocence; Lord Hastings insisted upon an audience of the Queen, wrote to the papers, and demanded the dismissal of Sir James Clark. The Queen expressed her regret to Lady Flora, but Sir James Clark was not dismissed. The tide of opinion turned violently against the Queen and her advisers; high society was disgusted by all this washing of dirty linen in Buckingham Palace; the public at large was indignant at the ill-treatment of Lady Flora. By the end of March, the popularity, so radiant and so abundant, with which the young Sovereign had begun her reign, had entirely disappeared.

There can be no doubt that a great lack of discretion had been shown by the Court. Ill-natured tittle-tattle, which should have been instantly nipped in the bud, had been allowed to assume disgraceful proportions; and the Throne itself had become involved in the personal malignities of the palace. A particularly awkward question had been raised by the position of Sir James Clark. The Duke of Wellington, upon whom it was customary to fall back, in cases of great difficulty in high places, had been consulted upon this question, and he had given it as his opinion that, as it would be impossible to remove Sir James without a pub-

lic enquiry, Sir James must certainly stay where he was. Probably the Duke was right; but the fact that the peccant doctor continued in the Queen's service made the Hastings family irreconcilable and produced an unpleasant impression of unrepentant error upon the public mind. As for Victoria, she was very young and quite inexperienced; and she can hardly be blamed for having failed to control an extremely difficult situation. That was clearly Lord Melbourne's task; he was a man of the world, and, with vigilance and circumspection, he might have quietly put out the ugly flames while they were still smoldering. He did not do so; he was lazy and easy-going; the Baroness was persistent, and he let things slide. But doubtless his position was not an easy one; passions ran high in the palace; and Victoria was not only very young, she was very headstrong, too. Did he possess the magic bridle which would curb that fiery steed? He could not be certain. And then, suddenly, another violent crisis revealed more unmistakably than ever the nature of the mind with which he had to deal.

VII

The Queen had for long been haunted by a terror that the day might come when she would be obliged to part with her Minister. Ever since the passage of the Reform Bill, the power of the Whig Government had steadily declined. The General Election of 1837 had left them with a very small majority in the House of Commons; since then, they had been in constant difficulties—abroad, at home, in Ireland; the Radical group had grown hostile; it became highly doubtful how much longer they could survive. The Queen watched the development of events in great anxiety. She was a Whig by birth, by upbringing, by every association, public and private; and, even if those ties had never existed, the mere fact that Lord M. was the head of the Whigs would have amply sufficed to determine her politics. The fall of the Whigs would mean a sad upset for Lord M. But it would have a still more terrible consequence: Lord M. would have to leave her; and the daily, the hourly, presence of Lord M. had become an integral part of her life. Six months after her accession she had noted in her diary, "I shall be very sorry to lose him *even* for *one* night"; and this feeling of personal dependence on her Minister steadily increased. In these circumstances it was natural that she should have become a Whig partisan. Of the wider significance of political questions she knew nothing; all she saw was that her friends were in office and about her, and that it would be dreadful if they ceased to be so. "I cannot say," she wrote when a critical division was impending "(though I feel *confident* of *our success*), HOW *low*, HOW *sad* I feel, when I think of the POSSIBILITY of this excellent and truly kind man not *remaining* my Minister! Yet I trust fervently that *He* who has so wonderfully protected me through such manifold difficulties will not *now* desert me! I should have liked to have expressed to Lord M. my anxiety, but the tears were nearer than words throughout the time I saw him, and I felt I should have choked, had I attempted to say anything." Lord Melbourne realized clearly enough how undesirable was such a state of mind in a constitutional sovereign who might be called upon at any moment to receive as her Ministers the leaders of the opposite party; he did what he could to cool her ardor; but in vain.

With considerable lack of foresight, too, he had himself helped to bring about

this unfortunate condition of affairs. From the moment of her accession, he had surrounded the Queen with ladies of his own party; the Mistress of the Robes and all the Ladies of the Bedchamber were Whigs. In the ordinary course, the Queen never saw a Tory: eventually she took pains never to see one in any circumstances. She disliked the whole tribe; and she did not conceal the fact. She particularly disliked Sir Robert Peel, who would almost certainly be the next Prime Minister. His manners were detestable, and he wanted to turn out Lord M. His supporters, without exception, were equally bad; and as for Sir James Graham, she could not bear the sight of him; he was exactly like Sir John Conroy.

The affair of Lady Flora intensified these party rumors still further. The Hastings were Tories, and Lord Melbourne and the Court were attacked by the Tory press in unmeasured language. The Queen's sectarian zeal proportionately increased. But the dreaded hour was now fast approaching. Early in May the Ministers were visibly tottering; on a vital point of policy they could only secure a majority of five in the House of Commons; they determined to resign. When Victoria heard the news she burst into tears. Was it possible, then, that all was over? Was she, indeed, about to see Lord M. for the last time? Lord M. came; and it is a curious fact that, even in this crowning moment of misery and agitation, the precise girl noted, to the minute, the exact time of the arrival and the departure of her beloved Minister. The conversation was touching and prolonged; but it could only end in one way—the Queen must send for the Duke of Wellington. When, next morning, the Duke came, he advised her Majesty to send for Sir Robert Peel. She was in "a state of dreadful grief," but she swallowed down her tears, and braced herself, with royal resolution, for the odious, odious interview.

Peel was by nature reserved, proud, and shy. His manners were not perfect, and he knew it; he was easily embarrassed, and, at such moments, he grew even more stiff and formal than before, while his feet mechanically performed upon the carpet a dancing-master's measure. Anxious as he now was to win the Queen's good graces, his very anxiety to do so made the attainment of his object the more difficult. He entirely failed to make any headway whatever with the haughty hostile girl before him. She coldly noted that he appeared to be unhappy and "put out," and, while he stood in painful fixity, with an occasional uneasy pointing of the toe, her heart sank within her at the sight of that manner. "Oh! how different, how dreadfully different, to the frank, open, natural, and most kind warm manner of Lord Melbourne." Nevertheless, the audience passed without disaster. Only at one point had there been some slight hint of a disagreement. Peel had decided that a change would be necessary in the composition of the royal Household: the Queen must no longer be entirely surrounded by the wives and sisters of his opponents; some, at any rate, of the Ladies of the Bedchamber should be friendly to his Government. When this matter was touched upon, the Queen had intimated that she wished her Household to remain unchanged; to which Sir Robert had replied that the question could be settled later, and shortly afterwards withdrew to arrange the details of his Cabinet. While he was present, Victoria had remained, as she herself said, "very much collected, civil and high, and betrayed no agitation"; but as

soon as she was alone she completely broke down. Then she pulled herself together to write to Lord Melbourne an account of all that had happened, and of her own wretchedness. "She feels," she said, "Lord Melbourne will understand it, amongst enemies to those she most relied on and most esteemed; but what is worst of all is the being deprived of seeing Lord Melbourne as she used to do."

Lord Melbourne replied with a very wise letter. He attempted to calm the Queen and to induce her to accept the new position gracefully; and he had nothing but good words for the Tory leaders. As for the question of the Ladies of the Household, the Queen, he said, should strongly urge what she desired, as it was a matter which concerned her personally, "but," he added, "if Sir Robert is unable to concede it, it will not do to refuse and to put off the negotiation upon it."

On this point there can be little doubt that Lord Melbourne was right. The question was a complicated and subtle one, and it had never arisen before; but subsequent constitutional practice has determined that a Queen Regnant must accede to the wishes of her Prime Minister as to the *personnel* of the female part of her Household. Lord Melbourne's wisdom, however, was wasted. The Queen would not be soothed, and still less would she take advice. It was outrageous of the Tories to want to deprive her of her Ladies, and that night she made up her mind that, whatever Sir Robert might say, she would refuse to consent to the removal of a single one of them. Accordingly, when, next morning, Peel appeared again, she was ready for action. He began by detailing the Cabinet appointments, and then he added, "Now, ma'am, about the Ladies"—when the Queen sharply interrupted him. "I cannot give up *any* of my Ladies," she said. "What, ma'am!" said Sir Robert, "does your Majesty mean to retain them *all?*" *"All,"* said the Queen. Sir Robert's face worked strangely; he could not conceal his agitation. "The Mistress of the Robes and the Ladies of the Bedchamber?" he brought out at last. *"All,"* replied once more her Majesty. It was in vain that Peel pleaded and argued; in vain that he spoke, growing every moment more pompous and uneasy, of the constitution, and Queens Regnant, and the public interest; in vain that he danced his pathetic minuet. She was adamant; but he, too, through all his embarrassment, showed no sign of yielding; and when at last he left her, nothing had been decided—the whole formation of the Government was hanging in the wind. A frenzy of excitement now seized upon Victoria. Sir Robert, she believed in her fury, had tried to outwit her, to take her friends from her, to impose his will upon her own; but that was not all: she had suddenly perceived, while the poor man was moving so uneasily before her, the one thing that she was desperately longing for—a loophole of escape. She seized a pen and dashed off a note to Lord Melbourne.

"Sir Robert has behaved very ill," she wrote, "he insisted on my giving up my Ladies, to which I replied that I *never* would consent, and I never saw a man so frightened. . . . I was calm but very decided, and I think you would have been pleased to see my composure and great firmness; the Queen of England will not submit to such trickery. Keep yourself in readiness, for you may soon be wanted." Hardly had she finished when the Duke of Wellington was announced. "Well, ma'am," he said as he entered, "I am very sorry to find

there is a difficulty." "Oh!" she instantly replied, "*he* began it, not me." She felt that only one thing now was needed: she must be firm. And firm she was. The venerable conqueror of Napoleon was outfaced by the relentless equanimity of a girl in her teens. He could not move the Queen one inch. At last, she even ventured to rally him. "Is Sir Robert so weak," she asked, "that even the Ladies must be of his opinion?" On which the Duke made a brief and humble expostulation, bowed low, and departed.

Had she won? Time would show; and in the meantime she scribbled down another letter. "Lord Melbourne must not think the Queen rash in her conduct. . . . The Queen felt this was an attempt to see whether she could be led and managed like a child." The Tories were not only wicked but ridiculous. Peel, having, as she understood, expressed a wish to remove only those members of the Household who were in Parliament, now objected to her Ladies. "I should like to know," she exclaimed in triumphant scorn, "if they mean to give the *Ladies* seats in Parliament?"

The end of the crisis was now fast approaching. Sir Robert returned, and told her that if she insisted upon retaining all her Ladies he could not form a Government. She replied that she would send him her final decision in writing. Next morning the late Whig Cabinet met. Lord Melbourne read to them the Queen's letters, and the group of elderly politicians were overcome by an extraordinary wave of enthusiasm. They knew very well that, to say the least, it was highly doubtful whether the Queen had acted in strict accordance with the constitution; that in doing what she had done she had brushed aside Lord Melbourne's advice; that, in reality, there was no public reason whatever why they should go back upon their decision to resign. But such considerations vanished before the passionate urgency of Victoria. The intensity of her determination swept them headlong down the stream of her desire. They unanimously felt that "it was impossible to abandon such a Queen and such a woman." Forgetting that they were no longer her Majesty's Ministers, they took the unprecedented course of advising the Queen by letter to put an end to her negotiation with Sir Robert Peel. She did so; all was over; she had triumphed. That evening there was a ball at the Palace. Every one was present. "Peel and the Duke of Wellington came by looking very much put out." She was perfectly happy; Lord M. was Prime Minister once more, and he was by her side.

VIII

Happiness had returned with Lord M., but it was happiness in the midst of agitation. The domestic imbroglio continued unabated, until at last the Duke, rejected as a Minister, was called in once again in his old capacity as moral physician to the family. Something was accomplished when, at last, he induced Sir John Conroy to resign his place about the Duchess of Kent and leave the Palace for ever; something more when he persuaded the Queen to write an affectionate letter to her mother. The way seemed open for a reconciliation, but the Duchess was stormy still. She didn't believe that Victoria had written that letter; it was not in her handwriting; and she sent for the Duke to tell him so. The Duke, assuring her that the letter was genuine, begged her to forget the past. But that was not so easy. "What am I to do if Lord Melbourne comes up

to me?" "Do, ma'am? Why, receive him with civility." Well, she would make an effort. . . . "But what am I to do if Victoria asks me to shake hands with Lehzen?" "Do, ma'am? Why, take her in your arms and kiss her." "What!" The Duchess bristled in every feather, and then she burst into a hearty laugh. "No, ma'am, no," said the Duke, laughing too. "I don't mean you are to take *Lehzen* in your arms and kiss *her,* but the Queen."

The Duke might perhaps have succeeded, had not all attempts at conciliation been rendered hopeless by a tragical event. Lady Flora, it was discovered, had been suffering from a terrible internal malady, which now grew rapidly worse. There could be little doubt that she was dying. The Queen's unpopularity reached an extraordinary height. More than once she was publicly insulted. "Mrs. Melbourne," was shouted at her when she appeared at her balcony; and, at Ascot, she was hissed by the Duchess of Montrose and Lady Sarah Ingestre as she passed. Lady Flora died. The whole scandal burst out again with redoubled vehemence; while, in the Palace, the two parties were henceforth divided by an impassable, a Stygian, gulf.

Nevertheless, Lord M. was back, and every trouble faded under the enchantment of his presence and his conversation. He, on his side, had gone through much; and his distresses were intensified by a consciousness of his own shortcomings. He realized clearly enough that, if he had intervened at the right moment, the Hastings scandal might have been averted; and, in the bedchamber crisis, he knew that he had allowed his judgment to be overruled and his conduct to be swayed by private feelings and the impetuosity of Victoria. But he was not one to suffer too acutely from the pangs of conscience. In spite of the dullness and the formality of the Court, his relationship with the Queen had come to be the dominating interest in his life; to have been deprived of it would have been heartrending; that dread eventuality had been—somehow—avoided; he was installed once more, in a kind of triumph; let him enjoy the fleeting hours to the full! And so, cherished by the favor of a sovereign and warmed by the adoration of a girl, the autumn rose, in those autumn months of 1839, came to a wondrous blooming. The petals expanded, beautifully, for the last time. For the last time in this unlooked-for, this incongruous, this almost incredible intercourse, the old epicure tasted the exquisiteness of romance. To watch, to teach, to restrain, to encourage the royal young creature beside him—that was much; to feel with such a constant intimacy the impact of her quick affection, her radiant vitality—that was more, most of all, perhaps, was it good to linger vaguely in humorous contemplation, in idle apostrophe, to talk disconnectedly, to make a little joke about an apple or a furbelow, to dream. The springs of his sensibility, hidden deep within him, were overflowing. Often, as he bent over her hand and kissed it, he found himself in tears.

Upon Victoria, with all her impermeability, it was inevitable that such a companionship should have produced, eventually, an effect. She was no longer the simple schoolgirl of two years since. The change was visible even in her public demeanor. Her expression, once "ingenuous and serene," now appeared to a shrewd observer to be "bold and discontented." She had learnt something of the pleasures of power and the pains of it; but that was not all. Lord Melbourne with his gentle instruction had sought to lead her into the paths of wisdom and

moderation, but the whole unconscious movement of his character had swayed her in a very different direction. The hard clear pebble, subjected for so long and so constantly to that encircling and insidious fluidity, had suffered a curious corrosion; it seemed to be actually growing a little soft and a little clouded. Humanity and fallibility are infectious things; was it possible that Lehzen's prim pupil had caught them? That she was beginning to listen to siren voices? That the secret impulses of self-expression, of self-indulgence even, were mastering her life? For a moment the child of a new age looked back, and wavered towards the eighteenth century. It was the most critical moment of her career. Had those influences lasted, the development of her character, the history of her life, would have been completely changed.

And why should they not last? She, for one, was very anxious that they should. Let them last for ever! She was surrounded by Whigs, she was free to do whatever she wanted, she had Lord M.; she could not believe that she could ever be happier. Any change would be for the worse; and the worst change of all . . . no, she would not hear of it; it would be quite intolerable, it would upset everything, if she were to marry. And yet every one seemed to want her to—the general public, the Ministers, her Saxe-Coburg relations—it was always the same story. Of course, she knew very well that there were excellent reasons for it. For one thing, if she remained childless, and were to die, her uncle Cumberland, who was now the King of Hanover, would succeed to the Throne of England. That, no doubt, would be a most unpleasant event; and she entirely sympathized with everybody who wished to avoid it. But there was no hurry; naturally, she would marry in the end—but not just yet—not for three or four years. What was tiresome was that her uncle Leopold had apparently determined, not only that she ought to marry, but that her cousin Albert ought to be her husband. That was very like her uncle Leopold, who wanted to have a finger in every pie; and it was true that long ago, in far-off days, before her accession even, she had written to him in a way which might well have encouraged him in such a notion. She had told him then that Albert possessed "every quality that could be desired to render her perfectly happy," and had begged her "dearest uncle to take care of the health of one, now *so dear* to me, and to take him under *your special* protection," adding, "I hope and trust all will go on prosperously and well on this subject of so much importance to me." But that had been years ago, when she was a mere child; perhaps, indeed, to judge from the language, the letter had been dictated by Lehzen; at any rate, her feelings, and all the circumstances, had now entirely changed. Albert hardly interested her at all.

In later life the Queen declared that she had never for a moment dreamt of marrying any one but her cousin; her letters and diaries tell a very different story. On August 26, 1837, she wrote in her journal: "Today is my *dearest* cousin Albert's 18th birthday, and I pray Heaven to pour its choicest blessings on his beloved head!" In the subsequent years, however, the date passes unnoticed. It had been arranged that Stockmar should accompany the Prince to Italy, and the faithful Baron left her side for that purpose. He wrote to her more than once with sympathetic descriptions of his young companion; but her mind was by this time made up. She liked and admired Albert very much, but she did not want to marry him. "At present," she told Lord Melbourne in

April, 1839, "*my* feeling is quite against ever marrying." When her cousin's Italian tour came to an end, she began to grow nervous; she knew that, according to a long-standing engagement, his next journey would be to England. He would probably arrive in the autumn, and by July her uneasiness was intense. She determined to write to her uncle, in order to make her position clear. It must be understood, she said, that "there is *no engagement* between us." If she should like Albert, she could "make *no final promise this year,* for, at the *very earliest,* any such event could not take place till *two or three years hence.*" She had, she said, "a *great* repugnance" to change her present position; and, if she should not like him, she was "*very* anxious that it should be understood that she would *not* be guilty of any breach of promise, for she *never gave any.*" To Lord Melbourne she was more explicit. She told him that she "had no great wish to see Albert, as the whole subject was an odious one"; she hated to have to decide about it; and she repeated once again that seeing Albert would be "a disagreeable thing." But there was no escaping the horrid business; the visit must be made, and she must see him. The summer slipped by and was over; it was the autumn already; on the evening of October 10 Albert, accompanied by his brother Ernest, arrived at Windsor.

Albert arrived; and the whole structure of her existence crumbled into nothingness like a house of cards. He was beautiful—she gasped—she knew no more. Then, in a flash, a thousand mysteries were revealed to her; the past, the present, rushed upon her with a new significance; the delusions of years were abolished and an extraordinary, an irresistible certitude leapt into being in the light of those blue eyes, the smile of that lovely mouth. The succeeding hours passed in a rapture. She was able to observe a few more details—the "exquisite nose," the "delicate mustachios and slight but very slight whiskers," the "beautiful figure, broad in the shoulders and a fine waist." She rode with him, danced with him, talked with him, and it was all perfection. She had no shadow of a doubt. He had come on a Thursday evening, and on the following Sunday morning she told Lord Melbourne that she had "a good deal changed her opinion as to marrying." Next morning, she told him that she had made up her mind to marry Albert. The morning after that, she sent for her cousin. She received him alone, and "after a few minutes I said to him that I thought he must be aware *why* I wished them to come here—and that it would make me *too happy* if he would consent to what I wished (to marry me)." Then "we embraced each other, and he was *so* kind, *so* affectionate." She said that she was quite unworthy of him, while he murmured that he would be very happy "Das Leben mit dir zu zubringen." They parted, and she felt "the happiest of human beings," when Lord M. came in. At first she beat about the bush, and talked of the weather, and indifferent subjects. Somehow or other she felt a little nervous with her old friend. At last, summoning up her courage, she said, "I have got well through this with Albert." "Oh! you have," said Lord M.

IV. MARRIAGE

IT WAS decidedly a family match. Prince Francis Charles Augustus Albert Emmanuel of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha—for such was his full title—had been born just three months after his cousin Victoria, and the same midwife had assisted at the two births. The children's grandmother, the Dowager Duchess

of Coburg, had from the first looked forward to their marriage; as they grew up, the Duke, the Duchess of Kent, and King Leopold came equally to desire it. The Prince, ever since the time when, as a child of three, his nurse had told him that some day "the little English May flower" would be his wife, had never thought of marrying any one else. When eventually Baron Stockmar himself signified his assent, the affair seemed as good as settled.

The Duke had one other child—Prince Ernest, Albert's senior by one year, and heir to the principality. The Duchess was a sprightly and beautiful woman, with fair hair and blue eyes; Albert was very like her and was her declared favorite. But in his fifth year he was parted from her for ever. The ducal court was not noted for the strictness of its morals; the Duke was a man of gallantry, and it was rumored that the Duchess followed her husband's example. There were scandals: one of the Court Chamberlains, a charming and cultivated man of Jewish extraction, was talked of; at last there was a separation, followed by a divorce. The Duchess retired to Paris, and died unhappily in 1831. Her memory was always very dear to Albert.

He grew up a pretty, clever, and high-spirited boy. Usually well-behaved, he was, however, sometimes violent. He had a will of his own, and asserted it; his elder brother was less passionate, less purposeful, and, in their wrangles, it was Albert who came out top. The two boys, living for the most part in one or other of the Duke's country houses, among pretty hills and woods and streams, had been at a very early age—Albert was less than four—separated from their nurses and put under a tutor, in whose charge they remained until they went to the University. They were brought up in a simple and unostentatious manner, for the Duke was poor and the duchy very small and very insignificant. Before long it became evident that Albert was a model lad. Intelligent and painstaking, he had been touched by the moral earnestness of his generation; at the age of eleven he surprised his father by telling him that he hoped to make himself "a good and useful man." And yet he was not over-serious; though, perhaps, he had little humor, he was full of fun—of practical jokes and mimicry. He was no milksop; he rode, and shot, and fenced; above all did he delight in being out of doors, and never was he happier than in his long rambles with his brother through the wild country round his beloved Rosenau—stalking the deer, admiring the scenery, and returning laden with specimens for his natural history collection. He was, besides, passionately fond of music. In one particular it was observed that he did not take after his father: owing either to his peculiar upbringing or to a more fundamental idiosyncrasy he had a marked distaste for the opposite sex. At the age of five, at a children's dance, he screamed with disgust and anger when a little girl was led up to him for a partner; and though, later on, he grew more successful in disguising such feelings, the feelings remained.

The brothers were very popular in Coburg, and, when the time came for them to be confirmed, the preliminary examination which, according to ancient custom, was held in public in the "Giants' Hall" of the Castle, was attended by an enthusiastic crowd of functionaries, clergy, delegates from the villages of the duchy, and miscellaneous onlookers. There were also present, besides the Duke and the Dowager Duchess, their Serene Highnesses the Princes Alex-

ander and Ernst of Württemberg, Prince Leiningen, Princess Hohenlohe-Langenburg, and Princess Hohenlohe-Schillingsfurst. Dr. Jacobi, the Court chaplain, presided at an altar, simply but appropriately decorated, which had been placed at the end of the hall; and the proceedings began by the choir singing the first verse of the hymn, "Come, Holy Ghost." After some introductory remarks, Dr. Jacobi began the examination. "The dignified and decorous bearing of the Princes," we are told in a contemporary account, "their strict attention to the questions, the frankness, decision, and correctness of their answers, produced a deep impression on the numerous assembly." Nothing was more striking in their answers than the evidence they gave of deep feeling and of inward strength of conviction. The questions put by the examiner were not such as to be met by a simple "yes" or "no." They were carefully considered in order to give the audience a clear insight into the views and feelings of the young princes. One of the most touching moments was when the examiner asked the hereditary prince whether he intended steadfastly to hold to the Evangelical Church, and the Prince answered not only "Yes!" but added in a clear and decided tone: "I and my brother are firmly resolved ever to remain faithful to the acknowledged truth." The examination having lasted an hour, Dr. Jacobi made some concluding observations, followed by a short prayer; the second and third verses of the opening hymn were sung; and the ceremony was over. The Princes, stepping down from the altar, were embraced by the Duke and the Dowager Duchess; after which the loyal inhabitants of Coburg dispersed, well satisfied with their entertainment.

Albert's mental development now proceeded apace. In his seventeenth year he began a careful study of German literature and German philosophy. He set about, he told his tutor, "to follow the thoughts of the great Klopstock into their depths—though in this, for the most part," he modestly added, "I do not succeed." He wrote an essay on the "Mode of Thought of the Germans, and a Sketch of the History of German Civilisation," "making use," he said, "in its general outlines, of the divisions which the treatment of the subject itself demands," and concluding with "a retrospect of the shortcomings of our time, with an appeal to every one to correct those shortcomings in his own case, and thus set a good example to others." Placed for some months under the care of King Leopold at Brussels, he came under the influence of Adolphe Quetelet, a mathematical professor, who was particularly interested in the application of the laws of probability to political and moral phenomena; this line of inquiry attracted the Prince, and the friendship thus begun continued till the end of his life. From Brussels he went to the University of Bonn, where he was speedily distinguished both by his intellectual and his social activities; his energies were absorbed in metaphysics, law, political economy, music, fencing, and amateur theatricals. Thirty years later his fellow-students recalled with delight the fits of laughter into which they had been sent by Prince Albert's mimicry. The *verve* with which his Serene Highness reproduced the tones and gestures of one of the professors who used to point to a picture of a row of houses in Venice with the remark, "That is the Ponte Realte," and of another who fell down in a race and was obliged to look for his spectacles, was especially appreciated.

After a year at Bonn, the time had come for a foreign tour, and Baron

Stockmar arrived from England to accompany the Prince on an expedition to Italy. The Baron had been already, two years previously, consulted by King Leopold as to his views upon the proposed marriage of Albert and Victoria. His reply had been remarkable. With a characteristic foresight, a characteristic absence of optimism, a characteristic sense of the moral elements in the situation, Stockmar had pointed out what were, in his opinion, the conditions essential to make the marriage a success. Albert, he wrote, was a fine young fellow, well grown for his age, with agreeable and valuable qualities; and it was probable that in a few years he would turn out a strong handsome man, of a kindly, simple, yet dignified demeanor. "Thus, externally, he possesses all that pleases the sex, and at all times and in all countries must please." Supposing, therefore, that Victoria herself was in favor of the marriage, the further question arose as to whether Albert's mental qualities were such as to fit him for the position of husband of the Queen of England. On this point, continued the Baron, one heard much to his credit; the Prince was said to be discreet and intelligent; but all such judgments were necessarily partial, and the Baron preferred to reserve his opinion until he could come to a trustworthy conclusion from personal observation. And then he added: "But all this is not enough. The young man ought to have not merely great ability, but a *right* ambition, and great force of will as well. To pursue for a lifetime a political career so arduous demands more than energy and inclination—it demands also that earnest frame of mind which is ready of its own accord to sacrifice mere pleasure to real usefulness. If he is not satisfied hereafter with the consciousness of having achieved one of the most influential positions in Europe, how often will he feel tempted to repent his adventure! If he does not from the very outset accept it as a vocation of grave responsibility, on the efficient performance of which his honor and happiness depend, there is small likelihood of his succeeding."

Such were the views of Stockmar on the qualifications necessary for the due fulfillment of that destiny which Albert's family had marked out for him; and he hoped, during the tour in Italy, to come to some conclusion as to how far the Prince possessed them. Albert on his side was much impressed by the Baron, whom he had previously seen but rarely; he also became acquainted, for the first time in his life, with a young Englishman, Lieut. Francis Seymour, who had been engaged to accompany him, whom he found *sehr liebenswurdig,* and with whom he struck up a warm friendship. He delighted in the galleries and scenery of Florence, though with Rome he was less impressed. "But for some beautiful palaces," he said, "it might just as well be any town in Germany." In an interview with Pope Gregory XVI, he took the opportunity of displaying his erudition. When the Pope observed that the Greeks had taken their art from the Etruscans, Albert replied that, on the contrary, in his opinion, they had borrowed from the Egyptians: his Holiness politely acquiesced. Wherever he went he was eager to increase his knowledge, and, at a ball in Florence, he was observed paying no attention whatever to the ladies, and deep in conversation with the learned Signor Capponi. "Voilà un prince dont nous pouvons être fiers," said the Grand Duke of Tuscany, who was standing by: "la belle danseuse l'attend, le savant l'occupe."

On his return to Germany, Stockmar's observations, imparted to King Leo-

pold, were still critical. Albert, he said, was intelligent, kind, and amiable; he was full of the best intentions and the noblest resolutions, and his judgment was in many things beyond his years. But great exertion was repugnant to him; he seemed to be too willing to spare himself, and his good resolutions too often came to nothing. It was particularly unfortunate that he took not the slightest interest in politics, and never read a newspaper. In his manners, too, there was still room for improvement. "He will always," said the Baron, "have more success with men than with women, in whose society he shows too little *empressement,* and is too indifferent and retiring." One other feature of the case was noted by the keen eye of the old physician: the Prince's constitution was not a strong one. Yet, on the whole, he was favorable to the projected marriage. But by now the chief obstacle seemed to lie in another quarter, Victoria was apparently determined to commit herself to nothing. And so it happened that when Albert went to England he had made up his mind to withdraw entirely from the affair. Nothing would induce him, he confessed to a friend, to be kept vaguely waiting; he would break it all off at once. His reception at Windsor threw an entirely new light upon the situation. The wheel of fortune turned with a sudden rapidity; and he found, in the arms of Victoria, the irrevocable assurance of his overwhelming fate.

II

He was not in love with her. Affection, gratitude, the natural reactions to the unqualified devotion of a lively young cousin who was also a queen—such feelings possessed him, but the ardors of reciprocal passion were not his. Though he found that he liked Victoria very much, what immediately interested him in his curious position was less her than himself. Dazzled and delighted, riding, dancing, singing, laughing, amid the splendors of Windsor, he was aware of a new sensation—the stirrings of ambition in his breast. His place would indeed be a high, an enviable one! And then, on the instant, came another thought. The teaching of religion, the admonitions of Stockmar, his own inmost convictions, all spoke with the same utterance. He would not be there to please himself, but for a very different purpose—to do good. He must be "noble, manly, and princely in all things," he would have "to live and to sacrifice himself for the benefit of his new country"; to "use his powers and endeavors for a great object—that of promoting the welfare of multitudes of his fellowmen." One serious thought led on to another. The wealth and the bustle of the English Court might be delightful for the moment, but, after all, it was Coburg that had his heart. "While I shall be untiring," he wrote to his grandmother, "in my efforts and labors for the country to which I shall in future belong, and where I am called to so high a position, I shall never cease *ein treuer Deutscher, Coburger, Gothaner zu sein.*" And now he must part from Coburg for ever! Sobered and sad, he sought relief in his brother Ernest's company; the two young men would shut themselves up together, and, sitting down at the pianoforte, would escape from the present and the future in the sweet familiar gayety of a Haydn duet.

They returned to Germany; and while Albert, for a few farewell months, enjoyed, for the last time, the happiness of home, Victoria, for the last time,

resumed her old life in London and Windsor. She corresponded daily with her future husband in a mingled flow of German and English; but the accustomed routine reasserted itself; the business and the pleasures of the day would brook no interruption; Lord M. was once more constantly beside her; and the Tories were as intolerable as ever. Indeed, they were more so. For now, in these final moments, the old feud burst out with redoubled fury. The impetuous sovereign found, to her chagrin, that there might be disadvantages in being the declared enemy of one of the great parties in the State. On two occasions, the Tories directly thwarted her in a matter on which she had set her heart. She wished her husband's rank to be fixed by statute, and their opposition prevented it. She wished her husband to receive a settlement from the nation of £50,000 a year; and, again owing to the Tories, he was only allowed £30,000. It was too bad. When the question was discussed in Parliament, it had been pointed out that the bulk of the population was suffering from great poverty, and that £30,000 was the whole revenue of Coburg; but her uncle Leopold had been given £50,000, and it would be monstrous to give Albert less. Sir Robert Peel—it might have been expected—had had the effrontery to speak and vote for the smaller sum. She was very angry; and determined to revenge herself by omitting to invite a single Tory to her wedding. She would make an exception in favor of old Lord Liverpool, but even the Duke of Wellington she refused to ask. When it was represented to her that it would amount to a national scandal if the Duke were absent from her wedding, she was angrier than ever. "What! That old rebel! I won't have him," she was reported to have said. Eventually she was induced to send him an invitation; but she made no attempt to conceal the bitterness of her feelings, and the Duke himself was only too well aware of all that had passed.

Nor was it only against the Tories that her irritation rose. As the time for her wedding approached, her temper grew steadily sharper and more arbitrary. Queen Adelaide annoyed her. King Leopold, too, was "ungracious" in his correspondence; "Dear Uncle," she told Albert, "is given to believe that he must rule the roost everywhere. However," she added with asperity, "that is not a necessity." Even Albert himself was not impeccable. Engulfed in Coburgs, he failed to appreciate the complexity of English affairs. There were difficulties about his household. He had a notion that he ought not to be surrounded by violent Whigs; very likely, but he would not understand that the only alternatives to violent Whigs were violent Tories; and it would be preposterous if his Lords and Gentlemen were to be found voting against the Queen's. He wanted to appoint his own Private Secretary. But how could he choose the right person? Lord M. was obviously best qualified to make the appointment; and Lord M. had decided that the Prince should take over his own Private Secretary—George Anson, a staunch Whig. Albert protested, but it was useless; Victoria simply announced that Anson was appointed, and instructed Lehzen to send the Prince an explanation of the details of the case. Then, again, he had written anxiously upon the necessity of maintaining unspotted the moral purity of the Court. Lord M.'s pupil considered that dear Albert was strait-laced, and, in a brisk Anglo-German missive, set forth her own views. "I like Lady A. very much," she told him, "only she is a little *strict and particular,* and too severe

towards others, which is not right; for I think one ought always to be indulgent towards other people, as I always think, if we had not been well taken care of, we might also have gone astray. That is always my feeling. Yet it is always right to show that one does not like to see what is obviously wrong; but it is very dangerous to be *too* severe, and I am certain that as a rule such people always greatly regret that in their youth they have not been so careful as they ought to have been. I have explained this so badly and written it so badly, that I fear you will hardly be able to make it out."

On one other matter she was insistent. Since the affair of Lady Flora Hastings, a sad fate had overtaken Sir James Clark. His flourishing practice had quite collapsed; nobody would go to him any more. But the Queen remained faithful. She would show the world how little she cared for their disapproval, and she desired Albert to make "poor Clark" his physician in ordinary. He did as he was told; but, as it turned out, the appointment was not a happy one.

The wedding-day was fixed, and it was time for Albert to tear himself away from his family and the scenes of his childhood. With an aching heart, he had revisited his beloved haunts—the woods and the valleys where he had spent so many happy hours shooting rabbits and collecting botanical specimens; in deep depression, he had sat through the farewell banquets in the Palace and listened to the *Freischütz* performed by the State band. It was time to go. The streets were packed as he drove through them; for a short space his eyes were gladdened by a sea of friendly German faces, and his ears by a gathering volume of good guttural sounds. He stopped to bid a last adieu to his grandmother. It was a heartrending moment. "Albert! Albert!" she shrieked, and fell fainting into the arms of her attendants as his carriage drove away. He was whirled rapidly to his destiny. At Calais a steamboat awaited him, and, together with his father and his brother, he stepped, dejected, on board. A little later, he was more dejected still. The crossing was a very rough one; the Duke went hurriedly below; while the two Princes, we are told, lay on either side of the cabin staircase "in an almost helpless state." At Dover a large crowd was collected on the pier, and "it was by no common effort that Prince Albert, who had continued to suffer up to the last moment, got up to bow to the people." His sense of duty triumphed. It was a curious omen: his whole life in England was foreshadowed as he landed on English ground.

Meanwhile Victoria, in growing agitation, was a prey to temper and to nerves. She grew feverish, and at last Sir James Clark pronounced that she was going to have the measles. But, once again, Sir James's diagnosis was incorrect. It was not the measles that were attacking her, but a very different malady; she was suddenly prostrated by alarm, regret, and doubt. For two years she had been her own mistress—the two happiest years, by far, of her life. And now it was all to end! She was to come under an alien domination—she would have to promise that she would honor and obey . . . some one, who might, after all, thwart her, oppose her—and how dreadful that would be! Why had she embarked on this hazardous experiment? Why had she not been contented with Lord M.? No doubt, she loved Albert; but she loved power too. At any rate, one thing was certain: she might be Albert's wife, but she would always be Queen of England. He reappeared, in an exquisite uniform, and her hesita-

tions melted in his presence like mist before the sun. On February 10, 1840, the marriage took place. The wedded pair drove down to Windsor; but they were not, of course, entirely alone. They were accompanied by their suites, and, in particular, by two persons—the Baron Stockmar and the Baroness Lehzen.

III

Albert had foreseen that his married life would not be all plain sailing; but he had by no means realized the gravity and the complication of the difficulties which he would have to face. Politically, he was a cipher. Lord Melbourne was not only Prime Minister, he was in effect the Private Secretary of the Queen, and thus controlled the whole of the political existence of the sovereign. A queen's husband was an entity unknown to the British Constitution. In State affairs there seemed to be no place for him; nor was Victoria herself at all unwilling that this should be so. "The English," she had told the Prince when, during their engagement, a proposal had been made to give him a peerage, "are very jealous of any foreigner interfering in the government of this country, and have already in some of the papers expressed a hope that you would not interfere. Now, though I know you never would, still, if you were a Peer, they would all say, the Prince meant to play a political part." "I know you never would!" In reality, she was not quite so certain; but she wished Albert to understand her views. He would, she hoped, make a perfect husband; but, as for governing the country, he would see that she and Lord M. between them could manage that very well, without his help.

But it was not only in politics that the Prince discovered that the part cut out for him was a negligible one. Even as a husband, he found, his functions were to be of an extremely limited kind. Over the whole of Victoria's private life the Baroness reigned supreme; and she had not the slightest intention of allowing that supremacy to be diminished by one iota. Since the accession, her power had greatly increased. Besides the undefined and enormous influence which she exercised through her management of the Queen's private correspondence, she was now the superintendent of the royal establishment and controlled the important office of Privy Purse. Albert very soon perceived that he was not master in his own house. Every detail of his own and his wife's existence was supervised by a third person: nothing could be done until the consent of Lehzen had first been obtained. And Victoria, who adored Lehzen with unabated intensity, saw nothing in all this that was wrong.

Nor was the Prince happier in his social surroundings. A shy young foreigner, awkward in ladies' company, unexpansive and self-opinionated, it was improbable that, in any circumstances, he would have been a society success. His appearance, too, was against him. Though in the eyes of Victoria he was the mirror of manly beauty, her subjects, whose eyes were of a less Teutonic cast, did not agree with her. To them—and particularly to the high-born ladies and gentlemen who naturally saw him most—what was immediately and distressingly striking in Albert's face and figure and whole demeanor was his un-English look. His features were regular, no doubt, but there was something smooth and smug about them; he was tall, but he was clumsily put together, and he walked with a slight slouch. Really, they thought, this youth was more

like some kind of foreign tenor than anything else. These were serious disadvantages; but the line of conduct which the Prince adopted from the first moment of his arrival was far from calculated to dispel them. Owing partly to a natural awkwardness, partly to a fear of undue familiarity, and partly to a desire to be absolutely correct, his manners were infused with an extraordinary stiffness and formality. Whenever he appeared in company, he seemed to be surrounded by a thick hedge of prickly etiquette. He never went out into ordinary society; he never walked in the streets of London; he was invariably accompanied by an equerry when he rode or drove. He wanted to be irreproachable and, if that involved friendlessness, it could not be helped. Besides, he had no very high opinion of the English. So far as he could see, they cared for nothing but fox-hunting and Sunday observances; they oscillated between an undue frivolity and an undue gloom; if you spoke to them of friendly joyousness they stared; and they did not understand either the Laws of Thought or the wit of a German University. Since it was clear that with such people he could have very little in common, there was no reason whatever for relaxing in their favor the rules of etiquette. In strict privacy, he could be natural and charming; Seymour and Anson were devoted to him, and he returned their affection; but they were subordinates—the receivers of his confidences and the agents of his will. From the support and the solace of true companionship he was utterly cut off.

A friend, indeed, he had—or rather, a mentor. The Baron, established once more in the royal residence, was determined to work with as whole-hearted a detachment for the Prince's benefit as, more than twenty years before, he had worked for his uncle's. The situations then and now, similar in many respects, were yet full of differences. Perhaps in either case the difficulties to be encountered were equally great; but the present problem was the more complex and the more interesting. The young doctor who, unknown and insignificant, had nothing at the back of him but his own wits and the friendship of an unimportant Prince, had been replaced by the accomplished confidant of kings and ministers, ripe in years, in reputation, and in the wisdom of a vast experience. It was possible for him to treat Albert with something of the affectionate authority of a father; but, on the other hand, Albert was no Leopold. As the Baron was very well aware, he had none of his uncle's rigidity of ambition, none of his over-weening impulse to be personally great. He was virtuous and well-intentioned; he was clever and well-informed; but he took no interest in politics, and there were no signs that he possessed any commanding force of character. Left to himself, he would almost certainly have subsided into a high-minded nonentity, an aimless dilettante busy over culture, a palace appendage without influence or power. But he was not left to himself: Stockmar saw to that. For ever at his pupil's elbow, the hidden Baron pushed him forward, with tireless pressure, along the path which had been trod by Leopold so many years ago. But, this time, the goal at the end of it was something more than the mediocre royalty that Leopold had reached. The prize which Stockmar, with all the energy of disinterested devotion, had determined should be Albert's was a tremendous prize indeed.

The beginning of the undertaking proved to be the most arduous part of it.

Albert was easily dispirited: what was the use of struggling to perform in a rôle which bored him and which, it was quite clear, nobody but the dear good Baron had any desire that he should take up? It was simpler, and it saved a great deal of trouble, to let things slide. But Stockmar would not have it. Incessantly, he harped upon two strings—Albert's sense of duty and his personal pride. Had the Prince forgotten the noble aims to which his life was to be devoted? And was he going to allow himself, his wife, his family, his whole existence, to be governed by Baroness Lehzen? The latter consideration was a potent one. Albert had never been accustomd to giving way; and now, more than ever before, it would be humiliating to do so. Not only was he constantly exasperated by the position of the Baroness in the royal household; there was another and a still more serious cause of complaint. He was, he knew very well, his wife's intellectual superior, and yet he found, to his intense annoyance, that there were parts of her mind over which he exercised no influence. When, urged on by the Baron, he attempted to discuss politics with Victoria, she eluded the subject, drifted into generalities, and then began to talk of something else. She was treating him as she had once treated their uncle Leopold. When at last he protested, she replied that her conduct was merely the result of indolence; that when she was with *him* she could not bear to bother her head with anything so dull as politics. The excuse was worse than the fault: was he the wife and she the husband? It almost seemed so. But the Baron declared that the root of the mischief was Lehzen: that it was she who encouraged the Queen to have secrets; who did worse—undermined the natural ingenuousness of Victoria, and induced her to give, unconsciously no doubt, false reasons to explain away her conduct.

Minor disagreements made matters worse. The royal couple differed in their tastes. Albert, brought up in a régime of Spartan simplicity and early hours, found the great Court functions intolerably wearisome, and was invariably observed to be nodding on the sofa at half-past ten; while the Queen's favorite form of enjoyment was to dance through the night, and then, going out into the portico of the Palace, watch the sun rise behind St. Paul's and the towers of Westminster. She loved London and he detested it. It was only in Windsor that he felt he could really breathe; but Windsor too had its terrors: though during the day there he could paint and walk and play on the piano, after dinner black tedium descended like a pall. He would have liked to summon distinguished scientific and literary men to his presence, and after ascertaining their views upon various points of art and learning, to set forth his own; but unfortunately Victoria "had no fancy to encourage such people"; knowing that she was unequal to taking a part in their conversation, she insisted that the evening routine should remain unaltered; the regulation interchange of platitudes with official persons was followed as usual by the round table and the books of engravings, while the Prince, with one of his attendants, played game after game of double chess.

It was only natural that in so peculiar a situation, in which the elements of power, passion, and pride were so strangely apportioned, there should have been occasionally something more than mere irritation—a struggle of angry wills. Victoria, no more than Albert, was in the habit of playing second fiddle.

Her arbitrary temper flashed out. Her vitality, her obstinacy, her overweening sense of her own position, might well have beaten down before them his superiorities and his rights. But she fought at a disadvantage; she was, in very truth, no longer her own mistress; a profound preoccupation dominated her, seizing upon her inmost purposes for its own extraordinary ends. She was madly in love. The details of those curious battles are unknown to us; but Prince Ernest, who remained in England with his brother for some months, noted them with a friendly and startled eye. One story, indeed, survives, ill-authenticated and perhaps mythical, yet summing up, as such stories often do, the central facts of the case. When, in wrath, the Prince one day had locked himself into his room, Victoria, no less furious, knocked on the door to be admitted. "Who is there?" he asked. "The Queen of England" was the answer. He did not move, and again there was a hail of knocks. The question and the answer were repeated many times; but at last there was a pause, and then a gentler knocking. "Who is there?" came once more the relentless question. But this time the reply was different. "Your wife, Albert." And the door was immediately opened.

Very gradually the Prince's position changed. He began to find the study of politics less uninteresting than he had supposed; he read Blackstone, and took lessons in English Law; he was occasionally present when the Queen interviewed her Ministers; and at Lord Melbourne's suggestion he was shown all the despatches relating to Foreign Affairs. Sometimes he would commit his views to paper, and read them aloud to the Prime Minister, who, infinitely kind and courteous, listened with attention, but seldom made any reply. An important step was taken when, before the birth of the Princess Royal, the Prince, without any opposition in Parliament, was appointed Regent in case of the death of the Queen. Stockmar, owing to whose intervention with the Tories this happy result had been brought about, now felt himself at liberty to take a holiday with his family in Coburg; but his solicitude, poured out in innumerable letters, still watched over his pupil from afar. "Dear Prince," he wrote, "I am satisfied with the news you have sent me. Mistakes, misunderstandings, obstructions, which come in vexatious opposition to one's views, are always to be taken for just what they are—namely, natural phenomena of life, which represent one of its sides, and that the shady one. In overcoming them with dignity, your mind has to exercise, to train, to enlighten itself; and your character to gain force, endurance, and the necessary hardness." The Prince had done well so far; but he must continue in the right path; above all, he was "never to relax."—"Never to relax in putting your magnanimity to the proof; never to relax in logical separation of what is great and essential from what is trivial and of no moment; never to relax in keeping yourself up to a high standard—in the determination, daily renewed, to be consistent, patient, courageous." It was a hard program, perhaps, for a young man of twenty-one; and yet there was something in it which touched the very depths of Albert's soul. He sighed, but he listened—listened as to the voice of a spiritual director inspired with divine truth. "The stars which are needful to you now," the voice continued, "and perhaps for some time to come, are *Love, Honesty, Truth.* All those whose minds are warped, or who are destitute of true feeling, will *be apt to mistake*

you, and to persuade themselves and the world that you are not the man you are—or, at least, may become. . . . Do you, therefore, be on the alert betimes, with your eyes open in every direction. . . . I wish for my Prince a great, noble, warm, and true heart, such as shall serve as the richest and surest basis for the noblest views of human nature, and the firmest resolve to give them development."

Before long, the decisive moment came. There was a General Election, and it became certain that the Tories, at last, must come into power. The Queen disliked them as much as ever; but, with a large majority in the House of Commons, they would now be in a position to insist upon their wishes being attended to. Lord Melbourne himself was the first to realize the importance of carrying out the inevitable transition with as little friction as possible; and with his consent, the Prince, following up the *rapprochement* which had begun over the Regency Act, opened, through Anson, a negotiation with Sir Robert Peel. In a series of secret interviews, a complete understanding was reached upon the difficult and complex question of the Bedchamber. It was agreed that the constitutional point should not be raised, but that on the formation of the Tory Government, the principal Whig ladies should retire, and their places be filled by others appointed by Sir Robert. Thus, in effect, though not in form, the Crown abandoned the claims of 1839, and they have never been subsequently put forward. The transaction was a turning point in the Prince's career. He had conducted an important negotiation with skill and tact; he had been brought into close and friendly relations with the new Prime Minister; it was obvious that a great political future lay before him. Victoria was much impressed and deeply grateful. "My dearest Angel," she told King Leopold, "is indeed a great comfort to me. He takes the greatest interest in what goes on, feeling with and for me, and yet abstaining as he ought from biasing me either way, though we talk much on the subject, and his judgment is, as you say, good and mild." She was in need of all the comfort and assistance he could give her. Lord M. was going; and she could hardly bring herself to speak to Peel. Yes; she would discuss everything with Albert now!

Stockmar, who had returned to England, watched the departure of Lord Melbourne with satisfaction. If all went well, the Prince should now wield a supreme political influence over Victoria. But would all go well? An unexpected development put the Baron into a serious fright. When the dreadful moment finally came, and the Queen, in anguish, bade adieu to her beloved Minister, it was settled between them that, though it would be inadvisable to meet very often, they could continue to correspond. Never were the inconsistencies of Lord Melbourne's character shown more clearly than in what followed. So long as he was in office, his attitude towards Peel had been irreproachable; he had done all he could to facilitate the change of government; he had even, through more than one channel, transmitted privately to his successful rival advice as to the best means of winning the Queen's good graces. Yet, no sooner was he in opposition than his heart failed him. He could not bear the thought of surrendering altogether the privilege and the pleasure of giving counsel to Victoria—of being cut off completely from the power and the intimacy which had been his for so long and in such abundant measure.

Though he had declared that he would be perfectly discreet in his letters, he could not resist taking advantage of the opening they afforded. He discussed in detail various public questions, and, in particular, gave the Queen a great deal of advice in the matter of appointments. This advice was followed. Lord Melbourne recommended that Lord Heytesbury, who, he said, was an able man, should be made Ambassador at Vienna; and a week later the Queen wrote to the Foreign Secretary urging that Lord Heytesbury, whom she believed to be a very able man, should be employed "on some important mission." Stockmar was very much alarmed. He wrote a memorandum, pointing out the unconstitutional nature of Lord Melbourne's proceedings and the unpleasant position in which the Queen might find herself if they were discovered by Peel; and he instructed Anson to take this memorandum to the ex-Minister. Lord Melbourne, lounging on a sofa, read it through with compressed lips. "This is quite an apple-pie opinion," he said. When Anson ventured to expostulate further, suggesting that it was unseemly in the leader of the Opposition to maintain an intimate relationship with the Sovereign, the old man lost his temper. "God eternally damn it!" he exclaimed, leaping up from his sofa, and dashing about the room. "Flesh and blood cannot stand this!" He continued to write to the Queen, as before; and two more violent bombardments from the Baron were needed before he was brought to reason. Then, gradually, his letters grew less and less frequent, with fewer and fewer references to public concerns; at last, they were entirely innocuous. The Baron smiled; Lord M. had accepted the inevitable.

The Whig Ministry resigned in September, 1841; but more than a year was to elapse before another and an equally momentous change was effected—the removal of Lehzen. For, in the end, the mysterious governess was conquered. The steps are unknown by which Victoria was at last led to accept her withdrawal with composure—perhaps with relief; but it is clear that Albert's domestic position must have been greatly strengthened by the appearance of children. The birth of the Princess Royal had been followed in November, 1841, by that of the Prince of Wales; and before very long another baby was expected. The Baroness, with all her affection, could have but a remote share in such family delights. She lost ground perceptibly. It was noticed as a phenomenon that, once or twice, when the Court traveled, she was left behind at Windsor. The Prince was very cautious; at the change of Ministry, Lord Melbourne had advised him to choose that moment for decisive action; but he judged it wiser to wait. Time and the pressure of inevitable circumstances were for him; every day his predominance grew more assured—and every night. At length he perceived that he need hesitate no longer—that every wish, every velleity of his had only to be expressed to be at once Victoria's. He spoke, and Lehzen vanished for ever. No more would she reign in that royal heart and those royal halls. No more, watching from a window at Windsor, would she follow her pupil and her sovereign walking on the terrace among the obsequious multitude, with the eye of triumphant love. Returning to her native Hanover she established herself at Buckeburg in a small but comfortable house, the walls of which were entirely covered by portraits of Her Majesty. The Baron, in spite of his dyspepsia, smiled again: Albert was supreme.

IV

The early discords had passed away completely—resolved into the absolute harmony of married life. Victoria, overcome by a new, an unimagined revelation, had surrendered her whole soul to her husband. The beauty and the charm which so suddenly had made her his at first were, she now saw, no more than but the outward manifestation of the true Albert. There was an inward beauty, an inward glory which, blind that she was, she had then but dimly apprehended, but of which now she was aware in every fiber of her being—he was good—he was great! How could she ever have dreamt of setting up her will against his wisdom, her ignorance against his knowledge, her fancies against his perfect taste? Had she really once loved London and late hours and dissipation? She who now was only happy in the country, she who jumped out of bed every morning—oh, so early!—with Albert, to take a walk, before breakfast, with Albert alone! How wonderful it was to be taught by him! To be told by him which trees were which; and to learn all about the bees! And then to sit doing cross-stitch while he read aloud to her Hallam's *Constitutional History of England!* Or to listen to him playing on his new organ ("The organ is the first of instruments," he said); or to sing to him a song by Mendelssohn, with a great deal of care over the time and the breathing, and only a very occasional false note! And, after dinner, too—oh, how good of him! He had given up his double chess! And so there could be round games at the round table, or every one could spend the evening in the most amusing way imaginable—spinning counters and rings. When the babies came it was still more wonderful. Pussy was such a clever little girl ("I am not Pussy! I am the Princess Royal!" she had angrily exclaimed on one occasion); and Bertie—well, she could only pray *most* fervently that the little Prince of Wales would grow up to "resemble his angelic dearest Father in *every, every* respect, both in body and mind." Her dear Mamma, too, had been drawn once more into the family circle, for Albert had brought about a reconciliation, and the departure of Lehzen had helped to obliterate the past. In Victoria's eyes, life had become an idyll, and, if the essential elements of an idyll are happiness, love and simplicity, an idyll it was; though, indeed, it was of a kind that might have disconcerted Theocritus. "Albert brought in dearest little Pussy," wrote Her Majesty in her journal, "in such a smart white merino dress trimmed with blue, which Mamma had given her, and a pretty cap, and placed her on my bed, seating himself next to her, and she was very dear and good. And, as my precious, invaluable Albert sat there, and our little Love between us, I felt quite moved with happiness and gratitude to God."

The past—the past of only three years since—when she looked back upon it, seemed a thing so remote and alien that she could explain it to herself in no other way than as some kind of delusion—an unfortunate mistake. Turning over an old volume of her diary, she came upon this sentence—"As for 'the confidence of the Crown,' God knows! No *Minister, no friend* EVER possessed it so entirely as this truly excellent Lord Melbourne possesses mine!" A pang shot through her—she seized a pen, and wrote upon the margin—"Reading this again, I cannot forbear remarking what an artificial sort of happiness *mine*

was *then,* and what a blessing it is I have now in my beloved Husband *real* and solid happiness, which no Politics, no worldly reverses *can* change; it could not have lasted long as it was then, for after all, kind and excellent as Lord M. is, and kind as he was to me, it was but in Society that I had amusement, and I was only living on that superficial resource, which I *then fancied* was happiness! Thank God! for *me* and others, this is changed, and I *know what* REAL *happiness* is—V. R." How did she know? What is the distinction between happiness that is real and happiness that is felt? So a philosopher—Lord M. himself perhaps—might have inquired. But she was no philosopher, and Lord M. was a phantom, and Albert was beside her, and that was enough. Happy, certainly, she was; and she wanted every one to know it. Her letters to King Leopold are sprinkled thick with raptures. "Oh! my dearest uncle, I am sure if you knew *how* happy, how blessed I feel, and how *proud* I feel in possessing *such* a perfect being as my husband . . ." such ecstasies seemed to gush from her pen unceasingly and almost of their own accord. When, one day, without thinking, Lady Lyttelton described some one to her as being "as happy as a queen," and then grew a little confused, "Don't correct yourself, Lady Lyttelton," said Her Majesty. "A queen *is* a very happy woman."

But this new happiness was no lotus dream. On the contrary, it was bracing, rather than relaxing. Never before had she felt so acutely the necessity for doing her duty. She worked more methodically than ever at the business of State; she watched over her children with untiring vigilance. She carried on a large correspondence; she was occupied with her farm—her dairy—a whole multitude of household avocations—from morning till night. Her active, eager little body hurrying with quick steps after the long strides of Albert down the corridors and avenues of Windsor, seemed the very expression of her spirit. Amid all the softness, the deliciousness of unmixed joy, all the liquescence, the overflowings of inexhaustible sentiment, her native rigidity remained. "A vein of iron," said Lady Lyttelton, who, as royal governess, had good means of observation, "runs through her most extraordinary character."

Sometimes the delightful routine of domestic existence had to be interrupted. It was necessary to exchange Windsor for Buckingham Palace, to open Parliament, or to interview official personages, or, occasionally, to entertain foreign visitors at the Castle. Then the quiet Court put on a sudden magnificence, and sovereigns from over the seas—Louis Philippe, or the King of Prussia, or the King of Saxony—found at Windsor an entertainment that was indeed a royal one. Few spectacles in Europe, it was agreed, produced an effect so imposing as the great Waterloo banqueting hall, crowded with guests in sparkling diamonds and blazing uniforms, the long walls hung with the stately portraits of heroes, and the tables loaded with the gorgeous gold plate of the kings of England. But, in that wealth of splendor, the most imposing spectacle of all was the Queen. The little *hausfrau,* who had spent the day before walking out with her children, inspecting her livestock, practicing shakes at the piano, and filling up her journal with adoring descriptions of her husband, suddenly shone forth, without art, without effort, by a spontaneous and natural transition, the very culmination of Majesty. The Tsar of Russia himself was deeply impressed. Victoria on her side viewed with secret awe the tremendous Nicholas. "A great

event and a great compliment *his* visit certainly is," she told her uncle, "and the people *here* are extremely flattered at it. He is certainly a *very striking* man; still very handsome. His profile is *beautiful,* and his manners *most* dignified and graceful; extremely civil—quite alarmingly so, as he is so full of attentions and *politeness.* But the expression of the *eyes* is *formidable,* and unlike anything I ever saw before." She and Albert and "the good King of Saxony," who happened to be there at the same time, and whom, she said, "we like much—he is *so* unassuming"—drew together like tame villatic fowl in the presence of that awful eagle. When he was gone, they compared notes about his face, his unhappiness, and his despotic power over millions. Well! She for her part could not help pitying him, and she thanked God she was Queen of England.

When the time came for returning some of these visits, the royal pair set forth in their yacht, much to Victoria's satisfaction. "I do love a ship!" she exclaimed, ran up and down ladders with the greatest agility, and cracked jokes with the sailors. The Prince was more aloof. They visited Louis Philippe at the Château d'Eu; they visited King Leopold in Brussels. It happened that a still more remarkable Englishwoman was in the Belgian capital, but she was not remarked; and Queen Victoria passed unknowing before the steady gaze of one of the mistresses in M. Héger's *pensionnat.* "A little stout, vivacious lady, very plainly dressed—not much dignity or pretension about her," was Charlotte Bronte's comment as the royal carriage and six flashed by her, making her wait on the pavement for a moment, and interrupting the train of her reflections. Victoria was in high spirits, and even succeeded in instilling a little cheerfulness into her uncle's somber Court. King Leopold, indeed, was perfectly contented. His dearest hopes had been fulfilled; all his ambitions were satisfied; and for the rest of his life he had only to enjoy, in undisturbed decorum, his throne, his respectability, the table of precedence, and the punctual discharge of his irksome duties. But unfortunately the felicity of those who surrounded him was less complete. His Court, it was murmured, was as gloomy as a conventicle, and the most dismal of all the sufferers was his wife. "Pas de plaisanteries, madame!" he had exclaimed to the unfortunate successor of the Princess Charlotte, when, in the early days of their marriage, she had attempted a feeble joke. Did she not understand that the consort of a constitutional sovereign must not be frivolous? She understood, at last, only too well; and when the startled walls of the state apartments reechoed to the chattering and the laughter of Victoria, the poor lady found that she had almost forgotten how to smile.

Another year, Germany was visited, and Albert displayed the beauties of his home. When Victoria crossed the frontier, she was much excited—and she was astonished as well. "To hear the people speak German," she noted in her diary, "and to see the German soldiers, etc., seemed to me so singular." Having recovered from this slight shock, she found the country charming. She was fêted everywhere, crowds of the surrounding royalties swooped down to welcome her, and the prettiest groups of peasant children, dressed in their best clothes, presented her with bunches of flowers. The principality of Coburg, with its romantic scenery and its well-behaved inhabitants, particularly delighted her;

and when she woke up one morning to find herself in "dear Rosenau, my Albert's birthplace," it was "like a beautiful dream." On her return home, she expatiated, in a letter to King Leopold, upon the pleasures of the trip, dwelling especially upon the intensity of her affection for Albert's native land. "I have a feeling," she said, "for our dear little Germany, which I cannot describe. I felt it at Rosenau so much. It is a something which touches me, and which goes to my heart, and makes me inclined to cry. I never felt at any other place that sort of pensive pleasure and peace which I felt there. I fear I almost like it too much."

V

The husband was not so happy as the wife. In spite of the great improvement in his situation, in spite of a growing family and the adoration of Victoria, Albert was still a stranger in a strange land, and the serenity of spiritual satisfaction was denied him. It was something, no doubt, to have dominated his immediate environment; but it was not enough; and, besides, in the very completeness of his success, there was a bitterness. Victoria idolized him; but it was understanding that he craved for, not idolatry; and how much did Victoria, filled to the brim though she was with him, understand him? How much does the bucket understand the well? He was lonely. He went to his organ and improvised with learned modulations until the sounds, swelling and subsiding through elaborate cadences, brought some solace to his heart. Then, with the elasticity of youth, he hurried off to play with the babies, or to design a new pigsty, or to read aloud the *Church History of Scotland* to Victoria, or to pirouette before her on one toe, like a ballet-dancer, with a fixed smile, to show her how she ought to behave when she appeared in public places. Thus did he amuse himself; but there was one distraction in which he did not indulge. He never flirted—no, not with the prettiest ladies of the Court. When, during their engagement, the Queen had remarked with pride to Lord Melbourne that the Prince paid no attention to any other woman, the cynic had answered, "No, that sort of thing is apt to come later"; upon which she had scolded him severely, and then hurried off to Stockmar to repeat what Lord M. had said. But the Baron had reassured her; though in other cases, he had replied, that might happen, he did not think it would in Albert's. And the Baron was right. Throughout their married life no rival female charms ever had cause to give Victoria one moment's pang of jealousy.

What more and more absorbed him—bringing with it a curious comfort of its own—was his work. With the advent of Peel, he began to intervene actively in the affairs of the State. In more ways than one—in the cast of their intelligence, in their moral earnestness, even in the uneasy formalism of their manners—the two men resembled each other; there was a sympathy between them; and thus Peel was ready enough to listen to the advice of Stockmar, and to urge the Prince forward into public life. A royal commission was about to be formed to enquire whether advantage might not be taken of the rebuilding of the Houses of Parliament to encourage the Fine Arts in the United Kingdom; and Peel, with great perspicacity, asked the Prince to preside over it. The work was of a kind which precisely suited Albert: his love of art, his love of method, his love of coming into contact—close yet dignified—with distinguished men—

it satisfied them all; and he threw himself into it *con amore*. Some of the members of the commission were somewhat alarmed when, in his opening speech, he pointed out the necessity of dividing the subjects to be considered into "categories"—the word, they thought, smacked dangerously of German metaphysics; but their confidence returned when they observed His Royal Highness's extraordinary technical acquaintance with the processes of fresco painting. When the question arose as to whether the decorations upon the walls of the new buildings should, or should not, have a moral purpose, the Prince spoke strongly for the affirmative. Although many, he observed, would give but a passing glance to the works, the painter was not therefore to forget that others might view them with more thoughtful eyes. This argument convinced the commission, and it was decided that the subjects to be depicted should be of an improving nature. The frescoes were carried out in accordance with the commission's instructions, but unfortunately before very long they had become, even to the most thoughtful eyes, totally invisible. It seems that His Royal Highness's technical acquaintance with the processes of fresco painting was incomplete.

The next task upon which the Prince embarked was a more arduous one: he determined to reform the organization of the royal household. This reform had been long overdue. For years past the confusion, discomfort, and extravagance in the royal residences, and in Buckingham Palace particularly, had been scandalous; no reform had been practicable under the rule of the Baroness; but her functions had now devolved upon the Prince, and in 1844, he boldly attacked the problem. Three years earlier, Stockmar, after careful enquiry, had revealed in an elaborate memorandum an extraordinary state of affairs. The control of the household, it appeared, was divided in the strangest manner between a number of authorities, each independent of the other, each possessed of vague and fluctuating powers, without responsibility, and without coordination. Of these authorities, the most prominent were the Lord Steward and the Lord Chamberlain—noblemen of high rank and political importance, who changed office with every administration, who did not reside with the Court, and had no effective representatives attached to it. The distribution of their respective functions was uncertain and peculiar. In Buckingham Palace, it was believed that the Lord Chamberlain had charge of the whole of the rooms, with the exception of the kitchen, sculleries, and pantries, which were claimed by the Lord Steward. At the same time, the outside of the Palace was under the control of neither of these functionaries—but of the Office of Woods and Forests; and thus, while the insides of the windows were cleaned by the Department of the Lord Chamberlain—or possibly, in certain cases, of the Lord Steward—the Office of Woods and Forests cleaned their outsides. Of the servants, the housekeepers, the pages, and the housemaids were under the authority of the Lord Chamberlain; the clerk of the kitchen, the cooks, and the porters were under that of the Lord Steward; but the footmen, the livery-porters, and the under-butlers took their orders from yet another official—the Master of the Horse. Naturally, in these circumstances the service was extremely defective and the lack of discipline among the servants disgraceful. They absented themselves for as long as they pleased and whenever the fancy took them; "and if,"

as the Baron put it, "smoking, drinking, and other irregularities occur in the dormitories, where footmen, etc., sleep ten and twelve in each room, no one can help it." As for Her Majesty's guests, there was nobody to show them to their rooms, and they were often left, having utterly lost their way in the complicated passages, to wander helpless by the hour. The strange divisions of authority extended not only to persons but to things. The Queen observed that there was never a fire in the dining-room. She enquired why. The answer was "the Lord Steward lays the fire, and the Lord Chamberlain lights it"; the underlings of those two great noblemen having failed to come to an accommodation, there was no help for it—the Queen must eat in the cold.

A surprising incident opened every one's eyes to the confusion and negligence that reigned in the Palace. A fortnight after the birth of the Princess Royal the nurse heard a suspicious noise in the room next to the Queen's bedroom. She called to one of the pages, who, looking under a large sofa, perceived there a crouching figure "with a most repulsive appearance." It was "the boy Jones." This enigmatical personage, whose escapades dominated the newspapers for several ensuing months, and whose motives and character remained to the end ambiguous, was an undersized lad of 17, the son of a tailor, who had apparently gained admittance to the Palace by climbing over the garden wall and walking in through an open window. Two years before he had paid a similar visit in the guise of a chimney-sweep. He now declared that he had spent three days in the Palace, hiding under various beds, that he had "helped himself to soup and other eatables," and that he had "sat upon the throne, seen the Queen, and heard the Princess Royal squall." Every detail of the strange affair was eagerly canvassed. *The Times* reported that the boy Jones had "from his infancy been fond of reading," but that "his countenance is exceedingly sullen." It added: "The sofa under which the boy Jones was discovered, we understand, is one of the most costly and magnificent material and workmanship, and ordered expressly for the accommodation of the royal and illustrious visitors who call to pay their respects to Her Majesty." The culprit was sent for three months to the "House of Correction." When he emerged, he immediately returned to Buckingham Palace. He was discovered, and sent back to the "House of Correction" for another three months, after which he was offered £4 a week by a music hall to appear upon the stage. He refused this offer, and shortly afterwards was found by the police loitering round Buckingham Palace. The authorities acted vigorously, and, without any trial or process of law, shipped the boy Jones off to sea. A year later his ship put into Portsmouth to refit, and he at once disembarked and walked to London. He was re-arrested before he reached the Palace, and sent back to his ship, the *Warspite*. On this occasion it was noticed that he had "much improved in personal appearance and grown quite corpulent"; and so the boy Jones passed out of history, though we catch one last glimpse of him in 1844 falling overboard in the night between Tunis and Algiers. He was fished up again; but it was conjectured—as one of the *Warspite's* officers explained in a letter to *The Times*—that his fall had not been accidental, but that he had deliberately jumped into the Mediterranean in order to "see the life-buoy light burning." Of a boy with such a record, what else could be supposed?

But discomfort and alarm were not the only results of the mismanagement of the household; the waste, extravagance, and peculation that also flowed from it were immeasurable. There were preposterous perquisites and malpractices of every kind. It was, for instance, an ancient and immutable rule that a candle that had once been lighted should never be lighted again; what happened to the old candles, nobody knew. Again, the Prince, examining the accounts, was puzzled by a weekly expenditure of thirty-five shillings on "Red Room Wine." He enquired into the matter, and after great difficulty discovered that in the time of George III a room in Windsor Castle with red hangings had once been used as a guard-room, and that five shillings a day had been allowed to provide wine for the officers. The guard had long since been moved elsewhere, but the payment for wine in the Red Room continued, the money being received by a half-pay officer who held the sinecure position of under-butler.

After much laborious investigation, and a stiff struggle with the multitude of vested interests which had been brought into being by long years of neglect, the Prince succeeded in effecting a complete reform. The various conflicting authorities were induced to resign their powers into the hands of a single official, the Master of the Household, who became responsible for the entire management of the royal palaces. Great economies were made, and the whole crowd of venerable abuses was swept away. Among others, the unlucky half-pay officer of the Red Room was, much to his surprise, given the choice of relinquishing his weekly emolument or of performing the duties of an under-butler. Even the irregularities among the footmen, etc., were greatly diminished. There were outcries and complaints; the Prince was accused of meddling, of injustice, and of saving candle-ends; but he held on his course, and before long the admirable administration of the royal household was recognized as a convincing proof of his perseverance and capacity.

At the same time his activity was increasing enormously in a more important sphere. He had become the Queen's Private Secretary, her confidential adviser, her second self. He was now always present at her interviews with Ministers. He took, like the Queen, a special interest in foreign policy; but there was no public question in which his influence was not felt. A double process was at work; while Victoria fell more and more absolutely under his intellectual predominance, he, simultaneously, grew more and more completely absorbed by the machinery of high politics—the incessant and multifarious business of a great State. Nobody any more could call him a dilettante; he was a worker, a public personage, a man of affairs. Stockmar noted the change with exultation. "The Prince," he wrote, "has improved very much lately. He has evidently a head for politics. He has become, too, far more independent. His mental activity is constantly on the increase, and he gives the greater part of his time to business, without complaining." "The relations between husband and wife," added the Baron, "are all one could desire."

Long before Peel's ministry came to an end, there had been a complete change in Victoria's attitude towards him. His appreciation of the Prince had softened her heart; the sincerity and warmth of his nature, which, in private intercourse with those whom he wished to please, had the power of gradually dissipating the awkwardness of his manners, did the rest. She came in time

to regard him with intense feelings of respect and attachment. She spoke of "our worthy Peel," for whom, she said, she had "an *extreme* admiration" and who had shown himself "a man of unbounded *loyalty, courage,* patriotism, and *high-mindedness,* and his conduct towards me has been *chivalrous* almost, I might say." She dreaded his removal from office almost as frantically as she had once dreaded that of Lord M. It would be, she declared, a *great calamity.* Six years before, what would she have said, if a prophet had told her that the day would come when she would be horrified by the triumph of the Whigs? Yet there was no escaping it; she had to face the return of her old friends. In the ministerial crises of 1845 and 1846, the Prince played a dominating part. Everybody recognized that he was the real center of the negotiations—the actual controller of the forces and the functions of the Crown. The process by which this result was reached had been so gradual as to be almost imperceptible; but it may be said with certainty that, by the close of Peel's administration, Albert had become, in effect, the King of England.

VI

With the final emergence of the Prince came the final extinction of Lord Melbourne. A year after his loss of office, he had been struck down by a paralytic seizure; he had apparently recovered, but his old elasticity had gone forever. Moody, restless, and unhappy, he wandered like a ghost about the town, bursting into soliloquies in public places, or asking odd questions, suddenly, *à propos de bottes.* "I'll be hanged if I'll do it for you, my Lord," he was heard to say in the hall at Brooks's, standing by himself, and addressing the air after much thought. "Don't you consider," he abruptly asked a fellow-guest at Lady Holland's, leaning across the dinner-table in a pause of the conversation, "that it was a most damnable act of Henri Quatre to change his religion with a view to securing the Crown?" He sat at home, brooding for hours in miserable solitude. He turned over his books—his classics and his Testaments—but they brought him no comfort at all. He longed for the return of the past, for the impossible, for he knew not what, for the devilries of Caro, for the happy platitudes of Windsor. His friends had left him, and no wonder, he said in bitterness—the fire was out. He secretly hoped for a return to power, scanning the newspapers with solicitude, and occasionally making a speech in the House of Lords. His correspondence with the Queen continued, and he appeared from time to time at Court; but he was a mere simulacrum of his former self; "the dream," wrote Victoria, "is *past.*" As for his political views, they could no longer be tolerated. The Prince was an ardent Free Trader, and so, of course, was the Queen; and when, dining at Windsor at the time of the repeal of the Corn Laws, Lord Melbourne suddenly exclaimed, "Ma'am, it's a damned dishonest act!" every one was extremely embarrassed. Her Majesty laughed and tried to change the conversation, but without avail; Lord Melbourne returned to the charge again and again with—"I say, Ma'am, it's damned dishonest!"—until the Queen said, "Lord Melbourne, I must beg you not to say anything more on this subject now"; and then he held his tongue. She was kind to him, writing him long letters, and always remembering his birthday; but it was kindness at a distance, and he knew it. He had become "poor Lord Melbourne."

A profound disquietude devoured him. He tried to fix his mind on the condition of Agriculture and the Oxford Movement. He wrote long memoranda in utterly undecipherable handwriting. He was convinced that he had lost all his money, and could not possibly afford to be a Knight of the Garter. He had run through everything, and yet—if Peel went out, he might be sent for—why not? He was never sent for. The Whigs ignored him in their consultations, and the leadership of the party passed to Lord John Russell. When Lord John became Prime Minister, there was much politeness, but Lord Melbourne was not asked to join the Cabinet. He bore the blow with perfect amenity; but he understood, at last, that that was the end.

For two years more he lingered, sinking slowly into unconsciousness and imbecility. Sometimes, propped up in his chair, he would be heard to murmur, with unexpected appositeness, the words of Samson:

> So much I feel my genial spirits droop,
> My hopes all flat, nature within me seems
> In all her functions weary of herself;
> My race of glory run, and race of shame,
> And I shall shortly be with them that rest.

A few days before his death, Victoria, learning that there was no hope of his recovery, turned her mind for a little towards that which had once been Lord M. "You will grieve to hear," she told King Leopold, "that our good, dear, old friend Melbourne is dying. . . . One cannot forget how good and kind and amiable he was, and it brings back so many recollections to my mind, though, God knows! I never wish that time back again."

She was in little danger. The tide of circumstance was flowing now with irresistible fullness towards a very different consummation. The seriousness of Albert, the claims of her children, her own inmost inclinations, and the movement of the whole surrounding world, combined to urge her forward along the narrow way of public and domestic duty. Her family steadily increased. Within eighteen months of the birth of the Prince of Wales the Princess Alice appeared, and a year later the Prince Alfred, and then the Princess Helena, and, two years afterwards, the Princess Louise; and still there were signs that the pretty row of royal infants was not complete. The parents, more and more involved in family cares and family happiness, found the pomp of Windsor galling, and longed for some more intimate and remote retreat. On the advice of Peel they purchased the estate of Osborne, in the Isle of Wight. Their skill and economy in financial matters had enabled them to lay aside a substantial sum of money; and they could afford, out of their savings, not merely to buy the property but to build a new house for themselves and to furnish it at a cost of £200,000. At Osborne, by the sea-shore, and among the woods, which Albert, with memories of Rosenau in his mind, had so carefully planted, the royal family spent every hour that could be snatched from Windsor and London—delightful hours of deep retirement and peaceful work. The public looked on with approval. A few aristocrats might sniff or titter; but with the nation at large the Queen was now once more extremely popular. The middle-classes, in particular, were pleased. They liked a love-match; they liked a household

which combined the advantages of royalty and virtue, and in which they seemed to see, reflected as in some resplendent looking-glass, the ideal image of the very lives they led themselves. Their own existences, less exalted, but oh! so soothingly similar, acquired an added excellence, an added succulence, from the early hours, the regularity, the plain tuckers, the round games, the roast beef and Yorkshire pudding of Osborne. It was indeed a model Court. Not only were its central personages the patterns of propriety, but no breath of scandal, no shadow of indecorum, might approach its utmost boundaries. For Victoria, with all the zeal of a convert, upheld now the standard of moral purity with an inflexibility surpassing, if that were possible, Albert's own. She blushed to think how she had once believed—how she had once actually told *him*—that one might be too strict and particular in such matters, and that one ought to be indulgent towards other people's dreadful sins. But she was no longer Lord M.'s pupil: she was Albert's wife. She was more—the embodiment, the living apex of a new era in the generations of mankind. The last vestige of the eighteenth century had disappeared; cynicism and subtlety were shriveled into powder; and duty, industry, morality, and domesticity triumphed over them. Even the very chairs and tables had assumed, with a singular responsiveness, the forms of prim solidity. The Victorian Age was in full swing.

VII

Only one thing more was needed: material expression must be given to the new ideals and the new forces so that they might stand revealed, in visible glory, before the eyes of an astonished world. It was for Albert to supply this want. He mused, and was inspired: the Great Exhibition came into his head.

Without consulting any one, he thought out the details of his conception with the minutest care. There had been exhibitions before in the world, but this should surpass them all. It should contain specimens of what every country could produce in raw materials, in machinery and mechanical inventions, in manufactures, and in the applied and plastic arts. It should not be merely useful and ornamental; it should teach a high moral lesson. It should be an international monument to those supreme blessings of civilization—peace, progress, and prosperity. For some time past the Prince had been devoting much of his attention to the problems of commerce and industry. He had a taste for machinery of every kind, and his sharp eye had more than once detected, with the precision of an expert, a missing cog-wheel in some vast and complicated engine. A visit to Liverpool, where he opened the Albert Dock, impressed upon his mind the immensity of modern industrial forces, though in a letter to Victoria describing his experiences, he was careful to retain his customary lightness of touch. "As I write," he playfully remarked, "you will be making your evening toilette, and not be ready in time for dinner. I must set about the same task, and not, let me hope, with the same result. . . . The loyalty and enthusiasm of the inhabitants are great; but the heat is greater still. I am satisfied that if the population of Liverpool had been weighed this morning, and were to be weighed again now, they would be found many degrees lighter. The docks are wonderful, and the mass of shipping incredible." In art and science he had been deeply interested since boyhood; his reform of the house-

hold had put his talent for organization beyond a doubt; and thus from every point of view the Prince was well qualified for his task. Having matured his plans, he summoned a small committee and laid an outline of his scheme before it. The committee approved, and the great undertaking was set on foot without delay.

Two years, however, passed before it was completed. For two years the Prince labored with extraordinary and incessant energy. At first all went smoothly. The leading manufacturers warmly took up the idea; the colonies and the East India Company were sympathetic; the great foreign nations were eager to send in their contributions; the powerful support of Sir Robert Peel was obtained, and the use of a site in Hyde Park, selected by the Prince, was sanctioned by the Government. Out of 234 plans for the exhibition building, the Prince chose that of Joseph Paxton, famous as a designer of gigantic conservatories; and the work was on the point of being put in hand when a series of unexpected difficulties arose. Opposition to the whole scheme, which had long been smoldering in various quarters, suddenly burst forth. There was an outcry, headed by *The Times,* against the use of the Park for the exhibition; for a moment it seemed as if the building would be relegated to a suburb; but, after a fierce debate in the House, the supporters of the site in the Park won the day. Then it appeared that the project lacked a sufficient financial backing; but this obstacle, too, was surmounted, and eventually £200,000 was subscribed as a guarantee fund. The enormous glass edifice rose higher and higher, covering acres and enclosing towering elm trees beneath its roof: and then the fury of its enemies reached a climax. The fashionable, the cautious, the Protectionists, the pious, all joined in the hue and cry. It was pointed out that the Exhibition would serve as a rallying point for all the ruffians in England, for all the malcontents in Europe; and that on the day of its opening there would certainly be a riot and probably a revolution. It was asserted that the glass roof was porous, and that the droppings of fifty million sparrows would utterly destroy every object beneath it. Agitated nonconformists declared that the Exhibition was an arrogant and wicked enterprise which would infallibly bring down God's punishment upon the nation. Colonel Sibthorpe, in the debate on the Address, prayed that hail and lightning might descend from heaven on the accursed thing. The Prince, with unyielding perseverance and infinite patience, pressed on to his goal. His health was seriously affected; he suffered from constant sleeplessness; his strength was almost worn out. But he remembered the injunctions of Stockmar and never relaxed. The volume of his labors grew more prodigious every day; he toiled at committees, presided over public meetings, made speeches, and carried on communications with every corner of the civilized world—and his efforts were rewarded. On May 1, 1851, the Great Exhibition was opened by the Queen before an enormous concourse of persons, amid scenes of dazzling brilliancy and triumphant enthusiasm.

Victoria herself, was in a state of excitement which bordered on delirium. She performed her duties in a trance of joy, gratitude, and amazement, and, when it was all over, her feelings poured themselves out into her journal in a torrential flood. The day had been nothing but an endless succession of glories—or rather one vast glory—one vast radiation of Albert. Everything she

had seen, everything she had felt or heard, had been so beautiful, so wonderful that even the royal underlinings broke down under the burden of emphasis, while her remembering pen rushed on, regardless, from splendor to splendor—the huge crowds, so well-behaved and loyal—flags of all the nations floating—the inside of the building, so immense, with myriads of people and the sun shining through the roof—a little side room, where we left our shawls—palm-trees and machinery—dear Albert—the place so big that we could hardly hear the organ—thankfulness to God—a curious assemblage of political and distinguished men—the March from *Athalie*—God bless my dearest Albert, God bless my dearest country!—a glass fountain—the Duke and Lord Anglesey walking arm in arm—a beautiful Amazon, in bronze, by Kiss—Mr. Paxton, who might be justly proud, and rose from being a common gardener's boy—Sir George Grey in tears, and everybody astonished and delighted.

A striking incident occurred when, after a short prayer by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the choir of 600 voices burst into the "Hallelujah Chorus." At that moment a Chinaman, dressed in full national costume, stepped out into the middle of the central nave, and, advancing slowly towards the royal group, did obeisance to Her Majesty. The Queen, much impressed, had no doubt that he was an eminent mandarin; and, when the final procession was formed, orders were given that, as no representative of the Celestial Empire was present, he should be included in the diplomatic cortège. He accordingly, with the utmost gravity, followed immediately behind the Ambassadors. He subsequently disappeared, and it was rumored, among ill-natured people, that, far from being a mandarin, the fellow was a mere impostor. But nobody ever really discovered the nature of the comments that had been lurking behind the matchless impassivity of that yellow face.

A few days later Victoria poured out her heart to her uncle. The first of May, she said, was "the *greatest* day in our history, the most *beautiful* and *imposing* and *touching* spectacle ever seen, and the triumph of my beloved Albert. . . . It was the *happiest, proudest* day in my life, and I can think of nothing else. Albert's dearest name is immortalized with this *great* conception, *his* own, and my *own* dear country *showed* she was *worthy* of it. The triumph is *immense*."

It was. The enthusiasm was universal; even the bitterest scoffers were converted, and joined in the chorus of praise. Congratulations from public bodies poured in; the City of Paris gave a great *fête* to the Exhibition committee; and the Queen and the Prince made a triumphal progress through the North of England. The financial results were equally remarkable. The total profit made by the Exhibition amounted to a sum of £165,000, which was employed in the purchase of land for the erection of a permanent National Museum in South Kensington. During the six months of its existence in Hyde Park over six million persons visited it, and not a single accident occurred. But there is an end to all things; and the time had come for the Crystal Palace to be removed to the salubrious seclusion of Sydenham. Victoria, sad but resigned, paid her final visit. "It looked so beautiful," she said. "I could not believe it was the last time I was to see it. An organ, accompanied by a fine and powerful wind instrument called the sommerophone, was being played, and it nearly upset me. The canvas is very dirty, the red curtains are faded and many things are very much soiled,

still the effect is fresh and new as ever and most beautiful. The glass fountain was already removed . . . and the sappers and miners were rolling about the little boxes just as they did at the beginning. It made us all very melancholy." But more cheerful thoughts followed. When all was over, she expressed her boundless satisfaction in a dithyrambic letter to the Prime Minister. Her beloved husband's name, she said, was for ever immortalized, and that this was universally recognized by the country was a source to her of immense happiness and gratitude. "She feels grateful to Providence," Her Majesty concluded, "to have permitted her to be united to so great, so noble, so excellent a Prince, and this year will ever remain the proudest and happiest of her life. The day of the closing of the Exhibition (which the Queen regretted much she could not witness) was the twelfth anniversary of her betrothal to the Prince, which is a curious coincidence."

V. LORD PALMERSTON

IN 1851 the Prince's fortunes reached their high-water mark. The success of the Great Exhibition enormously increased his reputation and seemed to assure him henceforward a leading place in the national life. But before the year was out another triumph, in a very different sphere of action, was also his. This triumph, big with fateful consequences, was itself the outcome of a series of complicated circumstances which had been gathering to a climax for many years.

The unpopularity of Albert in high society had not diminished with time. Aristocratic persons continued to regard him with disfavor; and he, on his side, withdrew further and further into a contemptuous reserve. For a moment, indeed, it appeared as if the dislike of the upper classes was about to be suddenly converted into cordiality; for they learnt with amazement that the Prince, during a country visit, had ridden to hounds and acquitted himself remarkably well. They had always taken it for granted that his horsemanship was of some second-rate foreign quality, and here he was jumping five-barred gates and tearing after the fox as if he had been born and bred in Leicestershire. They could hardly believe it; was it possible that they had made a mistake, and that Albert was a good fellow after all? Had he wished to be thought so he would certainly have seized this opportunity, purchased several hunters, and used them constantly. But he had no such desire; hunting bored him, and made Victoria nervous. He continued, as before, to ride, as he himself put it, for exercise or convenience, not for amusement; and it was agreed that though the Prince, no doubt, could keep in his saddle well enough, he was no sportsman.

This was a serious matter. It was not merely that Albert was laughed at by fine ladies and sneered at by fine gentlemen; it was not merely that Victoria, who before her marriage had cut some figure in society, had, under her husband's influence, almost completely given it up. Since Charles the Second the sovereigns of England had, with a single exception, always been unfashionable; and the fact that the exception was George the Fourth seemed to give an added significance to the rule. What was grave was not the lack of fashion, but the lack of other and more important qualities. The hostility of the upper classes

was symptomatic of an antagonism more profound than one of manners or even of tastes. The Prince, in a word, was un-English. What that word precisely meant it was difficult to say; but the fact was patent to every eye. Lord Palmerston, also, was not fashionable; the great Whig aristocrats looked askance at him, and only tolerated him as an unpleasant necessity thrust upon them by fate. But Lord Palmerston was English through and through; there was something in him that expressed, with extraordinary vigor, the fundamental qualities of the English race. And he was the very antithesis of the Prince. By a curious chance it so happened that this typical Englishman was brought into closer contact than any other of his countrymen with the alien from over the sea. It thus fell out that differences which, in more fortunate circumstances, might have been smoothed away and obliterated, became accentuated to the highest pitch. All the mysterious forces in Albert's soul leapt out to do battle with his adversary, and, in the long and violent conflict that followed, it almost seemed as if he was struggling with England herself.

Palmerston's whole life had been spent in the government of the country. At twenty-two he had been a Minister; at twenty-five he had been offered the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, which, with that prudence which formed so unexpected a part of his character, he had declined to accept. His first spell of office had lasted uninterruptedly for twenty-one years. When Lord Grey came into power he received the Foreign Secretaryship, a post which he continued to occupy, with two intervals, for another twenty-one years. Throughout this period his reputation with the public had steadily grown, and when, in 1846, he became Foreign Secretary for the third time, his position in the country was almost, if not quite, on an equality with that of the Prime Minister, Lord John Russell. He was a tall, big man of sixty-two, with a jaunty air, a large face, dyed whiskers, and a long sardonic upper lip. His private life was far from respectable, but he had greatly strengthened his position in society by marrying, late in life, Lady Cowper, the sister of Lord Melbourne, and one of the most influential of the Whig hostesses. Powerful, experienced, and supremely self-confident, he naturally paid very little attention to Albert. Why should he? The Prince was interested in foreign affairs? Very well, then; let the Prince pay attention to *him*—to him, who had been a Cabinet Minister when Albert was in the cradle, who was the chosen leader of a great nation, and who had never failed in anything he had undertaken in the whole course of his life. Not that he wanted the Prince's attention—far from it: so far as he could see, Albert was merely a young foreigner, who suffered from having no vices, and whose only claim to distinction was that he had happened to marry the Queen of England. This estimate, as he found out to his cost, was a mistaken one. Albert was by no means insignificant, and, behind Albert, there was another figure by no means insignificant either—there was Stockmar.

But Palmerston, busy with his plans, his ambitions, and the management of a great department, brushed all such considerations on one side; it was his favorite method of action. He lived by instinct—by a quick eye and a strong hand, a dexterous management of every crisis as it arose, a half-unconscious sense of the vital elements in a situation. He was very bold; and nothing gave him more exhilaration than to steer the ship of state in a high wind, on a rough

sea, with every stitch of canvas on her that she could carry. But there is a point beyond which boldness becomes rashness—a point perceptible only to intuition and not to reason; and beyond that point Palmerston never went. When he saw that the case demanded it, he could go slow—very slow indeed; in fact, his whole career, so full of vigorous adventure, was nevertheless a masterly example of the proverb, "tout vient à point à qui sait attendre." But when he decided to go quick, nobody went quicker. One day, returning from Osborne, he found that he had missed the train to London; he ordered a special, but the station-master told him that to put a special train upon the line at that time of day would be dangerous, and he could not allow it. Palmerston insisted, declaring that he had important business in London, which could not wait. The station-master, supported by all the officials, continued to demur; the company, he said, could not possibly take the responsibility. "On *my* responsibility, then!" said Palmerston, in his off-hand, peremptory way; whereupon the station-master ordered up the train, and the Foreign Secretary reached London in time for his work, without an accident. The story is typical of the happy valiance with which he conducted both his own affairs and those of the nation. "England," he used to say, "is strong enough to brave consequences." Apparently, under Palmerston's guidance, she was. While the officials protested and shook in their shoes, he would wave them away with his airy "*My* responsibility!" and carry the country swiftly along the line of his choice, to a triumphant destination,—without an accident. His immense popularity was the result partly of his diplomatic successes, partly of his extraordinary personal affability, but chiefly of the genuine intensity with which he responded to the feelings and supported the interests of his countrymen. The public knew that it had in Lord Palmerston not only a high-mettled master, but also a devoted servant—that he was, in every sense of the word, a public man. When he was Prime Minister, he noticed that iron hurdles had been put up on the grass in the Green Park; he immediately wrote to the Minister responsible, ordering, in the severest language, their instant removal, declaring that they were "an intolerable nuisance," and that the purpose of the grass was "to be walked upon freely and without restraint by the people, old and young, for whose enjoyment the parks are maintained." It was in this spirit that, as Foreign Secretary, he watched over the interests of Englishmen abroad. Nothing could be more agreeable for Englishmen; but foreign governments were less pleased. They found Lord Palmerston interfering, exasperating, and alarming. In Paris they spoke with bated breath of "ce terrible milord Palmerston"; and in Germany they made a little song about him—

Hat der Teufel einen Sohn,
So ist er sicher Palmerston.

But their complaints, their threats, and their agitations were all in vain. Palmerston, with his upper lip sardonically curving, braved consequences, and held on his course.

The first diplomatic crisis which arose after his return to office, though the Prince and the Queen were closely concerned with it, passed off without serious disagreement between the Court and the Minister. For some years past a

curious problem had been perplexing the chanceries of Europe. Spain, ever since the time of Napoleon a prey to civil convulsions, had settled down for a short interval to a state of comparative quiet under the rule of Christina, the Queen Mother, and her daughter Isabella, the young Queen. In 1846, the question of Isabella's marriage, which had for long been the subject of diplomatic speculations, suddenly became acute. Various candidates for her hand were proposed—among others, two cousins of her own, another Spanish prince, and Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, a first cousin of Victoria's and Albert's; for different reasons, however, none of these young men seemed altogether satisfactory. Isabella was not yet sixteen; and it might have been supposed that her marriage could be put off for a few years more; but this was considered to be out of the question. "Vous ne savez pas," said a high authority, "ce que c'est que ces princesses espagnoles; elles ont le diable au corps, et on a toujours dit que si nous ne nous hâtions pas, l'héritier viendrait avant le mari." It might also have been supposed that the young Queen's marriage was a matter to be settled by herself, her mother, and the Spanish Government; but this again was far from being the case. It had become, by one of those periodical reversions to the ways of the eighteenth century, which, it is rumored, are still not unknown in diplomacy, a question of dominating importance in the foreign policies both of France and England. For several years, Louis Philippe and his Prime Minister Guizot had been privately maturing a very subtle plan. It was the object of the French King to repeat the glorious *coup* of Louis XIV, and to abolish the Pyrenees by placing one of his grandsons on the throne of Spain. In order to bring this about, he did not venture to suggest that his younger son, the Duc de Montpensier, should marry Isabella; that would have been too obvious a move, which would have raised immediate and insurmountable opposition. He therefore proposed that Isabella should marry her cousin, the Duke of Cadiz, while Montpensier married Isabella's younger sister, the Infanta Fernanda; and pray, what possible objection could there be to that? The wily old King whispered into the chaste ears of Guizot the key to the secret; he had good reason to believe that the Duke of Cadiz was incapable of having children, and therefore the offspring of Fernanda would inherit the Spanish crown. Guizot rubbed his hands, and began at once to set the necessary springs in motion; but, of course, the whole scheme was very soon divulged and understood. The English Government took an extremely serious view of the matter; the balance of power was clearly at stake, and the French intrigue must be frustrated at all hazards. A diplomatic struggle of great intensity followed; and it occasionally appeared that a second War of the Spanish Succession was about to break out. This was avoided, but the consequences of this strange imbroglio were far-reaching and completely different from what any of the parties concerned could have guessed.

In the course of the long and intricate negotiations there was one point upon which Louis Philippe laid a special stress—the candidature of Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg. The prospect of a marriage between a Coburg Prince and the Queen of Spain was, he declared, at least as threatening to the balance of power in Europe as that of a marriage between the Duc de Montpensier and the Infanta; and, indeed, there was much to be said for this contention. The

ruin which had fallen upon the House of Coburg during the Napoleonic wars had apparently only served to multiply its vitality, for that princely family had by now extended itself over Europe in an extraordinary manner. King Leopold was firmly fixed in Belgium; his niece was Queen of England; one of his nephews was the husband of the Queen of England, and another the husband of the Queen of Portugal; yet another was Duke of Wurttemberg. Where was this to end? There seemed to be a Coburg Trust ready to send out one of its members at any moment to fill up any vacant place among the ruling families of Europe. And even beyond Europe there were signs of this infection spreading. An American who had arrived in Brussels had assured King Leopold that there was a strong feeling in the United States in favor of monarchy instead of the misrule of mobs, and had suggested, to the delight of His Majesty, that some branch of the Coburg family might be available for the position. That danger might, perhaps, be remote; but the Spanish danger was close at hand; and if Prince Leopold were to marry Queen Isabella the position of France would be one of humiliation, if not of positive danger. Such were the asseverations of Louis Philippe. The English Government had no wish to support Prince Leopold, and though Albert and Victoria had some hankerings for the match, the wisdom of Stockmar had induced them to give up all thoughts of it. The way thus seemed open for a settlement: England would be reasonable about Leopold, if France would be reasonable about Montpensier. At the Château d'Eu, the agreement was made, in a series of conversations between the King and Guizot on the one side, and the Queen, the Prince, and Lord Aberdeen on the other. Aberdeen, as Foreign Minister, declared that England would neither recognize nor support Prince Leopold as a candidate for the hand of the Queen of Spain; while Louis Philippe solemnly promised, both to Aberdeen and to Victoria, that the Duc de Montpensier should not marry the Infanta Fernanda until after the Queen was married and had issue. All went well, and the crisis seemed to be over, when the whole question was suddenly re-opened by Palmerston, who had succeeded Aberdeen at the Foreign Office. In a despatch to the English Minister at Madrid, he mentioned, in a list of possible candidates for Queen Isabella's hand, Prince Leopold of Coburg; and at the same time he took occasion to denounce in violent language the tyranny and incompetence of the Spanish Government. This despatch, indiscreet in any case, was rendered infinitely more so by being communicated to Guizot. Louis Philippe saw his opportunity and pounced on it. Though there was nothing in Palmerston's language to show that he either recognized or supported Prince Leopold, the King at once assumed that the English had broken their engagement, and that he was therefore free to do likewise. He then sent the despatch to the Queen Mother, declared that the English were intriguing for the Coburg marriage, bade her mark the animosity of Palmerston against the Spanish Government, and urged her to escape from her difficulties and ensure the friendship of France by marrying Isabella to the Duke of Cadiz and Fernanda to Montpensier. The Queen Mother, alarmed and furious, was easily convinced. There was only one difficulty: Isabella loathed the very sight of her cousin. But this was soon surmounted; there was a wild supper-party at the Palace, and in the course of it the young girl was induced

to consent to anything that was asked of her. Shortly after, and on the same day, both the marriages took place.

The news burst like a bomb on the English Government, who saw with rage and mortification that they had been completely outmaneuvered by the crafty King. Victoria, in particular, was outraged. Not only had she been the personal recipient of Louis Philippe's pledge, but he had won his way to her heart by presenting the Prince of Wales with a box of soldiers and sending the Princess Royal a beautiful Parisian doll with eyes that opened and shut. And now insult was added to injury. The Queen of the French wrote her a formal letter, calmly announcing, as a family event in which she was sure Victoria would be interested, the marriage of her son, Montpensier—"qui ajoutera à notre bonheur intérieur, le seul vrai dans ce monde, et que vous, madame, savez si bien apprécier." But the English Queen had not long to wait for her revenge. Within eighteen months the monarchy of Louis Philippe, discredited, unpopular, and fatally weakened by the withdrawal of English support, was swept into limbo, while he and his family threw themselves as suppliant fugitives at the feet of Victoria.

II

In this affair both the Queen and the Prince had been too much occupied with the delinquencies of Louis Philippe to have any wrath to spare for those of Palmerston; and, indeed, on the main issue, Palmerston's attitude and their own had been in complete agreement. But in this the case was unique. In every other foreign complication—and they were many and serious—during the ensuing years, the differences between the royal couple and the Foreign Secretary were constant and profound. There was a sharp quarrel over Portugal, where violently hostile parties were flying at each other's throats. The royal sympathy was naturally enlisted on behalf of the Queen and her Coburg husband, while Palmerston gave his support to the progressive elements in the country. It was not until 1848, however, that the strain became really serious. In that year of revolutions, when, in all directions and with alarming frequency, crowns kept rolling off royal heads, Albert and Victoria were appalled to find that the policy of England was persistently directed—in Germany, in Switzerland, in Austria, in Italy, in Sicily—so as to favor the insurgent forces. The situation, indeed, was just such an one as the soul of Palmerston loved. There was danger and excitement, the necessity of decision, the opportunity for action, on every hand. A disciple of Canning, with an English gentleman's contempt and dislike of foreign potentates deep in his heart, the spectacle of the popular uprisings, and of the oppressors bundled ignominiously out of the palaces they had disgraced, gave him unbounded pleasure, and he was determined that there should be no doubt whatever, all over the Continent, on which side in the great struggle England stood. It was not that he had the slightest tincture in him of philosophical radicalism; he had no philosophical tinctures of any kind; he was quite content to be inconsistent—to be a Conservative at home and a Liberal abroad. There were very good reasons for keeping the Irish in their places; but what had that to do with it? The point was this—when any decent man read an account of the political prisons in Naples his gorge rose. He did not want war; but he saw that without war a skillful and determined use of England's power might do much to further

the cause of the Liberals in Europe. It was a difficult and a hazardous game to play, but he set about playing it with delighted alacrity. And then, to his intense annoyance, just as he needed all his nerve and all possible freedom of action, he found himself being hampered and distracted at every turn by . . . those people at Osborne. He saw what it was; the opposition was systematic and informed, and the Queen alone would have been incapable of it; the Prince was at the bottom of the whole thing. It was exceedingly vexatious; but Palmerston was in a hurry, and could not wait; the Prince, if he would insist upon interfering, must be brushed on one side.

Albert was very angry. He highly disapproved both of Palmerston's policy and of his methods of action. He was opposed to absolutism; but in his opinion Palmerston's proceedings were simply calculated to substitute for absolutism, all over Europe, something no better and very possibly worse—the anarchy of faction and mob violence. The dangers of this revolutionary ferment were grave; even in England Chartism was rampant—a sinister movement, which might at any moment upset the Constitution and abolish the Monarchy. Surely, with such dangers at home, this was a very bad time to choose for encouraging lawlessness abroad. He naturally took a particular interest in Germany. His instincts, his affections, his prepossessions, were ineradicably German; Stockmar was deeply involved in German politics; and he had a multitude of relatives among the ruling German families, who, from the midst of the hurly-burly of revolution, wrote him long and agitated letters once a week. Having considered the question of Germany's future from every point of view, he came to the conclusion, under Stockmar's guidance, that the great aim for every lover of Germany should be her unification under the sovereignty of Prussia. The intricacy of the situation was extreme, and the possibilities of good or evil which every hour might bring forth were incalculable; yet he saw with horror that Palmerston neither understood nor cared to understand the niceties of this momentous problem, but rushed on blindly, dealing blows to right and left, quite—so far as he could see—without system, and even without motive—except, indeed, a totally unreasonable distrust of the Prussian State.

But his disagreement with the details of Palmerston's policy was in reality merely a symptom of the fundamental differences between the characters of the two men. In Albert's eyes Palmerston was a coarse, reckless egotist, whose combined arrogance and ignorance must inevitably have their issue in folly and disaster. Nothing could be more antipathetic to him than a mind so strangely lacking in patience, in reflection, in principle, and in the habits of ratiocination. For to him it was intolerable to think in a hurry, to jump to slapdash decisions, to act on instincts that could not be explained. Everything must be done in due order, with careful premeditation; the premises of the position must first be firmly established; and he must reach the correct conclusion by a regular series of rational steps. In complicated questions—and what questions, rightly looked at, were not complicated?—to commit one's thoughts to paper was the wisest course, and it was the course which Albert, laborious thought it might be, invariably adopted. It was as well, too, to draw up a reasoned statement after an event, as well as before it; and accordingly, whatever happened, it was always found that the Prince had made a memorandum. On

one occasion he reduced to six pages of foolscap the substance of a confidential conversation with Sir Robert Peel, and, having read them aloud to him, asked him to append his signature; Sir Robert, who never liked to commit himself, became extremely uneasy; upon which the Prince, understanding that it was necessary to humor the singular susceptibilities of Englishmen, with great tact dropped that particular memorandum into the fire. But as for Palmerston, he never even gave one so much as a chance to read him a memorandum; he positively seemed to dislike discussion; and, before one knew where one was, without any warning whatever, he would plunge into some hare-brained, violent project, which, as likely as not, would logically involve a European war. Closely connected, too, with this cautious, painstaking reasonableness of Albert's, was his desire to examine questions thoroughly from every point of view, to go down to the roots of things, and to act in strict accordance with some well-defined principle. Under Stockmar's tutelage he was constantly engaged in enlarging his outlook and in endeavoring to envisage vital problems both theoretically and practically—both with precision and with depth. To one whose mind was thus habitually occupied, the empirical activities of Palmerston, who had no notion what a principle meant, resembled the incoherent vagaries of a tiresome child. What did Palmerston know of economics, of science, of history? What did he care for morality and education? How much consideration had he devoted in the whole course of his life to the improvement of the condition of the working-classes and to the general amelioration of the human race? The answers to such questions were all too obvious; and yet it is easy to imagine, also, what might have been Palmerston's jaunty comment. "Ah! your Royal Highness is busy with fine schemes and beneficent calculations—exactly! Well, as for me, I must say I'm quite satisfied with my morning's work—I've had the iron hurdles taken out of the Green Park."

The exasperating man, however, preferred to make no comment, and to proceed in smiling silence on his inexcusable way. The process of "brushing on one side" very soon came into operation. Important Foreign Office despatches were either submitted to the Queen so late that there was no time to correct them, or they were not submitted to her at all; or, having been submitted, and some passage in them being objected to and an alteration suggested, they were after all sent off in their original form. The Queen complained, the Prince complained; both complained together. It was quite useless. Palmerston was most apologetic—could not understand how it had occurred—must give the clerks a wigging—certainly Her Majesty's wishes should be attended to, and such a thing should never happen again. But, of course, it very soon happened again, and the royal remonstrances redoubled. Victoria, her partisan passions thoroughly aroused, imported into her protests a personal vehemence which those of Albert lacked. Did Lord Palmerston forget that she was Queen of England? How could she tolerate a state of affairs in which despatches written in her name were sent abroad without her approval or even her knowledge? What could be more derogatory to her position than to be obliged to receive indignant letters from the crowned heads to whom those despatches were addressed—letters which she did not know how to answer, since she so thoroughly agreed with them? She addressed herself

to the Prime Minister. "No remonstrance has any effect with Lord Palmerston," she said. "Lord Palmerston," she told him on another occasion, "has as usual pretended not to have had time to submit the draft to the Queen before he had sent it off." She summoned Lord John to her presence, poured out her indignation, and afterwards, on the advice of Albert, noted down what had passed in a memorandum: "I said that I thought that Lord Palmerston often endangered the honor of England by taking a very prejudiced and one-sided view of a question; that his writings were always as bitter as gall and did great harm, which Lord John entirely assented to, and that I often felt quite ill from anxiety." Then she turned to her uncle. "The state of Germany," she wrote in a comprehensive and despairing review of the European situation, "is dreadful, and one does feel quite ashamed about that once really so peaceful and happy country. That there are still good people there I am sure, but they allow themselves to be worked upon in a frightful and shameful way. In France a crisis seems at hand. *What* a very bad figure we cut in this mediation! Really it is quite immoral, with Ireland quivering in our grasp and ready to throw off her allegiance at any moment, for us to force Austria to give up her lawful possessions. What shall we say if Canada, Malta, etc., begin to trouble us? It hurts me terribly." But what did Lord Palmerston care?

Lord John's position grew more and more irksome. He did not approve of his colleague's treatment of the Queen. When he begged him to be more careful, he was met with the reply that 28,000 despatches passed through the Foreign Office in a single year, that, if every one of these were to be subjected to the royal criticism, the delay would be most serious, that, as it was, the waste of time and the worry involved in submitting drafts to the meticulous examination of Prince Albert was almost too much for an overworked Minister, and that, as a matter of fact, the postponement of important decisions owing to this cause had already produced very unpleasant diplomatic consequences. These excuses would have impressed Lord John more favorably if he had not himself had to suffer from a similar neglect. As often as not Palmerston failed to communicate even to him the most important despatches. The Foreign Secretary was becoming an almost independent power, acting on his own initiative, and swaying the policy of England on his own responsibility. On one occasion, in 1847, he had actually been upon the point of threatening to break off diplomatic relations with France without consulting either the Cabinet or the Prime Minister. And such incidents were constantly recurring. When this became known to the Prince, he saw that his opportunity had come. If he could only drive in to the utmost the wedge between the two statesmen, if he could only secure the alliance of Lord John, then the suppression or the removal of Lord Palmerston would be almost certain to follow. He set about the business with all the pertinacity of his nature. Both he and the Queen put every kind of pressure upon the Prime Minister. They wrote, they harangued, they relapsed into awful silence. It occurred to them that Lord Clarendon, an important member of the Cabinet, would be a useful channel for their griefs. They commanded him to dine at the Palace, and, directly the meal was over, "the Queen," as he described it afterwards, "exploded, and went with the utmost vehemence and bitterness into the whole of Palmerston's con-

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In a memorandum made by the Prince, at about this time, of an interview between himself, the Queen, and the Prime Minister, we catch a curious glimpse of the states of mind of those three high personages—the anxiety and irritation of Lord John, the vehement acrimony of Victoria, and the reasonable animosity of Albert—drawn together, as it were, under the shadow of an unseen Presence, the cause of that celestial anger—the gay, portentous Palmerston. At one point in the conversation Lord John observed that he believed the Foreign Secretary would consent to a change of offices; Lord Palmerston, he said, realized that he had lost the Queen's confidence—though only on public, and not on personal, grounds. But on that, the Prince noted, "the Queen interrupted Lord John by remarking that she distrusted him on *personal* grounds also, but I remarked that Lord Palmerston had so far at least seen rightly; that he had become disagreeable to the Queen, not on account of his person, but of his political doings—to which the Queen assented." Then the Prince suggested that there was a danger of the Cabinet breaking up, and of Lord Palmerston returning to office as Prime Minister. But on that point Lord John was reassuring: he "thought Lord Palmerston too old to do much in the future (having passed his sixty-fifth year)." Eventually it was decided that nothing could be done for the present, but that the *utmost secrecy* must be observed; and so the conclave ended.

At last, in 1850, deliverance seemed to be at hand. There were signs that the public were growing weary of the alarums and excursions of Palmerston's diplomacy; and when his support of Don Pacifico, a British subject, in a quarrel with the Greek Government, seemed to be upon the point of involving the country in a war not only with Greece but also with France, and possibly with Russia into the bargain, a heavy cloud of distrust and displeasure appeared to be gathering and about to burst over his head. A motion directed against him in the House of Lords was passed by a substantial majority. The question was next to be discussed in the House of Commons, where another adverse vote was not improbable, and would seal the doom of the Minister.

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Palmerston received the attack with complete nonchalance, and then, at the last possible moment, he struck. In a speech of over four hours, in which exposition, invective, argument, declamation, plain talk and resounding eloquence were mingled together with consummate art and extraordinary felicity, he annihilated his enemies. The hostile motion was defeated, and Palmerston was once more the hero of the hour. Simultaneously, Atropos herself conspired to favor him. Sir Robert Peel was thrown from his horse and killed. By this tragic chance, Palmerston saw the one rival great enough to cope with him removed from his path. He judged—and judged rightly—that he was the most popular man in England; and when Lord John revived the project of his exchanging the Foreign Office for some other position in the Cabinet, he absolutely refused to stir.

Great was the disappointment of Albert; great was the indignation of Victoria. "The House of Commons," she wrote, "is becoming very unmanageable and troublesome." The Prince, perceiving that Palmerston was more firmly fixed in the saddle than ever, decided that something drastic must be done. Five months before, the prescient Baron had drawn up, in case of emergency, a memorandum, which had been carefully docketed, and placed in a pigeonhole ready to hand. The emergency had now arisen, and the memorandum must be used. The Queen copied out the words of Stockmar, and sent them to the Prime Minister, requesting him to show her letter to Palmerston. "She thinks it right," she wrote, "in order *to prevent any mistake* for the *future,* shortly to explain *what it is she expects from her Foreign Secretary.* She requires: (1) That he will distinctly state what he proposes in a given case, in order that the Queen may know as distinctly to *what* she has given her Royal sanction; (2) Having *once given* her sanction to a measure, that it be not arbitrarily altered or modified by the Minister; such an act she must consider as failing in sincerity towards the Crown, and justly to be visited by the exercise of her Constitutional right of dismissing that Minister." Lord John Russell did as he was bid, and forwarded the Queen's letter to Lord Palmerston. This transaction, which was of grave constitutional significance, was entirely unknown to the outside world.

If Palmerston had been a sensitive man, he would probably have resigned on the receipt of the Queen's missive. But he was far from sensitive; he loved power, and his power was greater than ever; an unerring instinct told him that this was not the time to go. Nevertheless, he was seriously perturbed. He understood at last that he was struggling with a formidable adversary, whose skill and strength, unless they were mollified, might do irreparable injury to his career. He therefore wrote to Lord John, briefly acquiescing in the Queen's requirements—"I have taken a copy of this memorandum of the Queen and will not fail to attend to the directions which it contains"—and at the same time, he asked for an interview with the Prince. Albert at once summoned him to the Palace, and was astonished to observe, as he noted in a memorandum, that when Palmerston entered the room "he was very much agitated, shook, and had tears in his eyes, so as quite to move me, who never under any circumstances had known him otherwise than with a bland smile on his face." The old statesman was profuse in protestations and excuses; the young one

was coldly polite. At last, after a long and inconclusive conversation, the Prince, drawing himself up, said that, in order to give Lord Palmerston "an example of what the Queen wanted," he would "ask him a question point-blank." Lord Palmerston waited in respectful silence, while the Prince proceeded as follows: —"You are aware that the Queen has objected to the Protocol about Schleswig, and of the grounds on which she has done so. Her opinion has been overruled, the Protocol stating the desire of the Great Powers to see the integrity of the Danish monarchy preserved has been signed, and upon this the King of Denmark has invaded Schleswig, where the war is raging. If Holstein is attacked also, which is likely, the Germans will not be restrained from flying to her assistance; Russia has menaced to interfere with arms, if the Schleswigers are successful. What will you do, if this emergency arises (provoking most likely an European war), and which will arise very probably when we shall be at Balmoral and Lord John in another part of Scotland? The Queen expects from your foresight that you have contemplated this possibility, and requires a categorical answer as to what you would do in the event supposed." Strangely enough, to this point-blank question, the Foreign Secretary appeared to be unable to reply. The whole matter, he said, was extremely complicated, and the contingencies mentioned by His Royal Highness were very unlikely to arise. The Prince persisted; but it was useless; for a full hour he struggled to extract a categorical answer, until at length Palmerston bowed himself out of the room. Albert threw up his hands in shocked amazement: what could one do with such a man?

What indeed? For, in spite of all his apologies and all his promises, within a few weeks the incorrigible reprobate was at his tricks again. The Austrian General Haynau, notorious as a rigorous suppressor of rebellion in Hungary and Italy, and in particular as a flogger of women, came to England and took it into his head to pay a visit to Messrs. Barclay and Perkins's brewery. The features of "General Hyæna," as he was everywhere called—his grim thin face, his enormous pepper-and-salt mustaches—had gained a horrid celebrity; and it so happened that among the clerks at the brewery there was a refugee from Vienna, who had given his fellow-workers a first-hand account of the General's characteristics. The Austrian Ambassador, scenting danger, begged his friend not to appear in public, or, if he must do so, to cut off his mustaches first. But the General would take no advice. He went to the brewery, was immediately recognized, surrounded by a crowd of angry draymen, pushed about, shouted at, punched in the ribs, and pulled by the mustaches until, bolting down an alley with the mob at his heels brandishing brooms and roaring "Hyæna!" he managed to take refuge in a public house, whence he was removed under the protection of several policemen. The Austrian Government was angry and demanded explanations. Palmerston, who, of course, was privately delighted by the incident, replied regretting what had occurred, but adding that in his opinion the General had "evinced a want of propriety in coming to England at the present moment"; and he delivered his note to the Ambassador without having previously submitted it to the Queen or to the Prime Minister. Naturally, when this was discovered, there was a serious

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regarded, with disgust and alarm, as "a slight foretaste of what an unregulated mass of illiterate people is capable"; and Palmerston was requested by Lord John to withdraw his note, and to substitute for it another from which all censure of the General had been omitted. On this the Foreign Secretary threatened resignation, but the Prime Minister was firm. For a moment the royal hopes rose high, only to be dashed to the ground again by the cruel compliance of the enemy. Palmerston, suddenly lamblike, agreed to everything; the note was withdrawn and altered, and peace was patched up once more.

It lasted for a year, and then, in October, 1851, the arrival of Kossuth in England brought on another crisis. Palmerston's desire to receive the Hungarian patriot at his house in London was vetoed by Lord John; once more there was a sharp struggle; once more Palmerston, after threatening resignation, yielded. But still the insubordinate man could not keep quiet. A few weeks later a deputation of Radicals from Finsbury and Islington waited on him at the Foreign Office and presented him with an address, in which the Emperors of Austria and Russia were stigmatized as "odious and detestable assassins" and "merciless tyrants and despots." The Foreign Secretary in his reply, while mildly deprecating these expressions, allowed his real sentiments to appear with a most undiplomatic *insouciance*. There was an immediate scandal, and the Court flowed over with rage and vituperation. "I think," said the Baron, "the man has been for some time insane." Victoria, in an agitated letter, urged Lord John to assert his authority. But Lord John perceived that on this matter the Foreign Secretary had the support of public opinion, and he judged it wiser to bide his time.

He had not long to wait. The culmination of the long series of conflicts, threats, and exacerbations came before the year was out. On December 2, Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état* took place in Paris; and on the following day Palmerston, without consulting anybody, expressed in a conversation with the French Ambassador his approval of Napoleon's act. Two days later, he was instructed by the Prime Minister, in accordance with a letter from the Queen, that it was the policy of the English Government to maintain an attitude of strict neutrality towards the affairs of France. Nevertheless, in an official despatch to the British Ambassador in Paris, he repeated the approval of the *coup d'état* which he had already given verbally to the French Ambassador in London. This despatch was submitted neither to the Queen nor to the Prime Minister. Lord John's patience, as he himself said, "was drained to the last drop." He dismissed Lord Palmerston.

Victoria was in ecstasies; and Albert knew that the triumph was his even more than Lord John's. It was his wish that Lord Granville, a young man whom he believed to be pliant to his influence, should be Palmerston's successor; and Lord Granville was appointed. Henceforward, it seemed that the Prince would have his way in foreign affairs. After years of struggle and mortification, success greeted him on every hand. In his family, he was an adored master; in the country, the Great Exhibition had brought him respect and glory; and now in the secret seats of power he had gained a new supremacy. He had wrestled with the terrible Lord Palmerston, the embodiment of all that was most hostile to him in the spirit of England, and his redoubtable

opponent had been overthrown. Was England herself at his feet? It might be so; and yet . . . it is said that the sons of England have a certain tiresome quality: they never know when they are beaten. It was odd, but Palmerston was positively still jaunty. Was it possible? Could he believe, in his blind arrogance, that even his ignominious dismissal from office was something that could be brushed aside?

III

The Prince's triumph was short-lived. A few weeks later, owing to Palmerston's influence, the Government was defeated in the House, and Lord John resigned. Then, after a short interval, a coalition between the Whigs and the followers of Peel came into power, under the premiership of Lord Aberdeen. Once more, Palmerston was in the Cabinet. It was true that he did not return to the Foreign Office; that was something to the good; in the Home Department it might be hoped that his activities would be less dangerous and disagreeable. But the Foreign Secretary was no longer the complacent Granville; and in Lord Clarendon the Prince knew that he had a Minister to deal with, who, discreet and courteous as he was, had a mind of his own.

These changes, however, were merely the preliminaries of a far more serious development. Events, on every side, were moving towards a catastrophe. Suddenly the nation found itself under the awful shadow of imminent war. For several months, amid the shifting mysteries of diplomacy and the perplexed agitations of politics, the issue grew more doubtful and more dark, while the national temper was strained to the breaking-point. At the very crisis of the long and ominous negotiations, it was announced that Lord Palmerston had resigned. Then the pent-up fury of the people burst forth. They had felt that in the terrible complexity of events they were being guided by weak and embarrassed counsels; but they had been reassured by the knowledge that at the center of power there was one man with strength, with courage, with determination, in whom they could put their trust. They now learnt that that man was no longer among their leaders. Why? In their rage, anxiety, and nervous exhaustion, they looked round desperately for some hidden and horrible explanation of what had occurred. They suspected plots, they smelt treachery in the air. It was easy to guess the object upon which their frenzy would vent itself. Was there not a foreigner in the highest of high places, a foreigner whose hostility to their own adored champion was unrelenting and unconcealed? The moment that Palmerston's resignation was known, there was a universal outcry and an extraordinary tempest of anger and hatred burst, with unparalleled violence, upon the head of the Prince.

It was everywhere asserted and believed that the Queen's husband was a traitor to the country, that he was a tool of the Russian Court, that in obedience to Russian influences he had forced Palmerston out of the Government, and that he was directing the foreign policy of England in the interests of England's enemies. For many weeks these accusations filled the whole of the press; repeated at public meetings, elaborated in private talk, they flew over the country, growing every moment more extreme and more improbable. While respectable newspapers thundered out their grave invectives, halfpenny broadsides, hawked through the streets of London, reechoed in doggerel vul-

garity the same sentiments and the same suspicions. At last the wildest rumors began to spread.

In January, 1854, it was whispered that the Prince had been seized, that he had been found guilty of high treason, that he was to be committed to the Tower. The Queen herself, some declared, had been arrested, and large crowds actually collected round the Tower to watch the incarceration of the royal miscreants.

These fantastic hallucinations, the result of the fevered atmosphere of approaching war, were devoid of any basis in actual fact. Palmerston's resignation had been in all probability totally disconnected with foreign policy; it had certainly been entirely spontaneous, and had surprised the Court as much as the nation. Nor had Albert's influence been used in any way to favor the interests of Russia. As often happens in such cases, the Government had been swinging backwards and forwards between two incompatible policies—that of non-interference and that of threats supported by force—either of which, if consistently followed, might well have had a successful and peaceful issue, but which, mingled together, could only lead to war. Albert, with characteristic scrupulosity, attempted to thread his way through the complicated labyrinth of European diplomacy, and eventually was lost in the maze. But so was the whole of the Cabinet; and, when war came, his anti-Russian feelings were quite as vehement as those of the most bellicose of Englishmen.

Nevertheless, though the specific charges leveled against the Prince were without foundation, there were underlying elements in the situation which explained, if they did not justify, the popular state of mind. It was true that the Queen's husband was a foreigner, who had been brought up in a foreign Court, was impregnated with foreign ideas, and was closely related to a multitude of foreign princes. Clearly this, though perhaps an unavoidable, was an undesirable, state of affairs; nor were the objections to it merely theoretical; it had in fact produced unpleasant consequences of a serious kind. The Prince's German proclivities were perpetually lamented by English Ministers; Lord Palmerston, Lord Clarendon, Lord Aberdeen, all told the same tale; and it was constantly necessary, in grave questions of national policy, to combat the prepossessions of a Court in which German views and German sentiments held a disproportionate place. As for Palmerston, his language on this topic was apt to be unbridled. At the height of his annoyance over his resignation, he roundly declared that he had been made a victim to foreign intrigue. He afterwards toned down this accusation; but the mere fact that such a suggestion from such a quarter was possible at all showed to what unfortunate consequences Albert's foreign birth and foreign upbringing might lead.

But this was not all. A constitutional question of the most profound importance was raised by the position of the Prince in England. His presence gave a new prominence to an old problem—the precise definition of the functions and the powers of the Crown. Those functions and powers had become, in effect, his; and what sort of use was he making of them? His views as to the place of the Crown in the Constitution are easily ascertainable; for they were Stockmar's; and it happens that we possess a detailed account of Stockmar's opinions upon the subject in a long letter addressed by him to the Prince at the

time of this very crisis, just before the outbreak of the Crimean War. Constitutional Monarchy, according to the Baron, had suffered an eclipse since the passing of the Reform Bill. It was now "constantly in danger of becoming a pure Ministerial Government." The old race of Tories, who "had a direct interest in upholding the prerogatives of the Crown," had died out; and the Whigs were "nothing but partly conscious, partly unconscious Republicans, who stand in the same relation to the Throne as the wolf does to the lamb." There was a rule that it was unconstitutional to introduce "the name and person of the irresponsible Sovereign" into parliamentary debates on constitutional matters; this was "a constitutional fiction, which, although undoubtedly of old standing, was fraught with danger"; and the Baron warned the Prince that "if the English Crown permit a Whig Ministry to follow this rule in practice, without exception, you must not wonder if in a little time you find the majority of the people impressed with the belief that the King, in the view of the law, is nothing but a mandarin figure, which has to nod its head in assent, or shake it in denial, as his Minister pleases." To prevent this from happening, it was of extreme importance, said the Baron, "that no opportunity should be let slip of vindicating the legitimate position of the Crown." "And this is not hard to do," he added, "and can never embarrass a Minister where such straightforward loyal personages as the Queen and the Prince are concerned." In his opinion, the very lowest claim of the Royal Prerogative should include "a right on the part of the King to be the permanent President of his Ministerial Council." The Sovereign ought to be "in the position of a permanent Premier, who takes rank above the temporary head of the Cabinet, and in matters of discipline exercises supreme authority." The Sovereign "may even take a part in the initiation and the maturing of the Government measures; for it would be unreasonable to expect that a king, himself as able, as accomplished, and as patriotic as the best of his Ministers, should be prevented from making use of these qualities at the deliberations of his Council." "The judicious exercise of this right," concluded the Baron, "which certainly requires a master mind, would not only be the best guarantee for Constitutional Monarchy, but would raise it to a height of power, stability, and symmetry, which has never been attained."

Now it may be that this reading of the Constitution is a possible one, though indeed it is hard to see how it can be made compatible with the fundamental doctrine of ministerial responsibility. William III presided over his Council, and he was a constitutional monarch; and it seems that Stockmar had in his mind a conception of the Crown which would have given it a place in the Constitution analogous to that which it filled at the time of William III. But it is clear that such a theory, which would invest the Crown with more power than it possessed even under George III, runs counter to the whole development of English public life since the Revolution; and the fact that it was held by Stockmar, and instilled by him into Albert, was of very serious importance. For there was good reason to believe not only that these doctrines were held by Albert in theory, but that he was making a deliberate and sustained attempt to give them practical validity. The history of the struggle between the [illegible] and Palmerston provided startling evidence that this was the case. That

struggle reached its culmination when, in Stockmar's memorandum of 1850, the Queen asserted her "constitutional right" to dismiss the Foreign Secretary if he altered a despatch which had received her sanction. The memorandum was, in fact, a plain declaration that the Crown intended to act independently of the Prime Minister. Lord John Russell, anxious at all costs to strengthen himself against Palmerston, accepted the memorandum, and thereby implicitly allowed the claim of the Crown. More than that; after the dismissal of Palmerston, among the grounds on which Lord John justified that dismissal in the House of Commons he gave a prominent place to the memorandum of 1850. It became apparent that the displeasure of the Sovereign might be a reason for the removal of a powerful and popular Minister. It seemed indeed as if, under the guidance of Stockmar and Albert, the "Constitutional Monarchy" might in very truth be rising "to a height of power, stability, and symmetry, which had never been attained."

But this new development in the position of the Crown, grave as it was in itself, was rendered peculiarly disquieting by the unusual circumstances which surrounded it. For the functions of the Crown were now, in effect, being exercised by a person unknown to the Constitution, who wielded over the Sovereign an undefined and unbounded influence. The fact that this person was the Sovereign's husband, while it explained his influence and even made it inevitable, by no means diminished its strange and momentous import. An ambiguous, prepotent figure had come to disturb the ancient, subtle, and jealously guarded balance of the English Constitution. Such had been the unexpected outcome of the tentative and faint-hearted opening of Albert's political life. He himself made no attempt to minimize either the multiplicity or the significance of the functions he performed. He considered that it was his duty, he told the Duke of Wellington in 1850, to "sink his *own individual* existence in that of his wife . . . —assume no separate responsibility before the public, but make his position entirely a part of hers—fill up every gap which, as a woman, she would naturally leave in the exercise of her regal functions—continually and anxiously watch every part of the public business, in order to be able to advise and assist her at any moment in any of the multifarious and difficult questions or duties brought before her, sometimes international, sometimes political, or social, or personal. As the natural head of her family, superintendent of her household, manager of her private affairs, sole *confidential* adviser in politics, and only assistant in her communications with the officers of the Government, he is, besides, the husband of the Queen, the tutor of the royal children, the private secretary of the Sovereign, and her permanent minister." Stockmar's pupil had assuredly gone far and learnt well. Stockmar's pupil!—precisely; the public, painfully aware of Albert's predominance, had grown, too, uneasily conscious that Victoria's master had a master of his own. Deep in the darkness the Baron loomed. Another foreigner! Decidedly, there were elements in the situation which went far to justify the popular alarm. A foreign Baron controlled a foreign Prince, and the foreign Prince controlled the Crown of England. And the Crown itself was creeping forward ominously; and when, from under its shadow, the Baron and the Prince had frowned, a great Minister, beloved of the people, had fallen. Where was all this to end?

Within a few weeks Palmerston withdrew his resignation, and the public frenzy subsided as quickly as it had arisen. When Parliament met, the leaders of both the parties in both the Houses made speeches in favor of the Prince, asserting his unimpeachable loyalty to the country and vindicating his right to advise the Sovereign in all matters of State. Victoria was delighted. "The position of my beloved lord and master," she told the Baron, "has been defined for *once and all* and his merits have been acknowledged on all sides most duly. There was an immense concourse of people assembled when we went to the House of Lords, and the people were very friendly." Immediately afterwards, the country finally plunged into the Crimean War. In the struggle that followed, Albert's patriotism was put beyond a doubt, and the animosities of the past were forgotten. But the war had another consequence, less gratifying to the royal couple: it crowned the ambition of Lord Palmerston. In 1855, the man who five years before had been pronounced by Lord John Russell to be "too old to do much in the future," became Prime Minister of England, and, with one short interval, remained in that position for ten years.

VI. LAST YEARS OF PRINCE CONSORT

THE weak-willed youth who took no interest in politics and never read a newspaper had grown into a man of unbending determination whose tireless energies were incessantly concentrated upon the laborious business of government and the highest questions of State. He was busy now from morning till night. In the winter, before the dawn, he was to be seen, seated at his writing-table, working by the light of the green reading-lamp which he had brought over with him from Germany, and the construction of which he had much improved by an ingenious device. Victoria was early too, but she was not so early as Albert; and when, in the chill darkness, she took her seat at her own writing-table, placed side by side with his, she invariably found upon it a neat pile of papers arranged for her inspection and her signature. The day, thus begun, continued in unremitting industry. At breakfast, the newspapers—the once hated newspapers—made their appearance, and the Prince, absorbed in their perusal, would answer no questions, or, if an article struck him, would read it aloud. After that there were ministers and secretaries to interview; there was a vast correspondence to be carried on; there were numerous memoranda to be made. Victoria, treasuring every word, preserving every letter, was all breathless attention and eager obedience. Sometimes Albert would actually ask her advice. He consulted her about his English: "Lese recht aufmerksam, und sage wenn irgend ein Fehler ist," he would say; or, as he handed her a draft for her signature, he would observe, "Ich hab' Dir hier ein Draft gemacht, lese es mal! Ich dachte es ware recht so." Thus the diligent, scrupulous, absorbing hours passed by. Fewer and fewer grew the moments of recreation and of exercise. The demands of society were narrowed down to the smallest limits, and even then but grudgingly attended to. It was no longer a mere pleasure, it was a positive necessity, to go to bed as early as possible in order to be up and at work on the morrow betimes.

The important and exacting business of government, which became at last a consuming preoccupation in Albert's mind, still left unimpaired his old

tastes and interests; he remained devoted to art, to science, to philosophy; and a multitude of subsidiary activities showed how his energies increased as the demands upon them grew. For whenever duty called, the Prince was all alertness. With indefatigable perseverance he opened museums, laid the foundation stones of hospitals, made speeches to the Royal Agricultural Society, and attended meetings of the British Association. The National Gallery particularly interested him: he drew up careful regulations for the arrangement of the pictures according to schools; and he attempted—though in vain—to have the whole collection transported to South Kensington. Feodora, now the Princess Hohenlohe, after a visit to England, expressed in a letter to Victoria her admiration of Albert both as a private and a public character. Nor did she rely only on her own opinion. "I must just copy out," she said, "what Mr. Klumpp wrote to me some little time ago, and which is quite true—'Prince Albert is one of the few Royal personages who can sacrifice to any principle (as soon as it has become evident to them to be good and noble) all those notions (or sentiments) to which others, owing to their narrow-mindedness, or to the prejudices of their rank, are so thoroughly inclined strongly to cling.'—There is something so truly religious in this," the Princess added, "as well as humane and just, most soothing to my feelings which are so often hurt and disturbed by what I hear and see."

Victoria, from the depth of her heart, subscribed to all the eulogies of Feodora and Mr. Klumpp. She only found that they were insufficient. As she watched her beloved Albert, after toiling with state documents and public functions, devoting every spare moment of his time to domestic duties, to artistic appreciation, and to intellectual improvements; as she listened to him cracking his jokes at the luncheon table, or playing Mendelssohn on the organ, or pointing out the merits of Sir Edwin Landseer's pictures; as she followed him round while he gave instructions about the breeding of cattle, or decided that the Gainsboroughs must be hung higher up so that the Winterhalters might be properly seen—she felt perfectly certain that no other wife had ever had such a husband. His mind was apparently capable of everything, and she was hardly surprised to learn that he had made an important discovery for the conversion of sewage into agricultural manure. Filtration from below upwards, he explained, through some appropriate medium, which retained the solids and set free the fluid sewage for irrigation, was the principle of the scheme. "All previous plans," he said, "would have cost millions; mine costs next to nothing." Unfortunately, owing to a slight miscalculation, the invention proved to be impracticable; but Albert's intelligence was unrebuffed, and he passed on, to plunge with all his accustomed ardor into a prolonged study of the rudiments of lithography.

But naturally it was upon his children that his private interests and those of Victoria were concentrated most vigorously. The royal nurseries showed no sign of emptying. The birth of the Prince Arthur in 1850 was followed, three years later, by that of the Prince Leopold; and in 1857 the Princess Beatrice was born. A family of nine must be, in any circumstances, a grave responsibility; and the Prince realized to the full how much the high destinies of his offspring intensified the need of parental care. It was inevitable that he should

believe profoundly in the importance of education; he himself had been the product of education; Stockmar had made him what he was; it was for him, in his turn, to be a Stockmar—to be even more than a Stockmar—to the young creatures he had brought into the world. Victoria would assist him; a Stockmar, no doubt, she could hardly be; but she could be perpetually vigilant, she could mingle strictness with her affection, and she could always set a good example. These considerations, of course, applied preeminently to the education of the Prince of Wales. How tremendous was the significance of every particle of influence which went to the making of the future King of England! Albert set to work with a will. But, watching with Victoria the minutest details of the physical, intellectual, and moral training of his children, he soon perceived, to his distress, that there was something unsatisfactory in the development of his eldest son. The Princess Royal was an extremely intelligent child; but Bertie, though he was good-humored and gentle, seemed to display a deep-seated repugnance to every form of mental exertion. This was most regrettable, but the remedy was obvious: the parental efforts must be redoubled; instruction must be multiplied; not for a single instant must the educational pressure be allowed to relax. Accordingly, more tutors were selected, the curriculum was revised, the time-table of studies was rearranged, elaborate memoranda dealing with every possible contingency were drawn up. It was above all essential that there should be no slackness: "work," said the Prince, "must be work." And work indeed it was. The boy grew up amid a ceaseless round of paradigms, syntactical exercises, dates, genealogical tables, and lists of capes. Constant notes flew backwards and forwards between the Prince, the Queen, and the tutors, with inquiries, with reports of progress, with detailed recommendations; and these notes were all carefully preserved for future reference. It was, besides, vital that the heir to the throne should be protected from the slightest possibility of contamination from the outside world. The Prince of Wales was not as other boys; he might, occasionally, be allowed to invite some sons of the nobility, boys of good character, to play with him in the garden of Buckingham Palace; but his father presided, with alarming precision, over their sports. In short, every possible precaution was taken, every conceivable effort was made. Yet, strange to say, the object of all this vigilance and solicitude continued to be unsatisfactory—appeared, in fact, to be positively growing worse. It was certainly very odd: the more lessons that Bertie had to do, the less he did them; and the more carefully he was guarded against excitements and frivolities, the more desirous of mere amusement he seemed to become. Albert was deeply grieved and Victoria was sometimes very angry; but grief and anger produced no more effect than supervision and time-tables. The Prince of Wales, in spite of everything, grew up into manhood without the faintest sign of "adherence to and perseverance in the plan both of studies and life"—as one of the Royal memoranda put it—which had been laid down with such extraordinary forethought by his father.

II

A·inst the insidious worries of politics, the boredom of society functions, ·ompous publicity of state ceremonies, Osborne had afforded a wel-

come refuge; but it soon appeared that even Osborne was too little removed from the world. After all, the Solent was a feeble barrier. Oh, for some distant, some almost inaccessible sanctuary, where, in true domestic privacy, one could make happy holiday, just as if—or at least very, very nearly—one were anybody else! Victoria, ever since, together with Albert, she had visited Scotland in the early years of her marriage, had felt that her heart was in the Highlands. She had returned to them a few years later, and her passion had grown. How romantic they were! And how Albert enjoyed them too! His spirits rose quite wonderfully as soon as he found himself among the hills and the conifers. "It is a happiness to see him," she wrote. "Oh! What can equal the beauties of nature!" she exclaimed in her journal, during one of these visits. "What enjoyment there is in them! Albert enjoys it so much; he is in ecstasies here." "Albert said," she noted next day, "that the chief beauty of mountain scenery consists in its frequent changes. We came home at six o'clock." Then she went on a longer expedition—up to the very top of a high hill. "It was quite romantic. Here we were with only this Highlander behind us holding the ponies (for we got off twice and walked about). . . . We came home at half-past eleven,—the most delightful, most romantic ride and walk I ever had. I had never been up such a mountain, and then the day was so fine." The Highlanders, too, were such astonishing people. They "never make difficulties," she noted, "but are cheerful, and happy, and merry, and ready to walk, and run, and do anything." As for Albert he "highly appreciated the good-breeding, simplicity, and intelligence, which make it so pleasant and even instructive to talk to them." "We were always in the habit," wrote Her Majesty, "of conversing with the Highlanders—with whom one comes so much in contact in the Highlands." She loved everything about them—their customs, their dress, their dances, even their musical instruments. "There were nine pipers at the castle," she wrote, after staying with Lord Breadalbane; "sometimes one and sometimes three played. They always played about breakfast-time, again during the morning, at luncheon, and also whenever we went in and out; again before dinner, and during most of dinner-time. We both have become quite fond of the bagpipes."

It was quite impossible not to wish to return to such pleasures again and again; and in 1848 the Queen took a lease of Balmoral House, a small residence near Braemar in the wilds of Aberdeenshire. Four years later she bought the place outright. Now she could be really happy every summer; now she could be simple and at her ease; now she could be romantic every evening, and dote upon Albert, without a single distraction, all day long. The diminutive scale of the house was in itself a charm. Nothing was more amusing than to find oneself living in two or three little sitting-rooms, with the children crammed away upstairs, and the minister in attendance with only a tiny bedroom to do all his work in. And then to be able to run in and out of doors as one liked, and to sketch, and to walk, and to watch the red deer coming so surprisingly close, and to pay visits to the cottagers! And occasionally one could be more adventurous still—one could go and stay for a night or two at the Bothie at Alt-na-giuthasach—a mere couple of huts with "a wooden addition"—and only eleven people in the whole party! And there were mountains to be climbed

and cairns to be built in solemn pomp. "At last, when the cairn, which is, I think, seven or eight feet high, was nearly completed, Albert climbed up to the top of it, and placed the last stone; after which three cheers were given. It was a gay, pretty, and touching sight; and I felt almost inclined to cry. The view was so beautiful over the dear hills; the day so fine; the whole so *gemuthlich*." And in the evening there were sword-dances and reels.

But Albert had determined to pull down the little old house, and to build in its place a castle of his own designing. With great ceremony, in accordance with a memorandum drawn up by the Prince for the occasion, the foundation-stone of the new edifice was laid, and by 1855 it was habitable. Spacious, built of granite in the Scotch baronial style, with a tower 100 feet high, and minor turrets and castellated gables, the castle was skillfully arranged to command the finest views of the surrounding mountains and of the neighboring river Dee. Upon the interior decorations Albert and Victoria lavished all their care. The wall and the floors were of pitch-pine, and covered with specially manufactured tartans. The Balmoral tartan, in red and gray, designed by the Prince, and the Victoria tartan, with a white stripe, designed by the Queen, were to be seen in every room: there were tartan curtains, and tartan chair-covers, and even tartan linoleums. Occasionally the Royal Stuart tartan appeared, for Her Majesty always maintained that she was an ardent Jacobite. Water-color sketches by Victoria hung upon the walls, together with innumerable stags' antlers, and the head of a boar, which had been shot by Albert in Germany. In an alcove in the hall stood a life-sized statue of Albert in Highland dress. Victoria declared that it was perfection. "Every year," she wrote, "my heart becomes more fixed in this dear paradise, and so much more so now, that *all* has become my dear Albert's *own* creation, own work, own building, own lay-out; . . . and his great taste, and the impress of his dear hand, have been stamped everywhere."

And here, in very truth, her happiest days were passed. In after years, when she looked back upon them, a kind of glory, a radiance as of an unearthly holiness, seemed to glow about these golden hours. Each hallowed moment stood out clear, beautiful, eternally significant. For, at the time, every experience there, sentimental, or grave, or trivial, had come upon her with a peculiar vividness, like a flashing of marvelous lights. Albert's stalkings—an evening walk when she lost her way—Vicky sitting down on a wasps' nest—a torchlight dance—with what intensity such things, and ten thousand like them, impressed themselves upon her eager consciousness! And how she flew to her journal to note them down! The news of the Duke's death! What a moment!—when, as she sat sketching after a picnic by a loch in the lonely hills, Lord Derby's letter had been brought to her, and she had learnt that *"England's,* or rather *Britain's* pride, her glory, her hero, the greatest man she had ever produced, was no more!" For such were her reflections upon the "old rebel" of former days. But that past had been utterly obliterated—no faintest memory of it remained. For years she had looked up to the Duke as a figure almost superhuman. Had he not been a supporter of good Sir Robert? Had he not asked Albert to succeed him as commander-in-chief? And what a [illegible] moment it had been when he stood as sponsor to her son Arthur, who

was born on his eighty-first birthday! So now she filled a whole page of her diary with panegyrical regrets. "His position was the highest a subject ever had—above party,—looked up to by all,—revered by the whole nation,—the friend of the Sovereign . . . The Crown never possessed—and I fear never *will*—so *devoted,* loyal, and faithful a subject, so staunch a supporter! To *us* his loss is *irreparable* . . . To Albert he showed the greatest kindness and the utmost confidence . . . Not an eye will be dry in the whole country." These were serious thoughts; but they were soon succeeded by others hardly less moving—by events as impossible to forget—by Mr. MacLeod's sermon on Nicodemus,—by the gift of a red flannel petticoat to Mrs. P. Farquharson, and another to old Kitty Kear.

But, without doubt, most memorable, most delightful of all were the expeditions—the rare, exciting expeditions up distant mountains, across broad rivers, through strange country, and lasting several days. With only two gillies—Grant and Brown—for servants, and with assumed names . . . it was more like something in a story than real life. "We had decided to call ourselves *Lord and Lady Churchill and party*—Lady Churchill passing as *Miss Spencer* and General Grey as *Dr. Grey!* Brown once forgot this and called me 'Your Majesty' as I was getting into the carriage, and Grant on the box once called Albert 'Your Royal Highness,' which set us off laughing, but no one observed it." Strong, vigorous, enthusiastic, bringing, so it seemed, good fortune with her—the Highlanders declared she had "a lucky foot"—she relished everything —the scrambles and the views and the contretemps and the rough inns which their coarse fare and Brown and Grant waiting at table. She could have gone on for ever and ever, absolutely happy with Albert beside her and Brown at her pony's head. But the time came for turning homewards; alas! the time came for going back to England. She could hardly bear it; she sat disconsolate in her room and watched the snow falling. The last day! Oh! If only she could be snowed up!

III

The Crimean War brought new experiences, and most of them were pleasant ones. It was pleasant to be patriotic and pugnacious, to look out appropriate prayers to be read in the churches, to have news of glorious victories, and to know oneself, more proudly than ever, the representative of England. With that spontaneity of feeling which was so peculiarly her own, Victoria poured out her emotion, her admiration, her pity, her love, upon her "dear soldiers." When she gave them their medals her exultation knew no bounds. "Noble fellows!" she wrote to the King of the Belgians. "I own I feel as if these were *my own children;* my heart beats for *them* as for my *nearest and dearest.* They were so touched, so pleased; many, I hear, cried—and they won't hear of giving up their medals to have their names engraved upon them for fear they should *not* receive the *identical one* put into *their hands by me,* which is quite touching. Several came by in a sadly mutilated state." She and they were at one. They felt that she had done them a splendid honor, and she, with perfect genuineness, shared their feeling. Albert's attitude towards such things was different; there was an austerity in him which quite prohibited the expansions of emotion. When General Williams returned from the heroic defense of Kars

and was presented at Court, the quick, stiff, distant bow with which the Prince received him struck like ice upon the beholders. He was a stranger still.

But he had other things to occupy him, more important, surely, than the personal impressions of military officers and people who went to Court. He was at work—ceaselessly at work—on the tremendous task of carrying through the war to a successful conclusion. State papers, despatches, memoranda, poured from him in an overwhelming stream. Between 1853 and 1857 fifty folio volumes were filled with the comments of his pen upon the Eastern question. Nothing would induce him to stop. Weary ministers staggered under the load of his advice; but his advice continued, piling itself up over their writing-tables, and flowing out upon them from red box after red box. Not was it advice to be ignored. The talent for administration which had reorganized the royal palaces and planned the Great Exhibition asserted itself no less in the confused complexities of war. Again and again the Prince's suggestions, rejected or unheeded at first, were adopted under the stress of circumstances and found to be full of value. The enrollment of a foreign legion, the establishment of a dépôt, for troops at Malta, the institution of periodical reports and tabulated returns as to the condition of the army at Sebastopol—such were the contrivances and the achievements of his indefatigable brain. He went further: in a lengthy minute he laid down the lines for a radical reform in the entire administration of the army. This was premature, but his proposal that "a camp of evolution" should be created, in which troops should be concentrated and drilled, proved to be the germ of Aldershot.

Meanwhile Victoria had made a new friend: she had suddenly been captivated by Napoleon III. Her dislike of him had been strong at first. She considered that he was a disreputable adventurer who had usurped the throne of poor old Louis Philippe; and besides he was hand-in-glove with Lord Palmerston. For a long time, although he was her ally, she was unwilling to meet him; but at last a visit of the Emperor and Empress to England was arranged. Directly he appeared at Windsor her heart began to soften. She found that she was charmed by his quiet manners, his low, soft voice, and by the soothing simplicity of his conversation. The good-will of England was essential to the Emperor's position in Europe, and he had determined to fascinate the Queen. He succeeded. There was something deep within her which responded immediately and vehemently to natures that offered a romantic contrast with her own. Her adoration of Lord Melbourne was intimately interwoven with her half-unconscious appreciation of the exciting unlikeness between herself and that sophisticated, subtle, aristocratical old man. Very different was the quality of her unlikeness to Napoleon; but its quantity was at least as great. From behind the vast solidity of her respectability, her conventionality, her established happiness, she peered out with a strange delicious pleasure at that unfamiliar, darkly-glittering foreign object, moving so meteorically before her, an ambiguous creature of willfulness and Destiny. And, to her surprise, where she had dreaded antagonisms, she discovered only sympathies. He was, she said, "so quiet, so simple, *naif* even, so pleased to be informed about things he does not know, so gentle, so full of tact, dignity, and modesty, so full of kind attention towards us, never saying a word, or doing

a thing, which could put me out . . . There is something fascinating, melancholy, and engaging, which draws you to him, in spite of any *prévention* you may have against him, and certainly without the assistance of any outward appearance, though I like his face." She observed that he rode "extremely well, and looks well on horseback, as he sits high." And he danced "with great dignity and spirit." Above all, he listened to Albert; listened with the most respectful attention; showed, in fact, how pleased he was "to be informed about things he did not know"; and afterwards was heard to declare that he had never met the Prince's equal. On one occasion, indeed—but only on one—he had seemed to grow slightly restive. In a diplomatic conversation, "I expatiated a little on the Holstein question," wrote the Prince in a memorandum, "which appeared to bore the Emperor as *'très-compliquée.'*"

Victoria, too, became much attached to the Empress, whose looks and graces she admired without a touch of jealousy. Eugénie, indeed, in the plenitude of her beauty, exquisitely dressed in wonderful Parisian crinolines which set off to perfection her tall and willowy figure, might well have caused some heartburning in the breast of her hostess, who, very short, rather stout, quite plain, in garish middle-class garments, could hardly be expected to feel at her best in such company. But Victoria had no misgivings. To her it mattered nothing that her face turned red in the heat and that her purple pork-pie hat was of last year's fashion, while Eugénie, cool and modish, floated in an infinitude of flounces by her side. She was Queen of England, and was not that enough? It certainly seemed to be; true majesty was hers, and she knew it. More than once, when the two were together in public, it was the woman to whom, as it seemed, nature and art had given so little, who, by the sheer force of an inherent grandeur, completely threw her adorned and beautiful companion into the shade.

There were tears when the moment came for parting, and Victoria felt "quite *wehmuthig,*" as her guests went away from Windsor. But before long she and Albert paid a return visit to France, where everything was very delightful, and she drove incognito through the streets of Paris in a "common bonnet," and saw a play in the theatre at St. Cloud, and, one evening, at a great party given by the Emperor in her honor at the Château of Versailles, talked a little to a distinguished-looking Prussian gentleman, whose name was Bismarck. Her rooms were furnished so much to her taste that she declared they gave her quite a home feeling—that, if her little dog were there, she should really imagine herself at home. Nothing was said, but three days later her little dog barked a welcome to her as she entered the apartments. The Emperor himself, sparing neither trouble nor expense, had personally arranged the charming surprise. Such were his attentions. She returned to England more enchanted than ever. "Strange indeed," she exclaimed, "are the dispensations and ways of Providence!"

The alliance prospered, and the war drew towards a conclusion. Both the Queen and the Prince, it is true, were most anxious that there should not be a premature peace. When Lord Aberdeen wished to open negotiations Albert attacked him in a *"geharnischten"* letter, while Victoria rode about on horseback reviewing the troops. At last, however, Sebastopol was captured. The news

reached Balmoral late at night, and "in a few minutes Albert and all the gentlemen in every species of attire sallied forth, followed by all the servants, and gradually by all the population of the village—keepers, gillies, workmen —up to the top of the cairn." A bonfire was lighted, the pipes were played, and guns were shot off. "About three-quarters of an hour after Albert came down and said the scene had been wild and exciting beyond everything. The people had been drinking healths in whisky and were in great ecstasy." The "great ecstasy," perhaps, would be replaced by other feelings next morning; but at any rate the war was over—though, to be sure, its end seemed as difficult to account for as its beginning. The dispensations and ways of Providence continued to be strange.

IV

An unexpected consequence of the war was a complete change in the relations between the royal pair and Palmerston. The Prince and the Minister drew together over their hostility to Russia, and thus it came about that when Victoria found it necessary to summon her old enemy to form an administration she did so without reluctance. The premiership, too, had a sobering effect upon Palmerston; he grew less impatient and dictatorial; considered with attention the suggestions of the Crown, and was, besides, genuinely impressed by the Prince's ability and knowledge. Friction, no doubt, there still occasionally was, for, while the Queen and the Prince devoted themselves to foreign politics as much as ever, their views, when the war was over, became once more antagonistic to those of the Prime Minister. This was especially the case with regard to Italy. Albert, theoretically the friend of constitutional government, distrusted Cavour, was horrified by Garibaldi, and dreaded the danger of England being drawn into war with Austria. Palmerston, on the other hand, was eager for Italian independence; but he was no longer at the Foreign Office, and the brunt of the royal displeasure had now to be borne by Lord John Russell. In a few years the situation had curiously altered. It was Lord John who now filled the subordinate and the ungrateful rôle; but the Foreign Secretary, in his struggle with the Crown, was supported, instead of opposed, by the Prime Minister. Nevertheless the struggle was fierce, and the policy, by which the vigorous sympathy of England became one of the decisive factors in the final achievement of Italian unity, was only carried through in face of the violent opposition of the Court.

Towards the other European storm-center, also, the Prince's attitude continued to be very different to that of Palmerston. Albert's great wish was for a united Germany under the leadership of a constitutional and virtuous Prussia; Palmerston did not think that there was much to be said for the scheme, but he took no particular interest in German politics, and was ready enough to agree to a proposal which was warmly supported by both the Prince and the Queen—that the royal Houses of England and Prussia should be united by the marriage of the Princess Royal with the Prussian Crown Prince. Accordingly, when the Princess was not yet fifteen, the Prince, a young man of twenty-four, came over on a visit to Balmoral, and the betrothal took place. Two years later, in 1857, the marriage was celebrated. At the last moment, however, it seemed that there might be a hitch. It was pointed out in Prussia that it was

customary for Princes of the blood royal to be married in Berlin, and it was suggested that there was no reason why the present case should be treated as an exception. When this reached the ears of Victoria, she was speechless with indignation. In a note, emphatic even for Her Majesty, she instructed the Foreign Secretary to tell the Prussian Ambassador "not to *entertain* the *possibility* of such a question. . . . The Queen *never* could consent to it, both for public and for private reasons, and the assumption of its being *too much* for a Prince Royal of Prussia to *come* over to marry *the Princess Royal of Great Britain in* England is too *absurd* to say the least. . . . Whatever may be the usual practice of Prussian princes, it is not *every* day that one marries the eldest daughter of the Queen of England. The question must therefore be considered as settled and closed." It was, and the wedding took place in St. James's Chapel. There were great festivities—illuminations, state concerts, immense crowds, and general rejoicings. At Windsor a magnificent banquet was given to the bride and bridegroom in the Waterloo room, at which, Victoria noted in her diary, "everybody was most friendly and kind about Vicky and full of the universal enthusiasm, of which the Duke of Buccleuch gave us most pleasing instances, he having been in the very thick of the crowd and among the lowest of the low." Her feelings during several days had been growing more and more emotional, and when the time came for the young couple to depart she very nearly broke down—but not quite. "Poor dear child!" she wrote afterwards. "I clasped her in my arms and blessed her, and knew not what to say. I kissed good Fritz and pressed his hand again and again. He was unable to speak and the tears were in his eyes. I embraced them both again at the carriage door, and Albert got into the carriage, an open one, with them and Bertie. . . . The band struck up. I wished good-by to the good Perponchers. General Schreckenstein was much affected. I pressed his hand, and the good Dean's, and then went quickly upstairs."

Albert, as well as General Schreckenstein, was much affected. He was losing his favorite child, whose opening intelligence had already begun to display a marked resemblance to his own—an adoring pupil, who, in a few years, might have become an almost adequate companion. An ironic fate had determined that the daughter who was taken from him should be sympathetic, clever, interested in the arts and sciences, and endowed with a strong taste for memoranda, while not a single one of these qualities could be discovered in the son who remained. For certainly the Prince of Wales did not take after his father. Victoria's prayer had been unanswered, and with each succeeding year it became more obvious that Bertie was a true scion of the House of Brunswick. But these evidences of innate characteristics only served to redouble the efforts of his parents; it still might not be too late to incline the young branch, by ceaseless pressure and careful fastenings, to grow in the proper direction. Everything was tried. The boy was sent on a continental tour with a picked body of tutors, but the results were unsatisfactory. At his father's request he kept a diary which, on his return, was inspected by the Prince. It was found to be distressingly meager: what a multitude of highly interesting reflections might have been arranged under the heading: "The First Prince of Wales visiting the Pope!" But there was not a single one. "Le jeune prince plaisit à

tout le monde," old Metternich reported to Guizot, "mais avait l'air embarrassé et très triste." On his seventeenth birthday a memorandum was drawn up over the names of the Queen and the Prince informing their eldest son that he was now entering upon the period of manhood, and directing him henceforward to perform the duties of a Christian gentleman. "Life is composed of duties," said the memorandum, "and in the due, punctual and cheerful performance of them the true Christian, true soldier, and true gentleman is recognized. . . . A new sphere of life will open for you in which you will have to be taught what to do and what not to do, a subject requiring study more important than any in which you have hitherto been engaged." On receipt of the memorandum Bertie burst into tears. At the same time another memorandum was drawn up, headed "confidential: for the guidance of the gentlemen appointed to attend on the Prince of Wales." This long and elaborate document laid down "certain principles" by which the "conduct and demeanor" of the gentlemen were to be regulated "and which it is thought may conduce to the benefit of the Prince of Wales." "The qualities which distinguish a gentleman in society," continued this remarkable paper, "are:—

(1) His appearance, his deportment and dress.

(2) The character of his relations with, and treatment of, others.

(3) His desire and power to acquit himself creditably in conversation or whatever is the occupation of the society with which he mixes."

A minute and detailed analysis of these sub-headings followed, filling several pages, and the memorandum ended with a final exhortation to the gentlemen: "If they will duly appreciate the responsibility of their position, and taking the points above laid down as the outline, will exercise their own good sense in acting *upon all occasions* upon these principles, thinking no point of detail too minute to be important, but maintaining one steady consistent line of conduct, they may render essential service to the young Prince and justify the flattering selection made by the royal parents." A year later the young Prince was sent to Oxford, where the greatest care was taken that he should not mix with the undergraduates. Yes, everything had been tried—everything . . . with one single exception. The experiment had never been made of letting Bertie enjoy himself. But why should it have been? "Life is composed of duties." What possible place could there be for enjoyment in the existence of a Prince of Wales?

The same year which deprived Albert of the Princess Royal brought him another and a still more serious loss. The Baron had paid his last visit to England. For twenty years, as he himself said in a letter to the King of the Belgians, he had performed "the laborious and exhausting office of a paternal friend and trusted adviser" to the Prince and the Queen. He was seventy; he was tired, physically and mentally; it was time to go. He returned to his home in Coburg, exchanging, once for all, the momentous secrecies of European statecraft for the tittle-tattle of a provincial capital and the gossip of family life. In his stiff chair by the fire he nodded now over old stories—not of emperors and generals—but of neighbors and relatives and the domestic adventures of long ago—the burning of his father's library—and the goat that ran upstairs to his sister's room and ran twice round the table and then ran down again. Dyspepsia and depression still attacked him; but, looking back over his life,

he was not dissatisfied. His conscience was clear. "I have worked as long as I had strength to work," he said, "and for a purpose no one can impugn. The consciousness of this is my reward—the only one which I desired to earn."

Apparently, indeed, his "purpose" had been accomplished. By his wisdom, his patience, and his example he had brought about, in the fullness of time, the miraculous metamorphosis of which he had dreamed. The Prince was his creation. An indefatigable toiler, presiding, for the highest ends, over a great nation—that was his achievement; and he looked upon his work and it was good. But had the Baron no misgivings? Did he never wonder whether, perhaps, he might have accomplished not too little but too much? How subtle and how dangerous are the snares which fate lays for the wariest of men! Albert, certainly, seemed to be everything that Stockmar could have wished—virtuous, industrious, persevering, intelligent. And yet—why was it?—all was not well with him. He was sick at heart.

For in spite of everything he had never reached to happiness. His work, for which at last he came to crave with an almost morbid appetite, was a solace and not a cure; the dragon of his dissatisfaction devoured with dark relish that ever-growing tribute of laborious days and nights; but it was hungry still. The causes of his melancholy were hidden, mysterious, unanalyzable perhaps—too deeply rooted in the innermost recesses of his temperament for the eye of reason to apprehend. There were contradictions in his nature, which, to some of those who knew him best, made him seem an inexplicable enigma: he was severe and gentle; he was modest and scornful; he longed for affection and he was cold. He was lonely, not merely with the loneliness of exile but with the loneliness of conscious and unrecognized superiority. He had the pride, at once resigned and overweening, of a doctrinaire. And yet to say that he was simply a doctrinaire would be a false description; for the pure doctrinaire rejoices always in an internal contentment, and Albert was very far from doing that. There was something that he wanted and that he could never get. What was it? Some absolute, some ineffable sympathy? Some extraordinary, some sublime success? Possibly, it was a mixture of both. To dominate and to be understood! To conquer, by the same triumphant influence, the submission and the appreciation of men—that would be worth while indeed! But, to such imaginations, he saw too clearly how faint were the responses of his actual environment. Who was there who appreciated him, really and truly? Who *could* appreciate him in England? And, if the gentle virtue of an inward excellence availed so little, could he expect more from the hard ways of skill and force? The terrible land of his exile loomed before him a frigid, an impregnable mass. Doubtless he had made some slight impression: it was true that he had gained the respect of his fellow workers, that his probity, his industry, his exactitude, had been recognized, that he was a highly influential, an extremely important man. But how far, how very far, was all this from the goal of his ambitions! How feeble and futile his efforts seemed against the enormous coagulation of dullness, of folly, of slackness, of ignorance, of confusion that confronted him! He might have the strength or the ingenuity to make some small change for the better here or there—to rearrange some detail, to abolish some anomaly, to insist upon some obvious reform; but the heart of the appalling organism

remained untouched. England lumbered on, impervious and self-satisfied, in her old intolerable course. He threw himself across the path of the monster with rigid purpose and set teeth, but he was brushed aside. Yes! even Palmerston was still unconquered—was still there to afflict him with his jauntiness, his muddle-headedness, his utter lack of principle. It was too much. Neither nature nor the Baron had given him a sanguine spirit; the seeds of pessimism, once lodged within him, flourished in a propitious soil. He

> questioned things, and did not find
> One that would answer to his mind;
> And all the world appeared unkind.

He believed that he was a failure and he began to despair.

Yet Stockmar had told him that he must "never relax," and he never would. He would go on, working to the utmost and striving for the highest, to the bitter end. His industry grew almost maniacal. Earlier and earlier was the green lamp lighted; more vast grew the correspondence; more searching the examination of the newspapers; the interminable memoranda more punctilious, analytical, and precise. His very recreations became duties. He enjoyed himself by time-table, went deer-stalking with meticulous gusto, and made puns at lunch—it was the right thing to do. The mechanism worked with astonishing efficiency, but it never rested and it was never oiled. In dry exactitude the innumerable cog-wheels perpetually revolved. No, whatever happened, the Prince would not relax; he had absorbed the doctrines of Stockmar too thoroughly. He knew what was right, and, at all costs, he would pursue it. That was certain. But alas! in this our life what are the certainties? "In nothing be over-zealous!" says an old Greek. "The due measure in all the works of man is best. For often one who zealously pushes towards some excellence, though he be pursuing a gain, is really being led utterly astray by the will of some Power, which makes those things that are evil seem to him good, and those things seem to him evil that are for his advantage." Surely, both the Prince and the Baron might have learnt something from the frigid wisdom of Theognis.

Victoria noticed that her husband sometimes seemed to be depressed and overworked. She tried to cheer him up. Realizing uneasily that he was still regarded as a foreigner, she hoped that by conferring upon him the title of Prince Consort (1857) she would improve his position in the country. "The Queen has a right to claim that her husband should be an Englishman," she wrote. But unfortunately, in spite of the Royal Letters Patent, Albert remained as foreign as before; and as the years passed his dejection deepened. She worked with him, she watched over him, she walked with him through the woods at Osborne, while he whistled to the nightingales, as he had whistled once at Rosenau so long ago. When his birthday came round, she took the greatest pains to choose him presents that he would really like. In 1858, when he was thirty-nine, she gave him "a picture of Beatrice, life-size, in oil, by Horsley, a complete collection of photographic views of Gotha and the country round, which I had taken by Bedford, and a paper-weight of Balmoral granite and deers' teeth, designed by Vicky." Albert was of course delighted, and his

merriment at the family gathering was more pronounced than ever: and yet . . . what was there that was wrong?

No doubt it was his health. He was wearing himself out in the service of the country; and certainly his constitution, as Stockmar had perceived from the first, was ill-adapted to meet a serious strain. He was easily upset; he constantly suffered from minor ailments. His appearance in itself was enough to indicate the infirmity of his physical powers. The handsome youth of twenty years since with the flashing eyes and the soft complexion had grown into a sallow, tired-looking man, whose body, in its stoop and its loose fleshiness, betrayed the sedentary laborer, and whose head was quite bald on the top. Unkind critics, who had once compared Albert to an operatic tenor, might have remarked that there was something of the butler about him now. Beside Victoria, he presented a painful contrast. She, too, was stout, but it was with the plumpness of a vigorous matron; and an eager vitality was everywhere visible—in her energetic bearing, her protruding, enquiring glances, her small, fat, capable, and commanding hands. If only, by some sympathetic magic, she could have conveyed into that portly, flabby figure, that desiccated and discouraged brain, a measure of the stamina and the self-assurance which were so preeminently hers!

But suddenly she was reminded that there were other perils besides those of ill-health. During a visit to Coburg in 1860, the Prince was very nearly killed in a carriage accident. He escaped with a few cuts and bruises; but Victoria's alarm was extreme, though she concealed it. "It is when the Queen feels most deeply," she wrote afterwards, "that she always appears calmest, and she could not and dared not allow herself to speak of what might have been, or even to admit to herself (and she cannot and dare not now) the entire danger, for her head would turn!" Her agitation, in fact, was only surpassed by her thankfulness to God. She felt, she said, that she could not rest "without doing something to mark permanently her feelings," and she decided that she would endow a charity in Coburg. "£1,000, or even £2,000, given either at once, or in installments yearly, would not, in the Queen's opinion, be too much." Eventually, the smaller sum having been fixed upon, it was invested in a trust, called the "Victoria-Stift," in the name of the Burgomaster and chief clergyman of Coburg, who were directed to distribute the interest yearly among a certain number of young men and women of exemplary character belonging to the humbler ranks of life.

Shortly afterwards the Queen underwent, for the first time in her life, the actual experience of close personal loss. Early in 1861 the Duchess of Kent was taken seriously ill, and in March she died. The event overwhelmed Victoria. With a morbid intensity, she filled her diary for pages with minute descriptions of her mother's last hours, her dissolution, and her corpse, interspersed with vehement apostrophes, and the agitated outpourings of emotional reflection. In the grief of the present the disagreements of the past were totally forgotten. It was the horror and the mystery of Death—Death, present and actual—that seized upon the imagination of the Queen. Her whole being, so instinct with vitality, recoiled in agony from the grim spectacle of the triumph of that awful power. Her own mother, with whom she had lived so closely

and so long that she had become a part almost of her existence, had fallen into nothingness before her very eyes! She tried to forget, but she could not. Her lamentations continued with a strange abundance, a strange persistency. It was almost as if, by some mysterious and unconscious precognition, she realized that for her, in an especial manner, that grisly Majesty had a dreadful dart in store.

For indeed, before the year was out, a far more terrible blow was to fall upon her. Albert, who had for long been suffering from sleeplessness, went, on a cold and drenching day towards the end of November, to inspect the buildings for the new Military Academy at Sandhurst. On his return, it was clear that the fatigue and exposure to which he had been subjected had seriously affected his health. He was attacked by rheumatism, his sleeplessness continued, and he complained that he felt thoroughly unwell. Three days later a painful duty obliged him to visit Cambridge. The Prince of Wales, who had been placed at that University in the previous year, was behaving in such a manner that a parental visit and a parental admonition had become necessary. The disappointed father, suffering in mind and body, carried through his task; but, on his return journey to Windsor, he caught a fatal chill. During the next week he gradually grew weaker and more miserable. Yet, depressed and enfeebled as he was, he continued to work. It so happened that at that very moment a grave diplomatic crisis had arisen. Civil war had broken out in America, and it seemed as if England, owing to a violent quarrel with the Northern States, was upon the point of being drawn into the conflict. A severe despatch by Lord John Russell was submitted to the Queen; and the Prince perceived that, if it was sent off unaltered, war would be the almost inevitable consequence. At seven o'clock on the morning of December 1, he rose from his bed, and with a quavering hand wrote a series of suggestions for the alteration of the draft, by which its language might be softened, and a way left open for a peaceful solution of the question. These changes were accepted by the Government, and war was averted It was the Prince's last memorandum.

He had always declared that he viewed the prospect of death with equanimity. "I do not cling to life," he had once said to Victoria. "You do; but I set no store by it." And then he had added: "I am sure, if I had a severe illness, I should give up at once, I should not struggle for life. I have no tenacity of life." He had judged correctly. Before he had been ill many days, he told a friend that he was convinced he would not recover. He sank and sank. Nevertheless, if his case had been properly understood and skillfully treated from the first, he might conceivably have been saved; but the doctors failed to diagnose his symptoms; and it is noteworthy that his principal physician was Sir James Clark. When it was suggested that other advice should be taken, Sir James pooh-poohed the idea: "there was no cause for alarm," he said. But the strange illness grew worse. At last, after a letter of fierce remonstrance from Palmerston, Dr. Watson was sent for; and Dr. Watson saw at once that he had come too late. The Prince was in the grip of typhoid fever. "I think that everything so far is satisfactory," said Sir James Clark.

The restlessness and the acute suffering of the earlier days gave place to a settled torpor and an ever-deepening gloom. Once the failing patient asked for

music—"a fine chorale at a distance"; and a piano having been placed in the adjoining room, Princess Alice played on it some of Luther's hymns, after which the Prince repeated "The Rock of Ages." Sometimes his mind wandered; sometimes the distant past came rushing upon him; he heard the birds in the early morning, and was at Rosenau again, a boy. Or Victoria would come and read to him *Peveril of the Peak*, and he showed that he could follow the story, and then she would bend over him, and he would murmur "liebes Frauchen" and "gutes Weibchen," stroking her cheek. Her distress and her agitation were great, but she was not seriously frightened. Buoyed up by her own abundant energies, she would not believe that Albert's might prove unequal to the strain. She refused to face such a hideous possibility. She declined to see Dr. Watson. Why should she? Had not Sir James Clark assured her that all would be well? Only two days before the end, which was seen now to be almost inevitable by every one about her, she wrote, full of apparent confidence, to the King of the Belgians: "I do not sit up with him at night," she said, "as I could be of no use; and there is nothing to cause alarm." The Princess Alice tried to tell her the truth, but her hopefulness would not be daunted. On the morning of December 14, Albert, just as she had expected, seemed to be better; perhaps the crisis was over. But in the course of the day there was a serious relapse. Then at last she allowed herself to see that she was standing on the edge of an appalling gulf. The whole family was summoned, and, one after another, the children took a silent farewell of their father. "It was a terrible moment," Victoria wrote in her diary, "but, thank God! I was able to command myself, and to be perfectly calm, and remained sitting by his side." He murmured something, but she could not hear what it was; she thought he was speaking in French. Then all at once he began to arrange his hair, "just as he used to do when well and he was dressing." "Es ist kleines Frauchen," she whispered to him; and he seemed to understand. For a moment, towards the evening, she went into another room, but was immediately called back; she saw at a glance that a ghastly change had taken place. As she knelt by the bed, he breathed deeply, breathed gently, breathed at last no more. His features became perfectly rigid; she shrieked one long wild shriek that rang through the terror-stricken castle—and understood that she had lost him forever.

VII. WIDOWHOOD

THE DEATH of the Prince Consort was the central turning-point in the history of Queen Victoria. She herself felt that her true life had ceased with her husband's, and that the remainder of her days upon earth was of a twilight nature—an epilogue to a drama that was done. Nor is it possible that her biographer should escape a similar impression. For him, too, there is a darkness over the latter half of that long career. The first forty-two years of the Queen's life are illuminated by a great and varied quantity of authentic information. With Albert's death a veil descends. Only occasionally, at fitful and disconnected intervals, does it lift for a moment or two; a few main outlines, a few remarkable details may be discerned; the rest is all conjecture and ambiguity. Thus, though the Queen survived her great bereavement for almost as many years as she had lived before it, the chronicle of those years can bear

no proportion to the tale of her earlier life. We must be content in our ignorance with a brief and summary relation.

The sudden removal of the Prince was not merely a matter of overwhelming personal concern to Victoria; it was an event of national, of European importance. He was only forty-two, and in the ordinary course of nature he might have been expected to live at least thirty years longer. Had he done so it can hardly be doubted that the whole development of the English polity would have been changed. Already at the time of his death he filled a unique place in English public life; already among the inner circle of politicians he was accepted as a necessary and useful part of the mechanism of the State. Lord Clarendon, for instance, spoke of his death as "a national calamity of far greater importance than the public dream of," and lamented the loss of his "sagacity and foresight," which, he declared, would have been "more than ever valuable" in the event of an American war. And, as time went on, the Prince's influence must have enormously increased. For, in addition to his intellectual and moral qualities, he enjoyed, by virtue of his position, one supreme advantage which every other holder of high office in the country was without: he was permanent. Politicians came and went, but the Prince was perpetually installed at the center of affairs. Who can doubt that, towards the end of the century, such a man, grown gray in the service of the nation, virtuous, intelligent, and with the unexampled experience of a whole life-time of government, would have acquired an extraordinary prestige? If, in his youth, he had been able to pit the Crown against the mighty Palmerston and to come off with equal honors from the contest, of what might he not have been capable in his old age? What Minister, however able, however popular, could have withstood the wisdom, the irreproachability, the vast prescriptive authority, of the venerable Prince? It is easy to imagine how, under such a ruler, an attempt might have been made to convert England into a State as exactly organized, as elaborately trained, as efficiently equipped, and as autocratically controlled, as Prussia herself. Then perhaps, eventually, under some powerful leader—a Gladstone or a Bright—the democratic forces in the country might have rallied together, and a struggle might have followed in which the Monarchy would have been shaken to its foundations. Or, on the other hand, Disraeli's hypothetical prophecy might have come true. "With Prince Albert," he said, "we have buried our sovereign. This German Prince has governed England for twenty-one years with a wisdom and energy such as none of our kings have ever shown. . . . If he had outlived some of our 'old stagers' he would have given us the blessings of absolute government."

The English Constitution—that indescribable entity—is a living thing, growing with the growth of men, and assuming ever-varying forms in accordance with the subtle and complex laws of human character. It is the child of wisdom and chance. The wise men of 1688 molded it into the shape we know; but the chance that George I could not speak English gave it one of its essential peculiarities—the system of a Cabinet independent of the Crown and subordinate to the Prime Minister. The wisdom of Lord Grey saved it from petrifaction and destruction, and set it upon the path of Democracy. Then chance intervened once more; a female sovereign happened to marry an able and perti-

nacious man; and it seemed likely that an element which had been quiescent within it for years—the element of irresponsible administrative power—was about to become its predominant characteristic and to change completely the direction of its growth. But what chance gave chance took away. The Consort perished in his prime; and the English Constitution, dropping the dead limb with hardly a tremor, continued its mysterious life as if he had never been.

One human being, and one alone, felt the full force of what had happened. The Baron, by his fireside at Coburg, suddenly saw the tremendous fabric of his creation crash down into sheer and irremediable ruin. Albert was gone, and he had lived in vain. Even his blackest hypochondria had never envisioned quite so miserable a catastrophe. Victoria wrote to him, visited him, tried to console him by declaring with passionate conviction that she would carry on her husband's work. He smiled a sad smile and looked into the fire. Then he murmured that he was going where Albert was—that he would not be long. He shrank into himself. His children clustered round him and did their best to comfort him, but it was useless: the Baron's heart was broken. He lingered for eighteen months, and then, with his pupil, explored the shadow and the dust.

II

With appalling suddenness Victoria had exchanged the serene radiance of happiness for the utter darkness of woe. In the first dreadful moments those about her had feared that she might lose her reason, but the iron strain within her held firm, and in the intervals between the intense paroxysms of grief it was observed that the Queen was calm. She remembered, too, that Albert had always disapproved of exaggerated manifestations of feeling, and her one remaining desire was to do nothing but what he would have wished. Yet there were moments when her royal anguish would brook no restraints. One day she sent for the Duchess of Sutherland, and, leading her to the Prince's room, fell prostrate before his clothes in a flood of weeping, while she adjured the Duchess to tell her whether the beauty of Albert's character had ever been surpassed. At other times a feeling akin to indignation swept over her. "The poor fatherless baby of eight months," she wrote to the King of the Belgians, "is now the utterly heartbroken and crushed widow of forty-two! My *life* as a *happy* one is *ended!* The world is gone for *me!* . . . Oh! to be cut off in the prime of life —to see our pure, happy, quiet, domestic life, which *alone* enabled me to bear my *much* disliked position, CUT OFF at forty-two—when I *had* hoped with such instinctive certainty that God never *would* part us, and would let us grow old together (though *he* always talked of the shortness of life)—is *too awful,* too cruel!" The tone of outraged Majesty seems to be discernible. Did she wonder in her heart of hearts how the Deity could have dared?

But all other emotions gave way before her overmastering determination to continue, absolutely unchanged, and for the rest of her life on earth, her reverence, her obedience, her idolatry. "I am anxious to repeat *one* thing," she told her uncle, "and *that one* is *my firm* resolve, my *irrevocable decision,* viz., that *his* wishes—*his* plans—about everything, *his* views about *every* thing are to be *my law!* And *no human power* will make me swerve from *what he* decided and wished." She grew fierce, she grew furious, at the thought of any possible

intrusion between her and her desire. Her uncle was coming to visit her, and it flashed upon her that *he* might try to interfere with her and seek to "rule the roast" as of old. She would give him a hint. "I am *also determined,*" she wrote, "that *no one* person—may *he* be ever so good, ever so devoted among my servants—is to lead or guide or dictate *to me*. I know *how he* would disapprove it . . . Though miserably weak and utterly shattered, my spirit rises when I think *any* wish or plan of his is to be touched or changed, or I am to be *made to do* anything." She ended her letter in grief and affection. She was, she said, his "ever wretched but devoted child, Victoria R." And then she looked at the date: it was the 24th of December. An agonizing pang assailed her, and she dashed down a postscript—"What a Xmas! I won't think of it."

At first, in the tumult of her distresses, she declared that she could not see her Ministers, and the Princess Alice, assisted by Sir Charles Phipps, the keeper of the Privy Purse, performed, to the best of her ability, the functions of an intermediary. After a few weeks, however, the Cabinet, through Lord John Russell, ventured to warn the Queen that this could not continue. She realized that they were right: Albert would have agreed with them; and so she sent for the Prime Minister. But when Lord Palmerston arrived at Osborne, in the pink of health, brisk, with his whiskers freshly dyed, and dressed in a brown overcoat, light gray trousers, green gloves, and blue studs, he did not create a very good impression.

Nevertheless, she had grown attached to her old enemy, and the thought of a political change filled her with agitated apprehensions. The Government, she knew, might fall at any moment; she felt she could not face such an eventuality; and therefore, six months after the death of the Prince, she took the unprecedented step of sending a private message to Lord Derby, the leader of the Opposition, to tell him that she was not in a fit state of mind or body to undergo the anxiety of a change of Government, and that if he turned the present Ministers out of office it would be at the risk of sacrificing her life—or her reason. When this message reached Lord Derby he was considerably surprised. "Dear me!" was his cynical comment. "I didn't think she was so fond of them as *that.*"

Though the violence of her perturbations gradually subsided, her cheerfulness did not return. For months, for years, she continued in settled gloom. Her life became one of almost complete seclusion. Arrayed in thickest *crêpe,* she passed dolefully from Windsor to Osborne, from Osborne to Balmoral. Rarely visiting the capital, refusing to take any part in the ceremonies of state, shutting herself off from the slightest intercourse with society, she became almost as unknown to her subjects as some potentate of the East. They might murmur, but they did not understand. What had she to do with empty shows and vain enjoyments? No! She was absorbed by very different preoccupations. She was the devoted guardian of a sacred trust. Her place was in the inmost shrine of the house of mourning—where she alone had the right to enter, where she could feel the effluence of a mysterious presence, and interpret, however faintly and feebly, the promptings of a still living soul. That, and that only, was her glorious, her terrible duty. For terrible indeed it was. As the years passed her depression seemed to deepen and her loneliness to grow more intense. "I am

on a dreary sad pinnacle of solitary grandeur," she said. Again and again she felt that she could bear her situation no longer—that she would sink under the strain. And then, instantly, that Voice spoke: and she braced herself once more to perform, with minute conscientiousness, her grim and holy task.

Above all else, what she had to do was to make her own the master-impulse of Albert's life—she must work, as he had worked, in the service of the country. That vast burden of toil which he had taken upon his shoulders it was now for her to bear. She assumed the gigantic load; and naturally she staggered under it. While he had lived, she had worked, indeed, with regularity and conscientiousness; but it was work made easy, made delicious, by his care, his forethought, his advice, and his infallibility. The mere sound of his voice, asking her to sign a paper, had thrilled her; in such a presence she could have labored gladly forever. But now there was a hideous change. Now there were no neat piles and docketings under the green lamp; now there were no simple explanations of difficult matters; now there was nobody to tell her what was right and what was wrong. She had her secretaries, no doubt: there were Sir Charles Phipps, and General Grey, and Sir Thomas Biddulph; and they did their best. But they were mere subordinates: the whole weight of initiative and responsibility rested upon her alone. For so it had to be. "I am *determined*"—had she not declared it?—"that *no one* person is to lead or guide or dictate to *me*"; anything else would be a betrayal of her trust. She would follow the Prince in all things. He had refused to delegate authority; he had examined into every detail with his own eyes; he had made it a rule never to sign a paper without having first, not merely read it, but made notes on it too. She would do the same. She sat from morning till night surrounded by huge heaps of despatch-boxes, reading and writing at her desk—at her desk, alas! which stood alone now in the room.

Within two years of Albert's death a violent disturbance in foreign politics put Victoria's faithfulness to a crucial test. The fearful Schleswig-Holstein dispute, which had been smoldering for more than a decade, showed signs of bursting out into conflagration. The complexity of the questions at issue was indescribable. "Only three people," said Palmerston, "have ever really understood the Schleswig-Holstein business—the Prince Consort, who is dead—a German professor, who has gone mad—and I, who have forgotten all about it." But, though the Prince might be dead, had he not left a vicegerent behind him? Victoria threw herself into the seething embroilment with the vigor of inspiration. She devoted hours daily to the study of the affair in all its windings; but she had a clew through the labyrinth: whenever the question had been discussed, Albert, she recollected it perfectly, had always taken the side of Prussia. Her course was clear. She became an ardent champion of the Prussian point of view. It was a legacy from the Prince, she said. She did not realize that the Prussia of the Prince's day was dead, and that a new Prussia, the Prussia of Bismarck, was born. Perhaps Palmerston, with his queer prescience, instinctively apprehended the new danger; at any rate, he and Lord John were agreed upon the necessity of supporting Denmark against Prussia's claims. But opinion was sharply divided, not only in the country but in the Cabinet. For eighteen months the controversy raged; while the Queen, with persistent vehemence,

opposed the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary. When at last the final crisis arose—when it seemed possible that England would join forces with Denmark in a war against Prussia—Victoria's agitation grew febrile in its intensity. Towards her German relatives she preserved a discreet appearance of impartiality; but she poured out upon her Ministers a flood of appeals, protests, and expostulations. She invoked the sacred cause of Peace. "The only chance of preserving peace for Europe," she wrote, "is by not assisting Denmark, who has brought this entirely upon herself. . . . The Queen suffers much, and her nerves are more and more totally shattered. . . . But though all this anxiety is wearing her out, it will not shake her firm purpose of resisting any attempt to involve this country in a mad and useless combat." She was, she declared, "prepared to make a stand," even if the resignation of the Foreign Secretary should follow. "The Queen," she told Lord Granville, "is completely exhausted by the anxiety and suspense, and misses her beloved husband's help, advice, support, and love in an overwhelming manner." She was so worn out by her efforts for peace that she could "hardly hold up her head or hold her pen." England did not go to war, and Denmark was left to her fate; but how far the attitude of the Queen contributed to this result it is impossible, with our present knowledge, to say. On the whole, however, it seems probable that the determining factor in the situation was the powerful peace party in the Cabinet rather than the imperious and pathetic pressure of Victoria.

It is, at any rate, certain that the Queen's enthusiasm for the sacred cause of peace was short-lived. Within a few months her mind had completely altered. Her eyes were opened to the true nature of Prussia, whose designs upon Austria were about to culminate in the Seven Weeks' War. Veering precipitately from one extreme to the other, she now urged her Ministers to interfere by force of arms in support of Austria. But she urged in vain.

Her political activity, no more than her social seclusion, was approved by the public. As the years passed, and the royal mourning remained as unrelieved as ever, the animadversions grew more general and more severe. It was observed that the Queen's protracted privacy not only cast a gloom over high society, not only deprived the populace of its pageantry, but also exercised a highly deleterious effect upon the dressmaking, millinery, and hosiery trades. This latter consideration carried great weight. At last, early in 1864, the rumor spread that Her Majesty was about to go out of mourning, and there was much rejoicing in the newspapers; but unfortunately it turned out that the rumor was quite without foundation. Victoria, with her own hand, wrote a letter to *The Times* to say so. "This idea," she declared, "cannot be too explicitly contradicted." "The Queen," the letter continued, "heartily appreciates the desire of her subjects to see her, and whatever she *can* do to gratify them in this loyal and affectionate wish, she *will* do. . . . But there are other and higher duties than those of mere representation which are now thrown upon the Queen, alone and unassisted—duties which she cannot neglect without injury to the public service, which weigh unceasingly upon her, overwhelming her with work and anxiety." The justification might have been considered more cogent had it not been known that those "other and higher duties" emphasized by the Queen consisted for the most part of an attempt to counteract the foreign policy of Lord Palmer-

ston and Lord John Russell. A large section—perhaps a majority—of the nation were violent partisans of Denmark in the Schleswig-Holstein quarrel; and Victoria's support of Prussia was widely denounced. A wave of unpopularity, which reminded old observers of the period preceding the Queen's marriage more than twenty-five years before, was beginning to rise. The press was rude; Lord Ellenborough attacked the Queen in the House of Lords; there were curious whispers in high quarters that she had had thoughts of abdicating—whispers followed by regrets that she had not done so. Victoria, outraged and injured, felt that she was misunderstood. She was profoundly unhappy. After Lord Ellenborough's speech, General Grey declared that he "had never seen the Queen so completely upset." "Oh, how fearful it is," she herself wrote to Lord Granville, "to be suspected—uncheered—unguided and unadvised—and how alone the poor Queen feels!" Nevertheless, suffer as she might, she was as resolute as ever; she would not move by a hair's breadth from the course that a supreme obligation marked out for her; she would be faithful to the end.

And so, when Schleswig-Holstein was forgotten, and even the image of the Prince had begun to grow dim in the fickle memories of men, the solitary watcher remained immutably concentrated at her peculiar task. The world's hostility, steadily increasing, was confronted and outfaced by the impenetrable weeds of Victoria. Would the world never understand? It was not mere sorrow that kept her so strangely sequestered; it was devotion, it was self-immolation; it was the laborious legacy of love. Unceasingly the pen moved over the black-edged paper. The flesh might be weak, but that vast burden must be borne. And fortunately, if the world would not understand, there were faithful friends who did. There was Lord Granville, and there was kind Mr. Theodore Martin. Perhaps Mr. Martin, who was so clever, would find means to make people realize the facts. She would send him a letter, pointing out her arduous labors and the difficulties under which she struggled, and then he might write an article for one of the magazines. It is not, she told him in 1863, "the Queen's *sorrow* that keeps her secluded. . . . It is her *overwhelming work* and her health, which is greatly shaken by her sorrow, and the totally overwhelming amount of work and responsibility—work which she feels really wears her out. Alice Helps was wonderfully struck at the Queen's room; and if Mrs. Martin will look at it, she can tell Mr. Martin what surrounds her. From the hour she gets out of bed till she gets into it again there is work, work, work,—letter-boxes, questions, &c., which are dreadfully exhausting—and if she had not comparative rest and quiet in the evening she would most likely not be *alive*. Her brain is constantly overtaxed." It was too true.

III

To carry on Albert's work—that was her first duty; but there was another, second only to that, and yet nearer, if possible, to her heart—to impress the true nature of his genius and character upon the minds of her subjects. She realized that during his life he had not been properly appreciated; the full extent of his powers, the supreme quality of his goodness, had been necessarily concealed; but death had removed the need of barriers, and now her husband, in his magnificent entirety, should stand revealed to all. She set to work

methodically. She directed Sir Arthur Helps to bring out a collection of the Prince's speeches and addresses, and the weighty tome appeared in 1862. Then she commanded General Grey to write an account of the Prince's early years—from his birth to his marriage; she herself laid down the design of the book, contributed a number of confidential documents, and added numerous notes; General Grey obeyed, and the work was completed in 1866. But the principal part of the story was still untold, and Mr. Martin was forthwith instructed to write a complete biography of the Prince Consort. Mr. Martin labored for fourteen years. The mass of material with which he had to deal was almost incredible, but he was extremely industrious, and he enjoyed throughout the gracious assistance of Her Majesty. The first bulky volume was published in 1874; four others slowly followed; so that it was not until 1880 that the monumental work was finished.

Mr. Martin was rewarded by a knighthood; and yet it was sadly evident that neither Sir Theodore nor his predecessors had achieved the purpose which the Queen had in view. Perhaps she was unfortunate in her coadjutors, but, in reality, the responsibility for the failure must lie with Victoria herself. Sir Theodore and the others faithfully carried out the task which she had set them—faithfully put before the public the very image of Albert that filled her own mind. The fatal drawback was that the public did not find that image attractive. Victoria's emotional nature, far more remarkable for vigor than for subtlety, rejecting utterly the qualifications which perspicuity, or humor, might suggest, could be satisfied with nothing but the absolute and the categorical. When she disliked she did so with an unequivocal emphasis which swept the object of her repugnance at once and finally outside the pale of consideration; and her feelings of affection were equally unmitigated. In the case of Albert her passion for superlatives reached its height. To have conceived of him as anything short of perfect—perfect in virtue, in wisdom, in beauty, in all the glories and graces of man—would have been an unthinkable blasphemy: perfect he was, and perfect he must be shown to have been. And so, Sir Arthur, Sir Theodore, and the General painted him. In the circumstances, and under such supervision, to have done anything else would have required talents considerably more distinguished than any that those gentlemen possessed. But that was not all. By a curious mischance Victoria was also able to press into her service another writer, the distinction of whose talents was this time beyond a doubt. The Poet Laureate, adopting, either from complaisance or conviction, the tone of his sovereign, joined in the chorus, and endowed the royal formula with the magical resonance of verse. This settled the matter. Henceforward it was impossible to forget that Albert had worn the white flower of a blameless life.

The result was doubly unfortunate. Victoria, disappointed and chagrined, bore a grudge against her people for their refusal, in spite of all her efforts, to rate her husband at his true worth. She did not understand that the picture of an embodied perfection is distasteful to the majority of mankind. The cause of this is not so much an envy of the perfect being as a suspicion that he must be inhuman; and thus it happened that the public, when it saw displayed for its admiration a figure resembling the sugary hero of a moral story-book rather

than a fellow man of flesh and blood, turned away with a shrug, a smile, and a flippant ejaculation. But in this the public was the loser as well as Victoria. For in truth Albert was a far more interesting personage than the public dreamed. By a curious irony an impeccable waxwork had been fixed by the Queen's love in the popular imagination, while the creature whom it represented—the real creature, so full of energy and stress and torment, so mysterious and so unhappy, and so fallible and so very human—had altogether disappeared.

IV

Words and books may be ambiguous memorials; but who can misinterpret the visible solidity of bronze and stone? At Frogmore, near Windsor, where her mother was buried, Victoria constructed, at the cost of £200,000, a vast and elaborate mausoleum for herself and her husband. But that was a private and domestic monument, and the Queen desired that wherever her subjects might be gathered together they should be reminded of the Prince. Her desire was gratified; all over the country—at Aberdeen, at Perth, and at Wolverhampton—statues of the Prince were erected; and the Queen, making an exception to her rule of retirement, unveiled them herself. Nor did the capital lag behind. A month after the Prince's death a meeting was called together at the Mansion House to discuss schemes for honoring his memory. Opinions, however, were divided upon the subject. Was a statue or an institution to be preferred? Meanwhile a subscription was opened; an influential committee was appointed, and the Queen was consulted as to her wishes in the matter. Her Majesty replied that she would prefer a granite obelisk, with sculptures at the base, to an institution. But the committee hesitated: an obelisk, to be worthy of the name, must clearly be a monolith; and where was the quarry in England capable of furnishing a granite block of the required size? It was true that there was granite in Russian Finland; but the committee were advised that it was not adapted to resist exposure to the open air. On the whole, therefore, they suggested that a Memorial Hall should be erected, together with a statue of the Prince. Her Majesty assented; but then another difficulty arose. It was found that not more than £60,000 had been subscribed—a sum insufficient to defray the double expense. The Hall, therefore, was abandoned; a statue alone was to be erected; and certain eminent architects were asked to prepare designs. Eventually the committee had at their disposal a total sum of £120,000, since the public subscribed another £10,000, while £50,000 was voted by Parliament. Some years later a joint stock company was formed and built, as a private speculation, the Albert Hall.

The architect whose design was selected, both by the committee and by the Queen, was Mr. Gilbert Scott, whose industry, conscientiousness, and genuine piety had brought him to the head of his profession. His lifelong zeal for the Gothic style having given him a special prominence, his handiwork was strikingly visible, not only in a multitude of original buildings, but in most of the cathedrals of England. Protests, indeed, were occasionally raised against his renovations; but Mr. Scott replied with such vigor and unction in articles and pamphlets that not a Dean was unconvinced, and he was permitted to continue his labors without interruption. On one occasion, however, his devotion to

Gothic had placed him in an unpleasant situation. The Government offices in Whitehall were to be rebuilt; Mr. Scott competed, and his designs were successful. Naturally, they were in the Gothic style, combining "a certain squareness and horizontality of outline" with pillar-mullions, gables, high-pitched roofs, and dormers; and the drawings, as Mr. Scott himself observed, "were, perhaps, the best ever sent in to a competition, or nearly so." After the usual difficulties and delays the work was at last to be put in hand, when there was a change of Government and Lord Palmerston became Prime Minister. Lord Palmerston at once sent for Mr. Scott. "Well, Mr. Scott," he said, in his jaunty way, "I can't have anything to do with this Gothic style. I must insist on your making a design in the Italian manner, which I am sure you can do very cleverly." Mr. Scott was appalled; the style of the Italian renaissance was not only unsightly, it was positively immoral, and he sternly refused to have anything to do with it. Thereupon Lord Palmerston assumed a fatherly tone. "Quite true; a Gothic architect can't be expected to put up a Classical building; I must find some one else." This was intolerable, and Mr. Scott, on his return home, addressed to the Prime Minister a strongly-worded letter, in which he dwelt upon his position as an architect, upon his having won two European competitions, his being an A.R.A., a gold medalist of the Institute, and a lecturer on architecture at the Royal Academy; but it was useless—Lord Palmerston did not even reply. It then occurred to Mr. Scott that, by a judicious mixture, he might, while preserving the essential character of the Gothic, produce a design which would give a superficial impression of the Classical style. He did so, but no effect was produced upon Lord Palmerston. The new design, he said, was "neither one thing nor t'other—a regular mongrel affair—and he would have nothing to do with it either." After that Mr. Scott found it necessary to recruit for two months at Scarborough, "with a course of quinine." He recovered his tone at last, but only at the cost of his convictions. For the sake of his family he felt that it was his unfortunate duty to obey the Prime Minister; and, shuddering with horror, he constructed the Government offices in a strictly Renaissance style.

Shortly afterwards Mr. Scott found some consolation in building the St. Pancras Hotel in a style of his own.

And now another and yet more satisfactory task was his. "My idea in designing the Memorial," he wrote, "was to erect a kind of ciborium to protect a statue of the Prince; and its special characteristic was that the ciborium was designed in some degree on the principles of the ancient shrines. These shrines were models of imaginary buildings, such as had never in reality been erected; and my idea was to realize one of these imaginary structures with its precious materials, its inlaying, its enamels, &c. &c." His idea was particularly appropriate since it chanced that a similar conception, though in the reverse order of magnitude, had occurred to the Prince himself, who had designed and executed several silver cruet-stands upon the same model. At the Queen's request a site was chosen in Kensington Gardens as near as possible to that of the Great Exhibition; and in May, 1864, the first sod was turned. The work was long, complicated, and difficult; a great number of workmen were employed, besides several subsidiary sculptors and metal-workers under Mr. Scott's direction, while

at every stage sketches and models were submitted to Her Majesty, who criticized all the details with minute care, and constantly suggested improvements. The frieze, which encircled the base of the monument, was in itself a very serious piece of work. "This," said Mr. Scott, "taken as a whole, is perhaps one of the most laborious works of sculpture ever undertaken, consisting, as it does, of a continuous range of figure-sculpture of the most elaborate description, in the highest *alto-relievo* of life-size, of more than 200 feet in length, containing about 170 figures, and executed in the hardest marble which could be procured." After three years of toil the memorial was still far from completion, and Mr. Scott thought it advisable to give a dinner to the workmen, "as a substantial recognition of his appreciation of their skill and energy." "Two long tables," we are told, "constructed of scaffold planks, were arranged in the workshops, and covered with newspapers, for want of table-cloths. Upwards of eighty men sat down. Beef and mutton, plum pudding and cheese were supplied in abundance, and each man who desired it had three pints of beer, gingerbeer and lemonade being provided for the teetotalers, who formed a very considerable proportion. . . . Several toasts were given and many of the workmen spoke, almost all of them commencing by 'Thanking God that they enjoyed good health'; some alluded to the temperance that prevailed amongst them, others observed how little swearing was ever heard, whilst all said how pleased and proud they were to be engaged on so great a work."

Gradually the edifice approached completion. The one hundred and seventieth life-size figure in the frieze was chiseled, the granite pillars arose, the mosaics were inserted in the allegorical pediments, the four colossal statues representing the greater Christian virtues, the four other colossal statues representing the greater moral virtues, were hoisted into their positions, the eight bronzes representing the greater sciences—Astronomy, Chemistry, Geology, Geometry, Rhetoric, Medicine, Philosophy, and Physiology—were fixed on their glittering pinnacles, high in air. The statue of Physiology was particularly admired. "On her left arm," the official description informs us, "she bears a new-born infant, as a representation of the development of the highest and most perfect of physiological forms; her hand points towards a microscope, the instrument which lends its assistance for the investigation of the minuter forms of animal and vegetable organisms." At last the gilded cross crowned the dwindling galaxies of superimposed angels, the four continents in white marble stood at the four corners of the base, and, seven years after its inception, in July, 1872, the monument was thrown open to the public.

But four more years were to elapse before the central figure was ready to be placed under its starry canopy. It was designed by Mr. Foley, though in one particular the sculptor's freedom was restricted by Mr. Scott. "I have chosen the sitting posture," Mr. Scott said, "as best conveying the idea of dignity befitting a royal personage." Mr. Foley ably carried out the conception of his principle. "In the attitude and expression," he said, "the aim has been, with the individuality of portraiture, to embody rank, character, and enlightenment, and to convey a sense of that responsive intelligence indicating an active, rather than a passive, interest in those pursuits of civilization illustrated in the surrounding figures, groups, and relievos. . . . To identify the figure with one of the most

memorable undertakings of the public life of the Prince—the International Exhibition of 1851—a catalogue of the works collected in that first gathering of the industry of all nations, is placed in the right hand." The statue was of bronze gilt and weighed nearly ten tons. It was rightly supposed that the simple word "Albert," cast on the base, would be a sufficient means of identification.

VIII. MR. GLADSTONE AND LORD BEACONSFIELD

LORD PALMERSTON'S laugh—a queer metallic "Ha! ha! ha!" with reverberations in it from the days of Pitt and the Congress of Vienna—was heard no more in Piccadilly; Lord John Russell dwindled into senility; Lord Derby tottered from the stage. A new scene opened; and new protagonists—Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Disraeli—struggled together in the limelight. Victoria, from her post of vantage, watched these developments with that passionate and personal interest which she invariably imported into politics. Her prepossessions were of an unexpected kind. Mr. Gladstone had been the disciple of her revered Peel, and had won the approval of Albert; Mr. Disraeli had hounded Sir Robert to his fall with hideous virulence, and the Prince had pronounced that he "had not one single element of a gentleman in his composition." Yet she regarded Mr. Gladstone with a distrust and dislike which steadily deepened, while upon his rival she lavished an abundance of confidence, esteem, and affection such as Lord Melbourne himself had hardly known.

Her attitude towards the Tory Minister had suddenly changed when she found that he alone among public men had divined her feelings at Albert's death. Of the others she might have said "they pity me and not my grief"; but Mr. Disraeli had understood; and all his condolences had taken the form of reverential eulogies of the departed. The Queen declared that he was "the only person who appreciated the Prince." She began to show him special favor; gave him and his wife two of the coveted seats in St. George's Chapel at the Prince of Wales's wedding, and invited him to stay a night at Windsor. When the grant for the Albert Memorial came before the House of Commons, Disraeli, as leader of the Opposition, eloquently supported the project. He was rewarded by a copy of the Prince's speeches, bound in white morocco, with an inscription in the royal hand. In his letter of thanks he "ventured to touch upon a sacred theme," and, in a strain which reechoed with masterly fidelity the sentiments of his correspondent, dwelt at length upon the absolute perfection of Albert. "The Prince," he said, "is the only person whom Mr. Disraeli has ever known who realized the Ideal. None with whom he is acquainted have ever approached it. There was in him an union of the manly grace and sublime simplicity, of chivalry with the intellectual splendor of the Attic Academe. The only character in English history that would, in some respects, draw near to him is Sir Philip Sidney: the same high tone, the same universal accomplishments, the same blended tenderness and vigor, the same rare combination of romantic energy and classic repose." As for his own acquaintance with the Prince, it had been, he said, "one of the most satisfactory incidents of his life: full of refined and beautiful memories, and exercising, as he hopes, over his remaining existence, a soothing and exalting influence." Victoria was much affected by "the depth and delicacy of these touches," and henceforward

Disraeli's place in her affections was assured. When, in 1866, the Conservatives came into office, Disraeli's position as Chancellor of the Exchequer and leader of the House necessarily brought him into a closer relation with the Sovereign. Two years later Lord Derby resigned, and Victoria, with intense delight and peculiar graciousness, welcomed Disraeli as her First Minister.

But only for nine agitated months did he remain in power. The Ministry, in a minority in the Commons, was swept out of existence by a general election. Yet by the end of that short period the ties which bound together the Queen and her Premier had grown far stronger than ever before; the relationship between them was now no longer merely that between a grateful mistress and a devoted servant: they were friends. His official letters, in which the personal element had always been perceptible, developed into racy records of political news and social gossip, written, as Lord Clarendon said, "in his best novel style." Victoria was delighted; she had never, she declared, had such letters in her life, and had never before known *everything*. In return, she sent him, when the spring came, several bunches of flowers, picked by her own hands. He despatched to her a set of his novels, for which, she said, she was "most grateful, and which she values much." She herself had lately published her *Leaves from the Journal of our Life in the Highlands,* and it was observed that the Prime Minister, in conversing with Her Majesty at this period, constantly used the words "we authors, ma'am." Upon political questions, she was his staunch supporter. "Really there never was such conduct as that of the Opposition," she wrote. And when the Government was defeated in the House she was "really shocked at the way in which the House of Commons go on; they really bring discredit on Constitutional Government." She dreaded the prospect of a change; she feared that if the Liberals insisted upon disestablishing the Irish Church, her Coronation Oath might stand in the way. But a change there had to be, and Victoria vainly tried to console herself for the loss of her favorite Minister by bestowing a peerage upon Mrs. Disraeli.

Mr. Gladstone was in his shirt-sleeves at Hawarden, cutting down a tree, when the royal message was brought to him. "Very significant," he remarked, when he had read the letter, and went on cutting down his tree. His secret thoughts on the occasion were more explicit, and were committed to his diary. "The Almighty," he wrote, "seems to sustain and spare me for some purpose of His own, deeply unworthy as I know myself to be. Glory be to His name."

The Queen, however, did not share her new Minister's view of the Almighty's intentions. She could not believe that there was any divine purpose to be detected in the program of sweeping changes which Mr. Gladstone was determined to carry out. But what could she do? Mr. Gladstone, with his demonic energy and his powerful majority in the House of Commons, was irresistible; and for five years (1869-74) Victoria found herself condemned to live in an agitating atmosphere of interminable reform—reform in the Irish Church and the Irish land system, reform in education, reform in parliamentary elections, reform in the organization of the Army and the Navy, reform in the administration of justice. She disapproved, she struggled, she grew very angry; she felt that if Albert had been living things would never have happened so; but her protests and her complaints were alike unavailing. The mere effort of

grappling with the mass of documents which poured in upon her in an ever-growing flood was terribly exhausting. When the draft of the lengthy and intricate Irish Church Bill came before her, accompanied by an explanatory letter from Mr. Gladstone covering a dozen closely-written quarto pages, she almost despaired. She turned from the Bill to the explanation, and from the explanation back again to the Bill, and she could not decide which was the most confusing. But she had to do her duty: she had not only to read, but to make notes. At last she handed the whole heap of papers to Mr. Martin, who happened to be staying at Osborne, and requested him to make a précis of them. When he had done so, her disapproval of the measure became more marked than ever; but, such was the strength of the Government, she actually found herself obliged to urge moderation upon the Opposition, lest worse should ensue.

In the midst of this crisis, when the future of the Irish Church was hanging in the balance, Victoria's attention was drawn to another proposed reform. It was suggested that the sailors in the Navy should henceforward be allowed to wear beards. "Has Mr. Childers ascertained anything on the subject of the beards?" the Queen wrote anxiously to the First Lord of the Admiralty. On the whole, Her Majesty was in favor of the change. "Her own personal feeling," she wrote, "would be for the beards without the mustache, as the latter have rather a soldierlike appearance; but then the object in view would not be obtained, viz., to prevent the necessity of shaving. Therefore it had better be as proposed, the entire beard, only it should be kept short and very clean." After thinking over the question for another week, the Queen wrote a final letter. She wished, she said, "to make one additional observation respecting the beards, viz., that on no account should mustaches be allowed without beards. That must be clearly understood."

Changes in the Navy might be tolerated; to lay hands upon the Army was a more serious matter. From time immemorial there had been a particularly close connection between the Army and the Crown; and Albert had devoted even more time and attention to the details of military business than to the processes of fresco-painting or the planning of sanitary cottages for the deserving poor. But now there was to be a great alteration: Mr. Gladstone's fiat had gone forth, and the Commander-in-Chief was to be removed from his direct dependence upon the Sovereign, and made subordinate to Parliament and the Secretary of State for War. Of all the liberal reforms this was the one which aroused the bitterest resentment in Victoria. She considered that the change was an attack upon her personal position—almost an attack upon the personal position of Albert. But she was helpless, and the Prime Minister had his way. When she heard that the dreadful man had yet another reform in contemplation—that he was about to abolish the purchase of military commissions—she could only feel that it was just what might have been expected. For a moment she hoped that the House of Lords would come to the rescue; the Peers opposed the change with unexpected vigor; but Mr. Gladstone, more conscious than ever of the support of the Almighty, was ready with an ingenious device. The purchase of commissions had been originally allowed by Royal Warrant; it should now be disallowed by the same agency. Victoria was faced by a curi-

ous dilemma: she abominated the abolition of purchase; but she was asked to abolish it by an exercise of sovereign power which was very much to her taste. She did not hesitate for long; and when the Cabinet, in a formal minute, advised her to sign the Warrant, she did so with a good grace.

Unacceptable as Mr. Gladstone's policy was, there was something else about him which was even more displeasing to Victoria. She disliked his personal demeanor towards herself. It was not that Mr. Gladstone, in his intercourse with her, was in any degree lacking in courtesy or respect. On the contrary, an extraordinary reverence impregnated his manner, both in his conversation and his correspondence with the Sovereign. Indeed, with that deep and passionate conservatism which, to the very end of his incredible career, gave such an unexpected coloring to his inexplicable character, Mr. Gladstone viewed Victoria through a haze of awe which was almost religious—as a sacrosanct embodiment of venerable traditions—a vital element in the British Constitution —a Queen by Act of Parliament. But unfortunately the lady did not appreciate the compliment. The well-known complaint—"He speaks to me as if I were a public meeting"—whether authentic or no—and the turn of the sentence is surely a little too epigrammatic to be genuinely Victorian—undoubtedly expresses the essential element of her antipathy. She had no objection to being considered as an institution; she was one, and she knew it. But she was a woman too, and to be considered *only* as an institution—that was unbearable. And thus all Mr. Gladstone's zeal and devotion, his ceremonious phrases, his low bows, his punctilious correctitudes, were utterly wasted; and when, in the excess of his loyalty, he went further, and imputed to the object of his veneration, with obsequious blindness, the subtlety of intellect, the wide reading, the grave enthusiasm, which he himself possessed, the misunderstanding became complete. The discordance between the actual Victoria and this strange Divinity made in Mr. Gladstone's image produced disastrous results. Her discomfort and dislike turned at last into positive animosity, and, though her manners continued to be perfect, she never for a moment unbent; while he on his side was overcome with disappointment, perplexity, and mortification.

Yet his fidelity remained unshaken. When the Cabinet met, the Prime Minister, filled with his beatific vision, would open the proceedings by reading aloud the letters which he had received from the Queen upon the questions of the hour. The assembly sat in absolute silence while, one after another, the royal missives, with their emphases, their ejaculations, and their grammatical peculiarities, boomed forth in all the deep solemnity of Mr. Gladstone's utterance. Not a single comment, of any kind, was ever hazarded; and, after a fitting pause, the Cabinet proceeded with the business of the day.

II

Little as Victoria appreciated her Prime Minister's attitude towards her, she found that it had its uses. The popular discontent at her uninterrupted seclusion had been gathering force for many years, and now burst out in a new and alarming shape. Republicanism was in the air. Radical opinion in England, stimulated by the fall of Napoleon III and the establishment of a republican government in France, suddenly grew more extreme than it ever had

been since 1848. It also became for the first time almost respectable. Chartism had been entirely an affair of the lower classes; but now Members of Parliament, learned professors, and ladies of title openly avowed the most subversive views. The monarchy was attacked both in theory and in practice. And it was attacked at a vital point: it was declared to be too expensive. What benefits, it was asked, did the nation reap to counterbalance the enormous sums which were expended upon the Sovereign? Victoria's retirement gave an unpleasant handle to the argument. It was pointed out that the ceremonial functions of the Crown had virtually lapsed; and the awkward question remained whether any of the other functions which it did continue to perform were really worth £385,000 per annum. The royal balance-sheet was curiously examined. An anonymous pamphlet entitled "What does she do with it?" appeared, setting forth the financial position with malicious clarity. The Queen, it stated, was granted by the Civil List £60,000 a year for her private use; but the rest of her vast annuity was given, as the Act declared, to enable her "to defray the expenses of her royal household and to support the honor and dignity of the Crown." Now it was obvious that, since the death of the Prince, the expenditure for both these purposes must have been very considerably diminished, and it was difficult to resist the conclusion that a large sum of money was diverted annually from the uses for which it had been designed by Parliament, to swell the private fortune of Victoria. The precise amount of that private fortune it was impossible to discover; but there was reason to suppose that it was gigantic; perhaps it reached a total of five million pounds. The pamphlet protested against such a state of affairs, and its protests were repeated vigorously in newspapers and at public meetings. Though it is certain that the estimate of Victoria's riches was much exaggerated, it is equally certain that she was an exceedingly wealthy woman. She probably saved £20,000 a year from the Civil List, the revenues of the Duchy of Lancaster were steadily increasing, she had inherited a considerable property from the Prince Consort, and she had been left, in 1852, an estate of half a million by Mr. John Neild, an eccentric miser. In these circumstances it was not surprising that when, in 1871, Parliament was asked to vote a dowry of £30,000 to the Princess Louise on her marriage with the eldest son of the Duke of Argyle, together with an annuity of £6,000, there should have been a serious outcry.

In order to conciliate public opinion, the Queen opened Parliament in person, and the vote was passed almost unanimously. But a few months later another demand was made; the Prince Arthur had come of age, and the nation was asked to grant him an annuity of £15,000. The outcry was redoubled. The newspapers were filled with angry articles; Bradlaugh thundered against "princely paupers" to one of the largest crowds that had ever been seen in Trafalgar Square; and Sir Charles Dilke expounded the case for a republic in a speech to his constituents at Newcastle. The Prince's annuity was ultimately sanctioned in the House of Commons by a large majority; but a minority of fifty members voted in favor of reducing the sum to £10,000.

Towards every aspect of this distasteful question, Mr. Gladstone presented an iron front. He absolutely discountenanced the extreme section of his followers. He declared that the whole of the Queen's income was justly at her per-

sonal disposal, argued that to complain of royal savings was merely to encourage royal extravagance, and successfully convoyed through Parliament the unpopular annuities, which, he pointed out, were strictly in accordance with precedent. When, in 1872, Sir Charles Dilke once more returned to the charge in the House of Commons, introducing a motion for a full enquiry into the Queen's expenditure with a view to a root and branch reform of the Civil List, the Prime Minister brought all the resources of his powerful and ingenious eloquence to the support of the Crown. He was completely successful; and amid a scene of great disorder the motion was ignominiously dismissed. Victoria was relieved; but she grew no fonder of Mr. Gladstone.

It was perhaps the most miserable moment of her life. The Ministers, the press, the public, all conspired to vex her, to blame her, to misinterpret her actions, to be unsympathetic and disrespectful in every way. She was "a cruelly misunderstood woman," she told Mr. Martin, complaining to him bitterly of the unjust attacks which were made upon her, and declaring that "the great worry and anxiety and hard work for ten years, alone, unaided, with increasing age and never very strong health" were breaking her down, and "almost drove her to despair." The situation was indeed deplorable. It seemed as if her whole existence had gone awry; as if an irremediable antagonism had grown up between the Queen and the nation. If Victoria had died in the early seventies, there can be little doubt that the voice of the world would have pronounced her a failure.

III

But she was reserved for a very different fate. The outburst of republicanism had been in fact the last flicker of an expiring cause. The liberal tide, which had been flowing steadily ever since the Reform Bill, reached its height with Mr. Gladstone's first administration; and towards the end of that administration the inevitable ebb began. The reaction, when it came, was sudden and complete. The General Election of 1874 changed the whole face of politics. Mr. Gladstone and the Liberals were routed; and the Tory party, for the first time for over forty years, attained an unquestioned supremacy in England. It was obvious that their surprising triumph was preeminently due to the skill and vigor of Disraeli. He returned to office, no longer the dubious commander of an insufficient host, but with drums beating and flags flying, a conquering hero. And as a conquering hero Victoria welcomed her new Prime Minister.

Then there followed six years of excitement, of enchantment, of felicity, of glory, of romance. The amazing being, who now at last, at the age of seventy, after a lifetime of extraordinary struggles, had turned into reality the absurdest of his boyhood's dreams, knew well enough how to make his own, with absolute completeness, the heart of the Sovereign Lady whose servant, and whose master, he had so miraculously become. In women's hearts he had always read as in an open book. His whole career had turned upon those curious entities; and the more curious they were, the more intimately at home with them he seemed to be. But Lady Beaconsfield, with her cracked idolatry, and Mrs. Brydges-Williams, with her clogs, her corpulence, and her legacy, were gone: an even more remarkable phenomenon stood in their place. He surveyed what was before him with the eye of a past-master; and he was not for a moment at

a loss. He realized everything—the interacting complexities of circumstance and character, the pride of place mingled so inextricably with personal arrogance, the superabundant emotionalism, the ingenuousness of outlook, the solid, the laborious respectability, shot through so incongruously by temperamental cravings for the colored and the strange, the singular intellectual limitations, and the mysteriously essential female elements impregnating every particle of the whole. A smile hovered over his impassive features, and he dubbed Victoria "the Faery." The name delighted him, for, with that epigrammatic ambiguity so dear to his heart, it precisely expressed his vision of the Queen. The Spenserian allusion was very pleasant—the elegant evocations of Gloriana; but there was more in it than that: there was the suggestion of a diminutive creature, endowed with magical—and mythical—properties, and a portentousness almost ridiculously out of keeping with the rest of her make-up. The Faery, he determined, should henceforward wave her wand for him alone. Detachment is always a rare quality, and rarest of all, perhaps, among politicians; but that veteran egotist possessed it in a supreme degree. Not only did he know what he had to do, not only did he do it; he was in the audience as well as on the stage; and he took in with the rich relish of a connoisseur every feature of the entertaining situation, every phase of the delicate drama, and every detail of his own consummate performance.

The smile hovered and vanished, and, bowing low with Oriental gravity and Oriental submissiveness, he set himself to his task. He had understood from the first that in dealing with the Faery the appropriate method of approach was the very antithesis of the Gladstonian; and such a method was naturally his. It was not his habit to harangue and exhort and expatiate in official conscientiousness; he liked to scatter flowers along the path of business, to compress a weighty argument into a happy phrase, to insinuate what was in his mind with an air of friendship and confidential courtesy. He was nothing if not personal; and he had perceived that personality was the key that opened the Faery's heart. Accordingly, he never for a moment allowed his intercourse with her to lose the personal tone; he invested all the transactions of State with the charms of familiar conversation; she was always the royal lady, the adored and revered mistress, he the devoted and respectful friend. When once the personal relation was firmly established, every difficulty disappeared. But to maintain that relation uninterruptedly in a smooth and even course a particular care was necessary: the bearings had to be most assiduously oiled. Nor was Disraeli in any doubt as to the nature of the lubricant. "You have heard me called a flatterer," he said to Matthew Arnold, "and it is true. Every one likes flattery; and when you come to royalty you should lay it on with a trowel." He practiced what he preached. His adulation was incessant, and he applied it in the very thickest slabs. "There is no honor and no reward," he declared, "that with him can ever equal the possession of your Majesty's kind thoughts. All his own thoughts and feelings and duties and affections are now concentrated in your Majesty, and he desires nothing more for his remaining years than to serve your Majesty, or, if that service ceases, to live still on its memory as a period of his existence most interesting and fas-

ci "In life," he told her, "one must have for one's thoughts a sacred

depository, and Lord Beaconsfield ever presumes to seek that in his Sovereign Mistress." She was not only his own solitary support; she was the one prop of the State. "If your Majesty is ill," he wrote during a grave political crisis, "he is sure he will himself break down. All, really, depends upon your Majesty." "He lives only for Her," he asseverated, "and works only for Her, and without Her all is lost." When her birthday came he produced an elaborate confection of hyperbolic compliment. "Today Lord Beaconsfield ought fitly, perhaps, to congratulate a powerful Sovereign on her imperial sway, the vastness of her Empire, and the success and strength of her fleets and armies. But he cannot, his mind is in another mood. He can only think of the strangeness of his destiny that it has come to pass that he should be the servant of one so great, and whose infinite kindness, the brightness of whose intelligence and the firmness of whose will, have enabled him to undertake labors to which he otherwise would be quite unequal, and supported him in all things by a condescending sympathy, which in the hour of difficulty alike charms and inspires. Upon the Sovereign of many lands and many hearts may an omnipotent Providence shed every blessing that the wise can desire and the virtuous deserve!" In those expert hands the trowel seemed to assume the qualities of some lofty masonic symbol—to be the ornate and glittering vehicle of verities unrealized by the profane.

Such tributes were delightful, but they remained in the nebulous region of words, and Disraeli had determined to give his blandishments a more significant solidity. He deliberately encouraged those high views of her own position which had always been native to Victoria's mind and had been reenforced by the principles of Albert and the doctrines of Stockmar. He professed to a belief in a theory of the Constitution which gave the Sovereign a leading place in the councils of government; but his pronouncements upon the subject were indistinct; and when he emphatically declared that there ought to be "a real Throne," it was probably with the mental addition that that throne would be a very unreal one indeed whose occupant was unamenable to his cajoleries. But the vagueness of his language was in itself an added stimulant to Victoria. Skillfully confusing the woman and the Queen, he threw, with a grandiose gesture, the government of England at her feet, as if in doing so he were performing an act of personal homage. In his first audience after returning to power, he assured her that "whatever she wished should be done." When the intricate Public Worship Regulation Bill was being discussed by the Cabinet, he told the Faery that his "only object" was "to further your Majesty's wishes in this matter." When he brought off his great *coup* over the Suez Canal, he used expressions which implied that the only gainer by the transaction was Victoria. "It is just settled," he wrote in triumph; "you have it, Madam . . . Four millions sterling! and almost immediately. There was only one firm that could do it—Rothschilds. They behaved admirably; advanced the money at a low rate, and the entire interest of the Khedive is now yours, Madam." Nor did he limit himself to highly-spiced insinuations. Writing with all the authority of his office, he advised the Queen that she had the constitutional right to dismiss a Ministry which was supported by a large majority in the House of Commons; he even urged her to do so, if, in her opinion, "your Majesty's

Government have from willfulness, or even from weakness, deceived your Majesty." To the horror of Mr. Gladstone, he not only kept the Queen informed as to the general course of business in the Cabinet, but revealed to her the part taken in its discussions by individual members of it. Lord Derby, the son of the late Prime Minister and Disraeli's Foreign Secretary, viewed these developments with grave mistrust. "Is there not," he ventured to write to his Chief, "just a risk of encouraging her in too large ideas of her personal power, and too great indifference to what the public expects? I only ask; it is for you to judge."

As for Victoria, she accepted everything—compliments, flatteries, Elizabethan prerogatives—without a single qualm. After the long gloom of her bereavement, after the chill of the Gladstonian discipline, she expanded to the rays of Disraeli's devotion like a flower in the sun. The change in her situation was indeed miraculous. No longer was she obliged to puzzle for hours over the complicated details of business, for now she had only to ask Mr. Disraeli for an explanation, and he would give it her in the most concise, in the most amusing, way. No longer was she worried by alarming novelties; no longer was she put out at finding herself treated, by a reverential gentleman in high collars, as if she were some embodied precedent, with a recondite knowledge of Greek. And her deliverer was surely the most fascinating of men. The strain of charlatanism, which had unconsciously captivated her in Napoleon III, exercised the same enchanting effect in the case of Disraeli. Like a dram-drinker, whose ordinary life is passed in dull sobriety, her unsophisticated intelligence gulped down his rococo allurements with peculiar zest. She became intoxicated, entranced. Believing all that he told her of herself, she completely regained the self-confidence which had been slipping away from her throughout the dark period that followed Albert's death. She swelled with a new elation, while he, conjuring up before her wonderful Oriental visions, dazzled her eyes with an imperial grandeur of which she had only dimly dreamed. Under the compelling influence, her very demeanor altered. Her short, stout figure, with its folds of black velvet, its muslin streamers, its heavy pearls at the heavy neck, assumed an almost menacing air. In her countenance, from which the charm of youth had long since vanished, and which had not yet been softened by age, the traces of grief, of disappointment, and of displeasure were still visible, but they were overlaid by looks of arrogance and sharp lines of peremptory hauteur. Only, when Mr. Disraeli appeared, the expression changed in an instant, and the forbidding visage became charged with smiles. For him she would do anything. Yielding to his encouragements, she began to emerge from her seclusion; she appeared in London in semi-state, at hospitals and concerts; she opened Parliament; she reviewed troops and distributed medals at Aldershot. But such public signs of favor were trivial in comparison with her private attentions. During his hours of audience, she could hardly restrain her excitement and delight. "I can only describe my reception," he wrote to a friend on one occasion, "by telling you that I really thought she was going to embrace me. She was wreathed with smiles, and, as she tattled, glided about the room like a bird." In his absence, she talked of him perpetually, and there was a note of unusual vehemence in her solicitude for his

health. "John Manners," Disraeli told Lady Bradford, "who has just come from Osborne, says that the Faery only talked of one subject, and that was her Primo. According to him, it was her gracious opinion that the Government should make my health a Cabinet question. Dear John seemed quite surprised at what she said; but you are more used to these ebullitions." She often sent him presents; an illustrated album arrived for him regularly from Windsor on Christmas Day. But her most valued gifts were the bunches of spring flowers which, gathered by herself and her ladies in the woods at Osborne, marked in an especial manner the warmth and tenderness of her sentiments. Among these it was, he declared, the primroses that he loved the best. They were, he said, "the ambassadors of Spring," "the gems and jewels of Nature." He liked them, he assured her, "so much better for their being wild; they seem an offering from the Fauns and Dryads of Osborne." "They show," he told her, "that your Majesty's scepter has touched the enchanted Isle." He sat at dinner with heaped-up bowls of them on every side, and told his guests that "they were all sent to me this morning by the Queen from Osborne, as she knows it is my favorite flower."

As time went on, and as it became clearer and clearer that the Faery's thralldom was complete, his protestations grew steadily more highly-colored and more unabashed. At last he ventured to import into his blandishments a strain of adoration that was almost avowedly romantic. In phrases of baroque convolution, he conveyed the message of his heart. The pressure of business, he wrote, had "so absorbed and exhausted him, that towards the hour of post he has not had clearness of mind, and vigor of pen, adequate to convey his thoughts and facts to the most loved and illustrious being, who deigns to consider them." She sent him some primroses, and he replied that he could "truly say they are 'more precious than rubies,' coming, as they do, and at such a moment, from a Sovereign whom he adores." She sent him snowdrops, and his sentiment overflowed into poetry. "Yesterday eve," he wrote, "there appeared, in Whitehall Gardens, a delicate-looking case, with a royal superscription, which, when he opened, he thought, at first, that your Majesty had graciously bestowed upon him the stars of your Majesty's principal orders. And, indeed, he was so impressed with this graceful illusion, that, having a banquet, where there were many stars and ribbons, he could not resist the temptation, by placing some snowdrops on his heart, of showing that, he, too, was decorated by a gracious Sovereign.

"Then, in the middle of the night, it occurred to him, that it might all be an enchantment, and that, perhaps, it was a Faery gift and came from another monarch: Queen Titania, gathering flowers, with her Court, in a soft and sea-girt isle, and sending magic blossoms, which, they say, turn the heads of those who receive them."

A Faery gift! Did he smile as he wrote the words? Perhaps; and yet it would be rash to conclude that his perfervid declarations were altogether without sincerity. Actor and spectator both, the two characters were so intimately blended together in that odd composition that they formed an inseparable unity, and it was impossible to say that one of them was less genuine than the other. With one element, he could coldly appraise the Faery's intellectual ca-

pacity, note with some surprise that she could be on occasion "most interesting and amusing," and then continue his use of the trowel with an ironical solemnity; while, with the other, he could be overwhelmed by the immemorial panoply of royalty, and, thrilling with the sense of his own strange elevation, dream himself into a gorgeous phantasy of crowns and powers and chivalric love. When he told Victoria that "during a somewhat romantic and imaginative life, nothing has ever occurred to him so interesting as this confidential correspondence with one so exalted and so inspiring," was he not in earnest after all? When he wrote to a lady about the Court, "I love the Queen—perhaps the only person in this world left to me that I do love," was he not creating for himself an enchanted palace out of the Arabian Nights, full of melancholy and spangles, in which he actually believed? Victoria's state of mind was far more simple; untroubled by imaginative yearnings, she never lost herself in that nebulous region of the spirit where feeling and fancy grow confused. Her emotions, with all their intensity and all their exaggeration, retained the plain prosaic texture of everyday life. And it was fitting that her expression of them should be equally commonplace. She was, she told her Prime Minister, at the end of an official letter, "yours aff'ly V. R. and I." In such a phrase the deep reality of her feeling is instantly manifest. The Faery's feet were on the solid earth; it was the *rusé* cynic who was in the air.

He had taught her, however, a lesson, which she had learnt with alarming rapidity. A second Gloriana, did he call her? Very well, then, she would show that she deserved the compliment. Disquieting symptoms followed fast. In May, 1874, the Tsar, whose daughter had just been married to Victoria's second son, the Duke of Edinburgh, was in London, and, by an unfortunate error, it had been arranged that his departure should not take place until two days after the date on which his royal hostess had previously decided to go to Balmoral. Her Majesty refused to modify her plans. It was pointed out to her that the Tsar would certainly be offended, that the most serious consequences might follow; Lord Derby protested; Lord Salisbury, the Secretary of State for India, was much perturbed. But the Faery was unconcerned; she had settled to go to Balmoral on the 18th, and on the 18th she would go. At last Disraeli, exercising all his influence, induced her to agree to stay in London for two days more. "My head is still on my shoulders," he told Lady Bradford. "The great lady has absolutely postponed her departure! Everybody had failed, even the Prince of Wales; . . . and I have no doubt I am not in favor. I can't help it. Salisbury says I have saved an Afghan War, and Derby compliments me on my unrivaled triumph." But before very long, on another issue, the triumph was the Faery's. Disraeli, who had suddenly veered towards a new Imperialism, had thrown out the suggestion that the Queen of England ought to become the Empress of India. Victoria seized upon the idea with avidity, and, in season and out of season, pressed upon her Prime Minister the desirability of putting his proposal into practice. He demurred; but she was not to be balked; and in 1876, in spite of his own unwillingness and that of his entire Cabinet, he found himself obliged to add to the troubles of a stormy session by introducing a bill for the alteration of the Royal Title. His compliance, however, finally conquered the Faery's heart. The measure was angrily

attacked in both Houses, and Victoria was deeply touched by the untiring energy with which Disraeli defended it. She was, she said, much grieved by "the worry and annoyance" to which he was subjected; she feared she was the cause of it; and she would never forget what she owed to "her kind, good, and considerate friend." At the same time, her wrath fell on the Opposition. Their conduct, she declared, was "extraordinary, incomprehensible, and mistaken," and, in an emphatic sentence which seemed to contradict both itself and all her former proceedings, she protested that she "would be glad if it were more generally known that it was *her* wish, as people *will* have it, that it has been *forced upon her!*" When the affair was successfully over, the imperial triumph was celebrated in a suitable manner. On the day of the Delhi Proclamation, the new Earl of Beaconsfield went to Windsor to dine with the new Empress of India. That night the Faery, usually so homely in her attire, appeared in a glittering panoply of enormous uncut jewels, which had been presented to her by the reigning Princes of her *Raj*. At the end of the meal the Prime Minister, breaking through the rules of etiquette, arose, and in a flowery oration proposed the health of the Queen-Empress. His audacity was well received, and his speech was rewarded by a smiling curtsey.

These were significant episodes; but a still more serious manifestation of Victoria's temper occurred in the following year, during the crowning crisis of Beaconsfield's life. His growing imperialism, his desire to magnify the power and prestige of England, his insistence upon a "spirited foreign policy," had brought him into collision with Russia; the terrible Eastern Question loomed up; and when war broke out between Russia and Turkey, the gravity of the situation became extreme. The Prime Minister's policy was fraught with difficulty and danger. Realizing perfectly the appalling implications of an Anglo-Russian war, he was yet prepared to face even that eventuality if he could obtain his ends by no other method; but he believed that Russia in reality was still less desirous of a rupture, and that, if he played his game with sufficient boldness and adroitness, she would yield, when it came to the point, all that he required without a blow. It was clear that the course he had marked out for himself was full of hazard, and demanded an extraordinary nerve; a single false step, and either himself, or England, might be plunged in disaster. But nerve he had never lacked; he began his diplomatic egg-dance with high assurance; and then he discovered that, besides the Russian Government, besides the Liberals and Mr. Gladstone, there were two additional sources of perilous embarrassment with which he would have to reckon. In the first place there was a strong party in the Cabinet, headed by Lord Derby, the Foreign Secretary, which was unwilling to take the risk of war; but his culminating anxiety was the Faery.

From the first, her attitude was uncompromising. The old hatred of Russia, which had been engendered by the Crimean War, surged up again within her; she remembered Albert's prolonged animosity; she felt the prickings of her own greatness; and she flung herself into the turmoil with passionate heat. Her indignation with the Opposition—with any one who ventured to sympathize with the Russians in their quarrel with the Turks—was unbounded. When anti-Turkish meetings were held in London, presided over by the Duke of

Westminster and Lord Shaftesbury, and attended by Mr. Gladstone and other prominent Radicals, she considered that "the Attorney-General ought to be set at these men"; "it can't," she exclaimed, "be constitutional." Never in her life, not even in the crisis over the Ladies of the Bedchamber, did she show herself a more furious partisan. But her displeasure was not reserved for the Radicals; the backsliding Conservatives equally felt its force. She was even discontented with Lord Beaconsfield himself. Failing entirely to appreciate the delicate complexity of his policy, she constantly assailed him with demands for vigorous action, interpreted each finesse as a sign of weakness, and was ready at every juncture to let slip the dogs of war. As the situation developed, her anxiety grew feverish. "The Queen," she wrote, "is feeling terribly anxious lest delay should cause us to be too late and lose our prestige for ever! It worries her night and day." "The Faery," Beaconsfield told Lady Bradford, "writes every day and telegraphs every hour; this is almost literally the case." She raged loudly against the Russians. "And the language," she cried, "the insulting language—used by the Russians against us! It makes the Queen's blood boil!" "Oh," she wrote a little later, "if the Queen were a man, she would like to go and give those Russians, whose word one cannot believe, such a beating! We shall never be friends again till we have it out. This the Queen feels sure of."

The unfortunate Prime Minister, urged on to violence by Victoria on one side, had to deal, on the other, with a Foreign Secretary who was fundamentally opposed to any policy of active interference at all. Between the Queen and Lord Derby he held a harassed course. He gained, indeed, some slight satisfaction in playing off the one against the other—in stimulating Lord Derby with the Queen's missives, and in appeasing the Queen by repudiating Lord Derby's opinions; on one occasion he actually went so far as to compose, at Victoria's request, a letter bitterly attacking his colleague, which Her Majesty forthwith signed, and sent, without alteration, to the Foreign Secretary. But such devices only gave a temporary relief; and it soon became evident that Victoria's martial ardor was not to be sidetracked by hostilities against Lord Derby; hostilities against Russia were what she wanted, what she would, what she must, have. For now, casting aside the last relics of moderation, she began to attack her friend with a series of extraordinary threats. Not once, not twice, but many times she held over his head the formidable menace of her imminent abdication. "If England," she wrote to Beaconsfield, "is to kiss Russia's feet, she will not be a party to the humiliation of England and would lay down her crown," and she added that the Prime Minister might, if he thought fit, repeat her words to the Cabinet. "This delay," she ejaculated, "this uncertainty by which, abroad, we are losing our prestige and our position, while Russia is advancing and will be before Constantinople in no time! Then the Government will be fearfully blamed and the Queen so humiliated that she thinks she would abdicate at once. Be bold!" "She feels," she reiterated, "she cannot, as she before said, remain the Sovereign of a country that is letting itself down to kiss the feet of the great barbarians, the retarders of all liberty and civilization that exists." When the Russians advanced to the outskirts of Constantinople she fired off three letters in a day demanding war; and when she learnt

that the Cabinet had only decided to send the Fleet to Gallipoli she declared that "her first impulse" was "to lay down the thorny crown, which she feels little satisfaction in retaining if the position of this country is to remain as it is now." It is easy to imagine the agitating effect of such a correspondence upon Beaconsfield. This was no longer the Faery; it was a genie whom he had rashly called out of her bottle, and who was now intent upon showing her supernal power. More than once, perplexed, dispirited, shattered by illness, he had thoughts of withdrawing altogether from the game. One thing alone, he told Lady Bradford, with a wry smile, prevented him. "If I could only," he wrote, "face the scene which would occur at headquarters if I resigned, I would do so at once."

He held on, however, to emerge victorious at last. The Queen was pacified; Lord Derby was replaced by Lord Salisbury; and at the Congress of Berlin *der alte Jude* carried all before him. He returned to England in triumph, and assured the delighted Victoria that she would very soon be, if she was not already, the "Dictatress of Europe."

But soon there was an unexpected reverse. At the General Election of 1880 the country, mistrustful of the forward policy of the Conservatives, and carried away by Mr. Gladstone's oratory, returned the Liberals to power. Victoria was horrified, but within a year she was to be yet more nearly hit. The grand romance had come to its conclusion. Lord Beaconsfield, worn out with age and maladies, but moving still, an assiduous mummy, from dinner-party to dinner-party, suddenly moved no longer. When she knew that the end was inevitable, she seemed, by a pathetic instinct, to divest herself of her royalty, and to shrink, with hushed gentleness, beside him, a woman and nothing more. "I send some Osborne primroses," she wrote to him with touching simplicity, "and I meant to pay you a little visit this week, but I thought it better you should be quite quiet and not speak. And I beg you will be very good and obey the doctors." She would see him, she said, "when we come back from Osborne, which won't be long." "Every one is so distressed at your not being well," she added; and she was, "Ever yours very affly, V.R.I." When the royal letter was given him, the strange old comedian, stretched on his bed of death, poised it in his hand, appeared to consider deeply, and then whispered to those about him, "This ought to be read to me by a Privy Councilor."

IX. OLD AGE

MEANWHILE in Victoria's private life many changes and developments had taken place. With the marriages of her elder children her family circle widened; grandchildren appeared; and a multitude of new domestic interests sprang up. The death of King Leopold in 1865 had removed the predominant figure of the older generation, and the functions he had performed as the center and adviser of a large group of relatives in Germany and in England devolved upon Victoria. These functions she discharged with unremitting industry, carrying on an enormous correspondence, and following with absorbed interest every detail in the lives of the ever-ramifying cousinhood. And she tasted to the full both the joys and the pains of family affection. She took a particular delight in her grandchildren, to whom she showed

an indulgence which their parents had not always enjoyed, though, even to her grandchildren, she could be, when the occasion demanded it, severe. The eldest of them, the little Prince Wilhelm of Prussia, was a remarkably headstrong child; he dared to be impertinent even to his grandmother; and once, when she told him to bow to a visitor at Osborne, he disobeyed her outright. This would not do: the order was sternly repeated, and the naughty boy, noticing that his kind grandmamma had suddenly turned into a most terrifying lady, submitted his will to hers, and bowed very low indeed.

It would have been well if all the Queen's domestic troubles could have been got over as easily. Among her more serious distresses was the conduct of the Prince of Wales. The young man was now independent and married; he had shaken the parental yoke from his shoulders; he was positively beginning to do as he liked. Victoria was much perturbed, and her worst fears seemed to be justified when in 1870 he appeared as a witness in a society divorce case. It was clear that the heir to the throne had been mixing with people of whom she did not at all approve. What was to be done? She saw that it was not only her son that was to blame—that it was the whole system of society; and so she despatched a letter to Mr. Delane, the editor of *The Times,* asking him if he would "frequently *write* articles pointing out the *immense* danger and evil of the wretched frivolity and levity of the views and lives of the Higher Classes." And five years later Mr. Delane did write an article upon that very subject. Yet it seemed to have very little effect.

Ah! if only the Higher Classes would learn to live as she lived in the domestic sobriety of her sanctuary at Balmoral! For more and more did she find solace and refreshment in her Highland domain; and twice yearly, in the spring and in the autumn, with a sigh of relief, she set her face northwards, in spite of the humble protests of Ministers, who murmured vainly in the royal ears that to transact the affairs of State over an interval of six hundred miles added considerably to the cares of government. Her ladies, too, felt occasionally a slight reluctance to set out, for, especially in the early days, the long pilgrimage was not without its drawbacks. For many years the Queen's conservatism forbade the continuation of the railway up Deeside, so that the last stages of the journey had to be accomplished in carriages. But, after all, carriages had their good points; they were easy, for instance, to get in and out of, which was an important consideration, for the royal train remained for long immune from modern conveniences, and when it drew up, on some border moorland, far from any platform, the high-bred dames were obliged to descend to earth by the perilous foot-board, the only pair of folding steps being reserved for Her Majesty's saloon. In the days of crinolines such moments were sometimes awkward; and it was occasionally necessary to summon Mr. Johnstone, the short and sturdy Manager of the Caledonian Railway, who, more than once, in a high gale and drenching rain with great difficulty "pushed up"—as he himself described it—some unlucky Lady Blanche or Lady Agatha into her compartment. But Victoria cared for none of these things. She was only intent upon regaining, with the utmost swiftness, her enchanted Castle, where every spot was charged with memories, where every memory was sacred,

and where life was passed in an incessant and delightful round of absolutely trivial events.

And it was not only the place that she loved; she was equally attached to "the simple mountaineers," from whom, she said, "she learnt many a lesson of resignation and faith." Smith and Grant and Ross and Thompson—she was devoted to them all; but, beyond the rest, she was devoted to John Brown. The Prince's gillie had now become the Queen's personal attendant—a body servant from whom she was never parted, who accompanied her on her drives, waited on her during the day, and slept in a neighboring chamber at night. She liked his strength, his solidity, the sense he gave her of physical security; she even liked his rugged manners and his rough unaccommodating speech. She allowed him to take liberties with her which would have been unthinkable from anybody else. To bully the Queen, to order her about, to reprimand her —who could dream of venturing upon such audacities? And yet, when she received such treatment from John Brown, she positively seemed to enjoy it. The eccentricity appeared to be extraordinary; but, after all, it is no uncommon thing for an autocratic dowager to allow some trusted indispensable servant to adopt towards her an attitude of authority which is jealously forbidden to relatives or friends: the power of a dependant still remains, by a psychological sleight-of-hand, one's own power, even when it is exercised over oneself. When Victoria meekly obeyed the abrupt commands of her henchman to get off her pony or put on her shawl, was she not displaying, and in the highest degree, the force of her volition? People might wonder; she could not help that; this was the manner in which it pleased her to act, and there was an end of it. To have submitted her judgment to a son or a Minister might have seemed wiser or more natural; but if she had done so, she instinctively felt, she would indeed have lost her independence. And yet upon somebody she longed to depend. Her days were heavy with the long process of domination. As she drove in silence over the moors she leaned back in the carriage, oppressed and weary; but what a relief!—John Brown was behind on the rumble, and his strong arm would be there for her to lean upon when she got out.

He had, too, in her mind, a special connection with Albert. In their expeditions the Prince had always trusted him more than any one; the gruff, kind, hairy Scotsman was, she felt, in some mysterious way, a legacy from the dead. She came to believe at last—or so it appeared—that the spirit of Albert was nearer when Brown was near. Often, when seeking inspiration over some complicated question of political or domestic import, she would gaze with deep concentration at her late husband's bust. But it was also noticed that sometimes in such moments of doubt and hesitation Her Majesty's looks would fix themselves upon John Brown.

Eventually, the "simple mountaineer" became almost a state personage. The influence which he wielded was not to be overlooked. Lord Beaconsfield was careful, from time to time, to send courteous messages to "Mr. Brown" in his letters to the Queen, and the French Government took particular pains to provide for his comfort during the visits of the English Sovereign to France. It was only natural that among the elder members of the royal family he should not have been popular, and that his failings—for failings he had, though

Victoria would never notice his too acute appreciation of Scotch whisky—should have been the subject of acrimonious comment at Court. But he served his mistress faithfully, and to ignore him would be a sign of disrespect in her biographer. For the Queen, far from making a secret of her affectionate friendship, took care to publish it to the world. By her orders two gold medals were struck in his honor; on his death, in 1883, a long and eulogistic obituary notice of him appeared in the *Court Circular;* and a Brown memorial brooch—of gold, with the late gillie's head on one side and the royal monogram on the other—was designed by Her Majesty for presentation to her Highland servants and cottagers, to be worn by them on the anniversary of his death, with a mourning scarf and pins. In the second series of extracts from the Queen's *Highland Journals,* published in 1884, her "devoted personal attendant and faithful friend" appears upon almost every page, and is in effect the hero of the book. With an absence of reticence remarkable in royal persons, Victoria seemed to demand, in this private and delicate matter, the sympathy of the whole nation; and yet—such is the world!—there were those who actually treated the relations between their Sovereign and her servant as a theme for ribald jests.

II

The busy years hastened away; the traces of Time's unimaginable touch grew manifest; and old age, approaching, laid a gentle hold upon Victoria. The gray hair whitened; the mature features mellowed; the short firm figure amplified and moved more slowly, supported by a stick. And, simultaneously, in the whole tenor of the Queen's existence an extraordinary transformation came to pass. The nation's attitude towards her, critical and even hostile as it had been for so many years, altogether changed; while there was a corresponding alteration in the temper of Victoria's own mind.

Many causes led to this result. Among them were the repeated strokes of personal misfortune which befell the Queen during a cruelly short space of years. In 1878 the Princess Alice, who had married in 1862 the Prince Louis of Hesse-Darmstadt, died in tragic circumstances. In the following year the Prince Imperial, the only son of the Empress Eugénie, to whom Victoria, since the catastrophe in 1870, had become devotedly attached, was killed in the Zulu War. Two years later, in 1881, the Queen lost Lord Beaconsfield, and, in 1883, John Brown. In 1884 the Prince Leopold, Duke of Albany, who had been an invalid from birth, died prematurely, shortly after his marriage. Victoria's cup of sorrows was indeed overflowing; and the public, as it watched the widowed mother weeping for her children and her friends, displayed a constantly increasing sympathy.

An event which occurred in 1882 revealed and accentuated the feelings of the nation. As the Queen, at Windsor, was walking from the train to her carriage, a youth named Roderick Maclean fired a pistol at her from a distance of a few yards. An Eton boy struck up Maclean's arm with an umbrella before the pistol went off; no damage was done, and the culprit was at once arrested. This was the last of a series of seven attempts upon the Queen—attempts which, taking place at sporadic intervals over a period of forty years, resembled one another in a curious manner. All, with a single exception, were perpetrated

by adolescents, whose motives were apparently not murderous, since, save in the case of Maclean, none of their pistols was loaded. These unhappy youths, who, after buying their cheap weapons, stuffed them with gunpowder and paper, and then went off, with the certainty of immediate detection, to click them in the face of royalty, present a strange problem to the psychologist. But, though in each case their actions and their purposes seemed to be so similar, their fates were remarkably varied. The first of them, Edward Oxford, who fired at Victoria within a few months of her marriage, was tried for high treason, declared to be insane, and sent to an asylum for life. It appears, however, that this sentence did not commend itself to Albert, for when, two years later, John Francis committed the same offense, and was tried upon the same charge, the Prince pronounced that there was no insanity in the matter. "The wretched creature," he told his father, was "not out of his mind, but a thorough scamp." "I hope," he added, "his trial will be conducted with the greatest strictness." Apparently it was; at any rate, the jury shared the view of the Prince, the plea of insanity was set aside, and Francis was found guilty of high treason and condemned to death; but, as there was no proof of an intent to kill or even to wound, this sentence, after a lengthened deliberation between the Home Secretary and the Judges, was commuted for one of transportation for life. As the law stood, these assaults, futile as they were, could only be treated as high treason; the discrepancy between the actual deed and the tremendous penalties involved was obviously grotesque; and it was, besides, clear that a jury, knowing that a verdict of guilty implied a sentence of death, would tend to the alternative course, and find the prisoner not guilty but insane—a conclusion which, on the face of it, would have appeared to be the more reasonable. In 1842, therefore, an Act was passed making any attempt to hurt the Queen a misdemeanor, punishable by transportation for seven years, or imprisonment, with or without hard labor, for a term not exceeding three years—the misdemeanant, at the discretion of the Court, "to be publicly or privately whipped, as often, and in such manner and form, as the Court shall direct, not exceeding thrice." The four subsequent attempts were all dealt with under this new law; William Bean, in 1842, was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment; William Hamilton, in 1849, was transported for seven years; and, in 1850, the same sentence was passed upon Lieutenant Robert Pate, who struck the Queen on the head with his cane in Piccadilly. Pate, alone among these delinquents, was of mature years; he had held a commission in the Army, dressed himself as a dandy, and was, the Prince declared, "manifestly deranged." In 1872 Arthur O'Connor, a youth of seventeen, fired an unloaded pistol at the Queen outside Buckingham Palace; he was immediately seized by John Brown, and sentenced to one year's imprisonment and twenty strokes of the birch rod. It was for his bravery upon this occasion that Brown was presented with one of his gold medals. In all these cases the jury had refused to allow the plea of insanity; but Roderick Maclean's attempt in 1882 had a different issue. On this occasion the pistol was found to have been loaded, and the public indignation, emphasized as it was by Victoria's growing popularity, was particularly great. Either for this or for some other reason the procedure of the last forty years was abandoned, and Maclean was tried for high treason. The result was what

might have been expected: the jury brought in a verdict of "not guilty, but insane"; and the prisoner was sent to an asylum during Her Majesty's pleasure. Their verdict, however, produced a remarkable consequence. Victoria, who doubtless carried in her mind some memory of Albert's disapproval of a similar verdict in the case of Oxford, was very much annoyed. What did the jury mean, she asked, by saying that Maclean was not guilty? It was perfectly clear that he was guilty—she had seen him fire off the pistol herself. It was in vain that Her Majesty's constitutional advisers reminded her of the principle of English law which lays down that no man can be found guilty of a crime unless he be proved to have had a criminal intention. Victoria was quite unconvinced. "If that is the law," she said, "the law must be altered": and altered it was. In 1883 an Act was passed changing the form of the verdict in cases of insanity, and the confusing anomaly remains upon the Statute Book to this day.

But it was not only through the feelings—commiserating or indignant—of personal sympathy that the Queen and her people were being drawn more nearly together; they were beginning, at last, to come to a close and permanent agreement upon the conduct of public affairs. Mr. Gladstone's second administration (1880-85) was a succession of failures, ending in disaster and disgrace; liberalism fell into discredit with the country, and Victoria perceived with joy that her distrust of her Ministers was shared by an ever-increasing number of her subjects. During the crisis in the Sudan, the popular temper was her own. She had been among the first to urge the necessity of an expedition to Khartoum, and, when the news came of the catastrophic death of General Gordon, her voice led the chorus of denunciation which raved against the Government. In her rage, she despatched a fulminating telegram to Mr. Gladstone, not in the usual cypher, but open; and her letter of condolence to Miss Gordon, in which she attacked her Ministers for breach of faith, was widely published. It was rumored that she had sent for Lord Hartington, the Secretary of State for War, and vehemently upbraided him. "She rated me," he was reported to have told a friend, "as if I'd been a footman." "Why didn't she send for the butler?" asked his friend. "Oh," was the reply, "the butler generally manages to keep out of the way on such occasions."

But the day came when it was impossible to keep out of the way any longer. Mr. Gladstone was defeated, and resigned. Victoria, at a final interview, received him with her usual amenity, but, besides the formalities demanded by the occasion, the only remark which she made to him of a personal nature was to the effect that she supposed Mr. Gladstone would now require some rest. He remembered with regret how, at a similar audience in 1874, she had expressed her trust in him as a supporter of the throne; but he noted the change without surprise. "Her mind and opinions," he wrote in his diary afterwards, "have since that day been seriously warped."

Such was Mr. Gladstone's view; but the majority of the nation by no means agreed with him; and, in the General Election of 1886, they showed decisively that Victoria's politics were identical with theirs by casting forth the contrivers of Home Rule—that abomination of desolation—into outer darkness, and placing Lord Salisbury in power. Victoria's satisfaction was profound. A flood of

new unwonted hopefulness swept over her, stimulating her vital spirits with a surprising force. Her habit of life was suddenly altered; abandoning the long seclusion which Disraeli's persuasions had only momentarily interrupted, she threw herself vigorously into a multitude of public activities. She appeared at drawing-rooms, at concerts, at reviews; she laid foundation-stones; she went to Liverpool to open an international exhibition, driving through the streets in her open carriage in heavy rain amid vast applauding crowds. Delighted by the welcome which met her everywhere, she warmed to her work. She visited Edinburgh, where the ovation of Liverpool was repeated and surpassed. In London, she opened in high state the Colonial and Indian Exhibition at South Kensington. On this occasion the ceremonial was particularly magnificent; a blare of trumpets announced the approach of Her Majesty; the "National Anthem" followed; and the Queen, seated on a gorgeous throne of hammered gold, replied with her own lips to the address that was presented to her. Then she rose, and, advancing upon the platform with regal port, acknowledged the acclamations of the great assembly by a succession of curtseys, of elaborate and commanding grace.

Next year was the fiftieth of her reign, and in June the splendid anniversary was celebrated in solemn pomp. Victoria, surrounded by the highest dignitaries of her realm, escorted by a glittering galaxy of kings and princes, drove through the crowded enthusiasm of the capital to render thanks to God in Westminster Abbey. In that triumphant hour the last remaining traces of past antipathies and past disagreements were altogether swept away. The Queen was hailed at once as the mother of her people and as the embodied symbol of their imperial greatness; and she responded to the double sentiment with all the ardor of her spirit. England and the people of England, she knew it, she felt it, were, in some wonderful and yet quite simple manner, *hers*. Exultation, affection, gratitude, a profound sense of obligation, an unbounded pride —such were her emotions; and, coloring and intensifying the rest, there was something else. At last, after so long, happiness—fragmentary, perhaps, and charged with gravity, but true and unmistakable none the less—had returned to her. The unaccustomed feeling filled and warmed her consciousness. When, at Buckingham Palace again, the long ceremony over, she was asked how she was, "I am very tired, but very happy," she said.

III

And so, after the toils and tempests of the day, a long evening followed—mild, serene, and lighted with a golden glory. For an unexampled atmosphere of success and adoration invested the last period of Victoria's life. Her triumph was the summary, the crown, of a greater triumph—the culminating prosperity of a nation. The solid splendor of the decade between Victoria's two jubilees can hardly be paralleled in the annals of England. The sage counsels of Lord Salisbury seemed to bring with them not only wealth and power, but security; and the country settled down, with calm assurance, to the enjoyment of an established grandeur. And—it was only natural—Victoria settled down too. For she was a part of the establishment—an essential part as it seemed—a fixture—a magnificent, immovable sideboard in the huge saloon of state. Without

her the heaped-up banquet of 1890 would have lost its distinctive quality—the comfortable order of the substantial unambiguous dishes, with their background of weighty glamour, half out of sight.

Her own existence came to harmonize more and more with what was around her. Gradually, imperceptibly, Albert receded. It was not that he was forgotten—that would have been impossible—but that the void created by his absence grew less agonizing, and even, at last, less obvious. At last Victoria found it possible to regret the bad weather without immediately reflecting that her "dear Albert always said we could not alter it, but must leave it as it was"; she could even enjoy a good breakfast without considering how "dear Albert" would have liked the buttered eggs. And, as that figure slowly faded, its place was taken, inevitably, by Victoria's own. Her being, revolving for so many years round an external object, now changed its motion and found its center in itself. It had to be so: her domestic position, the pressure of her public work, her indomitable sense of duty, made anything else impossible. Her egotism proclaimed its rights. Her age increased still further the surrounding deference; and her force of character, emerging at length in all its plenitude, imposed itself absolutely upon its environment by the conscious effort of an imperious will.

Little by little it was noticed that the outward vestiges of Albert's posthumous domination grew less complete. At Court the stringency of mourning was relaxed. As the Queen drove through the Park in her open carriage with her Highlanders behind her, nursery-maids canvassed eagerly the growing patch of violet velvet in the bonnet with its jet appurtenances on the small bowing head.

It was in her family that Victoria's ascendancy reached its highest point. All her offspring were married; the number of her descendants rapidly increased; there were many marriages in the third generation; and no fewer than thirty-seven of her great-grandchildren were living at the time of her death. A picture of the period displays the royal family collected together in one of the great rooms at Windsor—a crowded company of more than fifty persons, with the imperial matriarch in their midst. Over them all she ruled with a most potent sway. The small concerns of the youngest aroused her passionate interest; and the oldest she treated as if they were children still. The Prince of Wales, in particular, stood in tremendous awe of his mother. She had steadily refused to allow him the slightest participation in the business of government; and he had occupied himself in other ways. Nor could it be denied that he enjoyed himself—out of her sight; but, in that redoubtable presence, his abounding manhood suffered a miserable eclipse. Once, at Osborne, when, owing to no fault of his, he was too late for a dinner party, he was observed standing behind a pillar and, wiping the sweat from his forehead, trying to nerve himself to go up to the Queen. When at last he did so, she gave him a stiff nod, whereupon he vanished immediately behind another pillar, and remained there until the party broke up. At the time of this incident the Prince of Wales was over fifty years of age.

It was inevitable that the Queen's domestic activities should occasionally trench upon the domain of high diplomacy; and this was especially the case when the interests of her eldest daughter, the Crown Princess of Prussia, were

at stake. The Crown Prince held liberal opinions; he was much influenced by his wife; and both were detested by Bismarck, who declared with scurrilous emphasis that the Englishwoman and her mother were a menace to the Prussian State. The feud was still further intensified when, on the death of the old Emperor (1888), the Crown Prince succeeded to the throne. A family entanglement brought on a violent crisis. One of the daughters of the new Empress had become betrothed to Prince Alexander of Battenberg, who had lately been ejected from the throne of Bulgaria owing to the hostility of the Tsar. Victoria, as well as the Empress, highly approved of the match. Of the two brothers of Prince Alexander, the elder had married another of her granddaughters, and the younger was the husband of her daughter, the Princess Beatrice; she was devoted to the handsome young man; and she was delighted by the prospect of the third brother—on the whole the handsomest, she thought, of the three—also becoming a member of her family. Unfortunately, however, Bismarck was opposed to the scheme. He perceived that the marriage would endanger the friendship between Germany and Russia, which was vital to his foreign policy, and he announced that it must not take place. A fierce struggle between the Empress and the Chancellor followed. Victoria, whose hatred of her daughter's enemy was unbounded, came over to Charlottenburg to join in the fray. Bismarck, over his pipe and lager, snorted out his alarm. The Queen of England's object, he said, was clearly political—she wished to estrange Germany and Russia—and very likely she would have her way. "In family matters," he added, "she is not used to contradiction"; she would "bring the parson with her in her traveling bag and the bridegroom in her trunk, and the marriage would come off on the spot." But the man of blood and iron was not to be thwarted so easily, and he asked for a private interview with the Queen. The details of their conversation are unknown; but it is certain that in the course of it Victoria was forced to realize the meaning of resistance to that formidable personage, and that she promised to use all her influence to prevent the marriage. The engagement was broken off; and in the following year Prince Alexander of Battenberg united himself to Fraulein Loisinger, an actress at the court theatre of Darmstadt.

But such painful incidents were rare. Victoria was growing very old; with no Albert to guide her, with no Beaconsfield to enflame her, she was willing enough to abandon the dangerous questions of diplomacy to the wisdom of Lord Salisbury, and to concentrate her energies upon objects which touched her more nearly and over which she could exercise an undisputed control. Her home—her court—the monuments at Balmoral—the livestock at Windsor—the organization of her engagements—the supervision of the multitudinous details of her daily routine—such matters played now an even greater part in her existence than before. Her life passed in an extraordinary exactitude. Every moment of her day was mapped out beforehand; the succession of her engagements was immutably fixed; the dates of her journeys—to Osborne, to Balmoral, to the South of France, to Windsor, to London—were hardly altered from year to year. She demanded from those who surrounded her a rigid precision in details, and she was preternaturally quick in detecting the slightest deviation from the rules which she had laid down. Such was the irresistible

potency of her personality, that anything but the most implicit obedience to her wishes was felt to be impossible; but sometimes somebody was unpunctual; and unpunctuality was one of the most heinous of sins. Then her displeasure—her dreadful displeasure—became all too visible. At such moments there seemed nothing surprising in her having been the daughter of a martinet.

But these storms, unnerving as they were while they lasted, were quickly over, and they grew more and more exceptional. With the return of happiness a gentle benignity flowed from the aged Queen. Her smile, once so rare a visitant to those saddened features, flitted over them with an easy alacrity; the blue eyes beamed; the whole face, starting suddenly from its pendulous expressionlessness, brightened and softened and cast over those who watched it an unforgettable charm. For in her last years there was a fascination in Victoria's amiability which had been lacking even from the vivid impulse of her youth. Over all who approached her—or very nearly all—she threw a peculiar spell. Her grandchildren adored her; her ladies waited upon her with a reverential love. The honor of serving her obliterated a thousand inconveniences—the monotony of a court existence, the fatigue of standing, the necessity for a superhuman attentiveness to the minutiæ of time and space. As one did one's wonderful duty one could forget that one's legs were aching from the infinitude of the passages at Windsor, or that one's bare arms were turning blue in the Balmoral cold.

What, above all, seemed to make such service delightful was the detailed interest which the Queen took in the circumstances of those around her. Her absorbing passion for the comfortable commonplaces, the small crises, the recurrent sentimentalities, of domestic life constantly demanded wider fields for its activity; the sphere of her own family, vast as it was, was not enough; she became the eager confidante of the household affairs of her ladies; her sympathies reached out to the palace domestics; even the housemaids and scullions —so it appeared—were the objects of her searching inquiries, and of her heartfelt solicitude when their lovers were ordered to a foreign station, or their aunts suffered from an attack of rheumatism which was more than usually acute.

Nevertheless the due distinctions of rank were immaculately preserved. The Queen's mere presence was enough to ensure that; but, in addition, the dominion of court etiquette was paramount. For that elaborate code, which had kept Lord Melbourne stiff upon the sofa and ranged the other guests in silence about the round table according to the order of precedence, was as punctiliously enforced as ever. Every evening after dinner, the hearth-rug, sacred to royalty, loomed before the profane in inaccessible glory, or, on one or two terrific occasions, actually lured them magnetically forward to the very edge of the abyss. The Queen, at the fitting moment, moved towards her guests; one after the other they were led up to her; and, while dialogue followed dialogue in constraint and embarrassment, the rest of the assembly stood still, without a word. Only in one particular was the severity of the etiquette allowed to lapse. Throughout the greater part of the reign the rule that ministers must stand during their audiences with the Queen had been absolute. When Lord

Derby, the Prime Minister, had an audience of Her Majesty after a serious illness, he mentioned it afterwards, as a proof of the royal favor, that the Queen had remarked, "How sorry she was she could not ask him to be seated." Subsequently, Disraeli, after an attack of gout and in a moment of extreme expansion on the part of Victoria, had been offered a chair; but he had thought it wise humbly to decline the privilege. In her later years, however, the Queen invariably asked Mr. Gladstone and Lord Salisbury to sit down.

Sometimes the solemnity of the evening was diversified by a concert, an opera, or even a play. One of the most marked indications of Victoria's enfranchisement from the thralldom of widowhood had been her resumption—after an interval of thirty years—of the custom of commanding dramatic companies from London to perform before the Court at Windsor. On such occasions her spirits rose high. She loved acting; she loved a good plot; above all, she loved a farce. Engrossed by everything that passed upon the stage she would follow, with childlike innocence, the unwinding of the story; or she would assume an air of knowing superiority and exclaim in triumph, "There! You didn't expect *that,* did you?" when the *dénouement* came. Her sense of humor was of a vigorous though primitive kind. She had been one of the very few persons who had always been able to appreciate the Prince Consort's jokes; and, when those were cracked no more, she could still roar with laughter, in the privacy of her household, over some small piece of fun—some oddity of an ambassador, or some ignorant Minister's *faux pas.* When the jest grew subtle she was less pleased; but, if it approached the confines of the indecorous, the danger was serious. To take a liberty called down at once Her Majesty's most crushing disapprobation; and to say something improper was to take the greatest liberty of all. Then the royal lips sank down at the corners, the royal eyes stared in astonished protrusion, and in fact the royal countenance became inauspicious in the highest degree. The transgressor shuddered into silence, while the awful "We are not amused" annihilated the dinner table. Afterwards, in her private entourage, the Queen would observe that the person in question was, she very much feared, "not discreet"; it was a verdict from which there was no appeal.

In general, her esthetic tastes had remained unchanged since the days of Mendelssohn, Landseer, and Lablache. She still delighted in the roulades of Italian opera; she still demanded a high standard in the execution of a pianoforte duet. Her views on painting were decided; Sir Edwin, she declared, was perfect; she was much impressed by Lord Leighton's manners; and she profoundly distrusted Mr. Watts. From time to time she ordered engraved portraits to be taken of members of the royal family; on these occasions she would have the first proofs submitted to her, and, having inspected them with minute particularity, she would point out their mistakes to the artists, indicating at the same time how they might be corrected. The artists invariably discovered that Her Majesty's suggestions were of the highest value. In literature her interests were more restricted. She was devoted to Lord Tennyson; and, as the Prince Consort had admired George Eliot, she perused *Middlemarch:* she was disappointed. There is reason to believe, however, that the romances of another female writer, whose popularity among the humbler

classes of Her Majesty's subjects was at one time enormous, secured, no less, the approval of Her Majesty. Otherwise she did not read very much.

Once, however, the Queen's attention was drawn to a publication which it was impossible for her to ignore. *The Greville Memoirs,* filled with a mass of historical information of extraordinary importance, but filled also with descriptions, which were by no means flattering, of George IV, William IV, and other royal persons, was brought out by Mr. Reeve. Victoria read the book, and was appalled. It was, she declared, a "dreadful and really scandalous book," and she could not say "how *horrified* and *indignant*" she was at Greville's "indiscretion, indelicacy, ingratitude towards friends, betrayal of confidence and shameful disloyalty towards his Sovereign." She wrote to Disraeli to tell him that in her opinion it was "*very important* that the book should be severely censured and discredited." "The tone in which he speaks of royalty," she added, "is unlike anything one sees in history even, and is most reprehensible." Her anger was directed with almost equal vehemence against Mr. Reeve for his having published "such an abominable book," and she charged Sir Arthur Helps to convey to him her deep displeasure. Mr. Reeve, however, was impenitent. When Sir Arthur told him that, in the Queen's opinion, "the book degraded royalty," he replied: "Not at all; it elevates it by the contrast it offers between the present and the defunct state of affairs." But this adroit defense failed to make any impression upon Victoria; and Mr. Reeve, when he retired from the public service, did not receive the knighthood which custom entitled him to expect. Perhaps if the Queen had known how many caustic comments upon herself Mr. Reeve had quietly suppressed in the published *Memoirs,* she would have been almost grateful to him; but, in that case, what would she have said of Greville? Imagination boggles at the thought. As for more modern essays upon the same topic, Her Majesty, it is to be feared, would have characterized them as "not discreet."

But as a rule the leisure hours of that active life were occupied with recreations of a less intangible quality than the study of literature or the appreciation of art. Victoria was a woman not only of vast property but of innumerable possessions. She had inherited an immense quantity of furniture, of ornaments, of china, of plate, of valuable objects of every kind; her purchases, throughout a long life, made a formidable addition to these stores; and there flowed in upon her, besides, from every quarter of the globe, a constant stream of gifts. Over this enormous mass she exercised an unceasing and minute supervision, and the arrangement and the contemplation of it, in all its details, filled her with an intimate satisfaction. The collecting instinct has its roots in the very depths of human nature; and, in the case of Victoria, it seemed to owe its force to two of her dominating impulses—the intense sense, which had always been hers, of her own personality, and the craving which, growing with the years, had become in her old age almost an obsession, for fixity, for solidity, for the setting up of palpable barriers against the outrages of change and time. When she considered the multitudinous objects which belonged to her, or, better still, when, choosing out some section of them as the fancy took her, she actually savo ivid richness of their individual qualities, she saw herself deli- ci ' from a million facets, felt herself magnified miraculously over

a boundless area, and was well pleased. That was just as it should be; but then came the dismaying thought—everything slips away, crumbles, vanishes; Sèvres dinner-services get broken; even golden basins go unaccountably astray; even one's self, with all the recollections and experiences that make up one's being, fluctuates, perishes, dissolves . . . But no! It could not, should not be so! There should be no changes and no losses! Nothing should ever move—neither the past nor the present—and she herself least of all! And so the tenacious woman, hoarding her valuables, decreed their immortality with all the resolution of her soul. She would not lose one memory or one pin.

She gave orders that nothing should be thrown away—and nothing was. There, in drawer after drawer, in wardrobe after wardrobe, reposed the dresses of seventy years. But not only the dresses—the furs and the mantles and subsidiary frills and the muffs and the parasols and the bonnets—all were ranged in chronological order, dated and complete. A great cupboard was devoted to the dolls; in the china room at Windsor a special table held the mugs of her childhood, and her children's mugs as well. Mementoes of the past surrounded her in serried accumulations. In every room the tables were powdered thick with the photographs of relatives; their portraits, revealing them at all ages, covered the walls; their figures, in solid marble, rose up from pedestals, or gleamed from brackets in the form of gold and silver statuettes. The dead, in every shape—in miniatures, in porcelain, in enormous life-size oil-paintings—were perpetually about her. John Brown stood upon her writing-table in solid gold. Her favorite horses and dogs, endowed with a new durability, crowded round her footsteps. Sharp, in silver gilt, dominated the dinner table; Boy and Boz lay together among unfading flowers, in bronze. And it was not enough that each particle of the past should be given the stability of metal or of marble: the whole collection, in its arrangement, no less than its entity, should be immutably fixed. There might be additions, but there might never be alterations. No chintz might change, no carpet, no curtain, be replaced by another; or, if long use at last made it necessary, the stuffs and the patterns must be so identically reproduced that the keenest eye might not detect the difference. No new picture could be hung upon the walls at Windsor, for those already there had been put in their places by Albert, whose decisions were eternal. So, indeed, were Victoria's. To ensure that they should be the aid of the camera was called in. Every single article in the Queen's possession was photographed from several points of view. These photographs were submitted to Her Majesty, and when, after careful inspection, she had approved of them, they were placed in a series of albums, richly bound. Then, opposite each photograph, an entry was made, indicating the number of the article, the number of the room in which it was kept, its exact position in the room and all its principal characteristics. The fate of every object which had undergone this process was henceforth irrevocably sealed. The whole multitude, once and for all, took up its steadfast station. And Victoria, with a gigantic volume or two of the endless catalogue always beside her, to look through, to ponder upon, to expatiate over, could feel, with a double contentment, that the transitoriness of this world had been arrested by the amplitude of her might.

Thus the collection, ever multiplying, ever encroaching upon new fields of

consciousness, ever rooting itself more firmly in the depths of instinct, became one of the dominating influences of that strange existence. It was a collection not merely of things and of thoughts, but of states of mind and ways of living as well. The celebration of anniversaries grew to be an important branch of it—of birthdays and marriage days and death days, each of which demanded its appropriate feeling, which, in its turn, must be itself expressed in an appropriate outward form. And the form, of course—the ceremony of rejoicing or lamentation—was stereotyped with the rest: it was part of the collection. On a certain day, for instance, flowers must be strewn on John Brown's monument at Balmoral; and the date of the yearly departure for Scotland was fixed by that fact. Inevitably it was around the central circumstance of death—death, the final witness to human mutability—that these commemorative cravings clustered most thickly. Might not even death itself be humbled, if one could recall enough?—if one asserted, with a sufficiently passionate and reiterated emphasis, the eternity of love? Accordingly, every bed in which Victoria slept had attached to it, at the back, on the right-hand side, above the pillow, a photograph of the head and shoulders of Albert as he lay dead, surmounted by a wreath of immortelles. At Balmoral, where memories came crowding so closely, the solid signs of memory appeared in surprising profusion. Obelisks, pyramids, tombs, statues, cairns, and seats of inscribed granite, proclaimed Victoria's dedication to the dead. There, twice a year, on the days that followed her arrival, a solemn pilgrimage of inspection and meditation was performed. There, on August 26—Albert's birthday—at the foot of the bronze statue of him in Highland dress, the Queen, her family, her Court, her servants, and her tenantry, met together and in silence drank to the memory of the dead. In England the tokens of remembrance pullulated hardly less. Not a day passed without some addition to the multifold assemblage—a gold statuette of Ross, the piper—a life-sized marble group of Victoria and Albert, in medieval costume, inscribed upon the base with the words: "Allured to brighter worlds and led the way"—a granite slab in the shrubbery at Osborne, informing the visitor of "Waldmann: the very favorite little dachshund of Queen Victoria; who brought him from Baden, April, 1872; died, July 11, 1881."

At Frogmore, the great mausoleum, perpetually enriched, was visited almost daily by the Queen when the Court was at Windsor. But there was another, a more secret and a hardly less holy shrine. The suite of rooms which Albert had occupied in the Castle was kept forever shut away from the eyes of any save the most privileged. Within those precincts everything remained as it had been at the Prince's death; but the mysterious preoccupation of Victoria had commanded that her husband's clothing should be laid afresh, each evening, upon the bed, and that, each evening, the water should be set ready in the basin, as if he were still alive; and this incredible rite was performed with scrupulous regularity for nearly forty years.

Such was the inner worship; and still the flesh obeyed the spirit; still the daily hours of labor proclaimed Victoria's consecration to duty and to the ideal of the dead. Yet, with the years, the sense of self-sacrifice faded; the natural energies of that ardent being discharged themselves with satisfaction into the channel of public work; the love of business which, from her girlhood, had

been strong within her, reasserted itself in all its vigor, and, in her old age, to have been cut off from her papers and her boxes would have been, not a relief, but an agony to Victoria. Thus, though toiling Ministers might sigh and suffer, the whole process of government continued, till the very end, to pass before her. Nor was that all; ancient precedent had made the validity of an enormous number of official transactions dependent upon the application of the royal sign-manual; and a great proportion of the Queen's working hours was spent in this mechanical task. Nor did she show any desire to diminish it. On the contrary, she voluntarily resumed the duty of signing commissions in the army, from which she had been set free by Act of Parliament, and from which, during the years of middle life, she had abstained. In no case would she countenance the proposal that she should use a stamp. But, at last, when the increasing pressure of business made the delays of the antiquated system intolerable, she consented that, for certain classes of documents, her oral sanction should be sufficient. Each paper was read aloud to her, and she said at the end "Approved." Often, for hours at a time, she would sit, with Albert's bust in front of her, while the word "Approved" issued at intervals from her lips. The word came forth with a majestic sonority; for her voice now—how changed from the silvery treble of her girlhood!—was a contralto, full and strong.

IV

The final years were years of apotheosis. In the dazzled imagination of her subjects Victoria soared aloft towards the regions of divinity through a nimbus of purest glory. Criticism fell dumb; deficiencies which, twenty years earlier, would have been universally admitted, were now as universally ignored. That the nation's idol was a very incomplete representative of the nation was a circumstance that was hardly noticed, and yet it was conspicuously true. For the vast changes which, out of the England of 1837, had produced the England of 1897, seemed scarcely to have touched the Queen. The immense industrial development of the period, the significance of which had been so thoroughly understood by Albert, meant little indeed to Victoria. The amazing scientific movement, which Albert had appreciated no less, left Victoria perfectly cold. Her conception of the universe, and of man's place in it, and of the stupendous problems of nature and philosophy remained, throughout her life, entirely unchanged. Her religion was the religion which she had learnt from the Baroness Lehzen and the Duchess of Kent. Here, too, it might have been supposed that Albert's views might have influenced her. For Albert, in matters of religion, was advanced. Disbelieving altogether in evil spirits, he had had his doubts about the miracle of the Gadarene Swine. Stockmar, even, had thrown out, in a remarkable memorandum on the education of the Prince of Wales, the suggestion that while the child "must unquestionably be brought up in the creed of the Church of England," it might nevertheless be in acordance with the spirit of the times to exclude from his religious training the inculcation of a belief in "the supernatural doctrines of Christianity." This, however, would have been going too far; and all the royal children were brought up in complete orthodoxy. Anything else would have grieved Victoria, though her own conceptions of the Orthodox were not very precise. But her nature, in which

imagination and subtlety held so small a place, made her instinctively recoil from the intricate ecstasies of High Anglicanism; and she seemed to feel most at home in the simple faith of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. This was what might have been expected; for Lehzen was the daughter of a Lutheran pastor, and the Lutherans and the Presbyterians have much in common. For many years Dr. Norman Macleod, an innocent Scotch minister, was her principal spiritual adviser; and, when he was taken from her, she drew much comfort from quiet chats about life and death with the cottagers at Balmoral. Her piety, absolutely genuine, found what it wanted in the sober exhortations of old John Grant and the devout saws of Mrs. P. Farquharson. They possessed the qualities which, as a child of fourteen, she had so sincerely admired in the Bishop of Chester's *Exposition of the Gospel of St. Matthew;* they were "just plain and comprehensible and full of truth and good feeling." The Queen, who gave her name to the Age of Mill and of Darwin, never got any further than that.

From the social movements of her time Victoria was equally remote. Towards the smallest no less than towards the greatest changes she remained inflexible. During her youth and middle age smoking had been forbidden in polite society, and so long as she lived she would not withdraw her anathema against it. Kings might protest; bishops and ambassadors, invited to Windsor, might be reduced, in the privacy of their bedrooms, to lie full-length upon the floor and smoke up the chimney—the interdict continued. It might have been supposed that a female sovereign would have lent her countenance to one of the most vital of all the reforms to which her epoch gave birth—the emancipation of women—but, on the contrary, the mere mention of such a proposal sent the blood rushing to her head. In 1870, her eye having fallen upon the report of a meeting in favor of Woman's Suffrage, she wrote to Mr. Martin in royal rage—"The Queen is most anxious to enlist every one who can speak or write to join in checking this mad, wicked folly of 'Woman's Rights,' with all its attendant horrors, on which her poor feeble sex is bent, forgetting every sense of womanly feeling and propriety. Lady —— ought to get a *good whipping.* It is a subject which makes the Queen so furious that she cannot contain herself. God created men and women different—then let them remain each in their own position. Tennyson has some beautiful lines on the difference of men and women in 'The Princess.' Woman would become the most hateful, heartless, and disgusting of human beings were she allowed to unsex herself; and where would be the protection which man was intended to give the weaker sex? The Queen is sure that Mrs. Martin agrees with her." The argument was irrefutable; Mrs. Martin agreed; and yet the canker spread.

In another direction Victoria's comprehension of the spirit of her age has been constantly asserted. It was for long the custom for courtly historians and polite politicians to compliment the Queen upon the correctness of her attitude towards the Constitution. But such praises seem hardly to be justified by the facts. In her later years Victoria more than once alluded with regret to her conduct during the Bedchamber crisis, and let it be understood that she had grown wiser since. Yet in truth it is difficult to trace any fundamental change either in her theory or her practice in constitutional matters throughout her

life. The same despotic and personal spirit which led her to break off the negotiations with Peel is equally visible in her animosity towards Palmerston, in her threats of abdication to Disraeli, and in her desire to prosecute the Duke of Westminster for attending a meeting upon Bulgarian atrocities. The complex and delicate principles of the Constitution cannot be said to have come within the compass of her mental faculties; and in the actual developments which it underwent during her reign she played a passive part. From 1840 to 1861 the power of the Crown steadily increased in England; from 1861 to 1901 it steadily declined. The first process was due to the influence of the Prince Consort, the second to that of a series of great Ministers. During the first Victoria was in effect a mere accessory; during the second the threads of power, which Albert had so laboriously collected, inevitably fell from her hands into the vigorous grasp of Mr. Gladstone, Lord Beaconsfield, and Lord Salisbury. Perhaps, absorbed as she was in routine, and difficult as she found it to distinguish at all clearly between the trivial and the essential, she was only dimly aware of what was happening. Yet, at the end of her reign, the Crown was weaker than at any other time in English history. Paradoxically enough, Victoria received the highest eulogiums for assenting to a political evolution, which, had she completely realized its import, would have filled her with supreme displeasure.

Nevertheless it must not be supposed that she was a second George III. Her desire to impose her will, vehement as it was, and unlimited by any principle, was yet checked by a certain shrewdness. She might oppose her Ministers with extraordinary violence; she might remain utterly impervious to arguments and supplications; the pertinacity of her resolution might seem to be unconquerable; but, at the very last moment of all, her obstinacy would give way. Her innate respect and capacity for business, and perhaps, too, the memory of Albert's scrupulous avoidance of extreme courses, prevented her from ever entering an *impasse*. By instinct she understood when the facts were too much for her, and to them she invariably yielded. After all, what else could she do?

But if, in all these ways, the Queen and her epoch were profoundly separated, the points of contact between them also were not few. Victoria understood very well the meaning and the attractions of power and property, and in such learning the English nation, too, had grown to be more and more proficient. During the last fifteen years of the reign—for the short Liberal Administration of 1892 was a mere interlude—imperialism was the dominant creed of the country. It was Victoria's as well. In this direction, if in no other, she had allowed her mind to develop. Under Disraeli's tutelage the British Dominions over the seas had come to mean much more to her than ever before, and, in particular, she had grown enamored of the East. The thought of India fascinated her; she set to, and learnt a little Hindustani; she engaged some Indian servants, who became her inseparable attendants, and one of whom, Munshi Abdul Karim, eventually almost succeeded to the position which had once been John Brown's. At the same time, the imperialist temper of the nation invested her office with a new significance exactly harmonizing with her own inmost proclivities. The English polity was in the main a common-sense structure; but there was always a corner in it where common-sense could not enter—where, somehow or other, the ordinary measurements were not applicable and the

ordinary rules did not apply. So our ancestors had laid it down, giving scope, in their wisdom, to that mystical element which, as it seems, can never quite be eradicated from the affairs of men. Naturally it was in the Crown that the mysticism of the English polity was concentrated—the Crown, with its venerable antiquity, its sacred associations, its imposing spectacular array. But, for nearly two centuries, common-sense had been predominant in the great building, and the little, unexplored, inexplicable corner had attracted small attention. Then, with the rise of imperialism, there was a change. For imperialism is a faith as well as a business; as it grew, the mysticism in English public life grew with it; and simultaneously a new importance began to attach to the Crown. The need for a symbol—a symbol of England's might, of England's worth, of England's extraordinary and mysterious destiny—became felt more urgently than ever before. The Crown was that symbol: and the Crown rested upon the head of Victoria. Thus it happened that while by the end of the reign the power of the sovereign had appreciably diminished, the prestige of the sovereign had enormously grown.

Yet this prestige was not merely the outcome of public changes; it was an intensely personal matter, too. Victoria was the Queen of England, the Empress of India, the quintessential pivot round which the whole magnificent machine was revolving—but how much more besides! For one thing, she was of a great age—an almost indispensable qualification for popularity in England. She had given proof of one of the most admired characteristics of the race—persistent vitality. She had reigned for sixty years, and she was not out. And then, she was a character. The outlines of her nature were firmly drawn, and, even through the mists which envelop royalty, clearly visible. In the popular imagination her familiar figure filled, with satisfying ease, a distinct and memorable place. It was, besides, the kind of figure which naturally called forth the admiring sympathy of the great majority of the nation. Goodness they prized above every other human quality; and Victoria, who had said that she would be good at the age of twelve, had kept her word. Duty, conscience, morality—yes! in the light of those high beacons the Queen had always lived. She had passed her days in work and not in pleasure—in public responsibilities and family cares. The standard of solid virtue which had been set up so long ago amid the domestic happiness of Osborne had never been lowered for an instant. For more than half a century no divorced lady had approached the precincts of the Court. Victoria, indeed, in her enthusiasm for wifely fidelity, had laid down a still stricter ordinance: she frowned severely upon any widow who married again. Considering that she herself was the offspring of a widow's second marriage, this prohibition might be regarded as an eccentricity; but, no doubt, it was an eccentricity on the right side. The middle classes, firm in the triple brass of their respectability, rejoiced with a special joy over the most respectable of Queens. They almost claimed her, indeed, as one of themselves; but this would have been an exaggeration. For, though many of her characteristics were most often found among the middle classes, in other respects—in her manners, for instance—Victoria was decidedly aristocratic. And, in one important particular, she was neither aristocratic nor middle-class: her attitude toward herself was simply regal.

Such qualities were obvious and important; but, in the impact of a personality, it is something deeper, something fundamental and common to all its qualities, that really tells. In Victoria, it is easy to discern the nature of this underlying element: it was a peculiar sincerity. Her truthfulness, her single-mindedness, the vividness of her emotions and her unrestrained expression of them, were the varied forms which this central characteristic assumed. It was her sincerity which gave her at once her impressiveness, her charm, and her absurdity. She moved through life with the imposing certitude of one to whom concealment was impossible—either towards her surroundings or towards herself. There she was, all of her—the Queen of England, complete and obvious; the world might take her or leave her; she had nothing more to show, or to explain, or to modify; and, with her peerless carriage, she swept along her path. And not only was concealment out of the question; reticence, reserve, even dignity itself, as it sometimes seemed, might be very well dispensed with. As Lady Lyttelton said: "There is a transparency in her truth that is very striking—not a shade of exaggeration in describing feelings or facts; like very few other people I ever knew. Many may be as true, but I think it goes often along with some reserve. She talks all out; just as it is, no more and no less." She talked all out; and she wrote all out, too. Her letters, in the surprising jet of their expression, remind one of a turned-on tap. What is within pours forth in an immediate, spontaneous rush. Her utterly unliterary style has at least the merit of being a vehicle exactly suited to her thoughts and feelings; and even the platitude of her phraseology carries with it a curiously personal flavor. Undoubtedly it was through her writings that she touched the heart of the public. Not only in her *Highland Journals,* where the mild chronicle of her private proceedings was laid bare without a trace either of affectation or of embarrassment, but also in those remarkable messages to the nation which, from time to time, she published in the newspapers, her people found her very close to them indeed. They felt instinctively Victoria's irresistible sincerity, and they responded. And in truth it was an endearing trait.

The personality and the position, too—the wonderful combination of them—that, perhaps, was what was finally fascinating in the case. The little old lady, with her white hair and her plain mourning clothes, in her wheeled chair or her donkey-carriage—one saw her so; and then—close behind—with their immediate suggestion of singularity, of mystery, and of power—the Indian servants. That was the familiar vision, and it was admirable; but, at chosen moments, it was right that the widow of Windsor should step forth apparent Queen. The last and the most glorious of such occasions was the Jubilee of 1897. Then, as the splendid procession passed along, escorting Victoria through the thronged reechoing streets of London on her progress of thanksgiving to St. Paul's Cathedral, the greatness of her realm and the adoration of her subjects blazed out together. The tears welled to her eyes, and, while the multitude roared round her, "How kind they are to me! How kind they are!" she repeated over and over again. That night her message flew over the Empire: "From my heart I thank my beloved people. May God bless them!" The long journey was nearly done. But the traveler, who had come so far, and through such strange

experiences, moved on with the old unfaltering step. The girl, the wife, the aged woman, were the same: vitality, conscientiousness, pride, and simplicity were hers to the latest hour.

X. THE END

THE EVENING had been golden; but, after all, the day was to close in cloud and tempest. Imperial needs, imperial ambitions, involved the country in the South African War. There were checks, reverses, bloody disasters; for a moment the nation was shaken, and the public distresses were felt with intimate solicitude by the Queen. But her spirit was high, and neither her courage nor her confidence wavered for a moment. Throwing herself heart and soul into the struggle, she labored with redoubled vigor, interested herself in every detail of the hostilities, and sought by every means in her power to render service to the national cause. In April, 1900, when she was in her eighty-first year, she made the extraordinary decision to abandon her annual visit to the South of France, and to go instead to Ireland, which had provided a particularly large number of recruits to the armies in the field. She stayed for three weeks in Dublin, driving through the streets, in spite of the warnings of her advisers, without an armed escort; and the visit was a complete success. But, in the course of it, she began, for the first time, to show signs of the fatigue of age.

For the long strain and the unceasing anxiety, brought by the war, made themselves felt at last. Endowed by nature with a robust constitution, Victoria, though in periods of depression she had sometimes supposed herself an invalid, had in reality throughout her life enjoyed remarkably good health. In her old age, she had suffered from a rheumatic stiffness of the joints, which had necessitated the use of a stick, and, eventually, a wheeled chair; but no other ailments attacked her, until, in 1898, her eyesight began to be affected by incipient cataract. After that, she found reading more and more difficult, though she could still sign her name, and even, with some difficulty, write letters. In the summer of 1900, however, more serious symptoms appeared. Her memory, in whose strength and precision she had so long prided herself, now sometimes deserted her; there was a tendency towards aphasia; and, while no specific disease declared itself, by the autumn there were unmistakable signs of a general physical decay. Yet, even in these last months, the strain of iron held firm. The daily work continued; nay, it actually increased; for the Queen, with an astonishing pertinacity, insisted upon communicating personally with an ever-growing multitude of men and women who had suffered through the war.

By the end of the year the last remains of her ebbing strength had almost deserted her; and through the early days of the opening century it was clear that her dwindling forces were only kept together by an effort of will. On January 14, she had at Osborne an hour's interview with Lord Roberts, who had returned victorious from South Africa a few days before. She inquired with acute anxiety into all the details of the war; she appeared to sustain the exertion successfully; but, when the audience was over, there was a collapse. On the following day her medical attendants recognized that her state was hopeless; and yet, for two days more, the indomitable spirit fought on; for two

days more she discharged the duties of a Queen of England. But after that there was an end of working; and then, and not till then, did the last optimism of those about her break down. The brain was failing, and life was gently slipping away. Her family gathered round her; for a little more she lingered, speechless and apparently insensible; and, on January 22, 1901, she died.

When, two days previously, the news of the approaching end had been made public, astonished grief had swept over the country. It appeared as if some monstrous reversal of the course of nature was about to take place. The vast majority of her subjects had never known a time when Queen Victoria had not been reigning over them. She had become an indissoluble part of their whole scheme of things, and that they were about to lose her appeared a scarcely possible thought. She herself, as she lay blind and silent, seemed to those who watched her to be divested of all thinking—to have glided already, unawares, into oblivion. Yet, perhaps, in the secret chambers of consciousness, she had her thoughts, too. Perhaps her fading mind called up once more the shadows of the past to float before it, and retraced, for the last time, the vanished visions of that long history—passing back and back, through the cloud of years, to older and ever older memories—to the spring woods at Osborne, so full of primroses for Lord Beaconsfield—to Lord Palmerston's queer clothes and high demeanor, and Albert's face under the green lamp, and Albert's first stag at Balmoral, and Albert in his blue and silver uniform, and the Baron coming in through a doorway, and Lord M. dreaming at Windsor with the rooks cawing in the elm-trees, and the Archbishop of Canterbury on his knees in the dawn, and the old King's turkey-cock ejaculations, and Uncle Leopold's soft voice at Claremont, and Lehzen with the globes, and her mother's feathers sweeping down towards her, and a great old repeater-watch of her father's in its tortoise-shell case, and a yellow rug, and some friendly flounces of sprigged muslin, and the trees and the grass at Kensington.

SHORT STORIES

PERHAPS the best way to introduce this section of fourteen short stories is to explain why Maugham's "Before the Party" and Crane's "The Open Boat" are placed first. It was assumed, to begin with, that readers of the *Omnibus* would find Maugham's story immediately interesting and clear. It is the kind of story with which we are most familiar. In fact, we may be so accustomed to stories of this kind that we are not conscious that they represent a particular kind at all. What kind are they? This is essentially the question that Maugham himself attempts to answer in his essay reprinted on page 210. He decides that stories like his are marked by definiteness of form, by clarity of plot (in which incidents follow each other neatly to a climax), and by a calculated arrangement of materials to fit a preconceived intention and design. He recalls that he "did not take to writing stories seriously till I had had much experience as a dramatist, and this experience taught me to leave out everything that did not serve the dramatic value of my story." By "dramatic value" Maugham apparently means the kind of interests and techniques represented on the stage in the well-made play. A reading of "Before the Party" will show that it, like many of Maugham's stories, might be dramatized without radical alteration. The opening scene, in which Mrs. Skinner stands before her dressing table adjusting her egret-trimmed toque, is easy to visualize on a stage. Thereafter, other members of the cast appear and are clearly distinguished, as they would be in a play, by dress, physical appearance, and some dominant characteristic. Information about the plot is released in controlled amounts, both to hold our attention through suspense and to strengthen the theme by the emphasis of successive surprises and by putting the characters into positions that test or reveal them sharply. Looking back over the story, the reader understands that it is a serious comedy in which everything is selected and arranged, as Maugham says, and that the governing intention is to satirize the smug hypocrisy of certain social types. The author has arranged them in a critically revealing sequence of events so that they unwittingly expose themselves for what they are.

The second story, "The Open Boat," is also immediately interesting and clear. In so far as it is an exciting narrative of four shipwrecked men, it makes no unfamiliar demands on the reader; but it does differ from "Before the Party," and the differences make it to some extent another

kind of story. The opening paragraph, for instance, makes clear that this story is being told from a different point of view from that employed by Maugham. Instead of being outside of the characters, watching them as we do actors in a play, we are in the characters. Our eyes, like theirs, are level with the waves, and we know the color of the sky only by its reflection in the water. We understand that the author's aim is to make us feel as vividly and immediately as possible what it is like to be cast away in an open boat. It is hard to imagine the story on a stage, but it is easy to imagine it as a motion picture with the camera placed in the boat and maneuvered so as to duplicate the story's point of view. The problem, which was Crane's, would be to make the picture more than a documentary film. How and to what extent can a sequence of recorded experiences and sensations be made to reveal a deeper meaning?

It is obvious that if the author editorializes or removes himself and us from the characters and takes an omniscient view in order to interpret the meaning of the story, the immediacy of the experience will be lessened. There will be the same loss in vivid lifelikeness if the characters and the plot are controlled with the artfulness that is permissible in a story like Maugham's. The meaning will have to seem to arise from the multitude of particulars, just as it does in actual life. It will of necessity be something relatively general and deep-seated, rather than explicit, as it is in a story told from the outside. When "The Open Boat" is read attentively, interpretative overtones can be heard. By various means, necessarily subtle because of the over-all method, the author gradually suggests an opposition between man and nature that is more than the usual tale of men against the sea or the usual heroics like the verses about the dying soldier which one of the shipwrecked men remembers. Many small signs in the story combine to suggest that the water stands, as it has in many writings, including the Bible, for all that is chaotic and form-defying, and that man can and does realize what is best or most distinctly human in himself when he tries co-operatively to create firmness and order in the midst of the waves. This optimistic belief is emphasized not so much by the "happy ending" in which some of the men reach land, as it is by the fact that they were all capable of behaving so admirably, of distinguishing themselves from the water. There is a relationship here between the theme and the form of the story; in both a meaningful pattern is discovered or achieved in the thick of experience.

The differences between the kinds of fiction represented by "Before the Party" and "The Open Boat" may be sharpened by comparing Maugham's

remarks on the short story (page 210) with the passages from Henry James's essay on the art of fiction that are reprinted on page 206. Maugham emphasizes the selection and arrangement of material; James asks for a more complete and precise rendering of experience. Maugham discusses the story in terms of character, incident, climax; James thinks of these elements as really being aspects of each other, "associated parts of one general effort of expression." Maugham implies that the author has the design and meaning of his story in mind from the start; James suggests that the author, like a painter, finds his story's point and form through his "attempts to render the look of things, the look that conveys the meaning."

These two stories were placed first, then, as an introduction to different tendencies in fiction, tendencies which are further illustrated by other stories in this section. James's "The Birthplace" and Crane's "The Open Boat" are worlds apart in subject matter, but they are akin in technique. The experience of reading Crane's story may help us to understand James's attempt to render an experience that is not as immediately exciting as a shipwreck. Likewise, insight into Maugham's story may help us to see a comparable method at work in Angus Wilson's "Realpolitik," even though the subject matter is again very different.

Fortunately, however, stories cannot be fully understood simply by classifying them into groups. Donald Stauffer makes this point about poems in his essay reprinted on page 222. That essay might well be read as an introduction to the short story, for all literary forms present the reader with the same basic problems and opportunities. The reader's main responsibility, as Stauffer shows, is to get to know the poem (or story) as one does a person, with all of his individual concreteness and complexity. A first meeting or reading is likely to be incomplete or even misleading. Both quiet and lively exteriors may cover rewarding depths. What at first seemed only a surface feature is later found to be also a sign pointing inward to other meanings. A good story, like a richly endowed person, grows on closer acquaintanceship.

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM

Before the Party

MRS. SKINNER liked to be in good time. She was already dressed, in black silk as befitted her age and the mourning she wore for her son-in-law, and now she put on her toque. She was a little uncertain about it, since the egrets' feathers which adorned it might very well arouse in some of the friends she would certainly meet at the party acid expostulations; and of course it was shocking to kill those beautiful white birds, in the mating season too, for the sake of their feathers; but there they were, so pretty and stylish, and it would have been silly to refuse them, and it would have hurt her son-in-law's feelings. He had brought them all the way from Borneo and he expected her to be so pleased with them. Kathleen had made herself rather unpleasant about them, she must wish she hadn't now, after what had happened, but Kathleen had never really liked Harold. Mrs. Skinner, standing at her dressing-table, placed the toque on her head, it was after all the only nice hat she had, and put in a pin with large jet knob. If anybody spoke to her about the ospreys she had her answer.

"I know it's dreadful," she would say, "and I wouldn't dream of buying them, but my poor son-in-law brought them back the last time he was home on leave."

That would explain her possession of them and excuse their use. Everyone had been very kind. Mrs. Skinner took a clean handkerchief from a drawer and sprinkled a little *Eau de Cologne* on it. She never used scent, and she had always thought it rather fast, but *Eau de Cologne* was so refreshing. She was very nearly ready now and her eyes wandered out of the window behind her looking-glass. Canon Heywood had a beautiful day for his garden-party. It was warm and the sky was blue; the trees had not yet lost the fresh green of the spring. She smiled as she saw her little granddaughter in the strip of garden behind the house busily raking her very own flower-bed. Mrs. Skinner wished Joan were not quite so pale, it was a mistake to have kept her so long in the tropics; and she was so grave for her age, you never saw her run about; she played quiet games of her own invention and watered her garden. Mrs. Skinner gave the front of her dress a little pat, took up her gloves, and went down-stairs.

Kathleen was at the writing-table in the window busy with lists she was making, for she was honorary secretary of the Ladies' Golf Club, and when there were competitions had a good deal to do. But she too was ready for the party.

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"I see you've put on your jumper after all," said Mrs. Skinner.

They had discussed at luncheon whether Kathleen should wear her jumper or her black chiffon. The jumper was black and white, and Kathleen thought it rather smart, but it was hardly mourning. Millicent, however, was in favour of it.

"There's no reason why we should all look as if we'd just come from a funeral," she said. "Harold's been dead eight months."

To Mrs. Skinner it seemed rather unfeeling to talk like that. Millicent was strange since her return from Borneo.

"You're not going to leave off your weeds yet, darling?" she asked.

Millicent did not give a direct answer.

"People don't wear mourning in the way they used," she said. She paused a little and when she went on there was a tone in her voice which Mrs. Skinner thought quite peculiar. It was plain that Kathleen noticed it too, for she gave her sister a curious look. "I'm sure Harold wouldn't wish me to wear mourning for him indefinitely."

"I dressed early because I wanted to say something to Millicent," said Kathleen in reply to her mother's observation.

"Oh?"

Kathleen did not explain. But she put her lists aside and with knitted brows read for the second time a letter from a lady who complained that the committee had most unfairly marked down her handicap from twenty-four to eighteen. It requires a good deal of tact to be Honorary Secretary to a ladies' golf club. Mrs. Skinner began to put on her new gloves. The sun-blinds kept the room cool and dark. She looked at the great wooden hornbill, gaily painted, which Harold had left in her safekeeping; and it seemed a little odd and barbaric to her, but he had set much store on it. It had some religious significance and Canon Heywood had been greatly struck by it. On the wall, over the sofa, were Malay weapons, she forgot what they were called, and here and there on occasional tables pieces of silver and brass which Harold at various times had sent to them. She had liked Harold and involuntarily her eyes sought his photograph which stood on the piano with photographs of her two daughters, her grandchild, her sister and her sister's son.

"Why, Kathleen, where's Harold's photograph?" she asked.

Kathleen looked round. It no longer stood in its place.

"Some one's taken it away," said Kathleen.

Surprised and puzzled, she got up and went over to the piano. The photographs had been rearranged so that no gap should show.

"Perhaps Millicent wanted to have it in her bedroom," said Mrs. Skinner.

"I should have noticed it. Besides, Millicent has several photographs of Harold. She keeps them locked up."

Mrs. Skinner had thought it very peculiar that her daughter should have no photographs of Harold in her room. Indeed she had spoken of it once, but Millicent had made no reply. Millicent had been strangely silent since she came back from Borneo, and had not encouraged the sympathy Mrs. Skinner would have been so willing to show her. She seemed unwilling to speak of her great loss. Sorrow took people in different ways. Her husband had said the

best thing was to leave her alone. The thought of him turned her ideas to the party they were going to.

"Father asked if I thought he ought to wear a top-hat," she said. "I said I thought it was just as well to be on the safe side."

It was going to be quite a grand affair. They were having ices, strawberry and vanilla, from Boddy, the confectioner, but the Heywoods were making the iced coffee at home. Every one would be there. They had been asked to meet the Bishop of Hong-Kong, who was staying with the Canon, an old college friend of his, and he was going to speak on the Chinese missions. Mrs. Skinner, whose daughter had lived in the East for eight years and whose son-in-law had been Resident of a district in Borneo, was in a flutter of interest. Naturally it meant more to her than to people who had never had anything to do with the Colonies and that sort of thing.

"What can they know of England who only England know?" as Mr. Skinner said.

He came into the room at that moment. He was a lawyer, as his father had been before him, and he had offices in Lincoln's Inn Fields. He went up to London every morning and came down every evening. He was only able to accompany his wife and daughters to the Canon's garden-party because the Canon had very wisely chosen a Saturday to have it on. Mr. Skinner looked very well in his tail-coat and pepper-and-salt trousers. He was not exactly dressy, but he was neat. He looked like a respectable family solicitor, which indeed he was; his firm never touched work that was not perfectly above board, and if a client went to him with some trouble that was not quite nice, Mr. Skinner would look grave.

"I don't think this is the sort of case that we very much care to undertake," he said. "I think you'd do better to go elsewhere."

He drew towards him his writing-block and scribbled a name and address on it. He tore off a sheet of paper and handed it to his client.

"If I were you I think I would go and see these people. If you mention my name I believe they'll do anything they can for you."

Mr. Skinner was clean-shaven and very bald. His pale lips were tight and thin, but his blue eyes were shy. He had no colour in his cheeks and his face was much lined.

"I see you've put on your new trousers," said Mrs. Skinner.

"I thought it would be a good opportunity," he answered. "I was wondering if I should wear a buttonhole."

"I wouldn't, father," said Kathleen. "I don't think it's awfully good form."

"A lot of people will be wearing them," said Mrs. Skinner.

"Only clerks and people like that," said Kathleen. "The Heywoods have had to ask everybody, you know. And besides, we are in mourning."

"I wonder if there'll be a collection after the Bishop's address," said Mr. Skinner.

"I should hardly think so," said Mrs. Skinner.

"I think it would be rather bad form," agreed Kathleen.

"I [illegible] to be on the safe side," said Mr. Skinner. "I'll give for all of

us. I was wondering if ten shillings would be enough or if I must give a pound."

"If you give anything I think you ought to give a pound, father," said Kathleen.

"I'll see when the time comes. I don't want to give less than any one else, but on the other hand I see no reason to give more than I need."

Kathleen put away her papers in the drawer of the writing-table and stood up. She looked at her wrist-watch.

"Is Millicent ready?" asked Mrs. Skinner.

"There's plenty of time. We're only asked at four, and I don't think we ought to arrive much before half-past. I told Davis to bring the car round at four-fifteen."

Generally Kathleen drove the car, but on grand occasions, like this, Davis, who was the gardener, put on his uniform and acted as chauffeur. It looked better when you drove up, and naturally Kathleen didn't much want to drive herself when she was wearing her new jumper. The sight of her mother forcing her fingers one by one into her new gloves reminded her that she must put on her own. She smelt them to see if any odour of the cleaning still clung to them. It was very slight. She didn't believe any one would notice.

At last the door opened and Millicent came. She wore her widow's weeds. Mrs. Skinner never could get used to them, but of course she knew that Millicent must wear them for a year. It was a pity they didn't suit her; they suited some people. She had tried on Millicent's bonnet once, with its white band and long veil, and thought she looked very well in it. Of course she hoped dear Alfred would survive her, but if he didn't she would never go out of weeds. Queen Victoria never had. It was different for Millicent; Millicent was a much younger woman; she was only thirty-six; it was very sad to be a widow at thirty-six. And there wasn't much chance of her marrying again. Kathleen wasn't very likely to marry now, she was thirty-five; last time Millicent and Harold had come home she had suggested that they should have Kathleen to stay with them. Harold had seemed willing enough, but Millicent said it wouldn't do. Mrs. Skinner didn't know why not. It would give her a chance. Of course they didn't want to get rid of her, but a girl ought to marry, and somehow all the men they knew at home were married already. Millicent said the climate was trying. It was true she was a bad colour. No one would think now that Millicent had been the prettier of the two. Kathleen had fined down as she grew older, of course some people said she was too thin, but now that she had cut her hair, with her cheeks red from playing golf in all weathers, Mrs. Skinner thought her quite pretty. No one could say that of poor Millicent; she had lost her figure completely; she had never been tall, and now that she had filled out she looked stocky. She was a good deal too fat; Mrs. Skinner supposed it was due to the tropical heat that prevented her from taking exercise. Her skin was sallow and muddy; and her blue eyes, which had been her best feature, had gone quite pale.

"She ought to do something about her neck," Mrs. Skinner reflected. "She's becoming dreadfully jowly."

She had spoken of it once or twice to her husband. He remarked that Milli-

cent wasn't as young as she was: that might be, but she needn't let herself go altogether. Mrs. Skinner made up her mind to talk to her daughter seriously, but of course she must respect her grief and she would wait till the year was up. She was just as glad to have this reason to put off a conversation the thought of which made her slightly nervous. For Millicent was certainly changed. There was something sullen in her face which made her mother not quite at home with her. Mrs. Skinner liked to say aloud all the thoughts that passed through her head, but Millicent when you made a remark (just to say something, you know) had an awkward habit of not answering so that you wondered whether she had heard. Sometimes Mrs. Skinner found it so irritating, that not to be quite sharp with Millicent she had to remind herself that poor Harold had only been dead eight months.

The light from the window fell on the widow's heavy face as she advanced silently, but Kathleen stood with her back to it. She watched her sister for a moment.

"Millicent, there's something I want to say to you," she said. "I was playing golf with Gladys Heywood this morning."

"Did you beat her?" asked Millicent.

Gladys Heywood was the Canon's only unmarried daughter.

"She told me something about you which I think you ought to know."

Millicent's eyes passed beyond her sister to the little girl watering flowers in the garden.

"Have you told Annie to give Joan her tea in the kitchen, mother?" she said.

"Yes, she'll have it when the servants have theirs."

Kathleen looked at her sister coolly.

"The Bishop spent two or three days at Singapore on his way home," she went on. "He's very fond of travelling. He's been to Borneo, and he knows a good many of the people that you know."

"He'll be interested to see you, dear," said Mrs. Skinner. "Did he know poor Harold?"

"Yes, he met him at Kuala Solor. He remembers him very well. He says he was shocked to hear of his death."

Millicent sat down and began to put on her black gloves. It seemed strange to Mrs. Skinner that she received these remarks with complete silence.

"Oh, Millicent," she said, "Harold's photo has disappeared. Have you taken it?"

"Yes, I put it away."

"I should have thought you'd like to have it out."

Once more Millicent said nothing. It really was an exasperating habit.

Kathleen turned slightly in order to face her sister.

"Millicent, why did you tell us that Harold died of fever?"

The widow made no gesture, she looked at Kathleen with steady eyes, but her sallow skin darkened with a flush. She did not reply.

"What *do* you mean, Kathleen?" asked Mr. Skinner, with surprise.

"The Bishop says that Harold committed suicide."

Mrs. Skinner gave a startled cry, but her husband put out a deprecating hand.

"Is it true, Millicent?"

"It is."

"But why didn't you tell us?"

Millicent paused for an instant. She fingered idly a piece of Brunei brass which stood on the table by her side. That too had been a present from Harold.

"I thought it better for Joan that her father should be thought to have died of fever. I didn't want her to know anything about it."

"You've put us in an awfully awkward position," said Kathleen, frowning a little. "Gladys Heywood said she thought it rather nasty of me not to have told her the truth. I had the greatest difficulty in getting her to believe that I knew absolutely nothing about it. She said her father was rather put out. He says, after all the years we've known one another, and considering that he married you, and the terms we've been on, and all that, he does think we might have had confidence in him. And at all events, if we didn't want to tell him the truth we needn't have told him a lie."

"I must say I sympathise with him there," said Mr. Skinner acidly.

"Of course I told Gladys that we weren't to blame. We only told them what you told us."

"I hope it didn't put you off your game," said Millicent.

"Really, my dear, I think that is a most improper observation," exclaimed her father.

He rose from his chair, walked over to the empty fireplace, and from force of habit stood in front of it with parted coat-tails.

"It was my business," said Millicent, "and if I chose to keep it to myself I didn't see why I shouldn't."

"It doesn't look as if you had any affection for your mother if you didn't even tell her," said Mrs. Skinner.

Millicent shrugged her shoulders.

"You might have known it was bound to come out," said Kathleen.

"Why? I didn't expect that two gossiping old parsons would have nothing else to talk about than me."

"When the Bishop said he'd been to Borneo it's only natural that the Heywoods should ask him if he knew you and Harold."

"All that's neither here nor there," said Mr. Skinner. "I think you should certainly have told us the truth, and we could have decided what was the best thing to do. As a solicitor I can tell you that in the long run it only makes things worse if you attempt to hide them."

"Poor Harold," said Mrs. Skinner, and the tears began to trickle down her raddled cheeks. "It seems dreadful. He was always a good son-in-law to me. Whatever induced him to do such a dreadful thing?"

"The climate."

"I think you'd better give us all the facts, Millicent," said her father.

"Kathleen will tell you."

Kathleen hesitated. What she had to say really was rather dreadful. It seemed terrible that such things should happen to a family like theirs.

"The Bishop says he cut his throat."

Mrs. Skinner gasped and she went impulsively up to her bereaved daughter. She wanted to fold her in her arms.

"My poor child," she sobbed.

But Millicent withdrew herself.

"Please don't fuss me, mother. I really can't stand being mauled about."

"Really, Millicent," said Mr. Skinner, with a frown.

He did not think she was behaving very nicely.

Mrs. Skinner dabbed her eyes carefully with her handkerchief and with a sigh and a little shake of the head returned to her chair. Kathleen fidgeted with the long chain she wore round her neck.

"It does seem rather absurd that I should have to be told the details of my brother-in-law's death by a friend. It makes us all look such fools. The Bishop wants very much to see you, Millicent; he wants to tell you how much he feels for you." She paused, but Millicent did not speak. "He says that Millicent had been away with Joan and when she came back she found poor Harold lying dead on his bed."

"It must have been a great shock," said Mr. Skinner.

Mrs. Skinner began to cry again, but Kathleen put her hand gently on her shoulder.

"Don't cry, mother," she said. "It'll make your eyes red and people will think it so funny."

They were all silent while Mrs. Skinner, drying her eyes, made a successful effort to control herself. It seemed very strange to her that at this very moment she should be wearing in her toque the ospreys that poor Harold had given her.

"There's something else I ought to tell you," said Kathleen.

Millicent looked at her sister again, without haste, and her eyes were steady, but watchful. She had the look of a person who is waiting for a sound which he is afraid of missing.

"I don't want to say anything to wound you, dear," Kathleen went on, "but there's something else and I think you ought to know. The Bishop says that Harold drank."

"Oh, my dear, how dreadful!" cried Mrs. Skinner. "What a shocking thing to say. Did Gladys Heywood tell you? What did you say?"

"I said it was entirely untrue."

"This is what comes of making secrets of things," said Mr. Skinner irritably. "It's always the same. If you try and hush a thing up all sorts of rumours get about which are ten times worse than the truth."

"They told the Bishop in Singapore that Harold had killed himself while he was suffering from *delirium tremens*. I think for all our sakes you ought to deny that, Millicent."

"It's such a dreadful thing to have said about anyone who's dead," said Mrs. Skinner. "And it'll be so bad for Joan when she grows up."

"But what is the foundation of this story, Millicent?" asked her father. "Harold was always very abstemious."

"Here," said the widow.

"Did he drink?"

"Like a fish."

The answer was so unexpected, and the tone so sardonic, that all three of them were startled.

"Millicent, how can you talk like that of your husband when he's dead?" cried her mother, clasping her neatly gloved hands. "I can't understand you. You've been so strange since you came back. I could never have believed that a girl of mine could take her husband's death like that."

"Never mind about that, mother," said Mr. Skinner. "We can go into all that later."

He walked to the window and looked out at the sunny little garden, and then walked back into the room. He took his pince-nez out of his pocket and, though he had no intention of putting them on, wiped them with his handkerchief. Millicent looked at him and in her eyes, unmistakably, was a look of irony which was quite cynical. Mr. Skinner was vexed. He had finished his week's work and he was a free man till Monday morning. Though he had told his wife that this garden-party was a great nuisance and he would much sooner have tea quietly in his own garden, he had been looking forward to it. He did not care very much about Chinese missions, but it would be interesting to meet the Bishop. And now this! It was not the kind of thing he cared to be mixed up in; it was most unpleasant to be told on a sudden that his son-in-law was a drunkard and a suicide. Millicent was thoughtfully smoothing her white cuffs. Her coolness irritated him; but instead of addressing her he spoke to his younger daughter.

"Why don't you sit down, Kathleen? Surely there are plenty of chairs in the room."

Kathleen drew forward a chair and without a word seated herself. Mr. Skinner stopped in front of Millicent and faced her.

"Of course I see why you told us Harold had died of fever. I think it was a mistake, because that sort of thing is bound to come out sooner or later. I don't know how far what the Bishop has told the Heywoods coincides with the facts, but if you will take my advice you will tell us everything as circumstantially as you can, then we can see. We can't hope that it will go no further now that Canon Heywood and Gladys know. In a place like this people are bound to talk. It will make it easier for all of us if we at all events know the exact truth."

Mrs. Skinner and Kathleen thought he put the matter very well. They waited for Millicent's reply. She had listened with an impassive face; that sudden flush had disappeared and it was once more, as usual, pasty and sallow.

"I don't think you'll much like the truth if I tell it you," she said.

"You must know that you can count on our sympathy and understanding," said Kathleen gravely.

Millicent gave her a glance and the shadow of a smile flickered across her set mouth. She looked slowly at the three of them. Mrs. Skinner had an uneasy impression that she looked at them as though they were mannequins at a dressmaker's. She seemed to live in a different world from theirs and to have no connection with them.

"You know, I wasn't in love with Harold when I married him," she said reflectively.

Mrs. Skinner was on the point of making an exclamation when a rapid gesture of her husband, barely indicated, but after so many years of married life perfectly significant, stopped her. Millicent went on. She spoke with a level voice, slowly, and there was little change of expression in her tone.

"I was twenty-seven, and no one else seemed to want to marry me. It's true he was forty-four, and it seemed rather old, but he had a very good position, hadn't he? I wasn't likely to get a better chance."

Mrs. Skinner felt inclined to cry again, but she remembered the party.

"Of course I see now why you took his photograph away," she said dolefully.

"Don't, mother," exclaimed Kathleen.

It had been taken when he was engaged to Millicent and was a very good photograph of Harold. Mrs. Skinner had always thought him quite a fine man. He was heavily built, tall and perhaps a little too fat, but he held himself well, and his presence was imposing. He was inclined to be bald, even then, but men did go bald very early nowadays, and he said that topees, sunhelmets, you know, were very bad for the hair. He had a small dark moustache, and his face was deeply burned by the sun. Of course his best feature was his eyes; they were brown and large, like Joan's. His conversation was interesting. Kathleen said he was pompous, but Mrs. Skinner didn't think him so, she didn't mind it if a man laid down the law; and when she saw, as she very soon did, that he was attracted by Millicent she began to like him very much. He was always very attentive to Mrs. Skinner, and she listened as though she were really interested when he spoke of his district, and told her of the big game he had killed. Kathleen said he had a pretty good opinion of himself, but Mrs. Skinner came of a generation which accepted without question the good opinion that men had of themselves. Millicent saw very soon which way the wind blew, and though she said nothing to her mother, her mother knew that if Harold asked her she was going to accept him.

Harold was staying with some people who had been thirty years in Borneo and they spoke well of the country. There was no reason why a woman shouldn't live there comfortably; of course the children had to come home when they were seven; but Mrs. Skinner thought it unnecessary to trouble about that yet. She asked Harold to dine, and she told him they were always in to tea. He seemed to be at a loose end, and when his visit to his old friends was drawing to a close, she told him they would be very much pleased if he would come and spend a fortnight with them. It was towards the end of this that Harold and Millicent became engaged. They had a very pretty wedding, they went to Venice for their honeymoon, and then they started for the East. Millicent wrote from the various ports at which the ship touched. She seemed happy.

"People were very nice to me at Kuala Solor," she said. Kuala Solor was the chief town of the state of Sembulu. "We stayed with the Resident and every one asked us to dinner. Once or twice I heard men ask Harold to have a drink, but he refused; he said he had turned over a new leaf now he was

a married man. I didn't know why they laughed. Mrs. Gray, the Resident's wife, told me they were all so glad Harold was married. She said it was dreadfully lonely for a bachelor on one of the outstations. When we left Kuala Solor Mrs. Gray said good-bye to me so funnily that I was quite surprised. It was as if she was solemnly putting Harold in my charge."

They listened to her in silence. Kathleen never took her eyes off her sister's impassive face; but Mr. Skinner stared straight in front of him at the Malay arms, krises and parangs, which hung on the wall above the sofa on which his wife sat.

"It wasn't till I went back to Kuala Solor a year and a half later, that I found out why their manner had seemed so odd." Millicent gave a queer little sound like the echo of a scornful laugh. "I knew then a good deal that I hadn't known before. Harold came to England that time in order to marry. He didn't much mind who it was. Do you remember how we spread ourselves out to catch him, mother? We needn't have taken so much trouble."

"I don't know what you mean, Millicent," said Mrs. Skinner, not without acerbity, for the insinuation of scheming did not please her. "I saw he was attracted by you."

Millicent shrugged her heavy shoulders.

"He was a confirmed drunkard. He used to go to bed every night with a bottle of whisky and empty it before morning. The Chief Secretary told him he'd have to resign unless he stopped drinking. He said he'd give him one more chance. He could take his leave then and go to England. He advised him to marry so that when he got back he'd have someone to look after him. Harold married me because he wanted a keeper. They took bets in Kuala Solor on how long I'd make him stay sober."

"But he was in love with you," Mrs. Skinner interrupted. "You don't know how he used to speak to me about you, and at that time you're speaking of, when you went to Kuala Solor to have Joan, he wrote me such a charming letter about you."

Millicent looked at her mother again and a deep colour dyed her sallow skin. Her hands, lying on her lap, began to tremble a little. She thought of those first months of her married life. The Government launch took them to the mouth of the river, and they spent the night at the bungalow which Harold said jokingly was their seaside residence. Next day they went up-stream in a prahu. From the novels she had read she expected the rivers of Borneo to be dark and strangely sinister, but the sky was blue, dappled with little white clouds, and the green of the mangroves and the nipas, washed by the flowing water, glistened in the sun. On each side stretched the pathless jungle, and in the distance, silhouetted against the sky, was the rugged outline of a mountain. The air in the early morning was fresh and buoyant. She seemed to enter upon a friendly, fertile land, and she had a sense of spacious freedom. They watched the banks for monkeys sitting on the branches of the tangled trees, and once Harold pointed out something that looked like a log and said it was a crocodile. The Assistant Resident, in ducks and a topee, was at the landing-stage to meet them, and a dozen trim little soldiers were lined up to do them honour. The Assistant Resident was introduced to her. His name was Simpson.

"By Jove, sir," he said to Harold, "I'm glad to see you back. It's been deuced lonely without you."

The Resident's bungalow, surrounded by a garden in which grew wildly all manner of gay flowers, stood on the top of a low hill. It was a trifle shabby and the furniture was sparse, but the rooms were cool and of generous size.

"The kampong is down there," said Harold, pointing.

Her eyes followed his gesture, and from among the coconut trees rose the beating of a gong. It gave her a queer little sensation in the heart.

Though she had nothing much to do the days passed easily enough. At dawn a boy brought them their tea and they lounged about the verandah, enjoying the fragrance of the morning (Harold in a singlet and a sarong, she in a dressing-gown) till it was time to dress for breakfast. Then Harold went to his office and she spent an hour or two learning Malay. After tiffin he went back to his office while she slept. A cup of tea revived them both, and they went for a walk or played golf on the nine-hole links which Harold had made on a level piece of cleared jungle below the bungalow. Night fell at six and Mr. Simpson came along to have a drink. They chatted till their late dinner hour, and sometimes Harold and Mr. Simpson played chess. The balmy evenings were enchanting. The fireflies turned the bushes just below the verandah into coldly-sparkling tremulous beacons, and flowering trees scented the air with sweet odours. After dinner they read the papers which had left London six weeks before and presently went to bed. Millicent enjoyed being a married woman, with a house of her own, and she was pleased with the native servants, in their gay sarongs, who went about the bungalow, with bare feet, silent but friendly. It gave her a pleasant sense of importance to be the wife of the Resident. Harold impressed her by the fluency with which he spoke the language, by his air of command, and by his dignity. She went into the court-house now and then to hear him try cases. The multifariousness of his duties and the competent way in which he performed them aroused her respect. Mr. Simpson told her that Harold understood the natives as well as any man in the country. He had the combination of firmness, tact and good humour which was essential in dealing with that timid, revengeful and suspicious race. Millicent began to feel a certain admiration for her husband.

They had been married nearly a year when two English naturalists came to stay with them for a few days on their way to the interior. They brought a pressing recommendation from the Governor, and Harold said he wanted to do them proud. Their arrival was an agreeable change. Millicent asked Mr. Simpson to dinner (he lived at the Fort and only dined with them on Sunday nights) and after dinner the men sat down to play bridge. Millicent left them presently and went to bed, but they were so noisy that for some time she could not get to sleep. She did not know at what hour she was awakened by Harold staggering into the room. She kept silent. He made up his mind to have a bath before getting into bed; the bath-house was just below their room, and he went down the steps that led to it. Apparently he slipped, for there was a great clatter, and he began to swear. Then he was violently sick. She heard him sluice the buckets of water over himself and in a little while, walking very cautiously this time, he crawled up the stairs and slipped into bed.

Millicent pretended to be asleep. She was disgusted. Harold was drunk. She made up her mind to speak about it to him in the morning. What would the naturalists think of him? But in the morning Harold was so dignified that she hadn't quite the determination to refer to the matter. At eight Harold and she, with their two guests, sat down to breakfast. Harold looked round the table.

"Porridge," he said. "Millicent, your guests might manage a little Worcester Sauce for breakfast, but I don't think they'll much fancy anything else. Personally I shall content myself with a whisky and soda."

The naturalists laughed, but shamefacedly.

"Your husband's a terror," said one of them.

"I should not think I had properly performed the duties of hospitality if I sent you sober to bed on the first night of your visit," said Harold, with his round, stately way of putting things.

Millicent, smiling acidly, was relieved to think that her guests had been as drunk as her husband. The next evening she sat up with them and the party broke up at a reasonable hour. But she was glad when the strangers went on with their journey. Their life resumed its placid course. Some months later Harold went on a tour of inspection of his district and came back with a bad attack of malaria. This was the first time she had seen the disease of which she had heard so much, and when he recovered it did not seem strange to her that Harold was very shaky. She found his manner peculiar. He would come back from the office and stare at her with glazed eyes; he would stand on the verandah, swaying slightly, but still dignified, and make long harangues about the political situation in England; losing the thread of his discourse, he would look at her with an archness which his natural stateliness made somewhat disconcerting and say:

"Pulls you down dreadfully, this confounded malaria. Ah, little woman, you little know the strain it puts upon a man to be an empire-builder."

She thought that Mr. Simpson began to look worried, and once or twice, when they were alone, he seemed on the point of saying something to her which his shyness at the last moment prevented. The feeling grew so strong that it made her nervous, and one evening when Harold, she knew not why, had remained later than usual at the office she tackled him.

"What have you got to say to me, Mr. Simpson?" she broke out suddenly.

He blushed and hesitated.

"Nothing. What makes you think I have anything in particular to say to you?"

Mr. Simpson was a thin, weedy youth of four-and-twenty, with a fine head of waving hair which he took great pains to plaster down very flat. His wrists were swollen and scarred with mosquito bites. Millicent looked at him steadily.

"If it's something to do with Harold don't you think it would be kinder to tell me frankly?"

He grew scarlet now. He shuffled uneasily on his rattan chair. She insisted.

"I'm afraid you'll think it awful cheek," he said at last. "It's rotten of me to say anything about my chief behind his back. Malaria's a rotten thing, and after one's had a bout of it one feels awfully down and out."

He hesitated again. The corners of his mouth sagged as if he were going to cry. To Millicent he seemed like a little boy.

"I'll be as silent as the grave," she said with a smile, trying to conceal her apprehension. "Do tell me."

"I think it's a pity your husband keeps a bottle of whisky at the office. He's apt to take a nip more often than he otherwise would."

Mr. Simpson's voice was hoarse with agitation. Millicent felt a sudden coldness shiver through her. She controlled herself, for she knew that she must not frighten the boy if she were to get out of him all there was to tell. He was unwilling to speak. She pressed him, wheedling, appealing to his sense of duty, and at last she began to cry. Then he told her that Harold had been drunk more or less for the last fortnight, the natives were talking about it, and they said that soon he would be as bad as he had been before his marriage. He had been in the habit of drinking a good deal too much then, but details of that time, notwithstanding all her attempts, Mr. Simpson resolutely declined to give her.

"Do you think he's drinking now?" she asked.

"I don't know."

Millicent felt herself on a sudden hot with shame and anger. The Fort, as it was called because the rifles and the ammunition were kept there, was also the courthouse. It stood opposite the Resident's bungalow in a garden of its own. The sun was just about to set and she did not need a hat. She got up and walked across. She found Harold sitting in the office behind the large hall in which he administered justice. There was a bottle of whisky in front of him. He was smoking cigarettes and talking to three or four Malays who stood in front of him listening with obsequious and at the same time scornful smiles. His face was red.

The natives vanished.

"I came to see what you were doing," she said.

He rose, for he always treated her with elaborate politeness, and lurched. Feeling himself unsteady he assumed an elaborate stateliness of demeanour.

"Take a seat, my dear, take a seat. I was detained by press of work."

She looked at him with angry eyes.

"You're drunk," she said.

He stared at her, his eyes bulging a little, and a haughty look gradually traversed his large and fleshy face.

"I haven't the remotest idea what you mean," he said.

She had been ready with a flow of wrathful expostulation, but suddenly she burst into tears. She sank into a chair and hid her face. Harold looked at her for an instant, then the tears began to trickle down his own cheeks; he came towards her with outstretched arms and fell heavily on his knees. Sobbing, he clasped her to him.

"Forgive me, forgive me," he said. "I promise you it shall not happen again. It was that damned malaria."

"It's so humiliating," she moaned.

He wept like a child. There was something very touching in the self-abasement of that big dignified man. Presently Millicent looked up. His eyes, appealing and contrite, sought hers.

"Will you give me your word of honour that you'll never touch liquor again?"

"Yes, yes. I hate it."

It was then she told him that she was with child. He was overjoyed.

"That is the one thing I wanted. That'll keep me straight."

They went back to the bungalow. Harold bathed himself and had a nap. After dinner they talked long and quietly. He admitted that before he married her he had occasionally drunk more than was good for him; in outstations it was easy to fall into bad habits. He agreed to everything that Millicent asked. And during the months before it was necessary for her to go to Kuala Solor for her confinement, Harold was an excellent husband, tender, thoughtful, proud and affectionate; he was irreproachable. A launch came to fetch her, she was to leave him for six weeks, and he promised faithfully to drink nothing during her absence. He put his hands on her shoulders.

"I never break a promise," he said in his dignified way. "But even without it, can you imagine that while you are going through so much, I should do anything to increase your troubles?"

Joan was born. Millicent stayed at the Resident's and Mrs. Gray, his wife, a kindly creature of middle age, was very good to her. The two women had little to do during the long hours they were alone but to talk, and in course of time Millicent learnt everything there was to know of her husband's alcoholic past. The fact which she found most difficult to reconcile herself to, was that Harold had been told that the only condition upon which he would be allowed to keep his post was that he should bring back a wife. It caused in her a dull feeling of resentment. And when she discovered what a persistent drunkard he had been, she felt vaguely uneasy. She had a horrid fear that during her absence he would not have been able to resist the craving. She went home with her baby and a nurse. She spent a night at the mouth of the river and sent a messenger in a canoe to announce her arrival. She scanned the landing-stage anxiously as the launch approached it. Harold and Mr. Simpson were standing there. The trim little soldiers were lined up. Her heart sank, for Harold was swaying slightly, like a man who seeks to keep his balance on a rolling ship, and she knew he was drunk.

It wasn't a very pleasant home-coming. She had almost forgotten her mother and father and her sister who sat there silently listening to her. Now she roused herself and became once more aware of their presence. All that she spoke of seemed very far away.

"I knew that I hated him then," she said. "I could have killed him."

"Oh, Millicent, don't say that," cried her mother. "Don't forget that he's dead, poor man."

Millicent looked at her mother, and for a moment a scowl darkened her impassive face. Mr. Skinner moved uneasily.

"Go on," said Kathleen.

"When he found out that I knew all about him he didn't bother very much more. In three months he had another attack of D.T.'s."

"Why didn't you leave him?" said Kathleen.

"What would have been the good of that? He would have been dismissed from the service in a fortnight. Who was to keep me and Joan? I had to stay.

And when he was sober I had nothing to complain of. He wasn't in the least in love with me, but he was fond of me; I hadn't married him because I was in love with him, but because I wanted to be married. I did everything I could to keep liquor from him; I managed to get Mr. Gray to prevent whisky being sent from Kuala Solor, but he got it from the Chinese. I watched him as a cat watches a mouse. He was too cunning for me. In a little while he had another outbreak. He neglected his duties. I was afraid complaints would be made. We were two days from Kuala Solor and that was our safeguard, but I suppose something was said, for Mr. Gray wrote a private letter of warning to me. I showed it to Harold. He stormed and blustered, but I saw he was frightened, and for two or three months he was quite sober. Then he began again. And so it went on till our leave became due.

"Before we came to stay here I begged and prayed him to be careful. I didn't want any of you to know what sort of a man I had married. All the time he was in England he was all right and before we sailed I warned him. He'd grown to be very fond of Joan, and very proud of her, and she was devoted to him. She always liked him better than she liked me. I asked him if he wanted to have his child grow up, knowing that he was a drunkard, and I found out that at last I'd got a hold on him. The thought terrified him. I told him that *I* wouldn't allow it, and if he ever let Joan see him drunk I'd take her away from him at once. Do you know, he grew quite pale when I said it. I fell on my knees that night and thanked God, because I'd found a way of saving my husband.

"He told me that if I would stand by him he would have another try. We made up our minds to fight the thing together. And he tried so hard. When he felt as though he *must* drink he came to me. You know he was inclined to be rather pompous; with me he was so humble, he was like a child; he depended on me. Perhaps he didn't love me when he married me, but he loved me then, me and Joan. I'd hated him, because of the humiliation, because when he was drunk and tried to be dignified and impressive he was loathsome; but now I got a strange feeling in my heart. It wasn't love, but it was a queer, shy tenderness. He was something more than my husband, he was like a child that I'd carried under my heart for long and weary months. He was so proud of me, and, you know, I was proud too. His long speeches didn't irritate me any more, and I only thought his stately ways rather funny and charming. At last we won. For two years he never touched a drop. He lost his craving entirely. He was even able to joke about it.

"Mr. Simpson had left us then and we had another young man called Francis.

"'I'm a reformed drunkard, you know, Francis,' Harold said to him once. 'If it hadn't been for my wife I'd have been sacked long ago. I've got the best wife in the world, Francis.'

"You don't know what it meant to me to hear him say that. I felt that all I'd gone through was worth while. I was so happy."

She was silent. She thought of the broad, yellow and turbid river on whose banks she had lived so long. The egrets, white and gleaming in the tremulous sunset, flew down the stream in a flock, flew low and swift, and scattered. They were like a ripple of snowy notes, sweet and pure and spring-like, which an

unseen hand drew forth, a divine arpeggio, from an unseen harp. They fluttered along between the green banks, wrapped in the shadows of evening, like the happy thoughts of a contented mind.

"Then Joan fell ill. For three weeks we were very anxious. There was no doctor nearer than Kuala Solor and we had to put up with the treatment of a native dispenser. When she grew well again I took her down to the mouth of the river in order to give her a breath of sea air. We stayed there a week. It was the first time I had been separated from Harold since I went away to have Joan. There was a fishing village, on piles, not far from us, but really we were quite alone. I thought a great deal about Harold, so tenderly, and all at once I knew that I loved him. I was so glad when the prahu came to fetch us back, because I wanted to tell him. I thought it would mean a good deal to him. I can't tell you how happy I was. As we rowed up-stream the headman told me that Mr. Francis had had to go up-country to arrest a woman who had murdered her husband. He had been gone a couple of days.

"I was surprised that Harold was not on the landing-stage to meet me; he was always very punctilious about that sort of thing; he used to say that husband and wife should treat one another as politely as they treated acquaintances; and I could not imagine what business had prevented him. I walked up the little hill on which the bungalow stood. The ayah brought Joan behind me. The bungalow was strangely silent. There seemed to be no servants about, and I could not make it out; I wondered if Harold hadn't expected me so soon and was out. I went up the steps. Joan was thirsty and the ayah took her to the servants' quarters to give her something to drink. Harold was not in the sitting-room. I called him, but there was no answer. I was disappointed, because I should have liked him to be there. I went into our bedroom. Harold wasn't out after all: he was lying on the bed asleep. I was really very much amused, because he always pretended he never slept in the afternoon. He said it was an unnecessary habit that we white people got into. I went up to the bed softly. I thought I would have a joke with him. I opened the mosquito curtains. He was lying on his back, with nothing on but a sarong, and there was an empty whisky bottle by his side. He was drunk.

"It had begun again. All my struggles for so many years were wasted. My dream was shattered. It was all hopeless. I was seized with rage."

Millicent's face grew once again darkly red and she clenched the arms of the chair she sat in.

"I took him by the shoulders and shook him with all my might. 'You beast,' I cried, 'you beast.' I was so angry I don't know what I did, I don't know what I said. I kept on shaking him. You don't know how loathsome he looked, that large fat man, half naked; he hadn't shaved for days, and his face was bloated and purple. He was breathing heavily. I shouted at him, but he took no notice. I tried to drag him out of bed, but he was too heavy. He lay there like a log. 'Open your eyes,' I screamed. I shook him again. I hated him. I hated him all the more because for a week I'd loved him with all my heart. He'd let me down. He'd let me down. I wanted to tell him what a filthy beast he was. I could make no impression on him. 'You shall open your eyes,' I cried. I was determined to make him look at me."

The widow licked her dry lips. Her breath seemed hurried. She was silent.

"If he was in that state I should have thought it best to have let him go on sleeping," said Kathleen.

"There was a parang on the wall by the side of the bed. You know how fond Harold was of curios."

"What's a parang?" said Mrs. Skinner.

"Don't be silly, mother," her husband replied irritably. "There's one on the wall immediately behind you."

He pointed to the Malay sword on which for some reason his eyes had been unconsciously resting. Mrs. Skinner drew quickly into the corner of the sofa, with a little frightened gesture, as though she had been told that a snake lay curled up beside her.

"Suddenly the blood spurted out from Harold's throat. There was a great red gash right across it."

"Millicent," cried Kathleen, springing up and almost leaping towards her, "what in God's name do you mean?"

Mrs. Skinner stood staring at her with wide startled eyes, her mouth open.

"The parang wasn't on the wall any more. It was on the bed. Then Harold opened his eyes. They were just like Joan's."

"I don't understand," said Mr. Skinner. "How could he have committed suicide if he was in the state you describe?"

Kathleen took her sister's arm and shook her angrily.

"Millicent, for God's sake, explain."

Millicent released herself.

"The parang was on the wall, I told you. I don't know what happened. There was all the blood, and Harold opened his eyes. He died almost at once. He never spoke, but he gave a sort of gasp."

At last Mr. Skinner found his voice.

"But, you wretched woman, it was murder."

Millicent, her face mottled with red, gave him such a look of scornful hatred that he shrank back. Mrs. Skinner cried out:

"Millicent, you didn't do it, did you?"

Then Millicent did something that made them all feel as though their blood were turned to ice in their veins. She chuckled.

"I don't know who else did," she said.

"My God," muttered Mr. Skinner.

Kathleen had been standing bolt upright, with her hands to her heart, as though its beating were intolerable.

"And what happened then?" she said.

"I screamed. I went to the window and flung it open. I called for the ayah. She came across the compound with Joan. 'Not Joan,' I cried. 'Don't let her come.' She called the cook and told him to take the child. I cried to her to hurry. And when she came I showed her Harold. 'The Tuan's killed himself!' I cried. She gave a scream and ran out of the house.

"No one would come near. They were all frightened out of their wits. I wrote a letter to Mr. Francis, telling him what had happened and asking him to come at once."

on him the stern impression of a scene in the greys of dawn of seven turned faces, and later a stump of a top-mast with a white ball on it that slashed to and fro at the waves, went low and lower, and down. Thereafter there was something strange in his voice. Although steady, it was deep with mourning, and of a quality beyond oration or tears.

"Keep 'er a little more south, Billie," said he.

"A little more south, sir," said the oiler in the stern.

A seat in this boat was not unlike a seat upon a bucking broncho, and, by the same token, a broncho is not much smaller. The craft pranced and reared, and plunged like an animal. As each wave came, and she rose for it, she seemed like a horse making at a fence outrageously high. The manner of her scramble over these walls of water is a mystic thing, and, moreover, at the top of them were ordinarily these problems in white water, the foam racing down from the summit of each wave, requiring a new leap, and a leap from the air. Then, after scornfully bumping a crest, she would slide, and race, and splash down a long incline, and arrive bobbing and nodding in front of the next menace.

A singular disadvantage of the sea lies in the fact that after successfully surmounting one wave you discover that there is another behind it just as important and just as nervously anxious to do something effective in the way of swamping boats. In a ten-foot dingey one can get an idea of the resources of the sea in the line of waves that is not probable to the average experience which is never at sea in a dingey. As each slaty wall of water approached, it shut all else from the view of the men in the boat, and it was not difficult to imagine that this particular wave was the final outburst of the ocean, the last effort of the grim water. There was a terrible grace in the move of the waves, and they came in silence, save for the snarling of the crests.

In the wan light, the faces of the men must have been grey. Their eyes must have glinted in strange ways as they gazed steadily astern. Viewed from a balcony, the whole thing would doubtless have been weirdly picturesque. But the men in the boat had no time to see it, and if they had had leisure there were other things to occupy their minds. The sun swung steadily up the sky, and they knew it was broad day because the colour of the sea changed from slate to emerald-green, streaked with amber lights, and the foam was like tumbling snow. The process of the breaking day was unknown to them. They were aware only of this effect upon the colour of the waves that rolled toward them.

In disjointed sentences the cook and the correspondent argued as to the difference between a life-saving station and a house of refuge. The cook had said: "There's a house of refuge just north of the Mosquito Inlet Light, and as soon as they see us, they'll come off in their boat and pick us up."

"As soon as who see us?" said the correspondent.

"The crew," said the cook.

"Houses of refuge don't have crews," said the correspondent. "As I understand them, they are only places where clothes and grub are stored for the benefit of shipwrecked people. They don't carry crews."

"Oh, yes, they do," said the cook.

"No, they don't," said the correspondent.

"Well, we're not there yet, anyhow," said the oiler, in the stern.

They did not answer. They walked through the hall and out of the front door. The three ladies got into the back of the car and Mr. Skinner seated himself beside the driver. They had no self-starter; it was an old car, and Davis went to the bonnet to crank it up. Mr. Skinner turned round and looked petulantly at Millicent.

"I ought never to have been told," he said. "I think it was most selfish of you."

Davis took his seat and they drove off to the Canon's garden-party.

STEPHEN CRANE

The Open Boat

A Tale intended to be after the fact. Being the Experience of Four men from the Sunk Steamer "Commodore"

I

NONE of them knew the colour of the sky. Their eyes glanced level, and were fastened upon the waves that swept toward them. These waves were of the hue of slate, save for the tops, which were of foaming white, and all of the men knew the colours of the sea. The horizon narrowed and widened, and dipped and rose, and at all times its edge was jagged with waves that seemed thrust up in points like rocks.

Many a man ought to have a bath-tub larger than the boat which here rode upon the sea. These waves were most wrongfully and barbarously abrupt and tall, and each froth-top was a problem in small boat navigation.

The cook squatted in the bottom and looked with both eyes at the six inches of gunwale which separated him from the ocean. His sleeves were rolled over his fat forearms, and the two flaps of his unbuttoned vest dangled as he bent to bail out the boat. Often he said: "Gawd! That was a narrow clip." As he remarked it he invariably gazed eastward over the broken sea.

The oiler, steering with one of the two oars in the boat, sometimes raised himself suddenly to keep clear of water that swirled in over the stern. It was a thin little oar and it seemed often ready to snap.

The correspondent, pulling at the other oar, watched the waves and wondered why he was there.

The injured captain, lying in the bow, was at this time buried in that profound dejection and indifference which comes, temporarily at least, to even the bravest and most enduring when, willy nilly, the firm fails, the army loses, the ship goes down. The mind of the master of a vessel is rooted deep in the timbers of her, though he command for a day or a decade, and this captain had

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on him the stern impression of a scene in the greys of dawn of seven turned faces, and later a stump of a top-mast with a white ball on it that slashed to and fro at the waves, went low and lower, and down. Thereafter there was something strange in his voice. Although steady, it was deep with mourning, and of a quality beyond oration or tears.

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"Well, we're not there yet, anyhow," said the oiler, in the stern.

"Well," said the cook, "perhaps it's not a house of refuge that I'm thinking of as being near Mosquito Inlet Light. Perhaps it's a life-saving station."

"We're not there yet," said the oiler, in the stern.

II

As the boat bounced from the top of each wave, the wind tore through the hair of the hatless men, and as the craft plopped her stern down again the spray slashed past them. The crest of each of these waves was a hill, from the top of which the men surveyed, for a moment, a broad tumultuous expanse, shining and wind-driven. It was probably splendid. It was probably glorious, this play of the free sea, wild with lights of emerald and white and amber.

"Bully good thing it's an on-shore wind," said the cook. "If not, where would we be? Wouldn't have a show."

"That's right," said the correspondent.

The busy oiler nodded his assent.

Then the captain, in the bow, chuckled in a way that expressed humour, contempt, tragedy, all in one. "Do you think we've got much of a show now, boys?" said he.

Whereupon the three were silent, save for a trifle of hemming and hawing. To express any particular optimism at this time they felt to be childish and stupid, but they all doubtless possessed this sense of the situation in their mind. A young man thinks doggedly at such times. On the other hand, the ethics of their condition was decidedly against any open suggestion of hopelessness. So they were silent.

"Oh, well," said the captain, soothing his children, "we'll get ashore all right."

But there was that in his tone which made them think, so the oiler quoth: "Yes! If this wind holds!"

The cook was bailing: "Yes! If we don't catch hell in the surf."

Canton flannel gulls flew near and far. Sometimes they sat down on the sea, near patches of brown seaweed that rolled over the waves with a movement like carpets on a line in a gale. The birds sat comfortably in groups, and they were envied by some in the dingey, for the wrath of the sea was no more to them than it was to a covey of prairie chickens a thousand miles inland. Often they came very close and stared at the men with black bead-like eyes. At these times they were uncanny and sinister in their unblinking scrutiny, and the men hooted angrily at them, telling them to be gone. One came, and evidently decided to alight on the top of the captain's head. The bird flew parallel to the boat and did not circle, but made short sidelong jumps in the air in chicken-fashion. His black eyes were wistfully fixed upon the captain's head. "Ugly brute," said the oiler to the bird. "You look as if you were made with a jack-knife." The cook and the correspondent swore darkly at the creature. The captain naturally wished to knock it away with the end of the heavy painter; but he did not dare do it, because anything resembling an emphatic gesture would have capsized this freighted boat, and so with his open hand, the captain gently and carefully waved the gull away. After it had been discouraged from the pursuit the captain breathed easier on account of his hair, and others breathed easier

because the bird struck their minds at this time as being somehow gruesome and ominous.

In the meantime the oiler and the correspondent rowed. And also they rowed. They sat together in the same seat, and each rowed an oar. Then the oiler took both oars; then the correspondent took both oars; then the oiler; then the correspondent. They rowed and they rowed. The very ticklish part of the business was when the time came for the reclining one in the stern to take his turn at the oars. By the very last star of truth, it is easier to steal eggs from under a hen than it was to change seats in the dingey. First the man in the stern slid his hand along the thwart and moved with care, as if he were of Sèvres. Then the man in the rowing seat slid his hand along the other thwart. It was all done with the most extraordinary care. As the two sidled past each other, the whole party kept watchful eyes on the coming wave, and the captain cried: "Look out now! Steady there!"

The brown mats of seaweed that appeared from time to time were like islands, bits of earth. They were travelling, apparently, neither one way nor the other. They were, to all intents, stationary. They informed the men in the boat that it was making progress slowly toward the land.

The captain, rearing cautiously in the bow, after the dingey soared on a great swell, said that he had seen the lighthouse at Mosquito Inlet. Presently the cook remarked that he had seen it. The correspondent was at the oars then, and for some reason he too wished to look at the lighthouse, but his back was toward the far shore and the waves were important, and for some time he could not seize an opportunity to turn his head. But at last there came a wave more gentle than the others, and when at the crest of it he swiftly scoured the western horizon.

"See it?" said the captain.

"No, said the correspondent slowly, "I didn't see anything."

"Look again," said the captain. He pointed. "It's exactly in that direction."

At the top of another wave, the correspondent did as he was bid, and this time his eyes chanced on a small still thing on the edge of the swaying horizon. It was precisely like the point of a pin. It took an anxious eye to find a lighthouse so tiny.

"Think we'll make it, captain?"

"If this wind holds and the boat don't swamp, we can't do much else," said the captain.

The little boat, lifted by each towering sea, and splashed viciously by the crests, made progress that in the absence of seaweed was not apparent to those in her. She seemed just a wee thing wallowing, miraculously top up, at the mercy of five oceans. Occasionally, a great spread of water, like white flames, swarmed into her.

"Bail her, cook," said the captain serenely.

"All right, captain," said the cheerful cook.

III

It would be difficult to describe the subtle brotherhood of men that was here established on the seas. No one said that it was so. No one mentioned it. But

it dwelt in the boat, and each man felt it warm him. They were a captain, an oiler, a cook, and a correspondent, and they were friends, friends in a more curiously iron-bound degree than may be common. The hurt captain, lying against the water-jar in the bow, spoke always in a low voice and calmly, but he could never command a more ready and swiftly obedient crew than the motley three of the dingey. It was more than a mere recognition of what was best for the common safety. There was surely in it a quality that was personal and heartfelt. And after this devotion to the commander of the boat there was this comradeship that the correspondent, for instance, who had been taught to be cynical of men, knew even at the time was the best experience of his life. But no one said that it was so. No one mentioned it.

"I wish we had a sail," remarked the captain. "We might try my overcoat on the end of an oar and give you two boys a chance to rest." So the cook and the correspondent held the mast and spread wide the overcoat. The oiler steered, and the little boat made good way with her new rig. Sometimes the oiler had to scull sharply to keep a sea from breaking into the boat, but otherwise sailing was a success.

Meanwhile the lighthouse had been growing slowly larger. It had now almost assumed colour, and appeared like a little grey shadow on the sky. The man at the oars could not be prevented from turning his head rather often to try for a glimpse of this little grey shadow.

At last, from the top of each wave the men in the tossing boat could see land. Even as the lighthouse was an upright shadow on the sky, this land seemed but a long black shadow on the sea. It certainly was thinner than paper. "We must be about opposite New Smyrna," said the cook, who had coasted this shore often in schooners. "Captain, by the way, I believe they abandoned that life-saving station there about a year ago."

"Did they?" said the captain.

The wind slowly died away. The cook and the correspondent were not now obliged to slave in order to hold high the oar. But the waves continued their old impetuous swooping at the dingey, and the little craft, no longer under way, struggled woundily over them. The oiler or the correspondent took the oars again.

Shipwrecks are apropos of nothing. If men could only train for them and have them occur when the men had reached pink condition, there would be less drowning at sea. Of the four in the dingey none had slept any time worth mentioning for two days and two nights previous to embarking in the dingey, and in the excitement of clambering about the deck of a foundering ship they had also forgotten to eat heartily.

For these reasons, and for others, neither the oiler nor the correspondent was fond of rowing at this time. The correspondent wondered ingenuously how in the name of all that was sane could there be people who thought it amusing to row a boat. It was not an amusement; it was a diabolical punishment, and even a genius of mental aberrations could never conclude that it was anything but a horror to the muscles and a crime against the back. He mentioned to the boat in general how the amusement of rowing struck him, and the weary-faced

oiler smiled in full sympathy. Previously to the foundering, by the way, the oiler had worked double-watch in the engine-room of the ship.

"Take her easy, now, boys," said the captain. "Don't spend yourselves. If we have to run a surf you'll need all your strength, because we'll sure have to swim for it. Take your time."

Slowly the land arose from the sea. From a black line it became a line of black and a line of white, trees and sand. Finally, the captain said that he could make out a house on the shore. "That's the house of refuge, sure," said the cook. "They'll see us before long, and come out after us."

The distant lighthouse reared high. "The keeper ought to be able to make us out now, if he's looking through a glass," said the captain. "He'll notify the life-saving people."

"None of those other boats could have got ashore to give word of the wreck," said the oiler, in a low voice. "Else the lifeboat would be out hunting us."

Slowly and beautifully the land loomed out of the sea. The wind came again. It had veered from the north-east to the south-east. Finally, a new sound struck the ears of the men in the boat. It was the low thunder of the surf on the shore. "We'll never be able to make the lighthouse now," said the captain. "Swing her head a little more north, Billie."

"A little more north, sir," said the oiler.

Whereupon the little boat turned her nose once more down the wind, and all but the oarsman watched the shore grow. Under the influence of this expansion doubt and direful apprehension was leaving the minds of the men. The management of the boat was still most absorbing, but it could not prevent a quiet cheerfulness. In an hour, perhaps, they would be ashore.

Their backbones had become thoroughly used to balancing in the boat, and they now rode this wild colt of a dingey like circus men. The correspondent thought that he had been drenched to the skin, but happening to feel in the top pocket of his coat, he found therein eight cigars. Four of them were soaked with sea-water; four were perfectly scatheless. After a search, somebody produced three dry matches, and thereupon the four waifs rode impudently in their little boat, and with an assurance of an impending rescue shining in their eyes, puffed at the big cigars and judged well and ill of all men. Everybody took a drink of water.

IV

"Cook," remarked the captain, "there don't seem to be any signs of life about your house of refuge."

"No," replied the cook. "Funny they don't see us!"

A broad stretch of lowly coast lay before the eyes of the men. It was of low dunes topped with dark vegetation. The roar of the surf was plain, and sometimes they could see the white lip of a wave as it spun up the beach. A tiny house was blocked out black upon the sky. Southward, the slim lighthouse lifted its little grey length.

Tide, wind, and waves were swinging the dingey northward. "Funny they don't see us," said the men.

The surf's roar was here dulled, but its tone was, nevertheless, thunderous

and mighty. As the boat swam over the great rollers, the men sat listening to this roar. "We'll swamp sure," said everybody.

It is fair to say here that there was not a life-saving station within twenty miles in either direction, but the men did not know this fact, and in consequence they made dark and opprobrious remarks concerning the eyesight of the nation's life-savers. Four scowling men sat in the dingey and surpassed records in the invention of epithets.

"Funny they don't see us."

The light-heartedness of a former time had completely faded. To their sharpened minds it was easy to conjure pictures of all kinds of incompetency and blindness and, indeed, cowardice. There was the shore of the populous land, and it was bitter and bitter to them that from it came no sign.

"Well," said the captain, ultimately, "I suppose we'll have to make a try for ourselves. If we stay out here too long, we'll none of us have strength left to swim after the boat swamps."

And so the oiler, who was at the oars, turned the boat straight for the shore. There was a sudden tightening of muscles. There was some thinking.

"If we don't all get ashore—" said the captain. "If we don't all get ashore, I suppose you fellows know where to send news of my finish?"

They then briefly exchanged some addresses and admonitions. As for the reflections of the men, there was a great deal of rage in them. Perchance they might be formulated thus: "If I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned, why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I allowed to come thus far and contemplate sand and trees? Was I brought here merely to have my nose dragged away as I was about to nibble the sacred cheese of life? It is preposterous. If this old ninny-woman, Fate, cannot do better than this, she should be deprived of the management of men's fortunes. She is an old hen who knows not her intention. If she has decided to drown me, why did she not do it in the beginning and save me all this trouble? The whole affair is absurd. . . . But no, she cannot mean to drown me. She dare not drown me. She cannot drown me. Not after all this work." Afterward the man might have had an impulse to shake his fist at the clouds: "Just you drown me, now, and then hear what I call you!"

The billows that came at this time were more formidable. They seemed always just about to break and roll over the little boat in a turmoil of foam. There was a preparatory and long growl in the speech of them. No mind unused to the sea would have concluded that the dingey could ascend these sheer heights in time. The shore was still afar. The oiler was a wily surfman. "Boys," he said swiftly, "she won't live three minutes more, and we're too far out to swim. Shall I take her to sea again, captain?"

"Yes! Go ahead!" said the captain.

This oiler, by a series of quick miracles, and fast and steady oarsmanship, turned the boat in the middle of the surf and took her safely to sea again.

There was a considerable silence as the boat bumped over the furrowed sea to deeper water. Then somebody in gloom spoke. "Well, anyhow, they must have seen us from the shore by now."

The gulls went in slanting flight up the wind toward the grey desolate east.

A squall, marked by dingy clouds, and clouds brick-red, like smoke from a burning building, appeared from the south-east.

"What do you think of those life-saving people? Ain't they peaches?"

"Funny they haven't seen us."

"Maybe they think we're out here for sport! Maybe they think we're fishin'. Maybe they think we're damned fools."

It was a long afternoon. A changed tide tried to force them southward, but wind and wave said northward. Far ahead, where coastline, sea, and sky formed their mighty angle, there were little dots which seemed to indicate a city on the shore.

"St. Augustine?"

The captain shook his head. "Too near Mosquito Inlet."

And the oiler rowed, and then the correspondent rowed. Then the oiler rowed. It was a weary business. The human back can become the seat of more aches and pains than are registered in books for the composite anatomy of a regiment. It is a limited area, but it can become the theatre of innumerable muscular conflicts, tangles, wrenches, knots, and other comforts.

"Did you ever like to row, Billie?" asked the correspondent.

"No," said the oiler. "Hang it."

When one exchanged the rowing-seat for a place in the bottom of the boat, he suffered a bodily depression that caused him to be careless of everything save an obligation to wiggle one finger. There was cold sea-water swashing to and fro in the boat, and he lay in it. His head, pillowed on a thwart, was within an inch of the swirl of a wave crest, and sometimes a particularly obstreperous sea came in-board and drenched him once more. But these matters did not annoy him. It is almost certain that if the boat had capsized he would have tumbled comfortably out upon the ocean as if he felt sure that it was a great soft mattress.

"Look! There's a man on the shore!"

"Where?"

"There! See 'im? See 'im?"

"Yes, sure! He's walking along."

"Now he's stopped. Look! He's facing us!"

"He's waving at us!"

"So he is! By thunder!"

"Ah, now we're all right! Now we're all right! There'll be a boat out here for us in half an hour."

"He's going on. He's running. He's going up to that house there."

The remote beach seemed lower than the sea, and it required a searching glance to discern the little black figure. The captain saw a floating stick and they rowed to it. A bath-towel was by some weird chance in the boat, and, tying this on the stick, the captain waved it. The oarsman did not dare turn his head, so he was obliged to ask questions.

"What's he doing now?"

"He's standing still again. He's looking, I think. . . . There he goes again. Toward the house. . . . Now he stopped again."

"Is he waving at us?"

"No, not now! he was, though."

"Look! There comes another man!"

"He's running."

"Look at him go, would you."

"Why, he's on a bicycle. Now he's met the other man. They're both waving at us. Look!"

"There comes something up the beach."

"What the devil is that thing?"

"Why, it looks like a boat."

"Why, certainly it's a boat."

"No, it's on wheels."

"Yes, so it is. Well, that must be the life-boat. They drag them along shore on a wagon.

"That's the life-boat, sure."

"No, by—, it's—it's an omnibus."

"I tell you it's a life-boat."

"It is not! It's an omnibus. I can see it plain. See? One of these big hotel omnibuses."

"By thunder, you're right. It's an omnibus, sure as fate. What do you suppose they are doing with an omnibus? Maybe they are going around collecting the life-crew, hey?"

"That's it, likely. Look! There's a fellow waving a little black flag. He's standing on the steps of the omnibus. There come those other two fellows. Now they're all talking together. Look at the fellow with the flag. Maybe he ain't waving it."

"That ain't a flag, is it? That's his coat. Why, certainly, that's his coat."

"So it is. It's his coat. He's taken it off and is waving it around his head. But would you look at him swing it."

"Oh, say, there isn't any life-saving station there. That's just a winter resort hotel omnibus that has brought over some of the boarders to see us drown."

"What's that idiot with the coat mean? What's he signalling, anyhow?"

"It looks as if he were trying to tell us to go north. There must be a life-saving station up there."

"No! He thinks we're fishing. Just giving us a merry hand. See? Ah, there, Willie."

"Well, I wish I could make something out of those signals. What do you suppose he means?"

"He don't mean anything. He's just playing."

"Well, if he'd just signal us to try the surf again, or to go to sea and wait, or go north, or go south, or go to hell—there would be some reason in it. But look at him. He just stands there and keeps his coat revolving like a wheel. The ass!"

"There come more people."

"Now there's quite a mob. Look! Isn't that a boat?"

"Where? Oh, I see where you mean. No, that's no boat."

"That fellow is still waving his coat."

"He must think we like to see him do that. Why don't he quit it? It don't mean anything."

"I don't know. I think he is trying to make us go north. It must be that there's a life-saving station there somewhere."

"Say, he ain't tired yet. Look at 'im wave."

"Wonder how long he can keep that up. He's been revolving his coat ever since he caught sight of us. He's an idiot. Why aren't they getting men to bring a boat out? A fishing boat—one of those big yawls—could come out here all right. Why don't he do something?"

"Oh, it's all right, now."

"They'll have a boat out here for us in less than no time, now that they've seen us."

A faint yellow tone came into the sky over the low land. The shadows on the sea slowly deepened. The wind bore coldness with it, and the men began to shiver.

"Holy smoke!" said one, allowing his voice to express his impious mood, "if we keep on monkeying out here! If we've got to flounder out here all night!"

"Oh, we'll never have to stay here all night! Don't you worry. They've seen us now, and it won't be long before they'll come chasing out after us."

The shore grew dusky. The man waving a coat blended gradually into this gloom, and it swallowed in the same manner the omnibus and the group of people. The spray, when it dashed uproariously over the side, made the voyagers shrink and swear like men who were being branded.

"I'd like to catch the chump who waved that coat. I feel like soaking him one, just for luck."

"Why? What did he do?"

"Oh, nothing, but then he seemed so damned cheerful."

In the meantime the oiler rowed, and then the correspondent rowed, and then the oiler rowed. Grey-faced and bowed forward, they mechanically, turn by turn, plied the leaden oars. The form of the lighthouse had vanished from the southern horizon, but finally a pale star appeared, just lifting from the sea. The streaked saffron in the west passed before the all-merging darkness, and the sea to the east was black. The land had vanished, and was expressed only by the low and drear thunder of the surf.

"If I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned, why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I allowed to come thus far and contemplate sand and trees? Was I brought here merely to have my nose dragged away as I was about to nibble the sacred cheese of life?"

The patient captain, drooped over the water-jar, was sometimes obliged to speak to the oarsman.

"Keep her head up! Keep her head up!"

"'Keep her head up,' sir." The voices were weary and low.

This was surely a quiet evening. All save the oarsman lay heavily and listlessly in the boat's bottom. As for him, his eyes were just capable of noting the tall black waves that swept forward in a most sinister silence, save for an occasional subdued growl of a crest.

The cook's head was on a thwart, and he looked without interest at the water

under his nose. He was deep in other scenes. Finally he spoke. "Billie," he murmured, dreamfully, "what kind of pie do you like best?"

V

"Pie," said the oiler and the correspondent, agitatedly. "Don't talk about those things, blast you!"

"Well," said the cook, "I was just thinking about ham sandwiches, and—"

A night on the sea in an open boat is a long night. As darkness settled finally, the shine of the light, lifting from the sea in the south, changed to full gold. On the northern horizon a new light appeared, a small bluish gleam on the edge of the waters. These two lights were the furniture of the world. Otherwise there was nothing but waves.

Two men huddled in the stern, and distances were so magnificent in the dingey that the rower was enabled to keep his feet partly warmed by thrusting them under his companions. Their legs indeed extended far under the rowing-seat until they touched the feet of the captain forward. Sometimes, despite the efforts of the tired oarsman, a wave came piling into the boat, an icy wave of the night, and the chilling water soaked them anew. They would twist their bodies for a moment and groan, and sleep the dead sleep once more, while the water in the boat gurgled about them as the craft rocked.

The plan of the oiler and the correspondent was for one to row until he lost the ability, and then arouse the other from his sea-water couch in the bottom of the boat.

The oiler plied the oars until his head drooped forward, and the overpowering sleep blinded him. And he rowed yet afterward. Then he touched a man in the bottom of the boat, and called his name. "Will you spell me for a little while?" he said, meekly.

"Sure, Billie," said the correspondent, awakening and dragging himself to a sitting position. They exchanged places carefully, and the oiler, cuddling down in the sea-water at the cook's side, seemed to go to sleep instantly.

The particular violence of the sea had ceased. The waves came without snarling. The obligation of the man at the oars was to keep the boat headed so that the tilt of the rollers would not capsize her, and to preserve her from filling when the crests rushed past. The black waves were silent and hard to be seen in the darkness. Often one was almost upon the boat before the oarsman was aware.

In a low voice the correspondent addressed the captain. He was not sure that the captain was awake, although this iron man seemed to be always awake. "Captain, shall I keep her making for that light north, sir?"

The same steady voice answered him. "Yes. Keep it about two points off the port bow."

The cook had tied a life-belt around himself in order to get even the warmth which this clumsy cork contrivance could donate, and he seemed almost stove-like when a rower, whose teeth invariably chattered wildly as soon as he ceased his labour, dropped down to sleep.

The correspondent, as he rowed, looked down at the two men sleeping underfoot. The cook's arm was around the oiler's shoulders, and, with their fragmen-

tary clothing and haggard faces, they were the babes of the sea, a grotesque rendering of the old babes in the wood.

Later he must have grown stupid at his work, for suddenly there was a growling of water, and a crest came with a roar and a swash into the boat, and it was a wonder that it did not set the cook afloat in his life-belt. The cook continued to sleep, but the oiler sat up, blinking his eyes and shaking with the new cold.

"Oh, I'm awful sorry, Billie," said the correspondent, contritely.

"That's all right, old boy," said the oiler, and lay down again and was asleep.

Presently it seemed that even the captain dozed, and the correspondent thought that he was the one man afloat on all the oceans. The wind had a voice as it came over the waves, and it was sadder than the end.

There was a long, loud swishing astern of the boat, and a gleaming trail of phosphorescence, like blue flame, was furrowed on the black waters. It might have been made by a monstrous knife.

Then there came a stillness, while the correspondent breathed with the open mouth and looked at the sea.

Suddenly there was another swish and another long flash of bluish light, and this time it was alongside the boat, and might almost have been reached with an oar. The correspondent saw an enormous fin speed like a shadow through the water, hurling the crystalline spray and leaving the long glowing trail.

The correspondent looked over his shoulder at the captain. His face was hidden, and he seemed to be asleep. He looked at the babes of the sea. They certainly were asleep. So, being bereft of sympathy, he leaned a little way to one side and swore softly into the sea.

But the thing did not then leave the vicinity of the boat. Ahead or astern, on one side or the other, at intervals long or short, fled the long sparkling streak, and there was to be heard the whiroo of the dark fin. The speed and power of the thing was greatly to be admired. It cut the water like a gigantic and keen projectile.

The presence of this biding thing did not affect the man with the same horror that it would if he had been a picnicker. He simply looked at the sea dully and swore in an undertone.

Nevertheless, it is true that he did not wish to be alone with the thing. He wished one of his companions to awaken by chance and keep him company with it. But the captain hung motionless over the water-jar, and the oiler and the cook in the bottom of the boat were plunged in slumber.

VI

"If I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned, why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I allowed to come thus far and contemplate sand and trees?"

During this dismal night, it may be remarked that a man would conclude that it was really the intention of the seven mad gods to drown him, despite the abominable injustice of it. For it was certainly an abominable injustice to drown a man who had worked so hard, so hard. The man felt it would be a

crime most unnatural. Other people had drowned at sea since galleys swarmed with painted sails, but still—

When it occurs to a man that nature does not regard him as important, and that she feels she would not maim the universe by disposing of him, he at first wishes to throw bricks at the temple, and he hates deeply the fact that there are no bricks and no temples. Any visible expression of nature would surely be pelleted with his jeers.

Then, if there be no tangible thing to hoot he feels, perhaps, the desire to confront a personification and indulge in pleas, bowed to one knee, and with hands supplicant, saying: "Yes, but I love myself."

A high cold star on a winter's night is the word he feels that she says to him. Thereafter he knows the pathos of his situation.

The men in the dingey had not discussed these matters, but each had, no doubt, reflected upon them in silence and according to his mind. There was seldom any expression upon their faces save the general one of complete weariness. Speech was devoted to the business of the boat.

To chime the notes of his emotion, a verse mysteriously entered the correspondent's head. He had even forgotten that he had forgotten this verse, but it suddenly was in his mind.

> A soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers,
> There was lack of woman's nursing, there was dearth of woman's tears;
> But a comrade stood beside him, and he took that comrade's hand,
> And he said: "I shall never see my own, my native land."

In his childhood, the correspondent had been made acquainted with the fact that a soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers, but he had never regarded the fact as important. Myriads of his school-fellows had informed him of the soldier's plight, but the dinning had naturally ended by making him perfectly indifferent. He had never considered it his affair that a soldier of the Legion lay dying in Algiers, nor had it appeared to him as a matter for sorrow. It was less to him than the breaking of a pencil's point.

Now, however, it quaintly came to him as a human, living thing. It was no longer merely a picture of a few throes in the breast of a poet, meanwhile drinking tea and warming his feet at the grate; it was an actuality—stern, mournful, and fine.

The correspondent plainly saw the soldier. He lay on the sand with his feet out straight and still. While his pale left hand was upon his chest in an attempt to thwart the going of his life, the blood came between his fingers. In the far Algerian distance, a city of low square forms was set against a sky that was faint with the last sunset hues. The correspondent, plying the oars and dreaming of the slow and slower movements of the lips of the soldier, was moved by a profound and perfectly impersonal comprehension. He was sorry for the soldier of the Legion who lay dying in Algiers.

The thing which had followed the boat and waited had evidently grown bored at the delay. There was no longer to be heard the slash of the cutwater, and there was no longer the flame of the long trail. The light in the north still glimmered, but it was apparently no nearer to the boat. Sometimes the boom

of the surf rang in the correspondent's ears, and he turned the craft seaward then and rowed harder. Southward, someone had evidently built a watch-fire on the beach. It was too low and too far to be seen, but it made a shimmering, roseate reflection upon the bluff back of it, and this could be discerned from the boat. The wind came stronger, and sometimes a wave suddenly raged out like a mountain-cat, and there was to be seen the sheen and sparkle of a broken crest.

The captain, in the bow, moved on his water-jar and sat erect. "Pretty long night," he observed to the correspondent. He looked at the shore. "Those life-saving people take their time."

"Did you see that shark playing around?"

"Yes, I saw him. He was a big fellow, all right."

"Wish I had known you were awake."

Later the correspondent spoke into the bottom of the boat.

"Billie!" There was a slow and gradual disentanglement. "Billie, will you spell me?"

"Sure," said the oiler.

As soon as the correspondent touched the cold comfortable sea-water in the bottom of the boat, and had huddled close to the cook's life-belt he was deep in sleep, despite the fact that his teeth played all the popular airs. This sleep was so good to him that it was but a moment before he heard a voice call his name in a tone that demonstrated the last stages of exhaustion. "Will you spell me?"

"Sure, Billie."

The light in the north had mysteriously vanished, but the correspondent took his course from the wide-awake captain.

Later in the night they took the boat farther out to sea, and the captain directed the cook to take one oar at the stern and keep the boat facing the seas. He was to call out if he should hear the thunder of the surf. This plan enabled the oiler and the correspondent to get respite together. "We'll give those boys a chance to get into shape again," said the captain. They curled down and, after a few preliminary chatterings and trembles, slept once more the dead sleep. Neither knew they had bequeathed to the cook the company of another shark, or perhaps the same shark.

As the boat caroused on the waves, spray occasionally bumped over the side and gave them a fresh soaking, but this had no power to break their repose. The ominous slash of the wind and the water affected them as it would have affected mummies.

"Boys," said the cook, with the notes of every reluctance in his voice, "she's drifted in pretty close. I guess one of you had better take her to sea again." The correspondent, aroused, heard the crash of the toppled crests.

As he was rowing, the captain gave him some whisky-and-water, and this steadied the chills out of him. "If I ever get ashore and anybody shows me even a photograph of an oar—"

At last there was a short conversation.

"Billie . . . Billie, will you spell me?"

"Sure," said the oiler.

VII

When the correspondent again opened his eyes, the sea and the sky were each of the grey hue of the dawning. Later, carmine and gold was painted upon the waters. The morning appeared finally, in its splendour, with a sky of pure blue, and the sunlight flamed on the tips of the waves.

On the distant dunes were set many little black cottages, and a tall white windmill reared above them. No man, nor dog, nor bicycle appeared on the beach. The cottages might have formed a deserted village.

The voyagers scanned the shore. A conference was held in the boat. "Well," said the captain, "if no help is coming, we might better try a run through the surf right away. If we stay out here much longer we will be too weak to do anything for ourselves at all." The others silently acquiesced in this reasoning. The boat was headed for the beach. The correspondent wondered if none ever ascended the tall wind-tower, and if then they never looked seaward. This tower was a giant, standing with its back to the plight of the ants. It represented in a degree, to the correspondent, the serenity of nature amid the struggles of the individual—nature in the wind, and nature in the vision of men. She did not seem cruel to him then, nor beneficent, nor treacherous, nor wise. But she was indifferent, flatly indifferent. It is, perhaps, plausible that a man in this situation, impressed with the unconcern of the universe, should see the innumerable flaws of his life, and have them taste wickedly in his mind and wish for another chance. A distinction between right and wrong seems absurdly clear to him, then, in this new ignorance of the grave-edge, and he understands that if he were given another opportunity he would mend his conduct and his words, and be better and brighter during an introduction or at a tea.

"Now, boys," said the captain, "she is going to swamp sure. All we can do is to work her in as far as possible, and then when she swamps, pile out and scramble for the beach. Keep cool now, and don't jump until she swamps sure."

The oiler took the oars. Over his shoulders he scanned the surf. "Captain," he said, "I think I'd better bring her about, and keep her head-on to the seas and back her in."

"All right, Billie," said the captain. "Back her in." The oiler swung the boat then and, seated in the stern, the cook and the correspondent were obliged to look over their shoulders to contemplate the lonely and indifferent shore.

The monstrous in-shore rollers heaved the boat high until the men were again enabled to see the white sheets of water scudding up the slanted beach. "We won't get in very close," said the captain. Each time a man could wrest his attention from the rollers, he turned his glance toward the shore, and in the expression of the eyes during this contemplation there was a singular quality. The correspondent, observing the others, knew that they were not afraid, but the full meaning of their glances was shrouded.

As for himself, he was too tired to grapple fundamentally with the fact. He tried to coerce his mind into thinking of it, but the mind was dominated at this time by the muscles, and the muscles said they did not care. It merely occurred to him that if he should drown it would be a shame.

There were no hurried words, no pallor, no plain agitation. The men simply

looked at the shore. "Now, remember to get well clear of the boat when you jump," said the captain.

Seaward the crest of a roller suddenly fell with a thunderous crash, and the long white comber came roaring down upon the boat.

"Steady now," said the captain. The men were silent. They turned their eyes from the shore to the comber and waited. The boat slid up the incline, leaped at the furious top, bounced over it, and swung down the long back of the waves. Some water had been shipped and the cook bailed it out.

But the next crest crashed also. The tumbling boiling flood of white water caught the boat and whirled it almost perpendicular. Water swarmed in from all sides. The correspondent had his hands on the gunwale at this time, and when the water entered at that place he swiftly withdrew his fingers, as if he objected to wetting them.

The little boat, drunken with this weight of water, reeled and snuggled deeper into the sea.

"Bail her out, cook! Bail her out," said the captain.

"All right, captain," said the cook.

"Now, boys, the next one will do for us, sure," said the oiler. "Mind to jump clear of the boat."

The third wave moved forward, huge, furious, implacable. It fairly swallowed the dingey, and almost simultaneously the men tumbled into the sea. A piece of life-belt had lain in the bottom of the boat, and as the correspondent went overboard he held this to his chest with his left hand.

The January water was icy, and he reflected immediately that it was colder than he had expected to find it off the coast of Florida. This appeared to his dazed mind as a fact important enough to be noted at the time. The coldness of the water was sad; it was tragic. This fact was somehow so mixed and confused with his opinon of his own situation that it seemed almost a proper reason for tears. The water was cold.

When he came to the surface he was conscious of little but the noisy water. Afterward he saw his companions in the sea. The oiler was ahead in the race. He was swimming strongly and rapidly. Off to the correspondent's left, the cook's great white and corked back bulged out of the water, and in the rear the captain was hanging with his one good hand to the keel of the overturned dingey.

There is a certain immovable quality to a shore, and the correspondent wondered at it amid the confusion of the sea.

It seemed also very attractive, but the correspondent knew that it was a long journey, and he paddled leisurely. The piece of life-preserver lay under him, and sometimes he whirled down the incline of a wave as if he were on a hand-sled.

But finally he arrived at a place in the sea where travel was beset with difficulty. He did not pause swimming to inquire what manner of current had caught him, but there his progress ceased. The shore was set before him like a bit of scenery on a stage, and he looked at it and understood with his eyes each detail of it.

As the cook passed, much farther to the left, the captain was calling to him, "Turn over on your back, cook! Turn over on your back and use the oar."

"All right, sir." The cook turned on his back, and, paddling with an oar, went ahead as if he were a canoe.

Presently the boat also passed to the left of the correspondent with the captain clinging with one hand to the keel. He would have appeared like a man raising himself to look over a board fence, if it were not for the extraordinary gymnastics of the boat. The correspondent marvelled that the captain could still hold to it.

They passed on, nearer to shore—the oiler, the cook, the captain—and following them went the water-jar, bouncing gaily over the seas.

The correspondent remained in the grip of this strange new enemy—a current. The shore, with its white slope of sand and its green bluff, topped with little silent cottages, was spread like a picture before him. It was very near to him then, but he was impressed as one who in a gallery looks at a scene from Brittany or Algiers.

He thought: "I am going to drown? Can it be possible? Can it be possible? Can it be possible?" Perhaps an individual must consider his own death to be the final phenomenon of nature.

But later a wave perhaps whirled him out of this small deadly current, for he found suddenly that he could again make progress toward the shore. Later still, he was aware that the captain, clinging with one hand to the keel of the dingey, had his face turned away from the shore and toward him, and was calling his name. "Come to the boat! Come to the boat!"

In his struggle to reach the captain and the boat, he reflected that when one gets properly wearied, drowning must really be a comfortable arrangement, a cessation of hostilities accompanied by a large degree of relief, and he was glad of it, for the main thing in his mind for some moments had been horror of the temporary agony. He did not wish to be hurt.

Presently he saw a man running along the shore. He was undressing with most remarkable speed. Coat, trousers, shirt, everything flew magically off him.

"Come to the boat," called the captain.

"All right, captain." As the correspondent paddled, he saw the captain let himself down to bottom and leave the boat. Then the correspondent performed his one little marvel of the voyage. A large wave caught him and flung him with ease and supreme speed completely over the boat and far beyond it. It struck him even then as an event in gymnastics, and a true miracle of the sea. An overturned boat in the surf is not a plaything to a swimming man.

The correspondent arrived in water that reached only to his waist, but his condition did not enable him to stand for more than a moment. Each wave knocked him into a heap, and the under-tow pulled at him.

Then he saw the man who had been running and undressing, and undressing and running, come bounding into the water. He dragged ashore the cook, and then waded toward the captain, but the captain waved him away, and sent him to the correspondent. He was naked, naked as a tree in winter, but a halo was about his head, and he shone like a saint. He gave a strong pull, and a long drag, and a bully heave at the correspondent's hand. The correspondent,

schooled in the minor formulæ, said: "Thanks, old man." But suddenly the man cried: "What's that?" He pointed a swift finger. The correspondent said: "Go."

In the shallows, face downward, lay the oiler. His forehead touched sand that was periodically, between each wave, clear of the sea.

The correspondent did not know all that transpired afterward. When he achieved safe ground he fell, striking the sand with each particular part of his body. It was as if he had dropped from a roof, but the thud was grateful to him.

It seems that instantly the beach was populated with men, with blankets, clothes, and flasks, and women with coffee-pots and all the remedies sacred to their minds. The welcome of the land to the men from the sea was warm and generous, but a still and dripping shape was carried slowly up the beach, and the land's welcome for it could only be the different and sinister hospitality of the grave.

When it came night, the white waves paced to and fro in the moonlight, and the wind brought the sound of the great sea's voice to the men on shore, and they felt that they could then be interpreters.

WILLIAM SAROYAN

Where I Come From People Are Polite

ONE MORNING I walked into the office and the bookkeeper was putting on her hat and coat and tears were coming out of her eyes. It was April and what did I care if I was only a fifteen-dollar-a-week clerk in a lousy cemetery company? Didn't I have a new hat and a new pair of shoes and wasn't the Southern Pacific sending special trains at special low rates down to Monterey every week-end and wasn't I going down to Monterey tomorrow? Wasn't I going to take a train ride down the peninsula tomorrow?

I was going to work until noon Saturday and then I was going to get a de luxe hamburger for fifteen cents at Charley's and then I was going to hurry down to the Southern Pacific depot at Third and Townsend and buy me a special week-end round-trip ticket to Monterey and get on the train and be free in the world from Saturday afternoon till Monday morning. I was going to buy me a copy of the *Saturday Evening Post* and read stories all the way down to Monterey.

When I walked into the office, though, Mrs. Gilpley, the bookkeeper, was putting on her hat and coat and tears were coming out of her eyes.

I stopped whistling and looked around. It was very quiet. The door of Mr. Wylie's office was just a little open, so I figured he was at his desk. Nobody

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else was around, though. It was twenty minutes past eight, and the clock was making a lot of noise for a clock you could hardly hear ordinarily.

Good morning, Mrs. Gilpley, I said.

Good morning, Joe, she said.

I didn't go straight to the locker and hang up my hat and go to my desk because I knew something was wrong and I figured it wouldn't be polite to just go and hang up my hat and sit at my desk and not try to understand what was wrong and why Mrs. Gilpley was putting on her hat and coat and crying. Mrs. Gilpley was an old lady and she had a mustache and she was stoop-shouldered and her hands were dry and full of wrinkles and nobody liked Mrs. Gilpley, but it was April in the world and I had a new hat and a new pair of shoes and I had worked in the same office with Mrs. Gilpley from September till April, right straight through winter, and maybe I didn't exactly love her, maybe I wasn't exactly crazy about her, but she was a good-hearted old lady, and I couldn't just go and hang up my hat and start another day. I had to talk to her.

Mrs. Gilpley, I said, is something the matter?

She pointed at the partly open door of Mr. Wylie's private office and made a sign that told me not to talk and just hang up my hat and go to work.

I see, I thought. He's fired her.

After all these years.

Mrs. Gilpley, I said, you haven't lost your job, have you?

I've resigned, she said.

No, you haven't, I said. I wasn't born yesterday. You can't fool me.

Mrs. Gilpley's salary was twenty-seven-fifty per week. It was eight a week when she first started to work for the cemetery company. They taught me to do Mrs. Gilpley's work. My salary was fifteen a week, so they were giving the old lady the gate. Well, I was pretty lucky to have a job and I wanted to go down to Monterey and I felt fine in a new pair of three-dollar shoes and a new hat, but I didn't like the idea of making Mrs. Gilpley cry at her age.

Mrs. Gilpley, I said, I came in this morning to quit my job and I'm *going* to quit. I got an uncle in Portland who's opening a grocery store and I'm going up there to handle his accounts for him. I ain't going to work for any cemetery company all my life. I'm quitting.

Joe, Mrs. Gilpley said, you know you ain't got no uncle in Portland.

Is that so? I said. You'd be surprised where I got uncles. I'm through with this job. Keeping track of dead people's addresses. That's a hell of a career for a young man.

Joe, Mrs. Gilpley said, if you quit your job, I'll never speak to you again as long as I live.

I don't need no job in a cemetery company, I said. What do I want to be keeping track of dead people for?

You got no friends in this town, Joe, Mrs. Gilpley said. You told me all about where you're from and what you're doing out here in Frisco, and I know how it is. You need this job, and if you quit it, I'll be deeply hurt.

Mrs. Gilpley, I said, how do you think I feel? Coming in here and taking your job? It ain't right. You been doing this work twenty years or more.

Joe, Mrs. Gilpley said, you go on now and hang up your hat and go to work.

I won't, I said. I'm quitting right now.

I walked straight into Mr. Wylie's office. Mr. Wylie was the vice-president. He was an old man with a nose that was squeezed down at the end. He was tall and absent-minded and he wore a derby. And he was mean.

I walked straight into his office. Mr. Wylie, I said, I'm quitting my job beginning this morning.

What's that? he said.

Quitting, I said.

What for? he said.

I ain't getting enough money, I said.

How much do you want? he said.

Boy, was I surprised? I thought he'd throw me out. I figured I'd have to ask for plenty to make him throw me out, so I did.

I want thirty dollars a week, I said.

But you're only eighteen, he said. Such a salary would be a little premature, but perhaps we can arrange it.

What the hell. If I had tried to put over a thing like that, if I had wanted to put over something like that, and get more money, it never would have worked. Thirty dollars a week was enough to buy me all the stuff I always wanted, in less than six months. Why, Jesus Christ, I'd be able to buy a Harley-Davidson in no time at thirty a week.

No, I said. I'm quitting.

Why are you quitting? he said. I thought you liked your work?

I used to, I said. But I don't any more. Mr. Wylie, I said, did you fire Mrs. Gilpley?

Mr. Wylie leaned back in his chair and looked at me. He looked sore. Who the hell was I to ask *him* a question like that?

Young man, he said, a check for you will be made out in full this morning. You can come back for it in an hour.

I was sore too.

I want my check *now*, I said.

Then wait in the outer office, he said. Behind the rail.

I went out behind the rail and leaned on the counter.

Mrs. Gilpley looked excited.

I quit, I said.

She couldn't talk.

He wanted to give me thirty dollars a week, I said, but I quit.

She gulped a couple of times.

Mrs. Gilpley, I said, they'll have to give you your job back because they ain't got anybody else to do your work.

Joe, she said, you've hurt me very deeply.

That's all right, I said. Where I come from a young man doesn't take a lady's job. I come from Chicago and I guess I can always go back.

Go back to Chicago? Not me. I liked California. I always liked California. But that's what I said.

Joe, said Mrs. Gilpley, suppose you can't find another job?

I snapped my fingers.

I can get another job just like that, I said.

Mr. Wylie stood in the doorway of his private office and nodded at Mrs. Gilpley and she went into his office and he closed the door. She didn't come out till it was a quarter to nine. She took off her hat and coat and got out the check book and wrote a check and took it to Mr. Wylie.

The check was for me. It was a check for thirteen dollars.

Here's your check, Joe, Mrs. Gilpley said. I tried to get him to give you fifteen, but he said you were insolent.

Did he give you your job back? I said.

Yes, she said.

Mrs. Gilpley, I said, I'm very glad you've got your job back. What did he say I was?

Insolent, said Mrs. Gilpley.

What's that mean? I said.

Impolite, Mrs. Gilpley said.

I ain't impolite, I said. Where I come from people are courteous. Who does he think he's calling impolite?

I went into Mr. Wylie's office and asked him.

Mr. Wylie, I said, who do you think you're calling impolite?

What are you talking about? he said.

You can't call me impolite, I said. Where I come from people are courteous. People in Chicago aren't really courteous; not in every part of Chicago, but most of the people in the neighborhood where I lived were pretty polite. Most of the time anyway. I guess I was just sore.

You can't say I ain't got good manners, I said.

Where do you come from? Mr. Wylie said.

Chicago, I said. Didn't you know that?

No, he said.

I used to work on South Water Market Street, I said.

Well, said Mr. Wylie, you've got a lot to learn. You're going to learn it doesn't pay to bite the hand that feeds you.

I didn't bite no hand that fed me, I said.

You quit, didn't you? he said.

Yes, sir, I said. I quit all right, but I didn't bite nobody.

Well, what do you want now? he said.

I just want to say good-by, I said. I just want you to know I've got good manners.

All right, said Mr. Wylie. Good-by.

Good-by, I said.

I went out of the office and said good-by to Mrs. Gilpley. Mr. Wylie came out of his private office while I was saying good-by to Mrs. Gilpley. She got all excited when he came out of his office, but I wouldn't stop talking.

Mrs. Gilpley, I said, all my life I've wanted to buy a Harley-Davidson and ride around and see a lot of small towns and I guess I could have done it if I had wanted to keep my job here, but where I come from a man don't keep

a job and buy a Harley-Davidson and get somebody else who needs a job worse fired.

What's a Harley-Davidson? Mr. Wylie said.

It's a motorcycle, I said.

Oh, he said.

And don't think I won't get along all right, Mrs. Gilpley, I said, because I will.

What do you want with a motorcycle? Mr. Wylie said.

I want to ride it, I said.

What for? he said.

To get somewhere, I said. Travel.

That's no way to travel, Mr. Wylie said.

It's one of the best ways in the world, I said. Mr. Wylie, I don't suppose you've ever driven a motorcycle.

No, I haven't, he said.

There ain't nothing like it, I said. A good motorcycle can go eighty miles an hour, easy.

Mrs. Gilpley, I said, if I ever get a motorcycle with a side-car, I'd be very happy to take you for a little ride through Golden Gate Park, just to give you an idea how pleasant motorcycle riding can be.

Thank you very much, Joe, Mrs. Gilpley said.

Good-by, I said.

Good-by, said Mrs. Gilpley.

Good-by, said Mr. Wylie.

I went out and rang for the elevator. It was the Greek George.

Where you going? he said.

Portland, I said.

Portland? he said. What the hell you going to do in Portland?

I don't know, I said.

What's the matter? he said.

I just quit my job, I said.

What the hell do you want to quit your job for? he said.

I didn't like it, I said. I don't like keeping track of dead people.

You're crazy, he said.

I ain't crazy at all, I said.

I walked out of the elevator, out of the building, and up Market Street. I don't know how it happened, but I went straight to the Harley-Davidson agency, and they showed me the new model. I asked the salesman if I could try one out for a little while, and he talked it over with somebody in an inside office and then he said I could try one out if I would leave some money in the office. In case, he said.

Well, I had the check, so I gave him the check.

It was a beautiful machine. I tore down Market Street and stopped at the building where I used to work and went upstairs and walked into Mr. Wylie's office.

He looked dumbfounded.

Mr. Wylie, I said, I got a beautiful Harley-Davidson downstairs and if you'd like to go for a ride, I'd be more than glad to let you sit behind me. It's a big seat and if I move up toward the front, you'll be comfortable.

I don't want to ride no motorcycle, he said.

I thought maybe you would, I said.

I went out of the office, and then I went back.

Well, would you care to *see* it? I said.

No, he said.

All right, I said, and I went on downstairs and got on the motorcycle and drove away. It was a beautiful job. The motor was great. I got out on the Great Highway at the beach and then I remembered Monterey and I figured maybe I ought to let her out and tear down to Monterey and then tear back, and then give them back their motorcycle and start looking for another job. They'd maybe give me back some of the money, and maybe not, but even if they didn't, I figured it would be worth it, so I let her out. It was the real thing. April. And the Harley-Davidson under me, and the Pacific Ocean beside me. And the world. And the towns. And the people. And the trees. And I roared down to Monterey in no time.

It was a fine town. There were some old buildings in the town, and ships. Fishing ships. There was a fine smell of fish down there, and a lot of sunlight. The fishermen talked very loud in Italian. I drove the Harley-Davidson all around town and right out onto the wet sand of the beach and along the beach for quite a way. I scared a lot of sea gulls and then I stopped at a place and had three hamburgers and two cups of coffee.

Then I started back for Frisco.

It was a great trip, going and coming. It was the most beautiful machine I ever saw. I could do anything with it. I could make it go anywhere, and I did. And I could make it go slower than a man walking, and faster than any expensive car on the highway. I'll bet I passed at least sixty millionaires on the highway. I could make it roar too. I could drive it zig-zag. I could ride it leaning away over on one side. I guess I scared a lot of people on the highway. I drove it a mile no hands. I stood on the seat a long time, holding the handlebars. People think that's dangerous, but it isn't if you know how to do it.

I had a great time with the Harley-Davidson. Then I took it back and turned it in. The salesman said, Where did you go?

I went down to Monterey, I said.

Monterey? he said. We didn't know you wanted to go that far. We just thought you wanted to find out how it worked.

Well, I said, I always wanted to go down there. Can I have my money back?

Are you going to buy the motorcycle? he said.

How much is it? I said.

It's two hundred and seventy-five dollars, he said.

No, I said. I ain't got that much.

How much have you got? he said.

I got that check, that's all, I said. Them thirteen dollars.

We thought you were going to buy the motorcycle, he said.

I would have bought it if I hadn't quit my job, I said. Can I have my money back?

I don't think so, the salesman said. I'll talk to the manager.

He went into an office and talked, and then he came out and another man was with him. The other man looked important and sore.

What do you mean by taking a new bike and riding it to Monterey and back? he said.

What? I said.

I didn't know what to say. What did *he* mean, *what did I mean?* I didn't mean anything.

You can't do that, he said. We thought you just wanted to ride the motorcycle around the block or show it to somebody or something.

I showed it to a few people, I said. Can I have my money back?

I'm afraid *you* owe *us* money, said the manager. That machine's a new machine. It's for sale. It's secondhand now.

Can't I have *some* of my money back? I said.

No, said the manager.

It's a swell motorcycle, I said.

I walked out of the place and walked up to my room and I didn't even stop to think where I'd ever be able to find a job. I was feeling too happy about the ride to Monterey and back.

SHERWOOD ANDERSON

I Want to Know Why

WE GOT UP at four in the morning, that first day in the east. On the evening before we had climbed off a freight train at the edge of town, and with the true instinct of Kentucky boys had found our way across town and to the racetrack and the stables at once. Then we knew we were all right. Hanley Turner right away found a nigger we knew. It was Bildad Johnson who in the winter works at Ed Becker's livery barn in our home town, Beckersville. Bildad is a good cook as almost all our niggers are and of course he, like everyone in our part of Kentucky who is anyone at all, likes the horses. In the spring Bildad begins to scratch around. A nigger from our country can flatter and wheedle anyone into letting him do most anything he wants. Bildad wheedles the stable men and the trainers from the horse farms in our country around Lexington. The trainers come into town in the evening to stand around and talk and maybe get into a poker game. Bildad gets in with them. He is always doing little favors and telling about things to eat, chicken

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browned in a pan, and how is the best way to cook sweet potatoes and corn bread. It makes your mouth water to hear him.

When the racing season comes on and the horses go to the races and there is all the talk on the streets in the evenings about the new colts, and everyone says when they are going over to Lexington or to the spring meeting at Churchill Downs or to Latonia, and the horsemen that have been down to New Orleans or maybe at the winter meeting at Havana in Cuba come home to spend a week before they start out again, at such a time when everything talked about in Beckersville is just horses and nothing else and the outfits start out and horse racing is in every breath of air you breathe, Bildad shows up with a job as cook for some outfit. Often when I think about it, his always going all season to the races and working in the livery barn in the winter where horses are and where men like to come and talk about horses, I wish I was a nigger. It's a foolish thing to say, but that's the way I am about being around horses, just crazy. I can't help it.

Well, I must tell you about what we did and let you in on what I'm talking about. Four of us boys from Beckersville, all whites and sons of men who live in Beckersville regular, made up our minds we were going to the races, not just to Lexington or Louisville, I don't mean, but to the big eastern track we were always hearing our Beckersville men talk about, to Saratoga. We were all pretty young then. I was just turned fifteen and I was the oldest of the four. It was my scheme. I admit that and I talked the others into trying it. There was Hanley Turner and Henry Rieback and Tom Tumberton and myself. I had thirty-seven dollars I had earned during the winter working nights and Saturdays in Enoch Myer's grocery. Henry Rieback had eleven dollars and the others, Hanley and Tom, had only a dollar or two each. We fixed it all up and laid low until the Kentucky spring meetings were over and some of our men, the sportiest ones, the ones we envied the most, had cut out—then we cut out too.

I won't tell you the trouble we had beating our way on freights and all. We went through Cleveland and Buffalo and other cities and saw Niagara Falls. We bought things there, souvenirs and spoons and cards and shells with pictures of the Falls on them for our sisters and mothers, but thought we had better not send any of the things home. We didn't want to put the folks on our trail and maybe be nabbed.

We got into Saratoga as I said at night and went to the track. Bildad fed us up. He showed us a place to sleep in hay over a shed and promised to keep still. Niggers are all right about things like that. They won't squeal on you. Often a white man you might meet, when you had run away from home like that, might appear to be all right and give you a quarter or a half dollar or something, and then go right and give you away. White men will do that, but not a nigger. You can trust them. They are squarer with kids. I don't know why.

At the Saratoga meeting that year there were a lot of men from home. Dave Williams and Arthur Mulford and Jerry Myers and others. Then there was a lot from Louisville and Lexington Henry Rieback knew but I didn't. They were

professional gamblers and Henry Rieback's father is one too. He is what is called a sheet writer and goes away most of the year to tracks. In the winter when he is home in Beckersville he don't stay there much but goes away to cities and deals faro. He is a nice man and generous, is always sending Henry presents, a bicycle and a gold watch and a boy scout suit of clothes and things like that.

My own father is a lawyer. He's all right, but don't make much money and can't buy me things and anyway I'm getting so old now I don't expect it. He never said nothing to me against Henry, but Hanley Turner and Tom Tumberton's fathers did. They said to their boys that money so come by is no good and they didn't want their boys brought up to hear gamblers' talk and be thinking about such things and maybe embrace them.

That's all right and I guess the men know what they are talking about, but I don't see what it's got to do with Henry or horses either. That's what I'm writing this story about. I'm puzzled. I'm getting to be a man and want to think straight and be O.K., and there's something I saw at the race meeting at the eastern track I can't figure out.

I can't help it, I'm crazy about thoroughbred horses. I've always been that way. When I was ten years old and saw I was growing to be big and couldn't be a rider I was so sorry I nearly died. Harry Hellinfinger in Beckersville, whose father is Postmaster, is grown up and too lazy to work, but likes to stand around in the street and get up jokes on boys like sending them to a hardware store for a gimlet to bore square holes and other jokes like that. He played one on me. He told me that if I could eat a half a cigar I would be stunted and not grow any more and maybe could be a rider. I did it. When father wasn't looking I took a cigar out of his pocket and gagged it down some way. It made me awful sick and the doctor had to be sent for, and then it did no good. I kept right on growing. It was a joke. When I told what I had done and why most fathers would have whipped me but mine didn't.

Well, I didn't get stunted and didn't die. It serves Harry Hellinfinger right. Then I made up my mind I would like to be a stable boy, but had to give that up too. Mostly niggers do that work and I knew father wouldn't let me go into it. No use to ask him.

If you've never been crazy about thoroughbreds it's because you've never been around where they are much and don't know any better. They're beautiful. There isn't anything so lovely and clean and full of spunk and honest and everything as some racehorses. On the big horse farms that are all around our town Beckersville there are tracks and the horses run in the early morning. More than a thousand times I've got out of bed before daylight and walked two or three miles to the tracks. Mother wouldn't of let me go but father always says, "Let him alone." So I got some bread out of the bread box and some butter and jam, gobbled it and lit out.

At the tracks you sit on the fence with men, whites and niggers, and they chew tobacco and talk, and then the colts are brought out. It's early and the grass is covered with shiny dew and in another field a man is plowing and they are frying things in a shed where the track niggers sleep, and you know

how a nigger can giggle and laugh and say things that make you laugh. A white man can't do it and some niggers can't but a track nigger can every time.

And so the colts are brought out and some are just galloped by stable boys, but almost every morning on a big track owned by a rich man who lives maybe in New York, there are always, nearly every morning, a few colts and some of the old racehorses and geldings and mares that are cut loose.

It brings a lump up into my throat when a horse runs. I don't mean all horses but some. I can pick them nearly every time. It's in my blood like in the blood of race-track niggers and trainers. Even when they just go slop-jogging along with a little nigger on their backs I can tell a winner. If my throat hurts and it's hard for me to swallow, that's him. He'll run like Sam Hill when you let him out. If he don't win every time it'll be a wonder and because they've got him in a pocket behind another or he was pulled or got off bad at the post or something. If I wanted to be a gambler like Henry Rieback's father I could get rich. I know I could and Henry says so too. All I would have to do is to wait 'til that hurt comes when I see a horse and then bet every cent. That's what I would do if I wanted to be a gambler, but I don't.

When you're at the tracks in the morning—not the race tracks but the training tracks around Beckersville—you don't see a horse, the kind I've been talking about, very often, but it's nice anyway. Any thoroughbred, that is sired right and out of a good mare and trained by a man that knows how, can run. If he couldn't what would he be there for and not pulling a plow?

Well, out of the stables they come and the boys are on their backs and it's lovely to be there. You hunch down on top of the fence and itch inside you. Over in the sheds the niggers giggle and sing. Bacon is being fried and coffee made. Everything smells lovely. Nothing smells better than coffee and manure and horses and niggers and bacon frying and pipes being smoked out of doors on a morning like that. It just gets you, that's what it does.

But about Saratoga. We was there six days and not a soul from home seen us and everything came off just as we wanted it to, fine weather and horses and races and all. We beat our way home and Bildad gave us a basket with fried chicken and bread and other eatables in, and I had eighteen dollars when we got back to Beckersville. Mother jawed and cried but Pop didn't say much. I told everything we done except one thing. I did and saw that alone. That's what I'm writing about. It got me upset. I think about it at night. Here it is.

At Saratoga we laid up nights in the hay in the shed Bildad had showed us and ate with the niggers early and at night when the race people had all gone away. The men from home stayed mostly in the grandstand and betting field, and didn't come out around the places where the horses are kept except to the paddocks just before a race when the horses are saddled. At Saratoga they don't have paddocks under an open shed as at Lexington and Churchill Downs and other tracks down in our country, but saddle the horses right out in an open place under trees on a lawn as smooth and nice as Banker Bohon's front yard here in Beckersville. It's lovely. The horses are sweaty and nervous and shine and the men come out and smoke cigars and look at them and

the trainers are there and the owners, and your heart thumps so you can hardly breathe.

Then the bugle blows for post and the boys that ride come running out with their silk clothes on and you run to get a place by the fence with the niggers.

I always am wanting to be a trainer or owner, and at the risk of being seen and caught and sent home I went to the paddocks before every race. The other boys didn't but I did.

We got to Saratoga on a Friday and on Wednesday the next week the big Mullford Handicap was to be run. Middlestride was in it and Sunstreak. The weather was fine and the track fast. I couldn't sleep the night before.

What had happened was that both these horses are the kind it makes my throat hurt to see. Middlestride is long and looks awkward and is a gelding. He belongs to Joe Thompson, a little owner from home who only has a half-dozen horses. The Mullford Handicap is for a mile and Middlestride can't untrack fast. He goes away slow and is always way back at the half, then he begins to run and if the race is a mile and a quarter he'll just eat up everything and get there.

Sunstreak is different. He is a stallion and nervous and belongs on the biggest farm we've got in our country, the Van Riddle place that belongs to Mr. Van Riddle of New York. Sunstreak is like a girl you think about sometimes but never see. He is hard all over and lovely too. When you look at his head you want to kiss him. He is trained by Jerry Tillford who knows me and has been good to me lots of times, lets me walk into a horse's stall to look at him close and other things. There isn't anything as sweet as that horse. He stands at the post quiet and not letting on, but he is just burning up inside. Then when the barrier goes up he is off like his name, Sunstreak. It makes you ache to see him. It hurts you. He just lays down and runs like a bird dog. There can't anything I ever see run like him except Middlestride when he gets untracked and stretches himself.

Gee! I ached to see that race and those two horses run, ached and dreaded it too. I didn't want to see either of our horses beaten. We had never sent a pair like that to the races before. Old men in Beckersville said so and the niggers said so. It was a fact.

Before the race I went over to the paddocks to see. I looked a last look at Middlestride, who isn't such a much standing in a paddock that way, then I went to see Sunstreak.

It was his day. I knew when I see him. I forgot all about being seen myself and walked right up. All the men from Beckersville were there and no one noticed me except Jerry Tillford. He saw me and something happened. I'll tell you about that.

I was standing looking at that horse and aching. In some way, I can't tell how, I knew just how Sunstreak felt inside. He was quiet and letting the niggers rub his legs and Mr. Van Riddle himself put the saddle on, but he was just a raging torrent inside. He was like the water in the river at Niagara Falls just before it goes plunk down. That horse wasn't thinking about run-

ning. He don't have to think about that. He was just thinking about holding himself back 'til the time for the running came. I knew that. I could just in a way see right inside him. He was going to do some awful running and I knew it. He wasn't bragging or letting on much or prancing or making a fuss, but just waiting. I knew it and Jerry Tillford his trainer knew. I looked up and then that man and I looked into each other's eyes. Something happened to me. I guess I loved the man as much as I did the horse because he knew what I knew. Seemed to me there wasn't anything in the world but that man and the horse and me. I cried and Jerry Tillford had a shine in his eyes. Then I came away to the fence to wait for the race. The horse was better than me, more steadier, and now I know better than Jerry. He was the quietest and he had to do the running.

Sunstreak ran first of course and he busted the world's record for a mile. I've seen that if I never see anything more. Everything came out just as I expected. Middlestride got left at the post and was way back and closed up to be second, just as I knew he would. He'll get a world's record too some day. They can't skin the Beckersville country on horses.

I watched the race calm because I knew what would happen. I was sure. Hanley Turner and Henry Rieback and Tom Tumberton were all more excited than me.

A funny thing had happened to me. I was thinking about Jerry Tillford the trainer and how happy he was all through the race. I liked him that afternoon even more than I ever liked my own father. I almost forgot the horses thinking that way about him. It was because of what I had seen in his eyes as he stood in the paddocks beside Sunstreak before the race started. I knew he had been watching and working with Sunstreak since the horse was a baby colt, had taught him to run and be patient and when to let himself out and not to quit, never. I knew that for him it was like a mother seeing her child do something brave or wonderful. It was the first time I ever felt for a man like that.

After the race that night I cut out from Tom and Hanley and Henry. I wanted to be by myself and I wanted to be near Jerry Tillford if I could work it. Here is what happened.

The track in Saratoga is near the edge of town. It is all polished up and trees around, the evergreen kind, and grass and everything painted and nice. If you go past the track you get to a hard road made of asphalt for automobiles, and if you go along this for a few miles there is a road turns off to a little rummy-looking farmhouse set in a yard.

That night after the race I went along that road because I had seen Jerry and some other men go that way in an automobile. I didn't expect to find them. I walked for a ways and then sat down by a fence to think. It was the direction they went in. I wanted to be as near Jerry as I could. I felt close to him. Pretty soon I went up the side road—I don't know why—and came to the rummy farmhouse. I was just lonesome to see Jerry, like wanting to see your father at night when you are a young kid. Just then an automobile came along and turned in. Jerry was in it and Henry Rieback's father, and Arthur

Bedford from home, and Dave Williams and two other men I didn't know. They got out of the car and went into the house, all but Henry Rieback's father who quarreled with them and said he wouldn't go. It was only about nine o'clock, but they were all drunk and the rummy-looking farmhouse was a place for bad women to stay in. That's what it was. I crept up along a fence and looked through a window and saw.

It's what give me the fantods. I can't make it out. The women in the house were all ugly mean-looking women, not nice to look at or be near. They were homely too, except one who was tall and looked a little like the gelding Middlestride, but not clean like him, but with a hard ugly mouth. She had red hair. I saw everything plain. I got up by an old rosebush by an open window and looked. The women had on loose dresses and sat around in chairs. The men came in and some sat on the women's laps. The place smelled rotten and there was rotten talk, the kind a kid hears around a livery stable in a town like Beckersville in the winter but don't ever expect to hear talked when there are women around. It was rotten. A nigger wouldn't go into such a place.

I looked at Jerry Tillford. I've told you how I had been feeling about him on account of his knowing what was going on inside of Sunstreak in the minute before he went to the post for the race in which he made a world's record.

Jerry bragged in that bad-woman house as I know Sunstreak wouldn't never have bragged. He said that he made that horse, that it was him that won the race and made the record. He lied and bragged like a fool. I never heard such silly talk.

And then, what do you suppose he did! He looked at the woman in there, the one that was lean and hard-mouthed and looked a little like the gelding Middlestride, but not clean like him, and his eyes began to shine just as they did when he looked at me and at Sunstreak in the paddocks at the track in the afternoon. I stood there by the window—gee!—but I wished I hadn't gone away from the tracks, but had stayed with the boys and the niggers and the horses. The tall rotten-looking woman was between us just as Sunstreak was in the paddocks in the afternoon.

Then, all of a sudden, I began to hate that man. I wanted to scream and rush in the room and kill him. I never had such a feeling before. I was so mad clean through that I cried and my fists were doubled up so my fingernails cut my hands.

And Jerry's eyes kept shining and he waved back and forth, and then he went and kissed that woman and I crept away and went back to the tracks and to bed and didn't sleep hardly any, and then next day I got the other kids to start home with me and never told them anything I seen.

I been thinking about it ever since. I can't make it out. Spring has come again and I'm nearly sixteen and go to the tracks mornings same as always, and I see Sunstreak and Middlestride and a new colt named Strident I'll bet will lay them all out, but no one thinks so but me and two or three niggers.

But things are different. At the tracks the air don't taste as good or smell as good. It's because a man like Jerry Tillford, who knows what he does,

could see a horse like Sunstreak run, and kiss a woman like that the same day. I can't make it out. Darn him, what did he want to do like that for? I keep thinking about it and it spoils looking at horses and smelling things and hearing niggers laugh and everything. Sometimes I'm so mad about it I want to fight someone. It gives me the fantods. What did he do it for? I want to know why.

WILLIAM FAULKNER

The Bear

HE WAS ten. But it had already begun, long before that day when at last he wrote his age in two figures and he saw for the first time the camp where his father and Major de Spain and old General Compson and the others spent two weeks each November and two weeks again each June. He had already inherited then, without ever having seen it, the tremendous bear with one trap-ruined foot which, in an area almost a hundred miles deep, had earned itself a name, a definite designation like a living man.

He had listened to it for years: the long legend of corncribs rifled, of shotes and grown pigs and even calves carried bodily into the woods and devoured, of traps and dead-falls overthrown and dogs mangled and slain, and shotgun and even rifle charges delivered at point-blank range and with no more effect than so many peas blown through a tube by a boy—a corridor of wreckage and destruction beginning back before he was born, through which sped, not fast but rather with the ruthless and irresistible deliberation of a locomotive, the shaggy tremendous shape.

It ran in his knowledge before he ever saw it. It looked and towered in his dreams before he even saw the unaxed woods where it left its crooked print, shaggy, huge, red-eyed, not malevolent but just big—too big for the dogs which tried to bay it, for the horses which tried to ride it down, for the men and the bullets they fired into it, too big for the very country which was its constricting scope. He seemed to see it entire with a child's complete divination before he ever laid eyes on either—the doomed wilderness whose edges were being constantly and punily gnawed at by men with axes and plows who feared it because it was wilderness, men myriad and nameless even to one another in the land where the old bear had earned a name, through which ran not even a mortal animal but an anachronism, indomitable and invincible, out of an old dead time, a phantom, epitome and apotheosis of the old wild life at which the puny humans swarmed and hacked in a fury of abhorrence and fear, like pygmies about the ankles of a drowsing elephant: the old bear

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solitary, indomitable and alone, widowered, childless, and absolved of mortality—old Priam reft of his old wife and having outlived all his sons.

Until he was ten, each November he would watch the wagon containing the dogs and the bedding and food and guns and his father and Tennie's Jim, the Negro, and Sam Fathers, the Indian, son of a slave woman and a Chickasaw chief, depart on the road to town, to Jefferson, where Major de Spain and the others would join them. To the boy, at seven, eight, and nine, they were not going into the Big Bottom to hunt bear and deer, but to keep yearly rendezvous with the bear which they did not even intend to kill. Two weeks later they would return, with no trophy, no head and skin. He had not expected it. He had not even been afraid it would be in the wagon. He believed that even after he was ten and his father would let him go too, for those two weeks in November, he would merely make another one, along with his father and Major de Spain and General Compson and the others, the dogs which feared to bay at it and the rifles and shotguns which failed even to bleed it, in the yearly pageant of the old bear's furious immortality.

Then he heard the dogs. It was in the second week of his first time in the camp. He stood with Sam Fathers against a big oak beside the faint crossing where they had stood each dawn for nine days now, hearing the dogs. He had heard them once before, one morning last week—a murmur, sourceless, echoing through the wet woods, swelling presently into separate voices which he could recognize and call by name. He had raised and cocked the gun as Sam told him and stood motionless again while the uproar, the invisible course, swept up and past and faded; it seemed to him that he could actually see the deer, the buck, blond, smoke-colored, elongated with speed, fleeing, vanishing, the woods, the gray solitude, still ringing even when the cries of the dogs had died away.

"Now let the hammers down," Sam said.

"You knew they were not coming here too," he said.

"Yes," Sam said. "I want you to learn how to do when you didn't shoot. It's after the chance for the bear or the deer has done already come and gone that men and dogs get killed."

"Anyway," he said, "it was just a deer."

Then on the tenth morning he heard the dogs again. And he readied the too-long, too-heavy gun as Sam had taught him, before Sam even spoke. But this time it was no deer, no ringing chorus of dogs running strong on a free scent, but a moiling yapping an octave too high, with something more than indecision and even abjectness in it, not even moving very fast, taking a long time to pass completely out of hearing, leaving then somewhere in the air that echo, thin, slightly hysterical, abject, almost grieving, with no sense of a fleeing, unseen, smoke-colored, grass-eating shape ahead of it, and Sam, who had taught him first of all to cock the gun and take position where he could see everywhere and then never move again, had himself moved up beside him; he could hear Sam breathing at his shoulder, and he could see the arched curve of the old man's inhaling nostrils.

"Hah," Sam said. "Not even running. Walking."

"Old Ben!" the boy said. "But up here!" he cried. "Way up here!"

"He do it every year," Sam said. "Once. Maybe to see who in camp this time, if he can shoot or not. Whether we got the dog yet that can bay and hold him. He'll take them to the river, then he'll send them back home. We may as well go back too; see how they look when they come back to camp."

When they reached the camp the hounds were already there, ten of them crouching back under the kitchen, the boy and Sam squatting to peer back into the obscurity where they had huddled, quiet, the eyes luminous, glowing at them and vanishing, and no sound, only that effluvium of something more than dog, stronger than dog and not just animal, just beast, because still there had been nothing in front of that abject and almost painful yapping save the solitude, the wilderness, so that when the eleventh hound came in at noon and with all the others watching—even old Uncle Ash, who called himself first a cook—Sam daubed the tattered ear and the raked shoulder with turpentine and axle grease, to the boy it was still no living creature, but the wilderness which, leaning for the moment down, had patted lightly once the hound's temerity.

"Just like a man," Sam said. "Just like folks. Put off as long as she could having to brave, knowing all the time that sooner or later she would have to be brave to keep on living with herself, and knowing all the time beforehand what was going to happen to her when she done it."

That afternoon, himself on the one-eyed wagon mule which did not mind the smell of blood nor, as they told him, of bear, and with Sam on the other one, they rode for more than three hours through the rapid, shortening winter day. They followed no path, no trail even that he could see; almost at once they were in a country which he had never seen before. Then he knew why Sam had made him ride the mule which would not spook. The sound one stopped short and tried to whirl and bolt even as Sam got down, blowing its breath, jerking and wrenching at the rein, while Sam held it, coaxing it forward with his voice, since he could not risk tying it, drawing it forward while the boy got down from the marred one.

Then, standing beside Sam in the gloom of the dying afternoon, he looked down at the rotted over-turned log, gutted and scored with claw marks and, in the wet earth beside it, the print of the enormous warped two-toed foot. He knew now what he had smelled when he peered under the kitchen where the dogs huddled. He realized for the first time that the bear which had run in his listening and loomed in his dreams since before he could remember to the contrary, and which, therefore, must have existed in the listening and dreams of his father and Major de Spain and even old General Compson, too, before they began to remember in their turn, was a mortal animal, and that if they had departed for the camp each November without any actual hope of bringing its trophy back, it was not because it could not be slain, but because so far they had had no actual hope to.

"Tomorrow," he said.

"We'll try tomorrow," Sam said. "We ain't got the dog yet."

"We've got eleven. They ran him this morning."

"It won't need but one," Sam said. "He ain't here. Maybe he ain't nowhere.

The only other way will be for him to run by accident over somebody that has a gun."

"That wouldn't be me," the boy said. "It will be Walter or Major or—"

"It might," Sam said. "You watch close in the morning. Because he's smart. That's how come he has lived this long. If he gets hemmed up and has to pick out somebody to run over, he will pick out you."

"How?" the boy said. "How will he know—" He ceased. "You mean he already knows me, that I ain't never been here before, ain't had time to find out yet whether I—" He ceased again, looking at Sam, the old man whose face revealed nothing until it smiled. He said humbly, not even amazed, "It was me he was watching. I don't reckon he did need to come but once."

The next morning they left the camp three hours before daylight. They rode this time because it was too far to walk, even the dogs in the wagon; again the first gray light found him in a place which he had never seen before, where Sam had placed him and told him to stay and then departed. With the gun which was too big for him, which did not even belong to him, but to Major de Spain, and which he had fired only once—at a stump on the first day, to learn the recoil and how to reload it—he stood against a gum tree beside a little bayou whose black still water crept without movement out of a canebrake and crossed a small clearing and into cane again, where, invisible, a bird—the big woodpecker called Lord-to-God by Negroes—clattered at a dead limb.

It was a stand like any other, dissimilar only in incidentals to the one where he had stood each morning for ten days; a territory new to him, yet no less familiar than that other one which, after almost two weeks, he had come to believe he knew a little—the same solitude, the same loneliness through which human beings had merely passed without altering it, leaving no mark, no scar, which looked exactly as it must have looked when the first ancestor of Sam Fathers' Chickasaw predecessors crept into it and looked about, club or stone ax or bone arrow drawn and poised; different only because, squatting at the edge of the kitchen, he smelled the hounds huddled and cringing beneath it and saw the raked ear and shoulder of the one who, Sam said, had had to be brave once in order to live with herself, and saw yesterday in the earth beside the gutted log the print of the living foot.

He heard no dogs at all. He never did hear them. He only heard the drumming of the woodpecker stop short off and knew that the bear was looking at him. He never saw it. He did not know whether it was in front of him or behind him. He did not move, holding the useless gun, which he had not even had warning to cock and which even now he did not cock, tasting in his saliva that taint as of brass which he knew now because he had smelled it when he peered under the kitchen at the huddled dogs.

Then it was gone. As abruptly as it had ceased, the woodpecker's dry, monotonous clatter set up again, and after a while he even believed he could hear the dogs—a murmur, scarce a sound even, which he had probably been hearing for some time before he even remarked it, drifting into hearing and then out again, dying away. They came nowhere near him. If it was a bear

they ran, it was another bear. It was Sam himself who came out of the cane and crossed the bayou, followed by the injured bitch of yesterday. She was almost at heel, like a bird dog, making no sound. She came and crouched against his leg, trembling, staring off into the cane.

"I didn't see him," he said. "I didn't, Sam!"

"I know it," Sam said. "He done the looking. You didn't hear him neither, did you?"

"No," the boy said. "I—"

"He's smart," Sam said. "Too smart." He looked down at the hound, trembling faintly and steadily against the boy's knee. From the raked shoulder a few drops of fresh blood oozed and clung. "Too big. We ain't got the dog yet. But maybe someday. Maybe not next time. But someday."

So I must see him, he thought. *I must look at him.* Otherwise, it seemed to him that it would go on like this forever, as it had gone on with his father and Major de Spain, who was older than his father, and even with old General Compson, who had been old enough to be a brigade commander in 1865. Otherwise, it would go on so forever, next time and next time, after and after and after. It seemed to him that he could never see the two of them, himself and the bear, shadowy in the limbo from which time emerged, becoming time; the old bear absolved of mortality and himself partaking, sharing a little of it, enough of it. And he knew now what he had smelled in the huddled dogs and tasted in his saliva. He recognized fear. *So I will have to see him,* he thought, without dread or even hope. *I will have to look at him.*

It was in June of the next year. He was eleven. They were in camp again, celebrating Major de Spain's and General Compson's birthdays. Although the one had been born in September and the other in the depth of winter and in another decade, they had met for two weeks to fish and shoot squirrels and turkey and run coons and wildcats with the dogs at night. That is, he and Boon Hoggenbeck and the Negroes fished and shot squirrels and ran the coons and cats, because the proved hunters, not only Major de Spain and old General Compson, who spent those two weeks sitting in a rocking chair before a tremendous iron pot of Brunswick stew, stirring and tasting, with old Ash to quarrel with about how he was making it and Tennie's Jim to pour whiskey from the demijohn into the tin dipper from which he drank it, but even the boy's father and Walter Ewell, who were still young enough, scorned such, other than shooting the wild gobblers with pistols for wagers on their marksmanship.

Or, that is, his father and the others believed he was hunting squirrels. Until the third day, he thought that Sam Fathers believed that too. Each morning he would leave the camp right after breakfast. He had his own gun now, a Christmas present. He went back to the tree beside the bayou where he had stood that morning. Using the compass which old General Compson had given him, he ranged from that point; he was teaching himself to be a better-than-fair woodsman without knowing he was doing it. On the second day he even found the gutted log where he had first seen the crooked print. It

was almost completely crumbled now, healing with unbelievable speed, a passionate and almost visible relinquishment, back into the earth from which the tree had grown.

He ranged the summer woods now, green with gloom; if anything, actually dimmer than in November's gray dissolution, where, even at noon, the sun fell only in intermittent dappling upon the earth, which never completely dried out and which crawled with snakes—moccasins and water snakes and rattlers, themselves the color of the dappling gloom, so that he would not always see them until they moved, returning later and later, first day, second day, passing in the twilight of the third evening the little log pen enclosing the log stable where Sam was putting up the horses for the night.

"You ain't looked right yet," Sam said.

He stopped. For a moment he didn't answer. Then he said peacefully, in a peaceful rushing burst as when a boy's miniature dam in a little brook gives way, "All right. But how? I went to the bayou. I even found that log again. I—"

"I reckon that was all right. Likely he's been watching you. You never saw his foot?"

"I," the boy said—"I didn't—I never thought—"

"It's the gun," Sam said. He stood beside the fence, motionless—the old man, the Indian, in the battered faded overalls and the five-cent straw hat which in the Negro's race had been the badge of his enslavement and was now the regalia of his freedom. The camp—the clearing, the house, the barn and its tiny lot with which Major de Spain in his turn had scratched punily and evanescently at the wilderness—faded in the dusk, back into the immemorial darkness of the woods. *The gun,* the boy thought. *The gun.*

"Be scared," Sam said. "You can't help that. But don't be afraid. Ain't nothing in the woods going to hurt you unless you corner it, or it smells that you are afraid. A bear or a deer, too, has got to be scared of a coward the same as a brave man has got to be."

The gun, the boy thought.

"You will have to choose," Sam said.

He left the camp before daylight, long before Uncle Ash would wake in his quilts on the kitchen floor and start the fire for breakfast. He had only the compass and a stick for snakes. He could go almost a mile before he would begin to need the compass. He sat on a log, the invisible compass in his invisible hand, while the secret night sounds, fallen still at his movements, scurried again and then ceased for good, and the owls ceased and gave over to the waking of day birds, and he could see the compass. Then he went fast yet still quietly; he was becoming better and better as a woodsman, still without having yet realized it.

He jumped a doe and a fawn at sunrise, walked them out of the bed, close enough to see them—the crash of undergrowth, the white scut, the fawn scudding behind her faster than he had believed it could run. He was hunting right, upwind, as Sam had taught him; not that it mattered now. He had left the gun; of his own will and relinquishment he had accepted not a gambit, not a

choice, but a condition in which not only the bear's heretofore inviolable anonymity but all the old rules and balances of hunter and hunted had been abrogated. He would not even be afraid, not even in the moment when the fear would take him completely—blood, skin, bowels, bones, memory from the long time before it became his memory—all save that thin, clear, immortal lucidity which alone differed him from this bear and from all the other bear and deer he would ever kill in the humility and pride of his skill and endurance, to which Sam had spoken when he leaned in the twilight on the lot fence yesterday.

By noon he was far beyond the little bayou, farther into the new and alien country than he had ever been. He was traveling now not only by the old, heavy, biscuit-thick silver watch which had belonged to his grandfather. When he stopped at last, it was for the first time since he had risen from the log at dawn when he could see the compass. It was far enough. He had left the camp nine hours ago; nine hours from now, dark would have already been an hour old. But he didn't think that. He thought, *All right. Yes. But what?* and stood for a moment, alien and small in the green and topless solitude, answering his own question before it had formed and ceased. It was the watch, the compass, the stick—the three lifeless mechanicals with which for nine hours he had fended the wilderness off; he hung the watch and compass carefully on a bush and leaned the stick beside them and relinquished completely to it.

He had not been going very fast for the last two or three hours. He went no faster now, since distance would not matter even if he could have gone fast. And he was trying to keep a bearing on the tree where he had left the compass, trying to complete a circle which would bring him back to it or at least intersect itself, since direction would not matter now either. But the tree was not there, and he did as Sam had schooled him—made the next circle in the opposite direction, so that the two patterns would bisect somewhere, but crossing no point of his own feet, finding the tree at last, but in the wrong place—no bush, no compass, no watch—and the tree not even the tree, because there was a down log beside it and he did what Sam Fathers had told him was the next thing and the last.

As he sat down on the log he saw the crooked print—the warped, tremendous, two-toed indentation which, even as he watched it, filled with water. As he looked up, the wilderness coalesced, solidified—the glade, the tree he sought, the bush, the watch and the compass glinting where a ray of sunshine touched them. Then he saw the bear. It did not emerge, appear; it was just there, immobile, solid, fixed in the hot dappling of the green and windless noon, not as big as he had dreamed it, but as big as he had expected it, bigger, dimensionless, against the dappled obscurity, looking at him where he sat quietly on the log and looked back at it.

Then it moved. It made no sound. It did not hurry. It crossed the glade, walking for an instant into the full glare of the sun; when it reached the other side it stopped again and looked back at him across one shoulder while his quiet breathing inhaled and exhaled three times.

Then it was gone. It didn't walk into the woods, the undergrowth. It faded,

sank back into the wilderness as he had watched a fish, a huge old bass, sink and vanish into the dark depths of its pool without even any movement of its fins.

He thought, *It will be next fall.* But it was not next fall, nor the next nor the next. He was fourteen then. He had killed his buck, and Sam Fathers had marked his face with the hot blood, and in the next year he killed a bear. But even before that accolade he had become as competent in the woods as many grown men with the same experience; by his fourteenth year he was a better woodsman than most grown men with more. There was no territory within thirty miles of the camp that he did not know—bayou, ridge, brake, landmark, tree and path. He could have led anyone to any point in it without deviation, and brought them out again. He knew the game trails that even Sam Fathers did not know; in his thirteenth year he found a buck's bedding place, and unbeknown to his father he borrowed Walter Ewell's rifle and lay in wait at dawn and killed the buck when it walked back to the bed, as Sam had told him how the old Chickasaw fathers did.

But not the old bear, although by now he knew its footprints better than he did his own, and not only the crooked one. He could see any one of the three sound ones and distinguish it from any other, and not only by its size. There were other bears within these thirty miles which left tracks almost as large, but this was more than that. If Sam Fathers had been his mentor and the back-yard rabbits and squirrels at home his kindergarten, then the wilderness the old bear ran was his college, the old male bear itself, so long unwifed and childless as to have become its own ungendered progenitor, was his alma mater. But he never saw it.

He could find the crooked print now almost whenever he liked, fifteen or ten or five miles, or sometimes nearer the camp than that. Twice while on stand during the three years he heard the dogs strike its trail by accident; on the second time they jumped it seemingly, the voices high, abject, almost human in hysteria, as on that first morning two years ago. But not the bear itself. He would remember that noon three years ago, the glade, himself and the bear fixed during that moment in the windless and dappled blaze, and it would seem to him that it had never happened, that he had dreamed that too. But it had happened. They had looked at each other, they had emerged from the wilderness old as earth, synchronized to the instant by something more than the blood that moved the flesh and bones which bore them, and touched, pledged something, affirmed, something more lasting than the frail web of bones and flesh which any accident could obliterate.

Then he saw it again. Because of the very fact that he thought of nothing else, he had forgotten to look for it. He was still hunting with Walter Ewell's rifle. He saw it cross the end of a long blow-down, a corridor where a tornado had swept, rushing through rather than over the tangle of trunks and branches as a locomotive would have, faster than he had ever believed it could move, almost as fast as a deer even, because a deer would have spent most of that time in the air, faster than he could bring the rifle sights up with it. And now he knew what had been wrong during all the three years. He sat on a log,

shaking and trembling as if he had never seen the woods before nor anything that ran them, wondering with incredulous amazement how he could have forgotten the very thing which Sam Fathers had told him and which the bear itself had proved the next day and had now returned after three years to reaffirm.

And now he knew what Sam Fathers had meant about the right dog, a dog in which size would mean less than nothing. So when he returned alone in April—school was out then, so that the sons of farmers could help with the land's planting, and at last his father had granted him permission, on his promise to be back in four days—he had the dog. It was his own, a mongrel of the sort called by Negroes a fyce, a ratter, itself not much bigger than a rat and possessing that bravery which had long since stopped being courage and had become foolhardiness.

It did not take four days. Alone again, he found the trail on the first morning. It was not a stalk; it was an ambush. He timed the meeting almost as if it were an appointment with a human being. Himself holding the fyce muffled in a feed sack and Sam Fathers with two of the hounds on a piece of a plowline rope, they lay down wind of the trail at dawn of the second morning. They were so close that the bear turned without even running, as if in surprised amazement at the shrill and frantic uproar of the released fyce, turning at bay against the trunk of a tree, on its hind feet; it seemed to the boy that it would never stop rising, taller and taller, and even the two hounds seemed to take a desperate and despairing courage from the fyce, following it as it went in.

Then he realized that the fyce was actually not going to stop. He flung, threw the gun away, and ran; when he overtook and grasped the frantically pin-wheeling little dog, it seemed to him that he was directly under the bear.

He could smell it, strong and hot and rank. Sprawling, he looked up to where it loomed and towered over him like a cloudburst and colored like a thunderclap, quite familiar, peacefully and even lucidly familiar, until he remembered: This was the way he had used to dream about it. Then it was gone. He didn't see it go. He knelt, holding the frantic fyce with both hands, hearing the abashed wailing of the hounds drawing farther and farther away, until Sam came up. He carried the gun. He laid it down quietly beside the boy and stood looking down at him.

"You've done seed him twice now with a gun in your hands," he said. "This time you couldn't have missed him."

The boy rose. He still held the fyce. Even in his arms and clear of the ground, it yapped frantically, straining and surging after the fading uproar of the two hounds like a tangle of wire springs. He was panting a little, but he was neither shaking nor trembling now.

"Neither could you!" he said. "You had the gun! Neither did you!"

"And you didn't shoot," his father said. "How close were you?"

"I don't know, sir," he said. "There was a big wood tick inside his right hind leg. I saw that. But I didn't have the gun then."

"But you didn't shoot when you had the gun," his father said. "Why?"

But he didn't answer, and his father didn't wait for him to, rising and crossing the room, across the pelt of the bear which the boy had killed two years ago and the larger one which his father had killed before he was born, to the bookcase beneath the mounted head of the boy's first buck. It was the room which his father called the office, from which all the plantation business was transacted; in it for the fourteen years of his life he had heard the best of all talking. Major de Spain would be there and sometimes old General Compson, and Walter Ewell and Boon Hoggenbeck and Sam Fathers and Tennie's Jim, too, were hunters, knew the woods and what ran them.

He would hear it, not talking himself but listening—the wilderness, the big woods, bigger and older than any recorded document of white man fatuous enough to believe he had bought any fragment of it or Indian ruthless enough to pretend that any fragment of it had been his to convey. It was of the men, not white nor black nor red, but men, hunters with the will and hardihood to endure and the humility and skill to survive, and the dogs and the bear and deer juxtaposed and reliefed against it, ordered and compelled by and within the wilderness in the ancient and unremitting contest by the ancient and immitigable rules which voided all regrets and brooked no quarter, the voices quiet and weighty and deliberate for retrospection and recollection and exact remembering, while he squatted in the blazing firelight as Tennie's Jim squatted, who stirred only to put more wood on the fire and to pass the bottle from one glass to another. Because the bottle was always present, so that after a while it seemed to him that those fierce instants of heart and brain and courage and wiliness and speed were concentrated and distilled into that brown liquor which not women, not boys and children, but only hunters drank, drinking not of the blood they had spilled but some condensation of the wild immortal spirit, drinking it moderately, humbly even, not with the pagan's base hope of acquiring the virtues of cunning and strength and speed, but in salute to them.

His father returned with the book and sat down again and opened it. "Listen," he said. He read the five stanzas aloud, his voice quiet and deliberate in the room where there was no fire now because it was already spring. Then he looked up. The boy watched him. "All right," his father said. "Listen." He read again, but only the second stanza this time, to the end of it, the last two lines, and closed the book and put it on the table beside him. "She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss, for ever wilt thou love, and she be fair," he said.

"He's talking about a girl," the boy said.

"He had to talk about something," his father said. Then he said, "He was talking about truth. Truth doesn't change. Truth is one thing. It covers all things which touch the heart—honor and pride and pity and justice and courage and love. Do you see now?"

He didn't know. Somehow it was simpler than that. There was an old bear, fierce and ruthless, not merely just to stay alive, but with the fierce pride of liberty and freedom, proud enough of the liberty and freedom to see it threatened without fear or even alarm; nay, who at times even seemed deliberately to put that freedom and liberty in jeopardy in order to savor them, to remind his

old strong bones and flesh to keep supple and quick to defend and preserve them. There was an old man, son of a Negro slave and an Indian king, inheritor on the one side of the long chronicle of a people who had learned humility through suffering, and pride through the endurance which survived the suffering and injustice, and on the other side, the chronicle of a people even longer in the land than the first, yet who no longer existed in the land at all save in the solitary brotherhood of an old Negro's alien blood and the wild and invincible spirit of an old bear. There was a boy who wished to learn humility and pride in order to become skillful and worthy in the woods, who suddenly found himself becoming so skillful so rapidly that he feared he would never become worthy because he had not learned humility and pride, although he had tried to, until one day and as suddenly he discovered that an old man who could not have defined either had led him, as though by the hand, to that point where an old bear and a little mongrel of a dog showed him that, by possessing one thing other, he would possess them both.

And a little dog, nameless and mongrel and many-fathered, grown, yet weighing less than six pounds, saying as if to itself, "I can't be dangerous, because there's nothing much smaller than I am; I can't be fierce, because they would call it just a noise; I can't be humble, because I'm already too close to the ground to genuflect; I can't be proud, because I wouldn't be near enough to it for anyone to know who was casting the shadow, and I don't even know that I'm not going to heaven, because they have already decided that I don't possess an immortal soul. So all I can be is brave. But it's all right. I can be that, even if they still call it just noise."

That was all. It was simple, much simpler than somebody talking in a book about youth and a girl he would never need to grieve over, because he could never approach any nearer her and would never have to get any farther away. He had heard about a bear, and finally got big enough to trail it, and he trailed it four years and at last met it with a gun in his hands and he didn't shoot. Because a little dog— But he could have shot long before the little dog covered the twenty yards to where the bear waited, and Sam Fathers could have shot at any time during that interminable minute while Old Ben stood on his hind feet over them. He stopped. His father was watching him gravely across the spring-rife twilight of the room; when he spoke, his words were as quiet as the twilight, too, not loud, because they did not need to be because they would last, "Courage, and honor, and pride," his father said, "and pity, and love of justice and of liberty. They all touch the heart, and what the heart holds to becomes truth, as far as we know the truth. Do you see now?"

Sam, and Old Ben, and Nip, he thought. And himself too. He had been all right too. His father had said so. "Yes, sir," he said.

ERNEST HEMINGWAY

In Another Country

IN THE fall the war was always there, but we did not go to it any more. It was cold in the fall in Milan and the dark came very early. Then the electric lights came on, and it was pleasant along the streets looking in the windows. There was much game hanging outside the shops, and the snow powdered in the fur of the foxes and the wind blew their tails. The deer hung stiff and heavy and empty, and small birds blew in the wind and the wind turned their feathers. It was a cold fall and the wind came down from the mountains.

We were all at the hospital every afternoon, and there were different ways of walking across the town through the dusk to the hospital. Two of the ways were alongside canals, but they were long. Always, though, you crossed a bridge across a canal to enter the hospital. There was a choice of three bridges. On one of them a woman sold roasted chestnuts. It was warm, standing in front of her charcoal fire, and the chestnuts were warm afterward in your pocket. The hospital was very old and very beautiful, and you entered through a gate and walked across a courtyard and out a gate on the other side. There were usually funerals starting from the courtyard. Beyond the old hospital were the new brick pavilions, and there we met every afternoon and were all very polite and interested in what was the matter, and sat in the machines that were to make so much difference.

The doctor came up to the machine where I was sitting and said: "What did you like best to do before the war? Did you practice a sport?"

I said: "Yes, football."

"Good," he said. "You will be able to play football again better than ever."

My knee did not bend and the leg dropped straight from the knee to the ankle without a calf, and the machine was to bend the knee and make it move as in riding a tricycle. But it did not bend yet, and instead the machine lurched when it came to the bending part. The doctor said: "That will all pass. You are a fortunate young man. You will play football again like a champion."

In the next machine was a major who had a little hand like a baby's. He winked at me when the doctor examined his hand, which was between two leather straps that bounced up and down and flapped the stiff fingers, and said: "And will I too play football, captain-doctor?" He had been a very great fencer, and before the war the greatest fencer in Italy.

The doctor went to his office in a back room and brought a photograph which showed a hand that had been withered almost as small as the major's,

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before it had taken a machine course, and after was a little larger. The major held the photograph with his good hand and looked at it very carefully. "A wound?" he asked.

"An industrial accident," the doctor said.

"Very interesting, very interesting," the major said, and handed it back to the doctor.

"You have confidence?"

"No," said the major.

There were three boys who came each day who were about the same age I was. They were all three from Milan, and one of them was to be a lawyer, and one was to be a painter, and one had intended to be a soldier, and after we were finished with the machines, sometimes we walked back together to the Café Cova, which was next door to the Scala. We walked the short way through the communist quarter because we were four together. The people hated us because we were officers, and from a wine-shop someone called out, "A basso gli ufficiali!" as we passed. Another boy who walked with us sometimes and made us five wore a black silk handkerchief across his face because he had no nose then and his face was to be rebuilt. He had gone out to the front from the military academy and been wounded within an hour after he had gone into the front line for the first time. They rebuilt his face, but he came from a very old family and they could never get the nose exactly right. He went to South America and worked in a bank. But this was a long time ago, and then we did not any of us know how it was going to be afterward. We only knew then that there was always the war, but that we were not going to it any more.

We all had the same medals, except the boy with the black silk bandage across his face, and he had not been at the front long enough to get any medals. The tall boy with a very pale face who was to be a lawyer had been a lieutenant of Arditi and had three medals of the sort we each had only one of. He had lived a very long time with death and was a little detached. We were all a little detached, and there was nothing that held us together except that we met every afternoon at the hospital. Although, as we walked to the Cova through the tough part of town, walking in the dark, with light and singing coming out of the wine-shops, and sometimes having to walk into the street when the men and women would crowd together on the sidewalk so that we would have had to jostle them to get by, we felt held together by there being something that had happened that they, the people who disliked us, did not understand.

We ourselves all understood the Cova, where it was rich and warm and not too brightly lighted, and noisy and smoky at certain hours, and there were always girls at the tables and the illustrated papers on a rack on the wall. The girls at the Cova were very patriotic, and I found that the most patriotic people in Italy were the café girls—and I believe they are still patriotic.

The boys at first were very polite about my medals and asked me what I had done to get them. I showed them the papers, which were written in very beautiful language and full of *fratellanza* and *abnegazione,* but which really said, with the adjectives removed, that I had been given the medals because I

was an American. After that their manner changed a little toward me, although I was their friend against outsiders. I was a friend, but I was never really one of them after they had read the citations, because it had been different with them and they had done very different things to get their medals. I had been wounded, it was true; but we all knew that being wounded, after all, was really an accident. I was never ashamed of the ribbons, though, and sometimes, after the cocktail hour, I would imagine myself having done all the things they had done to get their medals; but walking home at night through the empty streets with the cold wind and all the shops closed, trying to keep near the street lights, I knew that I would never have done such things, and I was very much afraid to die, and often lay in bed at night by myself, afraid to die and wondering how I would be when I went back to the front again.

The three with the medals were like hunting-hawks; and I was not a hawk, although I might seem a hawk to those who had never hunted; they, the three, knew better and so we drifted apart. But I stayed good friends with the boy who had been wounded his first day at the front, because he would never know now how he would have turned out; so he could never be accepted either, and I liked him because I thought perhaps he would not have turned out to be a hawk either.

The major, who had been the great fencer, did not believe in bravery, and spent much time while we sat in the machines correcting my grammar. He had complimented me on how I spoke Italian, and we talked together very easily. One day I had said that Italian seemed such an easy language to me that I could not take a great interest in it; everything was so easy to say. "Ah, yes," the major said. "Why, then, do you not take up the use of grammar?" So we took up the use of grammar, and soon Italian was such a difficult language that I was afraid to talk to him until I had the grammar straight in my mind.

The major came very regularly to the hospital. I do not think he ever missed a day, although I am sure he did not believe in the machines. There was a time when none of us believed in the machines, and one day the major said it was all nonsense. The machines were new then and it was we who were to prove them. It was an idiotic idea, he said, "a theory, like another." I had not learned my grammar, and he said I was a stupid impossible disgrace, and he was a fool to have bothered with me. He was a small man and he sat straight up in his chair with his right hand thrust into the machine and looked straight ahead at the wall while the straps thumped up and down with his fingers in them.

"What will you do when the war is over if it is over?" he asked me. "Speak grammatically!"

"I will go to the States."

"Are you married?"

"No, but I hope to be."

"The more of a fool you are," he said. He seemed very angry. "A man must not marry."

"Why, Signor Maggiore?"

"Don't call me 'Signor Maggiore.' "

"Why must not a man marry?"

"He cannot marry. He cannot marry," he said angrily. "If he is to lose everything, he should not place himself in a position to lose that. He should not place himself in a position to lose. He should find things he cannot lose."

He spoke very angrily and bitterly, and looked straight ahead while he talked.

"But why should he necessarily lose it?"

"He'll lose it," the major said. He was looking at the wall. Then he looked down at the machine and jerked his little hand out from between the straps and slapped it hard against his thigh. "He'll lose it," he almost shouted. "Don't argue with me!" Then he called to the attendant who ran the machines. "Come and turn this damned thing off."

He went back into the other room for the light treatment and the massage. Then I heard him ask the doctor if he might use his telephone and he shut the door. When he came back into the room, I was sitting in another machine. He was wearing his cape and had his cap on, and he came directly toward my machine and put his arm on my shoulder.

"I am so sorry," he said, and patted me on the shoulder with his good hand. "I would not be rude. My wife has just died. You must forgive me."

"Oh—" I said, feeling sick for him. "I am *so* sorry."

He stood there biting his lower lip. "It is very difficult," he said. "I cannot resign myself."

He looked straight past me and out through the window. Then he began to cry. "I am utterly unable to resign myself," he said and choked. And then crying, his head up looking at nothing, carrying himself straight and soldierly, with tears on both his cheeks and biting his lips, he walked past the machines and out the door.

The doctor told me that the major's wife, who was very young and whom he had not married until he was definitely invalided out of the war, had died of pneumonia. She had been sick only a few days. No one expected her to die. The major did not come to the hospital for three days. Then he came at the usual hour, wearing a black band on the sleeve of his uniform. When he came back, there were large framed photographs around the wall, of all sorts of wounds before and after they had been cured by the machines. In front of the machine the major used were three photographs of hands like his that were completely restored. I do not know where the doctor got them. I always understood we were the first to use the machines. The photographs did not make much difference to the major because he only looked out of the window.

KATHERINE ANNE PORTER

Pale Horse, Pale Rider

IN SLEEP she knew she was in her bed, but not the bed she had lain down in a few hours since, and the room was not the same but it was a room she had known somewhere. Her heart was a stone lying upon her breast outside of her; her pulses lagged and paused, and she knew that something strange was going to happen, even as the early morning winds were cool through the lattice, the streaks of light were dark blue and the whole house was snoring in its sleep.

Now I must get up and go while they are all quiet. Where are my things? Things have a will of their own in this place and hide where they like. Daylight will strike a sudden blow on the roof startling them all up to their feet; faces will beam asking, Where are you going, What are you doing, What are you thinking, How do you feel, Why do you say such things, What do you mean? No more sleep. Where are my boots and what horse shall I ride? Fiddler or Graylie or Miss Lucy with the long nose and the wicked eye? How I have loved this house in the morning before we are all awake and tangled together like badly cast fishing lines. Too many people have been born here, and have wept too much here, and have laughed too much, and have been too angry and outrageous with each other here. Too many have died in this bed already, there are far too many ancestral bones propped up on the mantelpieces, there have been too damned many antimacassars in this house, she said loudly, and oh, what accumulation of storied dust never allowed to settle in peace for one moment.

And the stranger? Where is that lank greenish stranger I remember hanging about the place, welcomed by my grandfather, my great-aunt, my five times removed cousin, my decrepit hound and my silver kitten? Why did they take to him, I wonder? And where are they now? Yet I saw him pass the window in the evening. What else besides them did I have in the world? Nothing. Nothing is mine, I have only nothing but it is enough, it is beautiful and it is all mine. Do I even walk about in my own skin or is it something I have borrowed to spare my modesty? Now what horse shall I borrow for this journey I do not mean to take, Graylie or Miss Lucy or Fiddler who can jump ditches in the dark and knows how to get the bit between his teeth? Early morning is best for me because trees are trees in one stroke, stones are stones set in shades known to be grass, there are no false shapes or surmises, the road is still asleep with the crust of dew unbroken. I'll take Graylie because he is not afraid of bridges.

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Come now, Graylie, she said, taking his bridle, we must outrun Death and the Devil. You are no good for it, she told the other horses standing saddled before the stable gate, among them the horse of the stranger, gray also, with tarnished nose and ears. The stranger swung into his saddle beside her, leaned far towards her and regarded her without meaning, the blank still stare of mindless malice that makes no threats and can bide its time. She drew Graylie around sharply, urged him to run. He leaped the low rose hedge and the narrow ditch beyond, and the dust of the lane flew heavily under his beating hoofs. The stranger rode beside her, easily, lightly, his reins loose in his half-closed hand, straight and elegant in dark shabby garments that flapped upon his bones; his pale face smiled in an evil trance, he did not glance at her. Ah, I have seen this fellow before, I know this man if I could place him. He is no stranger to me.

She pulled Graylie up, rose in her stirrups and shouted, I'm not going with you this time—ride on! Without pausing or turning his head the stranger rode on. Graylie's ribs heaved under her, her own ribs rose and fell, Oh, why am I so tired, I must wake up. "But let me get a fine yawn first," she said, opening her eyes and stretching, "a slap of cold water in my face, for I've been talking in my sleep again, I heard myself but what was I saying?"

Slowly, unwillingly, Miranda drew herself up inch by inch out of the pit of sleep, waited in a daze for life to begin again. A single word struck in her mind, a gong of warning, reminding her for the day long what she forgot happily in sleep, and only in sleep. The war, said the gong, and she shook her head. Dangling her feet idly with their slippers hanging, she was reminded of the way all sorts of persons sat upon her desk at the newspaper office. Every day she found someone there, sitting upon her desk instead of the chair provided, dangling his legs, eyes roving, full of his important affairs, waiting to pounce about something or other. "*Why* won't they sit in the chair? Should I put a sign on it, saying, 'For God's sake, sit here'?"

Far from putting up a sign, she did not even frown at her visitors. Usually she did not notice them at all until their determination to be seen was greater than her determination not to see them. Saturday, she thought, lying comfortably in her tub of hot water, will be pay day, as always. Or I hope always. Her thoughts roved hazily in a continual effort to bring together and unite firmly the disturbing oppositions in her day-to-day existence, where survival, she could see clearly, had become a series of feats of sleight of hand. I owe—let me see, I wish I had pencil and paper—well, suppose I *did* pay five dollars now on a Liberty Bond, I couldn't possibly keep it up. Or maybe. Eighteen dollars a week. So much for rent, so much for food, and I mean to have a few things besides. About five dollars' worth. Will leave me twenty-seven cents. I suppose I can make it. I suppose I should be worried. I am worried. Very well, now I am worried and what next? Twenty-seven cents. That's not so bad. Pure profit, really. Imagine if they should suddenly raise me to twenty I should then have two dollars and twenty-seven cents left over. But they aren't going to raise me to twenty. They are in fact going to throw me out if I don't buy a Liberty Bond. I hardly believe that. I'll ask Bill. (Bill was the

city editor.) I wonder if a threat like that isn't a kind of blackmail. I don't believe even a Lusk Committeeman can get away with that.

Yesterday there had been two pairs of legs dangling, on either side of her typewriter, both pairs stuffed thickly into funnels of dark expensive-looking material. She noticed at a distance that one of them was oldish and one was youngish, and they both of them had a stale air of borrowed importance which apparently they had got from the same source. They were both much too well nourished and the younger one wore a square little mustache. Being what they were, no matter what their business was it would be something unpleasant. Miranda had nodded at them, pulled out her chair and without removing her cap or gloves had reached into a pile of letters and sheets from the copy desk as if she had not a moment to spare. They did not move, or take off their hats. At last she had said "Good morning" to them, and asked if they were, perhaps, waiting for her?

The two men slid off the desk, leaving some of her papers rumpled, and the oldish man had inquired why she had not bought a Liberty Bond. Miranda had looked at him then, and got a poor impression. He was a pursy-faced man, gross-mouthed, with little lightless eyes, and Miranda wondered why nearly all of those selected to do the war work at home were of his sort. He might be anything at all, she thought; advance agent for a road show, promoter of a wildcat oil company, a former saloon keeper announcing the opening of a new cabaret, an automobile salesman—any follower of any one of the crafty, haphazard callings. But he was now all Patriot, working for the government. "Look here," he asked her, "do you know there's a war, or don't you?"

Did he expect an answer to that? Be quiet, Miranda told herself, this was bound to happen. Sooner or later it happens. Keep your head. The man wagged his finger at her, "Do you?" he persisted, as if he were prompting an obstinate child.

"Oh, the war," Miranda had echoed on a rising note and she almost smiled at him. It was habitual, automatic, to give that solemn, mystically uplifted grin when you spoke the words or heard them spoken. *"C'est la guerre,"* whether you could pronounce it or not, was even better, and always, always, you shrugged.

"Yeah," said the younger man in a nasty way, "the war." Miranda, startled by the tone, met his eye; his stare was really stony, really viciously cold, the kind of thing you might expect to meet behind a pistol on a deserted corner. This expression gave temporary meaning to a set of features otherwise nondescript, the face of those men who have no business of their own. "We're having a war, and some people are buying Liberty Bonds and others just don't seem to get around to it," he said. "That's what we mean."

Miranda frowned with nervousness, the sharp beginnings of fear. "Are you selling them?" she asked, taking the cover off her typewriter and putting it back again.

"No, we're not selling them," said the older man. "We're just asking you why you haven't bought one." The voice was persuasive and ominous.

Miranda began to explain that she had no money, and did not know where to find any, when the older man interrupted: "That's no excuse, no excuse at all, and you know it, with the Huns overrunning martyred Belgium."

"With our American boys fighting and dying in Belleau Wood," said the younger man, "anybody can raise fifty dollars to help beat the Boche."

Miranda said hastily, "I have eighteen dollars a week and not another cent in the world. I simply cannot buy anything."

"You can pay for it five dollars a week," said the older man (they had stood there cawing back and forth over her head), "like a lot of other people in this office, and a lot of other offices besides are doing."

Miranda, desperately silent, had thought, "Suppose I were not a coward, but said what I really thought? Suppose I said to hell with this filthy war? Suppose I asked that little thug, What's the matter with you, why aren't you rotting in Belleau Wood? I wish you were . . ."

She began to arrange her letters and notes, her fingers refusing to pick up things properly. The older man went on making his little set speech. It was hard, of course. Everybody was suffering, naturally. Everybody had to do his share. But as to that, a Liberty Bond was the safest investment you could make. It was just like having the money in the bank. Of course. The government was back of it and where better could you invest?

"I agree with you about that," said Miranda, "but I haven't any money to invest."

And of course, the man had gone on, it wasn't so much her fifty dollars that was going to make any difference. It was just a pledge of good faith on her part. A pledge of good faith that she was a loyal American doing her duty. And the thing was safe as a church. Why, if he had a million dollars he'd be glad to put every last cent of it in these Bonds. . . . "You can't lose by it," he said, almost benevolently, "and you can lose a lot if you don't. Think it over. You're the only one in this whole newspaper office that hasn't come in. And every firm in this city has come in one hundred per cent. Over at the *Daily Clarion* nobody had to be asked twice."

"They pay better over there," said Miranda. "But next week, if I can. Not now, next week."

"See that you do," said the younger man. "This ain't any laughing matter."

They lolled away, past the Society Editor's desk, past Bill the City Editor's desk, past the long copy desk where old man Gibbons sat all night shouting at intervals, "Jarge! Jarge!" and the copy boy would come flying. "Never say *people* when you mean *persons,*" old man Gibbons had instructed Miranda, "and never say *practically,* say *virtually,* and don't for God's sake ever so long as I am at this desk use the barbarism *inasmuch* under any circumstances whatsoever. Now you're educated, you may go." At the head of the stairs her inquisitors had stopped in their fussy pride and vainglory, lighting cigars and wedging their hats more firmly over their eyes.

Miranda turned over in the soothing water, and wished she might fall asleep there, to wake up only when it was time to sleep again. She had a burning slow headache, and noticed it now, remembering she had waked up with it

and it had in fact begun the evening before. While she dressed she tried to trace the insidious career of her headache, and it seemed reasonable to suppose it had started with the war. "It's been a headache, all right, but not quite like this." After the Committeemen had left, yesterday, she had gone to the cloakroom and had found Mary Townsend, the Society Editor, quietly hysterical about something. She was perched on the edge of the shabby wicker couch with ridges down the center, knitting on something rose-colored. Now and then she would put down her knitting, seize her head with both hands and rock, saying, "My *God,*" in a surprised, inquiring voice. Her column was called Ye Towne Gossyp, so of course everybody called her Towney. Miranda and Towney had a great deal in common, and liked each other. They had both been real reporters once, and had been sent together to "cover" a scandalous elopement, in which no marriage had taken place, after all, and the recaptured girl, her face swollen, had sat with her mother, who was moaning steadily under a mound of blankets. They had both wept painfully and implored the young reporters to suppress the worst of the story. They had suppressed it, and the rival newspaper printed it all the next day. Miranda and Towney had then taken their punishment together, and had been degraded publicly to routine female jobs, one to the theaters, the other to society. They had this in common, that neither of them could see what else they could possibly have done, and they knew they were considered fools by the rest of the staff—nice girls, but fools. At sight of Miranda, Towney had broken out in a rage, "I can't do it, I'll never be able to raise the money, I told them, I can't, I can't, but they wouldn't listen."

Miranda said, "I knew I wasn't the only person in this office who couldn't raise five dollars. I told them I couldn't, too, and I can't."

"My *God,*" said Towney, in the same voice, "they told me I'd lose my job—"

"I'm going to ask Bill," Miranda said; "I don't believe Bill would do that."

"It's not up to Bill," said Towney. "He'd have to if they got after him. Do you suppose they could put us in jail?"

"I don't know," said Miranda. "If they do, we won't be lonesome." She sat down beside Towney and held her own head. "What kind of soldier are you knitting that for? It's a sprightly color, it ought to cheer him up."

"Like hell," said Towney, her needles going again. "I'm making this for myself. That's that."

"Well," said Miranda, "we won't be lonesome and we'll catch up on our sleep." She washed her face and put on fresh make-up. Taking clean gray gloves out of her pocket she went out to join a group of young women fresh from the country club dances, the morning bridge, the charity bazaar, the Red Cross workrooms, who were wallowing in good works. They gave tea dances and raised money, and with the money they bought quantities of sweets, fruit, cigarettes, and magazines for the men in the cantonment hospitals. With this loot they were now setting out, a gay procession of high-powered cars and brightly tinted faces to cheer the brave boys who already, you might very well say, had fallen in defense of their country. It must be frightfully hard on them, the dears, to be floored like this when they're all crazy to get overseas and into the trenches as quickly as possible. Yes, and

some of them are the cutest things you ever saw, I didn't know there were so many good-looking men in this country, good heavens, I said, where do they come from? Well, my dear, you may ask yourself that question, who knows where they did come from? You're quite right, the way I feel about it is this, we must do everything we can to make them contented, but I draw the line at talking to them. I told the chaperons at those dances for enlisted men, I'll dance with them, every dumbbell who asks me, but I will NOT talk to them, I said, even if there is a war. So I danced hundreds of miles without opening my mouth except to say, Please keep your knees to yourself. I'm glad we gave those dances up. Yes, and the men stopped coming, anyway. But listen, I've heard that a great many of the enlisted men come from very good families; I'm not good at catching names, and those I did catch I'd never heard before, so I don't know . . . but it seems to me if they were from good families, you'd know it, wouldn't you? I mean, if a man is well bred he doesn't step on your feet, does he? At least not that. I used to have a pair of sandals ruined at every one of those dances. Well, I think any kind of social life is in very poor taste just now, I think we should all put on our Red Cross head dresses and wear them for the duration of the war—

Miranda, carrying her basket and her flowers, moved in among the young women, who scattered out and rushed upon the ward uttering girlish laughter meant to be refreshingly gay, but there was a grim determined clang in it calculated to freeze the blood. Miserably embarrassed at the idiocy of her errand, she walked rapidly between the long rows of high beds, set foot to foot with a narrow aisle between. The men, a selected presentable lot, sheets drawn up to their chins, not seriously ill, were bored and restless, most of them willing to be amused at anything. They were for the most part picturesquely bandaged as to arm or head, and those who were not visibly wounded invariably replied "Rheumatism" if some tactless girl, who had been solemnly warned never to ask this question, still forgot and asked a man what his illness was. The good-natured, eager ones, laughing and calling out from their hard narrow beds, were soon surrounded. Miranda, with her wilting bouquet and her basket of sweets and cigarettes, looking about, caught the unfriendly bitter eye of a young fellow lying on his back, his right leg in a cast and pulley. She stopped at the foot of his bed and continued to look at him; and he looked back with an unchanged, hostile face. Not having any, thank you and be damned to the whole business, his eyes said plainly to her, and will you be so good as to take your trash off my bed? For Miranda had set it down, leaning over to place it where he might be able to reach it if he would. Having set it down, she was incapable of taking it up again, but hurried away, her face burning, down the long aisle and out into the cool October sunshine, where the dreary raw barracks swarmed and worked with an aimless life of scurrying, dun-colored insects; and going around to a window near where he lay, she looked in, spying upon her soldier. He was lying with his eyes closed, his eyebrows in a sad bitter frown. She could not place him at all, she could not imagine where he came from nor what sort of being he might have been "in life," she said to herself. His face was young and the features sharp and plain, the hands were not laborer's hands but not well-cared-for hands either.

They were good useful properly shaped hands, lying there on the coverlet. It occurred to her that it would be her luck to find him, instead of a jolly hungry puppy glad of a bite to eat and a little chatter. It is like turning a corner absorbed in your painful thoughts and meeting your state of mind embodied, face to face, she said. "My own feelings about this whole thing, made flesh. Never again will I come here, this is no sort of thing to be doing. This is disgusting," she told herself plainly. "Of course I would pick him out," she thought, getting into the back seat of the car she came in, "serves me right, I know better."

Another girl came out looking very tired and climbed in beside her. After a short silence, the girl said in a puzzled way, "I don't know what good it does, really. Some of them wouldn't take anything at all. I don't like this, do you?"

"I hate it," said Miranda.

"I suppose it's all right, though," said the girl, cautiously.

"Perhaps," said Miranda, turning cautious also.

That was for yesterday. At this point Miranda decided there was no good in thinking of yesterday, except for the hour after midnight she had spent dancing with Adam. He was in her mind so much, she hardly knew when she was thinking about him directly. His image was simply always present in more or less degree, he was sometimes nearer the surface of her thoughts, the pleasantest, the only really pleasant thought she had. She examined her face in the mirror between the windows and decided that her uneasiness was not all imagination. For three days at least she had felt odd and her expression was unfamiliar. She would have to raise that fifty dollars somehow, she supposed, or who knows what can happen? She was hardened to stories of personal disaster, of outrageous accusations and extraordinarily bitter penalties that had grown monstrously out of incidents very little more important than her failure—her refusal—to buy a Bond. No, she did not find herself a pleasing sight, flushed and shiny, and even her hair felt as if it had decided to grow in the other direction. I must do something about this, I can't let Adam see me like this, she told herself, knowing that even now at that moment he was listening for the turn of her doorknob, and he would be in the hallway, or on the porch when she came out, as if by sheerest coincidence. The noon sunlight cast cold slanting shadows in the room where, she said, I suppose I live, and this day is beginning badly, but they all do now, for one reason or another. In a drowse, she sprayed perfume on her hair, put on her moleskin cap and jacket, now in their second winter, but still good, still nice to wear, again being glad she had paid a frightening price for them. She had enjoyed them all this time, and in no case would she have had the money now. Maybe she could manage for that Bond. She could not find the lock without leaning to search for it, then stood undecided a moment possessed by the notion that she had forgotten something she would miss seriously later on.

Adam was in the hallway, a step outside his own door; he swung about as if quite startled to see her, and said, "Hello. I don't have to go back to camp today after all—isn't that luck?"

Miranda smiled at him gaily because she was always delighted at the sight

of him. He was wearing his new uniform, and he was all olive and tan and tawny, hay colored and sand colored from hair to boots. She half noticed again that he always began by smiling at her; that his smile faded gradually; that his eyes became fixed and thoughtful as if he were reading in a poor light.

They walked out together into the fine fall day, scuffling bright ragged leaves under their feet, turning their faces up to a generous sky really blue and spotless. At the first corner they waited for a funeral to pass, the mourners seated straight and firm as if proud in their sorrow.

"I imagine I'm late," said Miranda, "as usual. What time is it?"

"Nearly half past one," he said, slipping back his sleeve with an exaggerated thrust of his arm upward. The young soldiers were still self-conscious about their wrist watches. Such of them as Miranda knew were boys from southern and southwestern towns, far off the Atlantic seaboard, and they had always believed that only sissies wore wrist watches. "I'll slap you on the wrist watch," one vaudeville comedian would simper to another, and it was always a good joke, never stale.

"I think it's a most sensible way to carry a watch," said Miranda. "You needn't blush."

"I'm nearly used to it," said Adam, who was from Texas. "We've been told time and again how all the he-manly regular army men wear them. It's the horrors of war," he said; "are we downhearted? I'll say we are."

It was the kind of patter going the rounds. "You look it," said Miranda.

He was tall and heavily muscled in the shoulders, narrow in the waist and flanks, and he was infinitely buttoned, strapped, harnessed into a uniform as tough and unyielding in cut as a strait jacket, though the cloth was fine and supple. He had his uniforms made by the best tailor he could find, he confided to Miranda one day when she told him how squish he was looking in his new soldier suit. "Hard enough to make anything of the outfit, anyhow," he told her. "It's the least I can do for my beloved country, not to go around looking like a tramp." He was twenty-four years old and a Second Lieutenant in an Engineers Corps, on leave because his outfit expected to be sent over shortly. "Came in to make my will," he told Miranda, "and get a supply of toothbrushes and razor blades. By what gorgeous luck do you suppose," he asked her, "I happened to pick on your rooming house? How did I know you were there?"

Strolling, keeping step, his stout polished well-made boots setting themselves down firmly beside her thin-soled black suède, they put off as long as they could the end of their moment together, and kept up as well as they could their small talk that flew back and forth over little grooves worn in the thin upper surface of the brain, things you could say and hear clink reassuringly at once without disturbing the radiance which played and darted about the simple and lovely miracle of being two persons named Adam and Miranda, twenty-four years old each, alive and on the earth at the same moment: "Are you in the mood for dancing, Miranda?" and "I'm always in the mood for dancing, Adam!" but there were things in the way, the day that ended with dancing was a long way to go.

He really did look, Miranda thought, like a fine healthy apple this morning.

One time or another in their talking, he had boasted that he had never had a pain in his life that he could remember. Instead of being horrified at this monster, she approved his monstrous uniqueness. As for herself, she had had too many pains to mention, so she did not mention them. After working for three years on a morning newspaper she had an illusion of maturity and experience; but it was fatigue merely, she decided, from keeping what she had been brought up to believe were unnatural hours, eating casually at dirty little restaurants, drinking bad coffee all night, and smoking too much. When she said something of her way of living to Adam, he studied her face a few seconds as if he had never seen it before, and said in a forthright way, "Why, it hasn't hurt you a bit, I think you're beautiful," and left her dangling there, wondering if he had thought she wished to be praised. She did wish to be praised, but not at that moment. Adam kept unwholesome hours too, or had in the ten days they had known each other, staying awake until one o'clock to take her out for supper; he smoked also continually, though if she did not stop him he was apt to explain to her exactly what smoking did to the lungs. "But," he said, "does it matter so much if you're going to war, anyway?"

"No," said Miranda, "and it matters even less if you're staying at home knitting socks. Give me a cigarette, will you?" They paused at another corner, under a half-foliaged maple, and hardly glanced at a funeral procession approaching. His eyes were pale tan with orange flecks in them, and his hair was the color of a haystack when you turn the weathered top back to the clear straw beneath. He fished out his cigarette case and snapped his silver lighter at her, snapped it several times in his own face, and they moved on, smoking.

"I can see you knitting socks," he said. "That would be just your speed. You know perfectly well you can't knit."

"I do worse," she said, soberly; "I write pieces advising other young women to knit and roll bandages and do without sugar and help win the war."

"Oh, well," said Adam, with the easy masculine morals in such questions, "that's merely your job, that doesn't count."

"I wonder," said Miranda. "How did you manage to get an extension of leave?"

"They just gave it," said Adam, "for no reason. The men are dying like flies out there, anyway. This funny new disease. Simply knocks you into a cocked hat."

"It seems to be a plague," said Miranda, "something out of the Middle Ages. Did you ever see so many funerals, ever?"

"Never did. Well, let's be strong-minded and not have any of it. I've got four days more straight from the blue and not a blade of grass must grow under our feet. What about tonight?"

"Same thing," she told him, "but make it about half past one. I've got a special job beside my usual run of the mill."

"What a job you've got," said Adam, "nothing to do but run from one dizzy amusement to another and then write a piece about it."

"Yes, it's too dizzy for words," said Miranda. They stood while a funeral passed, and this time they watched it in silence. Miranda pulled her cap to an angle and winked in the sunlight, her head swimming slowly "like goldfish,"

she told Adam, "my head swims. I'm only half awake, I must have some coffee."

They lounged on their elbows over the counter of a drug store. "No more cream for the stay-at-homes," she said, "and only one lump of sugar. I'll have two or none; that's the kind of martyr I'm being. I mean to live on boiled cabbage and wear shoddy from now on and get in good shape for the next round. No war is going to sneak up on me again."

"Oh, there won't be any more wars, don't you read the newspapers?" asked Adam. "We're going to mop 'em up this time, and they're going to stay mopped, and this is going to be all."

"So they told me," said Miranda, tasting her bitter lukewarm brew and making a rueful face. Their smiles approved of each other, they felt they had got the right tone, they were taking the war properly. Above all, thought Miranda, no tooth-gnashing, no hair-tearing, it's noisy and unbecoming and it doesn't get you anywhere.

"Swill," said Adam rudely, pushing back his cup. "Is that all you're having for breakfast?"

"It's more than I want," said Miranda.

"I had buckwheat cakes, with sausage and maple syrup, and two bananas, and two cups of coffee, at eight o'clock, and right now, again, I feel like a famished orphan left in the ashcan. I'm all set," said Adam, "for broiled steak and fried potatoes and—"

"Don't go on with it," said Miranda, "it sounds delirious to me. Do all that after I'm gone." She slipped from the high seat, leaned against it slightly, glanced at her face in her round mirror, rubbed rouge on her lips and decided that she was past praying for.

"There's something terribly wrong," she told Adam. "I feel too rotten. It can't just be the weather, and the war."

"The weather is perfect," said Adam, "and the war is simply too good to be true. But since when? You were all right yesterday."

"I don't know," she said slowly, her voice sounding small and thin. They stopped as always at the open door before the flight of littered steps leading up to the newspaper loft. Miranda listened for a moment to the rattle of typewriters above, the steady rumble of presses below. "I wish we were going to spend the whole afternoon on a park bench," she said, "or drive to the mountains."

"I do too," he said; "let's do that tomorrow."

"Yes, tomorrow, unless something else happens. I'd like to run away," she told him; "let's both."

"Me?" said Adam. "Where I'm going there's no running to speak of. You mostly crawl about on your stomach here and there among the debris. You know, barbed wire and such stuff. It's going to be the kind of thing that happens once in a lifetime." He reflected a moment, and went on, "I don't know a darned thing about it, really, but they make it sound awfully messy. I've heard so much about it I feel as if I had been there and back. It's going to be an anticlimax," he said, "like seeing the pictures of a place so often you can't

see it at all when you actually get there. Seems to me I've been in the army all my life."

Six months, he meant. Eternity. He looked so clear and fresh, and he had never had a pain in his life. She had seen them when they had been there and back and they never looked like this again. "Already the returned hero," she said, "and don't I wish you were."

"When I learned the use of the bayonet in my first training camp," said Adam, "I gouged the vitals out of more sandbags and sacks of hay than I could keep track of. They kept bawling at us, 'Get him, get that Boche, stick him before he sticks you'—and we'd go for those sandbags like wildfire, and honestly, sometimes I felt a perfect fool for getting so worked up when I saw the sand trickling out. I used to wake up in the night sometimes feeling silly about it."

"I can imagine," said Miranda. "It's perfect nonsense." They lingered, unwilling to say good-by. After a little pause, Adam, as if keeping up the conversation, asked, "Do you know what the average life expectation of a sapping party is after it hits the job?"

"Something speedy, I suppose."

"Just nine minutes," said Adam; "I read that in your own newspaper not a week ago."

"Make it ten and I'll come along," said Miranda.

"Not another second," said Adam, "exactly nine minutes, take it or leave it."

"Stop bragging," said Miranda. "Who figured that out?"

"A noncombatant," said Adam, "a fellow with rickets."

This seemed very comic, they laughed and leaned towards each other and Miranda heard herself being a little shrill. She wiped the tears from her eyes. "My, it's a funny war," she said; "isn't it? I laugh every time I think about it."

Adam took her hand in both of his and pulled a little at the tips of her gloves and sniffed them. "What nice perfume you have," he said, "and such a lot of it, too. I like a lot of perfume on gloves and hair," he said, sniffing again.

"I've got probably too much," she said. "I can't smell or see or hear today. I must have a fearful cold."

"Don't catch cold," said Adam; "my leave is nearly up and it will be the last, the very last." She moved her fingers in her gloves as he pulled at the fingers and turned her hands as if they were something new and curious and of great value, and she turned shy and quiet. She liked him, she liked him, and there was more than this but it was no good even imagining, because he was not for her nor for any woman, being beyond experience already, committed without any knowledge or act of his own to death. She took back her hands. "Good-by," she said finally, "until tonight."

She ran upstairs and looked back from the top. He was still watching her, and raised his hand without smiling. Miranda hardly ever saw anyone look back after he had said good-by. She could not help turning sometimes for one glimpse more of the person she had been talking with, as if that would save too rude and too sudden a snapping of even the lightest bond. But people hur-

ried away, their faces already changed, fixed, in their straining towards their next stopping place, already absorbed in planning their next act or encounter. Adam was waiting as if he expected her to turn, and under his brows fixed in a strained frown, his eyes were very black.

At her desk she sat without taking off jacket or cap, slitting envelopes and pretending to read the letters. Only Chuck Rouncibale, the sports reporter, and Ye Towne Gossyp were sitting on her desk today, and them she liked having there. She sat on theirs when she pleased. Towney and Chuck were talking and they went on with it.

"They say," said Towney, "that it is really caused by germs brought by a German ship to Boston, a camouflaged ship, naturally, it didn't come in under its own colors. Isn't that ridiculous?"

"Maybe it was a submarine," said Chuck, "sneaking in from the bottom of the sea in the dead of night. Now that sounds better."

"Yes, it does," said Towney; "they always slip up somewhere in these details . . . and they think the germs were sprayed over the city—it started in Boston, you know—and somebody reported seeing a strange, thick, greasy-looking cloud float up out of Boston Harbor and spread slowly all over that end of town. I think it was an old woman who saw it."

"Should have been," said Chuck.

"I read it in a New York newspaper," said Towney; "so it's bound to be true."

Chuck and Miranda laughed so loudly at this that Bill stood up and glared at them. "Towney still reads the newspapers," explained Chuck.

"Well, what's funny about that?" asked Bill, sitting down again and frowning into the clutter before him.

"It was a noncombatant saw that cloud," said Miranda.

"Naturally," said Towney.

"Member of the Lusk Committee, maybe," said Miranda.

"The Angel of Mons," said Chuck, "or a dollar-a-year man."

Miranda wished to stop hearing, and talking, she wished to think for just five minutes of her own about Adam, really to think about him, but there was no time. She had seen him first ten days ago, and since then they had been crossing streets together, darting between trucks and limousines and pushcarts and farm wagons; he had waited for her in doorways and in little restaurants that smelled of stale frying fat; they had eaten and danced to the urgent whine and bray of jazz orchestras, they had sat in dull theaters because Miranda was there to write a piece about the play. Once they had gone to the mountains and, leaving the car, had climbed a stony trail, and had come out on a ledge upon a flat stone, where they sat and watched the lights change on a valley landscape that was, no doubt, Miranda said, quite apocryphal—"We need not believe it, but it is fine poetry," she told him; they had leaned their shoulders together there, and had sat quite still, watching. On two Sundays they had gone to the geological museum, and had pored in shared fascination over bits of meteors, rock formations, fossilized tusks and trees, Indian arrows, grottoes

from the silver and gold lodes. "Think of those old miners washing out their fortunes in little pans beside the streams," said Adam, "and inside the earth there was this—" and he had told her he liked better those things that took long to make; he loved airplanes too, all sorts of machinery, things carved out of wood or stone. He knew nothing much about them, but he recognized them when he saw them. He had confessed that he simply could not get through a book, any kind of book except textbooks on engineering; reading bored him to crumbs; he regretted now he hadn't brought his roadster, but he hadn't thought he would need a car; he loved driving, he wouldn't expect her to believe how many hundreds of miles he could get over in a day . . . he had showed her snapshots of himself at the wheel of his roadster; of himself sailing a boat, looking very free and windblown, all angles, hauling on the ropes; he would have joined the air force, but his mother had hysterics every time he mentioned it. She didn't seem to realize that dog fighting in the air was a good deal safer than sapping parties on the ground at night. But he hadn't argued, because of course she did not realize about sapping parties. And here he was, stuck, on a plateau a mile high with no water for a boat and his car at home, otherwise they could really have had a good time. Miranda knew he was trying to tell her what kind of person he was when he had his machinery with him. She felt she knew pretty well what kind of person he was, and would have liked to tell him that if he thought he had left himself at home in a boat or an automobile, he was much mistaken. The telephones were ringing, Bill was shouting at somebody who kept saying, "Well, but listen, well, but listen—" but nobody was going to listen, of course, nobody. Old man Gibbons bellowed in despair, "Jarge, Jarge—"

"Just the same," Towney was saying in her most complacent patriotic voice, "Hut Service is a fine idea, and we should all volunteer even if they don't want us." Towney does well at this, thought Miranda, look at her; remembering the rose-colored sweater and the tight rebellious face in the cloakroom. Towney was now all open-faced glory and goodness, willing to sacrifice herself for her country. "After all," said Towney, "I *can* sing and dance well enough for the Little Theater, and I could write their letters for them, and at a pinch I might drive an ambulance. I have driven a Ford for years."

Miranda joined in: "Well, I can sing and dance too, but who's going to do the bed-making and the scrubbing up? Those huts are hard to keep, and it would be a dirty job and we'd be perfectly miserable; and as I've got a hard dirty job and am perfectly miserable, I'm going to stay at home."

"I think the women should keep out of it," said Chuck Rouncivale. "They just add skirts to the horrors of war." Chuck had bad lungs and fretted a good deal about missing the show. "I could have been there and back with a leg off by now; it would have served the old man right. Then he'd either have to buy his own hooch or sober up."

Miranda had seen Chuck on pay day giving the old man money for hooch. He was a good-humored ingratiating old scoundrel, too, that was the worst of him. He slapped his son on the back and beamed upon him with the bleared eye of paternal affection while he took his last nickel.

"It was Florence Nightingale ruined wars," Chuck went on. "What's the idea of petting soldiers and binding up their wounds and soothing their fevered brows? That's not war. Let 'em perish where they fall. That's what they're there for."

"You can talk," said Towney, with a slantwise glint at him.

"What's the idea?" asked Chuck, flushing and hunching his shoulders. "You know I've got this lung, or maybe half of it anyway by now."

"You're much too sensitive," said Towney. "I didn't mean a thing."

Bill had been raging about, chewing his half-smoked cigar, his hair standing up in a brush, his eyes soft and lambent but wild, like a stag's. He would never, thought Miranda, be more than fourteen years old if he lived for a century, which he would not, at the rate he was going. He behaved exactly like city editors in the moving pictures, even to the chewed cigar. Had he formed his style on the films, or had scenario writers seized once for all on the type Bill in its inarguable purity? Bill was shouting to Chuck: *"And* if he comes back here take him up the alley and saw his head off *by hand!"*

Chuck said, "He'll be back, don't worry." Bill said mildly, already off on another track, "Well, saw him off." Towney went to her own desk, but Chuck sat waiting amiably to be taken to the new vaudeville show. Miranda, with two tickets, always invited one of the reporters to go with her on Monday. Chuck was lavishly hardboiled and professional in his sports writing, but he had told Miranda that he didn't give a damn about sports, really; the job kept him out in the open, and paid him enough to buy the old man's hooch. He preferred shows and didn't see why women always had the job.

"Who does Bill want sawed today?" asked Miranda.

"That hoofer you panned in this morning's," said Chuck. "He was up here bright and early asking for the guy that writes up the show business. He said he was going to take the goof who wrote that piece up the alley and bop him in the nose. He said . . ."

"I hope he's gone," said Miranda; "I do hope he had to catch a train."

Chuck stood up and arranged his maroon-colored turtle-necked sweater, glanced down at the peasoup tweed plus fours and the hobnailed tan boots which he hoped would help to disguise the fact that he had a bad lung and didn't care for sports, and said, "He's long gone by now, don't worry. Let's get going; you're late as usual."

Miranda, facing about, almost stepped on the toes of a little drab man in a derby hat. He might have been a pretty fellow once, but now his mouth drooped where he had lost his side teeth, and his sad red-rimmed eyes had given up coquetry. A thin brown wave of hair was combed out with brilliantine and curled against the rim of the derby. He didn't move his feet, but stood planted with a kind of inert resistance, and asked Miranda: "Are you the so-called dramatic critic on this hick newspaper?"

"I'm afraid I am," said Miranda.

"Well," said the little man, "I'm just asking for one minute of your valuable time." His underlip shot out, he began with shaking hands to fish about in his waistcoat pocket. "I just hate to let you get away with it, that's all."

He riffled through a collection of shabby newspaper clippings. "Just give these the once-over, will you? And then let me ask you if you think I'm gonna stand for being knocked by a tanktown critic," he said, in a toneless voice; "look here, here's Buffalo, Chicago, Saint Looey, Philadelphia, Frisco, besides New York. Here's the best publications in the business, *Variety,* the *Billboard,* they all broke down and admitted that Danny Dickerson knows his stuff. So you don't think so, hey? That's all I wanta ask you."

"No, I don't," said Miranda, as bluntly as she could, "and I can't stop to talk about it."

The little man leaned nearer, his voice shook as if he had been nervous for a long time. "Look here, what was there you didn't like about me? Tell me that."

Miranda said, "You shouldn't pay any attention at all. What does it matter what I think?"

"I don't care what you think, it ain't that," said the little man, "but these things get round and booking agencies back East don't know how it is out here. We get panned in the sticks and they think it's the same as getting panned in Chicago, see? They don't know the difference. They don't know that the more high class an act is the more the hick critics pan it. But I've been called the best in the business by the best in the business and I wanta know what you think is wrong with me."

Chuck said, "Come on, Miranda, curtain's going up." Miranda handed the little man his clippings, they were mostly ten years old, and tried to edge past him. He stepped before her again and said without much conviction, "If you was a man I'd knock your block off." Chuck got up at that and lounged over, taking his hands out of his pockets, and said, "Now you've done your song and dance you'd better get out. Get the hell out now before I throw you downstairs."

The little man pulled at the top of his tie, a small blue tie with red polka dots, slightly frayed at the knot. He pulled it straight and repeated as if he had rehearsed it, "Come out in the alley." The tears filled his thickened red lids. Chuck said, "Ah, shut up," and followed Miranda, who was running towards the stairs. He overtook her on the sidewalk. "I left him sniveling and shuffling his publicity trying to find the joker," said Chuck, "the poor old heel."

Miranda said, "There's too much of everything in this world just now. I'd like to sit down here on the curb, Chuck, and die, and never again see—I wish I could lose my memory and forget my own name . . . I wish—"

Chuck said, "Toughen up, Miranda. This is no time to cave in. Forget that fellow. For every hundred people in show business, there are ninety-nine like him. But you don't manage right, anyway. You bring it on yourself. All you have to do is play up the headliners, and you needn't even mention the also-rans. Try to keep in mind that Rypinsky has got show business cornered in this town; please Rypinsky and you'll please the advertising department, please them and you'll get a raise. Hand-in-glove, my poor dumb child, will you never learn?"

"I seem to keep learning all the wrong things," said Miranda, hopelessly.

"You do for a fact," Chuck told her cheerfully. "You are as good at it as I ever saw. Now do you feel better?"

"This is a rotten show you've invited me to," said Chuck. "Now what are you going to do about it? If I were writing it up, I'd—"

"Do write it up," said Miranda. "You write it up this time. I'm getting ready to leave, anyway, but don't tell anybody yet."

"You mean it? All my life," said Chuck, "I've yearned to be a so-called dramatic critic on a hick newspaper, and this is positively my first chance."

"Better take it," Miranda told him. "It may be your last." She thought, This is the beginning of the end of something. Something terrible is going to happen to me. I shan't need bread and butter where I'm going. I'll will it to Chuck, he has a venerable father to buy hooch for. I hope they let him have it. Oh, Adam, I hope I see you once more before I go under with whatever is the matter with me. "I wish the war were over," she said to Chuck, as if they had been talking about that. "I wish it were over and I wish it had never begun."

Chuck had got out his pad and pencil and was already writing his review. What she had said seemed safe enough but how would he take it? "I don't care how it started or when it ends," said Chuck, scribbling away, "I'm not going to be there."

All the rejected men talked like that, thought Miranda. War was the one thing they wanted, now they couldn't have it. Maybe they had wanted badly to go, some of them. All of them had a sidelong eye for the women they talked with about it, a guarded resentment which said, "Don't pin a white feather on me, you bloodthirsty female. I've offered my meat to the crows and they won't have it." The worst thing about war for the stay-at-homes is there isn't anyone to talk to any more. The Lusk Committee will get you if you don't watch out. Bread will win the war. Work will win, sugar will win, peach pits will win the war. Nonsense. *Not* nonsense, I tell you, there's some kind of valuable high explosive to be got out of peach pits. So all the happy housewives hurry during the canning season to lay their baskets of peach pits on the altar of their country. It keeps them busy and makes them feel useful, and all these women running wild with the men away are dangerous, if they aren't given something to keep their little minds out of mischief. So rows of young girls, the intact cradles of the future, with their pure serious faces framed becomingly in Red Cross wimples, roll cock-eyed bandages that will never reach a base hospital, and knit sweaters that will never warm a manly chest, their minds dwelling lovingly on all the blood and mud and the next dance at the Acanthus Club for the officers of the flying corps. Keeping still and quiet will win the war.

"I'm simply not going to be there," said Chuck, absorbed in his review. No, Adam will be there, thought Miranda. She slipped down in the chair and leaned her head against the dusty plush, closed her eyes and faced for one instant that was a lifetime the certain, the overwhelming and awful knowledge that there was nothing at all ahead for Adam and for her. Nothing.

She opened her eyes and held her hands together palms up, gazing at them and trying to understand oblivion.

"Now look at this," said Chuck, for the lights had come on and the audience was rustling and talking again. "I've got it all done, even before the headliner comes on. It's old Stella Mayhew, and she's always good, she's been good for forty years, and she's going to sing 'O the blues ain't nothin' but the easygoing heart disease.' That's all you need to know about her. Now just glance over this. Would you be willing to sign it?"

Miranda took the pages and stared at them conscientiously, turning them over, she hoped, at the right moment, and gave them back. "Yes, Chuck, yes, I'd sign that. But I won't. We must tell Bill you wrote it, because it's your start, maybe."

"You don't half appreciate it," said Chuck. "You read it too fast. Here, listen to this—" and he began to mutter excitedly. While he was reading she watched his face. It was a pleasant face with some kind of spark of life in it, and a good severity in the modeling of the brow above the nose. For the first time since she had known him she wondered what Chuck was thinking about. He looked preoccupied and unhappy, he wasn't so frivolous as he sounded. The people were crowding into the aisle, bringing out their cigarette cases ready to strike a match the instant they reached the lobby; women with waved hair clutched at their wraps, men stretched their chins to ease them of their stiff collars, and Chuck said, "We might as well go now." Miranda, buttoning her jacket, stepped into the moving crowd, thinking, What did I ever know about them? There must be a great many of them here who think as I do, and we dare not say a word to each other of our desperation, we are speechless animals letting ourselves be destroyed, and why? Does anybody here believe the things we say to each other?

Stretched in unease on the ridge of the wicker couch in the cloakroom, Miranda waited for time to pass and leave Adam with her. Time seemed to proceed with more than usual eccentricity, leaving twilight gaps in her mind for thirty minutes which seemed like a second, and then hard flashes of light that shone clearly on her watch proving that three minutes is an intolerable stretch of waiting, as if she were hanging by her thumbs. At last it was reasonable to imagine Adam stepping out of the house in the early darkness into the blue mist that might soon be rain, he would be on the way, and there was nothing to think about him, after all. There was only the wish to see him and the fear, the present threat, of not seeing him again; for every step they took towards each other seemed perilous, drawing them apart instead of together, as a swimmer in spite of his most determined strokes is yet drawn slowly backward by the tide. "I don't want to love," she would think in spite of herself, "not Adam, there is no time and we are not ready for it and yet this is all we have—"

And there he was on the sidewalk, with his foot on the first step, and Miranda almost ran down to meet him. Adam, holding her hands, asked, "Do you feel well now? Are you hungry? Are you tired? Will you feel like dancing after the show?"

"Yes to everything," said Miranda, "yes, yes. . . ." Her head was like a

feather, and she steadied herself on his arm. The mist was still mist that might be rain later, and though the air was sharp and clean in her mouth, it did not, she decided, make breathing any easier. "I hope the show is good, or at least funny," she told him, "but I promise nothing."

It was a long, dreary play, but Adam and Miranda sat very quietly together waiting patiently for it to be over. Adam carefully and seriously pulled off her glove and held her hand as if he were accustomed to holding her hand in theaters. Once they turned and their eyes met, but only once, and the two pairs of eyes were equally steady and noncommittal. A deep tremor set up in Miranda, and she set about resisting herself methodically as if she were closing windows and doors and fastening down curtains against a rising storm. Adam sat watching the monotonous play with a strange shining excitement, his face quite fixed and still.

When the curtain rose for the third act, the third act did not take place at once. There was instead disclosed a backdrop almost covered with an American flag improperly and disrespectfully exposed, nailed at each upper corner, gathered in the middle and nailed again, sagging dustily. Before it posed a local dollar-a-year man, now doing his bit as a Liberty Bond salesman. He was an ordinary man past middle life, with a neat little melon buttoned into his trousers and waistcoat, an opinionated tight mouth, a face and figure in which nothing could be read save the inept sensual record of fifty years. But for once in his life he was an important fellow in an impressive situation, and he reveled, rolling his words in an actorish tone.

"Looks like a penguin," said Adam. They moved, smiled at each other, Miranda reclaimed her hand, Adam folded his together and they prepared to wear their way again through the same old moldy speech with the same old dusty backdrop. Miranda tried not to listen, but she heard. These vile Huns—glorious Belleau Wood—our keyword is Sacrifice—Martyred Belgium—give till it hurts—our noble boys Over There—Big Berthas—the death of civilization—the Boche—

"My head aches," whispered Miranda. "Oh, why won't he hush?"

"He won't," whispered Adam. "I'll get you some aspirin."

"In Flanders Field the poppies grow, Between the crosses row on row"—"He's getting into the home stretch," whispered Adam—atrocities, innocent babes hoisted on Boche bayonets—your child and my child—if our children are spared these things, then let us say with all reverence that these dead have not died in vain—the war, the *war,* the WAR to end WAR, war for Democracy, for humanity, a safe world forever and ever—and to prove our faith in Democracy to each other, and to the world, let everybody get together and buy Liberty Bonds and do without sugar and wool socks—was that it? Miranda asked herself, Say that over, I didn't catch the last line. Did you mention Adam? If you didn't I'm not interested. What about Adam, you little pig? And what are we going to sing this time, *Tipperary* or *There's a Long, Long Trail?* Oh, please do let the show go on and get over with. I must write a piece about it before I can go dancing with Adam and we have no time. Coal, oil, iron, gold, international finance, why don't you tell us about them, you little liar?

The audience rose and sang, *There's a Long, Long Trail A-winding,* their

opened mouths black and faces pallid in the reflected footlights; some of the faces grimaced and wept and had shining streaks like snail's tracks on them. Adam and Miranda joined in at the tops of their voices, grinning shamefacedly at each other once or twice.

In the street, they lit their cigarettes and walked slowly as always. "Just another nasty old man who would like to see the young ones killed," said Miranda in a low voice; "the tomcats try to eat the little tomkittens, you know. They don't fool you really, do they, Adam?"

The young people were talking like that about the business by then. They felt they were seeing pretty clearly through that game. She went on, "I hate these potbellied baldheads, too fat, too old, too cowardly, to go to war themselves, they know they're safe; it's you they are sending instead—"

Adam turned eyes of genuine surprise upon her. "Oh, *that* one," he said. "Now what could the poor sap do if they did take him? It's not his fault," he explained, "he can't do anything but talk." His pride in his youth, his forbearance and tolerance and contempt for that unlucky being breathed out of his very pores as he strolled, straight and relaxed in his strength. "What *could* you expect of him, Miranda?"

She spoke his name often, and he spoke hers rarely. The little shock of pleasure the sound of her name in his mouth gave her stopped her answer. For a moment she hesitated, and began at another point of attack. "Adam," she said, "the worst of war is the fear and suspicion and the awful expression in all the eyes you meet . . . as if they had pulled down the shutters over their minds and their hearts and were peering out at you, ready to leap if you make one gesture or say one word they do not understand instantly. It frightens me; I live in fear too, and no one should have to live in fear. It's the skulking about, and the lying. It's what war does to the mind and the heart, Adam, and you can't separate these two—what it does to them is worse than what it can do to the body."

Adam said soberly, after a moment, "Oh, yes, but suppose one comes back whole? The mind and the heart sometimes get another chance, but if anything happens to the poor old human frame, why, it's just out of luck, that's all."

"Oh, yes," mimicked Miranda. "It's just out of luck, that's all."

"If I didn't go," said Adam, in a matter-of-fact voice, "I couldn't look myself in the face."

So that's all settled. With her fingers flattened on his arm, Miranda was silent, thinking about Adam. No, there was no resentment or revolt in him. Pure, she thought, all the way through, flawless, complete, as the sacrificial lamb must be. The sacrificial lamb strode along casually, accommodating his long pace to hers, keeping her on the inside of the walk in the good American style, helping her across street corners as if she were a cripple—"I hope we don't come to a mud puddle, he'll carry me over it"—giving off whiffs of tobacco smoke, a manly smell of scentless soap, freshly cleaned leather and freshly washed skin, breathing through his nose and carrying his chest easily. He threw back his head and smiled into the sky which still misted, promising rain. "Oh, boy," he said, "what a night. Can't you hurry that review of yours so we can get started?"

He waited for her before a cup of coffee in the restaurant next to the press-room, nicknamed The Greasy Spoon. When she came down at last, freshly washed and combed and powdered, she saw Adam first, sitting near the dingy big window, face turned to the street, but looking down. It was an extraordinary face, smooth and fine and golden in the shabby light, but now set in a blind melancholy, a look of pained suspense and disillusion. For just one split second she got a glimpse of Adam when he would have been older, the face of the man he would not live to be. He saw her then, rose, and the bright glow was there.

Adam pulled their chairs together at their table; they drank hot tea and listened to the orchestra jazzing *Pack Up Your Troubles.*

"In an old kit bag, and smoil, smoil, smoil," shouted half a dozen boys under the draft age, gathered around a table near the orchestra. They yelled incoherently, laughed in great hysterial bursts of something that appeared to be merriment, and passed around under the tablecloth flat bottles containing a clear liquid—for in this western city founded and built by roaring drunken miners, no one was allowed to take his alcohol openly—splashed it into their tumblers of ginger ale, and went on singing, *It's a Long Way to Tipperary.* When the tune changed to *Madelon,* Adam said, "Let's dance." It was a tawdry little place, crowded and hot and full of smoke, but there was nothing better. The music was gay; and life is completely crazy anyway, thought Miranda, so what does it matter? This is what we have, Adam and I, this is all we're going to get, this is the way it is with us. She wanted to say, "Adam, come out of your dream and listen to me. I have pains in my chest and my head and my heart and they're real. I am in pain all over, and you are in such danger as I can't bear to think about, and why can we not save each other?" When her hand tightened on his shoulder his arm tightened about her waist instantly, and stayed there, holding firmly. They said nothing but smiled continually at each other, odd changing smiles as though they had found a new language. Miranda, her face near Adam's shoulder, noticed a dark young pair sitting at a corner table, each with an arm around the waist of the other, their heads together, their eyes staring at the same thing, whatever it was, that hovered in space before them. Her right hand lay on the table, his hand over it, and her face was a blur with weeping. Now and then he raised her hand and kissed it, and set it down and held it, and her eyes would fill again. They were not shameless, they had merely forgotten where they were, or they had no other place to go, perhaps. They said not a word, and the small pantomime repeated itself, like a melancholy short film running monotonously over and over again. Miranda envied them. She envied that girl. At least she can weep if that helps, and he does not even have to ask, What is the matter? Tell me. They had cups of coffee before them, and after a long while—Miranda and Adam had danced and sat down again twice—when the coffee was quite cold, they drank it suddenly, then embraced as before, without a word and scarcely a glance at each other. Something was done and settled between them, at least; it was enviable, enviable, that they could sit quietly together and have the same expression on

their faces while they looked into the hell they shared, no matter what kind of hell, it was theirs, they were together.

At the table nearest Adam and Miranda a young woman was leaning on her elbow, telling her young man a story. "And I don't like him because he's too fresh. He kept on asking me to take a drink and I kept telling him, I don't drink and he said, Now look here, I want a drink the worst way and I think it's mean of you not to drink with me, I can't sit up here and drink by myself, he said. I told him, You're not by yourself in the first place; I like that, I said, and if you want a drink go ahead and have it, I told him, why drag *me* in? So he called the waiter and ordered ginger ale and two glasses and I drank straight ginger ale like I always do but he poured a shot of hooch in his. He was awfully proud of that hooch, said he made it himself out of potatoes. Nice homemade likker, warm from the pipe, he told me, three drops of this and your ginger ale will taste like Mumm's Extry. But I said, No, and I mean no, can't you get that through your bean? He took another drink and said, Ah, come on, honey, don't be so stubborn, this'll make your shimmy shake. So I just got tired of the argument, and I said, I don't need to drink, to shake my shimmy, I can strut my stuff on tea, I said. Well, why don't you then, he wanted to know, and I just told him—"

She knew she had been asleep for a long time when all at once without even a warning footstep or creak of the door hinge, Adam was in the room turning on the light, and she knew it was he, though at first she was blinded and turned her head away. He came over at once and sat on the side of the bed and began to talk as if he were going on with something they had been talking about before. He crumpled a square of paper and tossed it in the fireplace.

"You didn't get my note," he said. "I left it under the door. I was called back suddenly to camp for a lot of inoculations. They kept me longer than I expected, I was late. I called the office and they told me you were not coming in today. I called Miss Hobbe here and she said you were in bed and couldn't come to the telephone. Did she give you my message?"

"No," said Miranda drowsily, "but I think I have been asleep all day. Oh, I do remember. There was a doctor here. Bill sent him. I was at the telephone once, for Bill told me he would send an ambulance and have me taken to the hospital. The doctor tapped my chest and left a prescription and said he would be back, but he hasn't come."

"Where is it, the prescription?" asked Adam.

"I don't know. He left it, though, I saw him."

Adam moved about searching the tables and the mantelpiece. "Here it is," he said. "I'll be back in a few minutes. I must look for an all-night drug store. It's after one o'clock. Good-by."

Good-by, good-by. Miranda watched the door where he had disappeared for quite a while, then closed her eyes, and thought, When I am not here I cannot remember anything about this room where I have lived for nearly a year, except that the curtains are too thin and there was never any way of shutting out the morning light. Miss Hobbe had promised heavier curtains, but they had never appeared. When Miranda in her dressing gown had been at the telephone that

morning, Miss Hobbe had passed through, carrying a tray. She was a little red-haired nervously friendly creature, and her manner said all too plainly that the place was not paying and she was on the ragged edge.

"My dear *child,*" she said sharply, with a glance at Miranda's attire, "what is the matter?"

Miranda, with the receiver to her ear, said, "Influenza, I think."

"Horrors," said Miss Hobbe, in a whisper, and the tray wavered in her hands. "Go back to bed at once . . . go at *once!"*

"I must talk to Bill first," Miranda had told her, and Miss Hobbe had hurried on and had not returned. Bill had shouted directions at her, promising everything, doctor, nurse, ambulance, hospital, her check every week as usual, everything, but she was to get back to bed and stay there. She dropped into bed, thinking that Bill was the only person she had ever seen who actually tore his own hair when he was excited enough . . . I suppose I should ask to be sent home, she thought, it's a respectable old custom to inflict your death on the family if you can manage it. No, I'll stay here, this is my business, but not in this room, I hope . . . I wish I were in the cold mountains in the snow, that's what I should like best; and all about her rose the measured ranges of the Rockies wearing their perpetual snow, their majestic blue laurels of cloud, chilling her to the bone with their sharp breath. Oh, no, I must have warmth—and her memory turned and roved after another place she had known first and loved best, that now she could see only in drifting fragments of palm and cedar, dark shadows and a sky that warmed without dazzling, as this strange sky had dazzled without warming her; there was the long slow wavering of gray moss in the drowsy oak shade, the spacious hovering of buzzards overhead, the smell of crushed water herbs along a bank, and without warning a broad tranquil river into which flowed all the rivers she had known. The walls shelved away in one deliberate silent movement on either side, and a tall sailing ship was moored near by, with a gangplank weathered to blackness touching the foot of her bed. Back of the ship was jungle, and even as it appeared before her, she knew it was all she had ever read or had been told or felt or thought about jungles; a writhing terribly alive and secret place of death, creeping with tangles of spotted serpents, rainbow-colored birds with malign eyes, leopards with humanly wise faces and extravagantly crested lions; screaming long-armed monkeys tumbling among broad fleshy leaves that glowed with sulphur-colored light and exuded the ichor of death, and rotting trunks of unfamiliar trees sprawled in crawling slime. Without surprise, watching from her pillow, she saw herself run swiftly down this gangplank to the slanting deck, and standing there, she leaned on the rail and waved gaily to herself in bed, and the slender ship spread its wings and sailed away into the jungle. The air trembled with the shattering scream and the hoarse bellow of voices all crying together, rolling and colliding above her like ragged stormclouds, and the words became two words only rising and falling and clamoring about her head. Danger, danger, danger, the voices said, and War, war, war. There was her door half open, Adam standing with his hand on the knob, and Miss Hobbe with her face all out of shape with terror was crying shrilly, "I tell you, they must come for her

now, or I'll put her on the sidewalk . . . I tell you, this is a plague, a plague, my God, and I've got a houseful of people to think about!"

Adam said, "I know that. They'll come for her tomorrow morning."

"Tomorrow morning, my God, they'd better come now!"

"They can't get an ambulance," said Adam, "and there aren't any beds. And we can't find a doctor or a nurse. They're all busy. That's all there is to it. You stay out of the room, and I'll look after her."

"Yes, you'll look after her, I can see that," said Miss Hobbe, in a particularly unpleasant tone.

"Yes, that's what I said," answered Adam, drily, "and you keep out."

He closed the door carefully. He was carrying an assortment of misshapen packages, and his face was astonishingly impassive.

"Did you hear that?" he asked, leaning over and speaking very quietly.

"Most of it," said Miranda, "it's a nice prospect, isn't it?"

"I've got your medicine," said Adam, "and you're to begin with it this minute. She can't put you out."

"So it's really as bad as that," said Miranda.

"It's as bad as anything can be," said Adam, "all the theaters and nearly all the shops and restaurants are closed, and the streets have been full of funerals all day and ambulances all night—"

"But not one for me," said Miranda, feeling hilarious and lightheaded. She sat up and beat her pillow into shape and reached for her robe. "I'm glad you're here, I've been having a nightmare. Give me a cigarette, will you, and light one for yourself and open all the windows and sit near one of them. You're running a risk," she told him, "don't you know that? Why do you do it?"

"Never mind," said Adam, "take your medicine," and offered her two large cherry-colored pills. She swallowed them promptly and instantly vomited them up. "*Do* excuse me," she said, beginning to laugh. "I'm so sorry." Adam without a word and with a very concerned expression washed her face with a wet towel, gave her some cracked ice from one of the packages, and firmly offered her two more pills. "That's what they always did at home," she explained to him, "and it worked." Crushed with humiliation, she put her hands over her face and laughed again, painfully.

"There are two more kinds yet," said Adam, pulling her hands from her face and lifting her chin. "You've hardly begun. And I've got other things, like orange juice and ice cream—they told me to feed you ice cream—and coffee in a thermos bottle, and a thermometer. You have to work through the whole lot so you'd better take it easy."

"This time last night we were dancing," said Miranda, and drank something from a spoon. Her eyes followed him about the room, as he did things for her with an absent-minded face, like a man alone; now and again he would come back, and slipping his hand under her head, would hold a cup or a tumbler to her mouth, and she drank, and followed him with her eyes again, without a clear notion of what was happening.

"Adam," she said, "I've just thought of something. Maybe they forgot St. Luke's Hospital. Call the sisters there and ask them not to be so selfish with

their silly old rooms. Tell them I only want a very small dark ugly one for three days, or less. Do try them, Adam."

He believed, apparently, that she was still more or less in her right mind, for she heard him at the telephone explaining in his deliberate voice. He was back again almost at once, saying, "This seems to be my day for getting mixed up with peevish old maids. The sister said that even if they had a room you couldn't have it without doctor's orders. But they didn't have one, anyway. She was pretty sour about it."

"Well," said Miranda in a thick voice, "I think that's abominably rude and mean, don't you?" She sat up with a wide gesture of both arms, and began to retch again, violently.

"Hold it, as you were," called Adam, fetching the basin. He held her head, washed her face and hands with ice water, put her head straight on the pillow, and went over and looked out of the window. "Well," he said at last, sitting beside her again, "they haven't got a room. They haven't got a bed. They haven't even got a baby crib, the way she talked. So I think that's straight enough, and we may as well dig in."

"Isn't the ambulance coming?"

"Tomorrow, maybe."

He took off his tunic and hung it on the back of a chair. Kneeling before the fireplace, he began carefully to set kindling sticks in the shape of an Indian tepee, with a little paper in the center for them to lean upon. He lighted this and placed other sticks upon them, and larger bits of wood. When they were going nicely he added still heavier wood, and coal a few lumps at a time, until there was a good blaze, and a fire that would not need rekindling. He rose and dusted his hands together, the fire illuminated him from the back and his hair shone.

"Adam," said Miranda, "I think you're very beautiful." He laughed out at this, and shook his head at her. "What a hell of a word," he said, "for me." "It was the first that occurred to me," she said, drawing up on her elbow to catch the warmth of the blaze. "That's a good job, that fire."

He sat on the bed again, dragging up a chair and putting his feet on the rungs. They smiled at each other for the first time since he had come in that night. "How do you feel now?" he asked.

"Better, much better," she told him. "Let's talk. Let's tell each other what we meant to do."

"You tell me first," said Adam. "I want to know about you."

"You'd get the notion I had a very sad life," she said, "and perhaps it was, but I'd be glad enough to have it now. If I could have it back, it would be easy to be happy about almost anything at all. That's not true, but that's the way I feel now." After a pause, she said, "There's nothing to tell, after all, if it ends now, for all this time I was getting ready for something that was going to happen later, when the time came. So now it's nothing much."

"But it must have been worth having until now, wasn't it?" he asked seriously as if it were something important to know.

"Not if this is all," she repeated obstinately.

"Weren't you ever—happy?" asked Adam, and he was plainly afraid of the

word; he was shy of it as he was of the word *love,* he seemed never to have spoken it before, and was uncertain of its sound or meaning.

"I don't know," she said, "I just lived and never thought about it. I remember things I liked, though, and things I hoped for."

"I was going to be an electrical engineer," said Adam. He stopped short. "And I shall finish up when I get back," he added, after a moment.

"Don't you love being alive?" asked Miranda. "Don't you love weather and the colors at different times of the day, and all the sounds and noises like children screaming in the next lot, and automobile horns and little bands playing in the street and the smell of food cooking?"

"I love to swim, too," said Adam.

"So do I," said Miranda; "we never did swim together."

"Do you remember any prayers?" she asked him suddenly. "Did you ever learn anything at Sunday School?"

"Not much," confessed Adam without contrition. "Well, the Lord's Prayer."

"Yes, and there's Hail Mary," she said, "and the really useful one beginning, I confess to Almighty God and to blessed Mary ever virgin and to the holy Apostles Peter and Paul—"

"Catholic," he commented.

"Prayers just the same, you big Methodist. I'll bet you *are* a Methodist."

"No, Presbyterian."

"Well, what others do you remember?"

"Now I lay me down to sleep—" said Adam.

"Yes, that one, and Blessed Jesus meek and mild—you see that my religious education wasn't neglected either. I even know a prayer beginning O Apollo. Want to hear it?"

"No," said Adam, "you're making fun."

"I'm not," said Miranda, "I'm trying to keep from going to sleep. I'm afraid to go to sleep, I may not wake up. Don't let me go to sleep, Adam. Do you know Matthew, Mark, Luke and John? Bless the bed I lie upon?"

"If I should die before I wake, I pray the Lord my soul to take. Is that it?" asked Adam. "It doesn't sound right, somehow."

"Light me a cigarette, please, and move over and sit near the window. We keep forgetting about fresh air. You must have it." He lighted the cigarette and held it to her lips. She took it between her fingers and dropped it under the edge of her pillow. He found it and crushed it out in the saucer under the water tumbler. Her head swam in darkness for an instant, cleared, and she sat up in panic, throwing off the covers and breaking into a sweat. Adam leaped up with an alarmed face, and almost at once was holding a cup of hot coffee to her mouth.

"You must have some too," she told him, quiet again, and they sat huddled together on the edge of the bed, drinking coffee in silence.

Adam said, "You must lie down again. You're awake now."

"Let's sing," said Miranda. "I know an old spiritual, I can remember some of the words." She spoke in a natural voice. "I'm fine now." She began in a hoarse whisper, " 'Pale horse, pale rider, done taken my lover away . . .' Do you know that song?"

"Yes," said Adam, "I heard Negroes in Texas sing it, in an oil field."

"I heard them sing it in a cotton field," she said; "it's a good song."

They sang that line together. "But I can't remember what comes next," said Adam.

"'Pale horse, pale rider,'" said Miranda, "(We really need a good banjo) 'done taken my lover away—'" Her voice cleared and she said, "But we ought to get on with it. What's the next line?"

"There's a lot more to it than that," said Adam, "about forty verses, the rider done taken away mammy, pappy, brother, sister, the whole family besides the lover—"

"But not the singer, not yet," said Miranda. "Death always leaves one singer to mourn. 'Death,'" she sang, "'oh, leave one singer to mourn—'"

"'Pale horse, pale rider,'" chanted Adam, coming in on the beat, "'done taken my lover away!' (I think we're good, I think we ought to get up an act—)"

"Go in Hut Service," said Miranda, "entertain the poor defenseless heroes Over There."

"We'll play banjoes," said Adam; "I always wanted to play the banjo."

Miranda sighed, and lay back on the pillow and thought, I must give up, I can't hold out any longer. There was only that pain, only that room, and only Adam. There were no longer any multiple planes of living, no tough filaments of memory and hope pulling taut backwards and forwards holding her upright between them. There was only this one moment and it was a dream of time, and Adam's face, very near hers, eyes still and intent, was a shadow, and there was to be nothing more. . . .

"Adam," she said out of the heavy soft darkness that drew her down, down, "I love you, and I was hoping you would say that to me, too."

He lay down beside her with his arm under her shoulder, and pressed his smooth face against hers, his mouth moved towards her mouth and stopped. "Can you hear what I am saying? . . . What do you think I have been trying to tell you all this time?"

She turned towards him, the cloud cleared and she saw his face for an instant. He pulled the covers about her and held her, and said, "Go to sleep, darling, darling, if you will go to sleep now for one hour I will wake you up and bring you hot coffee and tomorrow we will find somebody to help. I love you, go to sleep—"

Almost with no warning at all, she floated into the darkness, holding his hand, in sleep that was not sleep but clear evening light in a small green wood, an angry dangerous wood full of inhuman concealed voices singing sharply like the whine of arrows and she saw Adam transfixed by a flight of these singing arrows that struck him in the heart and passed shrilly cutting their path through the leaves. Adam fell straight back before her eyes, and rose again unwounded and alive; another flight of arrows loosed from the invisible bow struck him again and he fell, and yet he was there before her untouched in a perpetual death and resurrection. She threw herself before him, angrily and selfishly she interposed between him and the track of the arrow, crying, No, no, like a child cheated in a game, It's my turn now, why must you always be the one to die?

and the arrows struck her cleanly through the heart and through his body and he lay dead, and she still lived, and the wood whistled and sang and shouted, every branch and leaf and blade of grass had its own terrible accusing voice. She ran then, and Adam caught her in the middle of the room, running, and said, "Darling, I must have been asleep too. What happened, you screamed terribly?"

After he had helped her to settle again, she sat with her knees drawn up under her chin, resting her head on her folded arms and began carefully searching for her words because it was important to explain clearly. "It was a very odd sort of dream, I don't know why it could have frightened me. There was something about an old-fashioned valentine. There were two hearts carved on a tree, pierced by the same arrow—you know, Adam—"

"Yes, I know, honey," he said in the gentlest sort of way, and sat kissing her on the cheek and forehead with a kind of accustomedness, as if he had been kissing her for years, "one of those lace paper things."

"Yes, and yet they were alive, and were us, you understand—this doesn't seem to be quite the way it was, but it was something like that. It was in a wood—"

"Yes," said Adam. He got up and put on his tunic and gathered up the thermos bottle. "I'm going back to that little stand and get us some ice cream and hot coffee," he told her, "and I'll be back in five minutes, and you keep quiet. Good-by for five minutes," he said, holding her chin in the palm of his hand and trying to catch her eye, "and you be very quiet."

"Good-by," she said. "I'm awake again." But she was not, and the two alert young internes from the County hospital who had arrived, after frantic urgings from the noisy city editor of the Blue Mountain *News,* to carry her away in a police ambulance, decided that they had better go down and get the stretcher. Their voices roused her, she sat up, got out of bed at once and stood glancing about brightly. "Why, you're all right," said the darker and stouter of the two young men, both extremely fit and competent-looking in their white clothes, each with a flower in his buttonhole. "I'll just carry you." He unfolded a white blanket and wrapped it around her. She gathered up the folds and asked, "But where is Adam?" taking hold of the doctor's arm. He laid a hand on her drenched forehead, shook his head, and gave her a shrewd look. "Adam?"

"Yes," Miranda told him, lowering her voice confidentially, "he was here and now he is gone."

"Oh, he'll be back," the interne told her easily, "he's just gone round the block to get cigarettes. Don't worry about Adam. He's the least of your troubles."

"Will he know where to find me?" she asked, still holding back.

"We'll leave him a note," said the interne. "Come now, it's time we got out of here."

He lifted and swung her up to his shoulder. "I feel very badly," she told him; "I don't know why."

"I'll bet you do," said he, stepping out carefully, the other doctor going before them, and feeling for the first step of the stairs. "Put your arms around my neck," he instructed her. "It won't do you any harm and it's a great help to me."

"What's your name?" Miranda asked as the other doctor opened the front door and they stepped out into the frosty sweet air.

"Hildesheim," he said, in the tone of one humoring a child.

"Well, Dr. Hildesheim, aren't we in a pretty mess?"

"We certainly are," said Dr. Hildesheim.

The second young interne, still quite fresh and dapper in his white coat, though his carnation was withering at the edges, was leaning over listening to her breathing through a stethoscope, whistling thinly, "There's a Long, Long Trail—" From time to time he tapped her ribs smartly with two fingers, whistling. Miranda observed him for a few moments until she fixed his bright busy hazel eye not four inches from hers. "I'm not unconscious," she explained, "I know what I want to say." Then to her horror she heard herself babbling nonsense, knowing it was nonsense though she could not hear what she was saying. The flicker of attention in the eye near her vanished, the second interne went on tapping and listening, hissing softly under his breath.

"I wish you'd stop whistling," she said clearly. The sound stopped. "It's a beastly tune," she added. Anything, anything at all to keep her small hold on the life of human beings, a clear line of communication, no matter what, between her and the receding world. "Please let me see Dr. Hildesheim," she said, "I have something important to say to him. I must say it now." The second interne vanished. He did not walk away, he fled into the air without a sound, and Dr. Hildesheim's face appeared in his stead.

"Dr. Hildesheim, I want to ask you about Adam."

"That young man? He's been here, and left you a note, and has gone again," said Dr. Hildesheim, "and he'll be back tomorrow and the day after." His tone was altogether too merry and flippant.

"I don't believe you," said Miranda, bitterly, closing her lips and eyes and hoping she might not weep.

"Miss Tanner," called the doctor, "have you got that note?"

Miss Tanner appeared beside her, handed her an unsealed envelope, took it back, unfolded the note and gave it to her.

"I can't see it," said Miranda, after a pained search of the page full of hasty scratches in black ink.

"Here, I'll read it," said Miss Tanner. "It says, 'They came and took you while I was away and now they will not let me see you. Maybe tomorrow they will, with my love, Adam,'" read Miss Tanner in a firm dry voice, pronouncing the words distinctly. "Now, do you see?" she asked soothingly.

Miranda, hearing the words one by one, forgot them one by one. "Oh, read it again, what does it say?" she called out over the silence that pressed upon her, reaching towards the dancing words that just escaped as she almost touched them. "That will do," said Dr. Hildesheim, calmly authoritarian. "Where is that bed?"

"There is no bed yet," said Miss Tanner, as if she said, We are short of oranges. Dr. Hildesheim said, "Well, we'll manage something," and Miss Tanner drew the narrow trestle with bright crossed metal supports and small rubbery wheels into a deep jut of the corridor, out of the way of the swift white

figures darting about, whirling and skimming like water flies all in silence. The white walls rose sheer as cliffs, a dozen frosted moons followed each other in perfect self-possession down a white lane and dropped mutely one by one into a snowy abyss.

What is this whiteness and silence but the absence of pain? Miranda lay lifting the nap of her white blanket softly between eased fingers, watching a dance of tall deliberate shadows moving behind a wide screen of sheets spread upon a frame. It was there, near her, on her side of the wall where she could see it clearly and enjoy it, and it was so beautiful she had no curiosity as to its meaning. Two dark figures nodded, bent, curtsied to each other, retreated and bowed again, lifted long arms and spread great hands against the white shadow of the screen; then with a single round movement, the sheets were folded back, disclosing two speechless men in white, standing, and another speechless man in white, lying on the bare springs of a white iron bed. The man on the springs was swathed smoothly from head to foot in white, with folded bands across the face, and a large stiff bow like merry rabbit ears dangled at the crown of his head.

The two living men lifted a mattress standing hunched against the wall, spread it tenderly and exactly over the dead man. Wordless and white they vanished down the corridor, pushing the wheeled bed before them. It had been an entrancing and leisurely spectacle, but now it was over. A pallid white fog rose in their wake insinuatingly and floated before Miranda's eyes, a fog in which was concealed all terror and all weariness, all the wrung faces and twisted backs and broken feet of abused, outraged living things, all the shapes of their confused pain and their estranged hearts; the fog might part at any moment and loose the horde of human torments. She put up her hands and said, Not yet, not yet, but it was too late. The fog parted and two executioners, white clad, moved towards her pushing between them with marvelously deft and practiced hands the misshapen figure of an old man in filthy rags whose scanty beard waggled under his opened mouth as he bowed his back and braced his feet to resist and delay the fate they had prepared for him. In a high weeping voice he was trying to explain to them that the crime of which he was accused did not merit the punishment he was about to receive; and except for this whining cry there was silence as they advanced. The soiled cracked bowls of the old man's hands were held before him beseechingly as a beggar's as he said, "Before God I am not guilty," but they held his arms and drew him onward, passed, and were gone.

The road to death is a long march beset with all evils, and the heart fails little by little at each new terror, the bones rebel at each step, the mind sets up its own bitter resistance and to what end? The barriers sink one by one, and no covering of the eye shuts out the landscape of disaster, nor the sight of crimes committed there. Across the field came Dr. Hildesheim, his face a skull beneath his German helmet, carrying a naked infant writhing on the point of his bayonet, and a huge stone pot marked Poison in Gothic letters. He stopped before the well that Miranda remembered in a pasture on her father's farm, a well once dry but now bubbling with living water, and into its pure depths he threw the child and the poison, and the violated water sank back soundlessly

into the earth. Miranda, screaming, ran with her arms above her head; her voice echoed and came back to her like a wolf's howl, Hildesheim is a Boche, a spy, a Hun, kill him, kill him before he kills you. . . . She woke howling, she heard the foul words accusing Dr. Hildesheim tumbling from her mouth; opened her eyes and knew she was in a bed in a small white room, with Dr. Hildesheim sitting beside her, two firm fingers on her pulse. His hair was brushed sleekly and his buttonhole flower was fresh. Stars gleamed through the window, and Dr. Hildesheim seemed to be gazing at them with no particular expression, his stethoscope dangling around his neck. Miss Tanner stood at the foot of the bed writing something on a chart.

"Hello," said Dr. Hildesheim, "at least you take it out in shouting. You don't try to get out of bed and go running around." Miranda held her eyes open with a terrible effort, saw his rather heavy, patient face clearly even as her mind tottered and slithered again, broke from its foundation and spun like a cast wheel in a ditch. "I didn't mean it, I never believed it, Dr. Hildesheim, you mustn't remember it—" and was gone again, not being able to wait for an answer.

The wrong she had done followed her and haunted her dream: this wrong took vague shapes of horror she could not recognize or name, though her heart cringed at sight of them. Her mind, split in two, acknowledged and denied what she saw in the one instant, for across an abyss of complaining darkness her reasoning coherent self watched the strange frenzy of the other coldly, reluctant to admit the truth of its visions, its tenacious remorses and despairs.

"I know those are your hands," she told Miss Tanner, "I know it, but to me they are white tarantulas, don't touch me."

"Shut your eyes," said Miss Tanner.

"Oh, no," said Miranda, "for then I see worse things," but her eyes closed in spite of her will, and the midnight of her internal torment closed about her.

Oblivion, thought Miranda, her mind feeling among her memories of words she had been taught to describe the unseen, the unknowable, is a whirlpool of gray water turning upon itself for all eternity . . . eternity is perhaps more than the distance to the farthest star. She lay on a narrow ledge over a pit that she knew to be bottomless, though she could not comprehend it; the ledge was her childhood dream of danger, and she strained back against a reassuring wall of granite at her shoulders, staring into the pit, thinking, There it is, there it is at last, it is very simple; and soft carefully shaped words like oblivion and eternity are curtains hung before nothing at all. I shall not know when it happens, I shall not feel or remember, why can't I consent now, I am lost, there is no hope for me. Look, she told herself, there it is, that is death and there is nothing to fear. But she could not consent, still shrinking stiffly against the granite wall that was her childhood dream of safety, breathing slowly for fear of squandering breath, saying desperately, Look, don't be afraid, it is nothing, it is only eternity.

Granite walls, whirlpools, stars are things. None of them is death, nor the image of it. Death is death, said Miranda, and for the dead it has no attributes. Silenced she sank easily through deeps under deeps of darkness until she lay like a stone at the farthest bottom of life, knowing herself to be blind, deaf,

speechless, no longer aware of the members of her own body, entirely withdrawn from all human concerns, yet alive with a peculiar lucidity and coherence; all notions of the mind, the reasonable inquiries of doubt, all ties of blood and the desires of the heart, dissolved and fell away from her, and there remained of her only a minute fiercely burning particle of being that knew itself alone, that relied upon nothing beyond itself for its strength; not susceptible to any appeal or inducement, being itself composed entirely of one single motive, the stubborn will to live. This fiery motionless particle set itself unaided to resist destruction, to survive and to be in its own madness of being, motiveless and planless beyond that one essential end. Trust me, the hard unwinking angry point of light said. Trust me. I stay.

At once it grew, flattened, thinned to a fine radiance, spread like a great fan and curved out into a rainbow through which Miranda, enchanted, altogether believing, looked upon a deep clear landscape of sea and sand, of soft meadow and sky, freshly washed and glistening with transparencies of blue. Why, of course, of course, said Miranda, without surprise but with serene rapture as if some promise made to her had been kept long after she had ceased to hope for it. She rose from her narrow ledge and ran lightly through the tall portals of the great bow that arched in its splendor over the burning blue of the sea and the cool green of the meadow on either hand.

The small waves rolled in and over unhurriedly, lapped upon the sand in silence and retreated; the grasses flurried before a breeze that made no sound. Moving towards her leisurely as clouds through the shimmering air came a great company of human beings, and Miranda saw in an amazement of joy that they were all the living she had known. Their faces were transfigured, each in its own beauty, beyond what she remembered of them, their eyes were clear and untroubled as good weather, and they cast no shadows. They were pure identities and she knew them every one without calling their names or remembering what relation she bore to them. They surrounded her smoothly on silent feet, then turned their entranced faces again towards the sea, and she moved among them easily as a wave among waves. The drifting circle widened, separated, and each figure was alone but not solitary; Miranda, alone too, questioning nothing, desiring nothing, in the quietude of her ecstasy, stayed where she was, eyes fixed on the overwhelming deep sky where it was always morning.

Lying at ease, arms under her head, in the prodigal warmth which flowed evenly from sea and sky and meadow, within touch but not touching the serenely smiling familiar beings about her, Miranda felt without warning a vague tremor of apprehension, some small flick of distrust in her joy; a thin frost touched the edges of this confident tranquillity; something, somebody, was missing, she had lost something, she had left something valuable in another country, oh, what could it be? There are no trees, no trees here, she said in fright, I have left something unfinished. A thought struggled at the back of her mind, came clearly as a voice in her ear. Where are the dead? We have forgotten the dead, oh, the dead, where are they? At once as if a curtain had fallen, the bright landscape faded, she was alone in a strange stony place of bitter cold, picking her way along a steep path of slippery snow, calling out, Oh, I must go back! But in what direction? Pain returned, a terrible compelling

pain running through her veins like heavy fire, the stench of corruption filled her nostrils, the sweetish sickening smell of rotting flesh and pus; she opened her eyes and saw pale light through a coarse white cloth over her face, knew that the smell of death was in her own body, and struggled to lift her hand. The cloth was drawn away; she saw Miss Tanner filling a hypodermic needle in her methodical expert way, and heard Dr. Hildesheim saying, "I think that will do the trick. Try another." Miss Tanner plucked firmly at Miranda's arm near the shoulder, and the unbelievable current of agony ran burning through her veins again. She struggled to cry out, saying, Let me go, let me go; but heard only incoherent sounds of animal suffering. She saw doctor and nurse glance at each other with the glance of initiates at a mystery, nodding in silence, their eyes alive with knowledgeable pride. They looked briefly at their handiwork and hurried away.

Bells screamed all off key, wrangling together as they collided in mid air, horns and whistles mingled shrilly with cries of human distress; sulphur colored light exploded through the black window pane and flashed away in darkness. Miranda waking from a dreamless sleep asked without expecting an answer, "What is happening?" for there was a bustle of voices and footsteps in the corridor, and a sharpness in the air; the far clamor went on, a furious exasperated shrieking like a mob in revolt.

The light came on, and Miss Tanner said in a furry voice, "Hear that? They're celebrating. It's the Armistice. The war is over, my dear." Her hands trembled. She rattled a spoon in a cup, stopped to listen, held the cup out to Miranda. From the ward for old bedridden women down the hall floated a ragged chorus of cracked voices singing, "My country, 'tis of thee . . ."

Sweet land . . . oh, terrible land of this bitter world where the sound of rejoicing was a clamor of pain, where ragged tuneless old women, sitting up waiting for their evening bowl of cocoa, were singing, "Sweet land of Liberty—"

"Oh, say, can you see?" their hopeless voices were asking next, the hammer strokes of metal tongues drowning them out. "The war is over," said Miss Tanner, her underlip held firmly, her eyes blurred. Miranda said, "Please open the window, please, I smell death in here."

Now if real daylight such as I remember having seen in this world would only come again, but it is always twilight or just before morning, a promise of day that is never kept. What has become of the sun? That was the longest and loneliest night and yet it will not end and let the day come. Shall I ever see light again?

Sitting in a long chair, near a window, it was in itself a melancholy wonder to see the colorless sunlight slanting on the snow, under a sky drained of its blue. "Can this be my face?" Miranda asked her mirror. "Are these my own hands?" she asked Miss Tanner, holding them up to show the yellow tint like melted wax glimmering between the closed fingers. The body is a curious monster, no place to live in, how could anyone feel at home there? Is it possible I can ever accustom myself to this place? she asked herself. The human faces around her seemed dulled and tired, with no radiance of skin and eyes as Miranda remembered radiance; the once white walls of her room were now a soiled gray. Breathing slowly, falling asleep and waking again, feeling the

splash of water on her flesh, taking food, talking in bare phrases with Dr. Hildesheim and Miss Tanner, Miranda looked about her with the covertly hostile eyes of an alien who does not like the country in which he finds himself, does not understand the language nor wish to learn it, does not mean to live there and yet is helpless, unable to leave it at his will.

"It is morning," Miss Tanner would say, with a sigh, for she had grown old and weary once for all in the past month, "morning again, my dear," showing Miranda the same monotonous landscape of dulled evergreens and leaden snow. She would rustle about in her starched skirts, her face bravely powdered, her spirit unbreakable as good steel, saying, "Look, my dear, what a heavenly morning, like a crystal," for she had an affection for the salvaged creature before her, the silent ungrateful human being whom she, Cornelia Tanner, a nurse who knew her business, had snatched back from death with her own hands. "Nursing is nine-tenths, just the same," Miss Tanner would tell the other nurses; "keep that in mind." Even the sunshine was Miss Tanner's own prescription for the further recovery of Miranda, this patient the doctors had given up for lost, and who yet sat here, visible proof of Miss Tanner's theory. She said, "Look at the sunshine, now," as she might be saying, "I ordered this for you, my dear, do sit up and take it."

"It's beautiful," Miranda would answer, even turning her head to look, thanking Miss Tanner for her goodness, most of all her goodness about the weather, "beautiful, I always loved it." And I might love it again if I saw it, she thought, but truth was, she could not see it. There was no light, there might never be light again, compared as it must always be with the light she had seen beside the blue sea that lay so tranquilly along the shore of her paradise. That was a child's dream of the heavenly meadow, the vision of repose that comes to a tired body in sleep, she thought, but I have seen it when I did not know it was a dream. Closing her eyes she would rest for a moment remembering that bliss which had repaid all the pain of the journey to reach it; opening them again she saw with a new anguish the dull world to which she was condemned, where the light seemed filmed over with cobwebs, all the bright surfaces corroded, the sharp planes melted and formless, all objects and beings meaningless, ah, dead and withered things that believed themselves alive!

At night, after the long effort of lying in her chair, in her extremity of grief for what she had so briefly won, she folded her painful body together and wept silently, shamelessly, in pity for herself and her lost rapture. There was no escape. Dr. Hildesheim, Miss Tanner, the nurses in the diet kitchen, the chemist, the surgeon, the precise machine of the hospital, the whole humane conviction and custom of society, conspired to pull her inseparable rack of bones and wasted flesh to its feet, to put in order her disordered mind, and to set her once more safely in the road that would lead her again to death.

Chuck Rouncivale and Mary Townsend came to see her, bringing her a bundle of letters they had guarded for her. They brought a basket of delicate small hothouse flowers, lilies of the valley with sweet peas and feathery fern, and above these blooms their faces were merry and haggard.

Mary said, "You *have* had a tussle, haven't you?" and Chuck said, "Well,

you made it back, didn't you?" Then after an uneasy pause, they told her that everybody was waiting to see her again at her desk. "They've put me back on sports already, Miranda," said Chuck. For ten minutes Miranda smiled and told them how gay and what a pleasant surprise it was to find herself alive. For it will not do to betray the conspiracy and tamper with the courage of the living; there is nothing better than to be alive, everyone has agreed on that; it is past argument, and who attempts to deny it is justly outlawed. "I'll be back in no time at all," she said; "this is almost over."

Her letters lay in a heap in her lap and beside her chair. Now and then she turned one over to read the inscription, recognized this handwriting or that, examined the blotted stamps and the postmarks, and let them drop again. For two or three days they lay upon the table beside her, and she continued to shrink from them. "They will all be telling me again how good it is to be alive, they will say again they love me, they are glad I am living too, and what can I answer to that?" and her hardened, indifferent heart shuddered in despair at itself, because before it had been tender and capable of love.

Dr. Hildesheim said, "What, all these letters not opened yet?" and Miss Tanner said, "Read your letters, my dear, I'll open them for you." Standing beside the bed, she slit them cleanly with a paper knife. Miranda, cornered, picked and chose until she found a thin one in an unfamiliar handwriting. "Oh, no, now," said Miss Tanner, "take them as they come. Here, I'll hand them to you." She sat down, prepared to be helpful to the end.

What a victory, what triumph, what happiness to be alive, sang the letters in a chorus. The names were signed with flourishes like the circles in air of bugle notes, and they were the names of those she had loved best; some of those she had known well and pleasantly; and a few who meant nothing to her, then or now. The thin letter in the unfamiliar handwriting was from a strange man at the camp where Adam had been, telling her that Adam had died of influenza in the camp hospital. Adam had asked him, in case anything happened, to be sure to let her know.

If anything happened. To be sure to let her know. If anything happened. "Your friend, Adam Barclay," wrote the strange man. It had happened—she looked at the date—more than a month ago.

"I've been here a long time, haven't I?" she asked Miss Tanner, who was folding letters and putting them back in their proper envelopes.

"Oh, quite a while," said Miss Tanner, "but you'll be ready to go soon now. But you must be careful of yourself and not overdo, and you should come back now and then and let us look at you, because sometimes the aftereffects are very—"

Miranda, sitting up before the mirror, wrote carefully: "One lipstick, medium, one ounce flask Bois d'Hiver perfume, one pair of gray suède gauntlets without straps, two pairs gray sheer stockings without clocks—"

Towney, reading after her, said, "Everything without something so that it will be almost impossible to get?"

"Try it, though," said Miranda, "they're nicer without. One walking stick of silvery wood with a silver knob."

"That's going to be expensive," warned Towney. "Walking is hardly worth it."

"You're right," said Miranda, and wrote in the margin, "a nice one to match my other things. Ask Chuck to look for this, Mary. Good looking and not too heavy." Lazarus, come forth. Not unless you bring me my top hat and stick. Stay where you are then, you snob. Not at all. I'm coming forth. "A jar of cold cream," wrote Miranda, "a box of apricot powder—and, Mary, I don't need eye shadow, do I?" She glanced at her face in the mirror and away again. "Still, no one need pity this corpse if we look properly to the art of the thing."

Mary Townsend said, "You won't recognize yourself in a week."

"Do you suppose, Mary," asked Miranda, "I could have my old room back again?"

"That should be easy?" said Mary. "We stored away all your things there with Miss Hobbe." Miranda wondered again at the time and trouble the living took to be helpful to the dead. But not quite dead now, she reassured herself, one foot in either world now; soon I shall cross back and be at home again. The light will seem real and I shall be glad when I hear that someone I know has escaped from death. I shall visit the escaped ones and help them dress and tell them how lucky they are, and how lucky I am still to have them. Mary will be back soon with my gloves and my walking stick, I must go now, I must begin saying good-by to Miss Tanner and Dr. Hildesheim. Adam, she said, now you need not die again, but still I wish you were here; I wish you had come back, what do you think I came back for, Adam, to be deceived like this?

At once he was there beside her, invisible but urgently present, a ghost but more alive than she was, the last intolerable cheat of her heart; for knowing it was false she still clung to the lie, the unpardonable lie of her bitter desire. She said, "I love you," and stood up trembling, trying by the mere act of her will to bring him to sight before her. If I could call you up from the grave I would, she said, if I could see your ghost I would say, I believe . . . "I believe," she said aloud. "Oh, let me see you once more." The room was silent, empty, the shade was gone from it, struck away by the sudden violence of her rising and speaking aloud. She came to herself as if out of sleep. Oh, no, that is not the way, I must never do that, she warned herself. Miss Tanner said, "Your taxicab is waiting, my dear," and there was Mary. Ready to go.

No more war, no more plague, only the dazed silence that follows the ceasing of the heavy guns; noiseless houses with the shades drawn, empty streets, the dead cold light of tomorrow. Now there would be time for everything.

MARK SCHORER

What We Don't Know Hurts Us

THE midafternoon winter sun burned through the high California haze. Charles Dudley, working with a mattock in a thicket of overgrowth, felt as steamy and as moldy as the black adobe earth in which his feet kept slipping. Rain had fallen for five days with no glimmer of sunshine, and now it seemed as if the earth, with fetid animation, like heavy breath, were giving all that moisture back to the air. The soil, or the broom which he was struggling to uproot, had a disgusting, acrid odor, as if he were tussling with some obscene animal instead of with a lot of neglected vegetation, and suddenly an overload of irritations—the smell, the stinging sweat in his eyes, his itching skin, his blistering palms—made him throw the mattock down and come diving out of the thicket into the clearing he had already achieved.

"Is it hard?"

He looked up and saw Josephine, his wife, sitting on the railing of the balcony onto which the french doors of their bedroom opened. She was holding a dust mop, and a tea towel was wrapped around her head, and her face seemed pallid and without character, as it always did to Charles when she neglected to wear lipstick.

He snorted instead of replying, and wiped his muddy hands on the seat of his stiff new levis. Then he walked over to the short flight of steps that led up to the balcony from the garden, and lit a cigarette.

"It looks as though the ground levels out up there where you're working," Josephine said.

"Yes, it does. Somebody once had a terrace up there. It's full of overgrown geraniums that are more like snakes, and a lot of damned rose vines."

"You've got the pepper tree almost free. It's going to be very nice, isn't it?"

He looked up at the pepper tree, with its delicate, drooping branches and the long gray tendrils that hung down from the branches to the ground. He had chopped out the broom as far up the incline as the tree, and now he could see that a big branch of the eucalyptus at the very edge of the property had forced the top of the pepper tree to grow out almost horizontally from the main portion of its trunk. "Look at the damned thing!" he said.

"It's charming, like a Japanese print."

"I'm going to hate this house long before it's livable," he said.

"Oh, Charles!"

"I didn't want to buy a house. I never wanted to own any house. I certainly never wanted to own a miserable, half-ruined imitation of a Swiss chalet

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built on an incline that was meant for goats." Vehemently he flipped his cigarette up into the pile of brush he had accumulated.

Josephine stood up and shook out the dust mop. "Let's not go into all that again. There was no choice. It's no pleasure for me, either, living the way we are, nor is it for the children." She paused, and then she added a cold supplement. "I sometimes think that your disinclination to own anything is a form of irresponsibility." She turned swiftly and went into the house.

He stood staring after her, frowning a little, for it seemed momentarily that with studied intent she had cracked the bland habit of her amiability. But in a minute she reappeared in the doorway and said matter-of-factly, "I heard on the radio that Boston has had eighteen inches of snow." Then she went back inside.

"Are you trying to make me homesick?" he asked of no one as he started back up the incline, and he remembered the frozen river, snow blowing over the Esplanade, and city lights faint in a blizzard.

He began again to chop at the roots of the broom. All right, he told himself, so he was being unpleasant. He did not like the idea of being pinned down by a mortgage to a place his firm had picked for him. He did not even like the idea of being pinned down by a mortgage. To own something was, to that extent, to be owned, and he did not like the feeling. His idea of a good way to live was in a duplex apartment owned by someone else, in Charles River Square, or, better than that but always less likely, in a duplex apartment owned by someone else, on the East River. He connected happiness with a certain luxury, and, probably, sexuality with elegance and freedom. These were not noble associations, he was aware, and he knew that it was foolish to let impossibilities, as they faded, become forms of minor torture. This knowledge made him chop more angrily than ever at the broom.

It was vegetation with which Charles felt that he had a peculiar intimacy, perhaps the only thing in California which, in the several weeks they had lived there, he had really come to know. And he loathed it with a violence which he recognized as quite undue, and which, now, made him feel childish and curiously guilty. Yet he could not laugh away his loathing. The stuff was ubiquitous, and sprang up anywhere at all the minute the ground was neglected. If it grew up in a patch, it began a foolish competition with itself, and the thin, naked stalks shot ten and twelve and fourteen feet into the air, all stretching up to the sun for the sake of a plume of paltry foliage at the top. Then the foliage tangled together in a thatch, and when you had managed to chop out the shallow roots of the tree, you still had to extricate its trivial but tenacious branches from those of all its neighbors to get it out of the clump. Once it was out, the wood was good for nothing, but dried up into a kind of bamboo stalk so insubstantial that it did not make even decent kindling. As a tree it was a total fraud, and in spite of the nuisance of its numbers, and of its feminine air of lofty self-importance, it was, with its shallow roots in this loose soil, very vulnerable to attack. Charles beat away at it in an angry frenzy, as if he were overwhelming, after a long struggle, some bitter foe.

He did not hear his son come up the incline behind him, and the boy stood

quietly watching until his father turned to toss a stalk up on the pile in the clearing. Then the boy said, "Hi." He said it tentatively, almost shyly, as though his father's responses were unpredictable.

"Hi, Gordon."

"What're you doing?"

"Can't you see? How was school?"

"It stinks," he answered doggedly, his dark eyes half-averted and sorrowful.

Charles felt a twinge of pain for him. "Cheer up. Give it time. You'll get to like it after a while."

"I'll never like it," Gordon said stubbornly.

Charles took up his mattock again. "Sure you will," he said as he began to swing it.

"Nobody likes me."

Charles let the mattock come to rest and, turning once more to the boy, he spoke with an impatient excess of patience. "You say that every day. I've told you it isn't true. You're a new boy in the school, and you came in the middle of the term, and there's never yet been a new boy who entered a school late and made friends right away. You're nearly nine, and you can understand that. Anyway, I'm tired of explaining it to you."

"When can I get a paper route?"

Charles laughed without humor. "My God, boy! Give us a chance to get settled."

"I need money."

"You get an allowance."

"I need more money," the boy insisted. "I want a paper route. How do kids get them?"

"You can work for me. You can get in there with a hedge shears and cut out all those vines."

The boy looked at his father despairingly and shook his head. "No, I need a lot of money."

"You can earn a lot of money working for me," Charles said, swinging his mattock.

"I need a dollar," Gordon said faintly.

His father did not hear him, and he did not turn from his work again until presently he heard his daughter calling him shrilly from the foot of the hill on which the house stood.

"What is it?" he called back. She was climbing the path, and he saw that she had a white envelope in her hand.

Then Gordon broke into rapid, desperate speech. "I need a dollar. I'll pay it back out of my allowance. Remember yesterday I told you about that dollar I found? I have to pay it back."

Charles stared at him. "What dollar?"

Gordon glanced wildly over his shoulder. His sister, holding the menacing white envelope in one hand and her workman's tin lunch box in the other, was halfway up the hill, coming along the side of the house. Pleadingly, Gordon looked back at his father. "The dollar. Remember? I told you I found it. You wanted to know what I did with it."

"What dollar?"

He sighed. "You didn't listen! You never listen!"

Charles patted his shoulder. "Now take it easy. Don't get excited. Tell me again. I don't think you told me anything about a dollar yesterday."

"The dollar I found. You asked me what I did with it, and I told you I gave it to Crow, and you said I should have brought it home to you."

"That Crow! I thought you were joking."

Penelope, the six-year-old, was behind him now, and Gordon's shoulders sagged in despair. "I wasn't joking," he said almost wearily as Penelope handed his father the letter. "You never really listen."

Charles read the precise handwriting on the envelope. "Mr. or Mrs. Dudley," it said, and in the lower left-hand corner, "Courtesy of Penelope." He opened the envelope and read the message:

DEAR MR. AND MRS. DUDLEY,

Gordon became involved in some difficulty about a dollar today, and I wish you would help me. The dollar was lunch money belonging to a girl who says she left it deep in her coat pocket, in the cloakroom, yesterday. When I brought it up with Gordon, he immediately said that he did not steal it. He says that he found it on the floor, and he also says that he told his father about it yesterday and that his father said he should have brought it home to him, and now he is fixed in his confusions. He gave it to an older boy named Will Crow, who spent it, and I have told Gordon that he will have to return a dollar to the girl tomorrow. Gordon is a very worth-while little personality, but I do not think he has been entirely happy here at the Crestview School, and therefore, if you can help me straighten this out to his own best interest, I will be ever so grateful.

Sincerely yours,

GERTRUDE GRANDJENT,
Principal.

Charles groaned in exasperation. "My God, why did you have to drag me into it? What will that woman think?"

Gordon's lips were trembling. "You remember? I did tell you, didn't I?"

"Yes, I remember now. I remember very clearly that you told me you found it on the way to school, and when I asked you what you did with it, and you said you gave it to Crow, naturally I said you should have brought it home. *Listen,* Gordon—" The very simplicity of the boy's strategy infuriated Charles, and it was with an effort that he controlled his temper. He said, "Penny, you go in now and tell your mother you're home."

Penny was staring at her brother. "What did Gordon do?"

"Run along, Penny, as I told you."

She went down the incline reluctantly, staring back over her shoulder, and when she had gone into the house, Charles turned to Gordon again and said, "Sit down."

They sat down side by side on the damp slope. Gordon said, "Will you

lend me a dollar and keep my allowance until it's made up? I have to take it back tomorrow."

"We'll talk about that later." Charles tapped the letter with his muddy hand. "Why did you tell me you found it in the street?"

Gordon looked away but answered promptly. "I knew if I told you I found it in school, you'd have said I should have taken it to the office."

"So you lied to me instead. That was better?"

Gordon did not answer.

"Answer me."

"Yes."

"Yes, what?"

"I lied."

That was that. Charles started over. "Why did you tell Miss Grandjent that you did not steal it when she hadn't even said that you had?"

"I knew that's what she thought."

"How did you know?"

"I just knew."

Charles hesitated. When he spoke again, his voice was warmer, friendly, almost confidential. "What's the little girl's name, Gordon?"

"She's not little. She's in high fourth."

"What's her name?"

"I don't know. Joan, I guess."

"What color is her coat?"

Gordon glanced at his father sharply. "I don't know. I never noticed it."

Charles bit his lip in exasperation and stood up. "Let's go inside." He led the way in.

Josephine was standing on a chair in the middle of the living room. She was dusting the hideous chandelier of dark metal and colored glass which hung from the center of the ceiling. It was only one of many distasteful features in the house which the Dudleys hoped to rid it of, but it was hard to find men to do all the necessary work, and none would promise to do it quickly. An electrician had torn away a good deal of plaster and lathing, and a carpenter had ripped out some bookshelves and ugly mantels and taken down most of a wall between the dining room and a useless hallway, but neither had returned, and painters, plasterers, paper hangers had not yet come at all. The Dudleys had decided to leave most of their belongings in storage until the work was done, and to bring nothing out of storage that they cared about. The result was that the house was almost fantastically disordered and bleak and squalid, and while Josephine managed to keep an even temper under these conditions, Charles, who found them very trying, did not.

He stood in the doorway of the living room now and said to her, "Why do you bother?"

"The light was so dim," she said, and then, seeing his expression, asked quickly, "What's wrong?"

"Another problem." He came heavily into the living room and gave her the letter. She read it standing on the chair, her face expressionless. Then she

stepped down and went out into the hall where Gordon was lurking and said, "Come in, dear."

There was one old sofa in the room, and Josephine sat down there with Gordon. Charles sat facing them on the single straight chair. Josephine took Gordon's hands and said, "Now tell me everything, Gordon, just the way it happened."

The boy's face was composed in a kind of stolid determination, but when he raised his moody eyes from the bare floor to his father, his chin began to tremble, his eyelids fluttered, and suddenly the dogged expression broke in despair, his body sagged, his head fell back against the sofa, and he burst into harsh sobs. Josephine put her arm around his shoulders and held him close while he cried, and she shook her head sharply at Charles as he jumped up impatiently. He sat down again. Finally Gordon stopped crying, almost as abruptly as he had begun.

"How did it happen, Gordon?" his mother asked.

He straightened up and stared at the floor again. "Nothing happened. I just came in the cloakroom and saw it on the floor. I took it and put it in my pocket, and at recess I gave it to Crow."

"Didn't anyone see you pick it up?"

"There wasn't anyone else there."

"In the cloakroom? Before school? Why not?"

"I was late."

"Late? But why? You left here in plenty of time."

"I stopped on the way and played with a cat."

Josephine frowned. "So there was no one else there at all to see you?" she asked meaningfully.

"No."

Josephine glanced at Charles. He drew his lips apart and, with a heavy satiric edge, said, "Well, Gordon, that's too bad! If there'd been someone else there, you could prove that you hadn't—"

Josephine broke in. "Tell me just where the dollar was, Gordon," she said softly, and her voice had no relation to the look in her eyes as she glanced at Charles.

"On the floor."

"But exactly where? Was it near the little girl's coat?"

"She isn't little."

"Was it near her coat?"

"I don't know which coat is hers."

"Was it near any coat?"

"It was on the floor, near all of them. They hang on a rack, and it was on the floor near them."

Josephine paused, and Gordon wriggled his shoulders out from under her arm and slumped in the corner of the sofa, away from her. "When can I get out of here?" he asked.

"When you start answering our questions," his father said sharply. "You insist that you didn't steal it?"

Gordon raised his lids slowly, as if they were very heavy, and stared out at his father from under his brows. "I found it on the floor."

Josephine spoke brightly. "Very well. We have settled that. But, Gordon, surely you don't think that because you found it on the floor, it belonged to you? Don't you see that it was just as much stealing it as if you had really taken it from the pocket of the person it belonged to?"

"Not as much," Gordon said.

"But it wasn't *yours!* You knew that."

The boy nodded.

"Well, then—"

"Someone else would have found it!"

"But would someone else have kept it?"

"I didn't keep it."

Charles leaped up from his chair. "That's the point! Why in God's name did you give it to that Crow rat?"

"He's my friend," Gordon said with simple defiance, and then he slid off the sofa and lay on the floor.

"Your friend! A fine friend!" Charles shouted in disgust, standing over him. "Get up!"

Gordon did not make any effort to move, and Josephine grasped Charles's arm. "Let me," she said quietly. "Sit down."

"Nonsense!" he cried angrily at her, and pulled his arm free of her touch. "I'll take over now." He seized the boy by the shoulders and pulled him up on the sofa. The jerk which he gave his body made the boy's head bob back and forward like a doll's, and he slumped against the sofa back almost as if he had been injured, dull eyes staring out of his pale face. "Now listen to me, Gordon. I don't know if you took that money out of someone's pocket or not, but it looks, from the way you're behaving, as if you did. Anyway, you took it. It didn't belong to you, you knew that, and yet you took it. Do you see that there is no difference between the floor and the pocket as long as you kept it?"

"I didn't keep it," Gordon repeated, but almost listlessly.

"Oh, my God!" Charles ran his hand through his hair, and the rumpled hair gave him a sudden wild look. "Listen," he said as quietly as he could, "we are all having a very hard time here. We are trying to live in a house that isn't fit to live in. I am trying to get used to a new office. Your mother—"

Josephine said, "Don't bother about me."

"I will bother! We are all having a tough time, and Gordon can't think of anything better to do than to get into this mess at school. Of all the friends you could pick, you pick that nasty Crow brat, who is too old for you by three years and is a snide little—"

"Charles!"

Gordon lay back on the sofa. He looked ill and defeated.

"Will you admit that you stole that dollar? That taking it from the floor was just as much stealing it as if you had taken it from the pocket?"

"Yes," he answered faintly.

"Speak up!"

"Yes, I *do!*" Gordon cried, and turned his face away.

Then the room was very still. Josephine stood stiffly beside the couch, her eyes fixed on Charles with dismay. Charles sagged a little, as if he, too, were defeated. And Gordon might have been asleep or dreaming, so remote had he suddenly become. Then they all heard a sly noise at the door, and Charles and Josephine swung toward it. Penelope stood there, embarrassed to have been caught. She giggled and said, "Why did Gordon steal money?"

"Go away," Charles said.

"Go to your room, dear," Josephine said, "or go outside."

"But why did Gordon steal money?"

Charles walked to the girl, gave her a little push, and closed the door on her face. Then he came back to the sofa. He sat down next to Gordon, and when he spoke, his voice was nearly lifeless. "You want to earn that dollar. All right, you can, Gordon. First go to your room and write your five sentences. Do them quickly for a change, and then go out into that patch of broom with the hedge shears and cut down all the vines you can find in it. You have an hour left before it gets dark."

Gordon's eyes dreamed over his father's face, and then he slowly got up and left the room. His parents watched him go, and when he had closed the door softly behind him, Charles broke out. "What is it, what stubbornness, that makes that boy so impenetrable? Did he steal that money or not? I haven't the slightest idea. All I could do was force him to admit that there was no difference between the two things."

Josephine was looking at him with studied appraisal.

"Well?" he challenged her.

"You forced his admission. Did that gain anything? And what did it lose? How much did it hurt him? Is it of very great importance whether he stole it or not?"

"I don't know what's more important."

"No, I really think you don't."

"Well?"

"What's more important is why he took it, and what he did with it, and why he did that. What's more important is that he's a miserable little boy, and that you haven't made the slightest effort to understand *that.* All you've done is played the heavy parent, shown him that you don't trust him or believe him, and left him with a nice new layer of solidified guilt, and what is he supposed to do with *that?*"

"Let's skip the psychology for a change," Charles said. "There is an old-fashioned principle of honesty and dishonesty."

"There's a more old-fashioned one of simple perception!" Josephine's face was red with anger. She stood in the middle of the bare room and looked rapidly around her, as if she felt a sudden desperate need, a hunger, for objects. But there was only the sofa, the chair, and Charles. Her eyes came back to him.

"Have you thought of his difficulties at all? Just the simple matter of his writing, for example? He came from a school where the children printed, and he printed as well as anyone. He comes here where the children do cursive

writing, and of course he's made to feel like a fool, and he has to practice at home to learn it when other boys are playing. Or have you once helped him with that? Have you even suggested a sentence he might write? No. All you've done is to give him the extremely comforting bit of information that new boys, especially if they enter school late, have a hard time making friends! The one friend he has made you deride. No, don't interrupt. I know he's a horrid boy. I don't want Gordon playing with him either. But you haven't the sense to see that what has brought them together is that they are both pariahs. I think Gordon's giving that dollar to that dreadful boy is one of the most touching things I've ever heard of!"

"If what you've told me about Crow is true," Charles said quietly, "I won't have Gordon playing with him, and that's that."

"Because Crow taught him some nasty words and told him some nasty, mistaken things about sex! You're perfectly right. But you can't just stand there and say no to him! If you were half a father, you would have told him yourself. *You* should be his friend! You're the one who should be giving him a decent attitude toward those things. You *are* his father, after all."

"Oh, listen— He's not even nine!"

"All right. But he's getting it, isn't he? And all wrong?" And then, without warning, she sat down heavily on the single chair and began to sob, her reddened face lifted, her mouth twisted in sorrow, tears streaming down over her cheeks. "All *wrong!*" she wailed.

Charles went to her quickly and, half standing, half kneeling beside the chair, awkwardly put his arms around her. "Josephine, listen—"

"Oh, I know!" she sobbed. "We all get in your way. We're all a nuisance that you're saddled with! We all just *bother* you! I know! It just isn't your idea of the way to live. You really hate it, don't you?"

His arms tightened. "Darling," he said, "don't be a damned fool. Listen, I love you, I love the kids. Why, little Penny, I—"

"Oh, yes. Penny, sure! She's tractable! She doesn't raise any problems. That's different!"

"You're crazy. Gordon, too. You. Maybe I'm not much good with him, but that doesn't mean . . . And listen . . . I'll try. I'll go out there now."

She dug in her pocket for a piece of Kleenex. She blew her nose and wiped her eyes. She pulled the tea towel off her head and shook out her hair. Then she blew her nose again. "I'm all right now," she said, getting up. She picked up the dustcloth which she had flung over the back of the chair, and she said, "It's probably just this awful house, the way we have to camp. I'm going to get cleaned up and dress, and I'm going to find a tablecloth, and we'll have dinner at a table tonight, instead of sitting on the floor with plates in our laps."

He said, "Good girl! I'll go and fix it up with Gordon."

Charles went into Gordon's room. It was empty. He glanced at the table where Gordon worked and saw that there was a sheet of writing there. Then he looked out of the window and saw the boy on his hands and knees in among the remaining broom. He crossed the hall to the bedroom where Josephine was dressing. "I may not be very subtle with him, but I seem to get results,"

he said. She merely glanced up at him, and as he went out on the balcony, down the steps, and up the slippery incline, he felt no satisfaction whatever in his remark.

"How's it going?" he asked the boy.

Gordon glanced over his shoulder. "All right," he said, and turned at once to his job. The hedge shears made a busy, innocent sound.

Charles found his mattock where he had dropped it, and began to chop at the edge of the overgrowth again. Immediately his nostrils filled with the poisonous smell he had noticed before, his hands began to chafe, and even though the heat of the sun had gone in the late afternoon, sweat broke out with a prickling sensation all over his face and body. Once more he was tense with irritation, and he said, "That awful smell! What is it?"

"I don't know," Gordon replied without looking up.

"Like something decaying."

The boy did not answer, and Charles chopped angrily away at a root. When it came free, he shook the earth off and tossed the slim tree down the slope. "This crazy, piddling stuff!" he shouted, and then reminded himself that it was only a kind of exaggerated weed, a thing that grew everywhere, so futile that it could not even send down a decent root and was hardly designed as a personal affront to him. Or was it? He laughed and started to chop at the next root, but stopped at once. "I'm quitting for today," he said. "Come on, let's go in."

Gordon said, "No, I'll work a while. I want to earn the money."

"Oh, let it go. We'll fix that up."

Gordon stared at him. "I want to earn it," he said, and went on clipping at the rose vines.

"All right," Charles said, "but come in soon. You'll have to wash up thoroughly to get that muck off."

He went back into the house by way of the bedroom, but Josephine was no longer there. He went into Gordon's room, but she was not there, either. On the table lay the white sheet of ruled paper covered with the boy's writing, his five sentences in their hasty, uncertain, and very large cursive characters. Charles picked it up. The first sentence was, "I am going to cut vins." The second was, "I am going to ern mony." The third was, "The sun is shining." The fourth was, "When it rains here it rains hard." The last, which seemed to have been written with greater care, with a kind of precision and flourish which his writing had never shown before, was, "You hate me and I hate you."

Charles took a sharp breath and held it, then sagged. After a moment he walked to the window and put his forehead against the cool glass. He stared out into the desolate garden, at the bare earth and the darkening tangle, and tried to think. When he heard Josephine moving on high heels somewhere in the rugless house, he began to fold the sheet of paper, and he folded it again and again, until it was a small hard square. This he stuffed deep into his pocket.

He came into the hall and saw Josephine standing in the center of the barren living room. She looked tall in an old but still handsome black housecoat,

a straight, severe garment which hung from the tightly belted waist in heavy folds, and was without ornament or color anywhere. Her hair was pulled tautly away from her face, and her face was smooth and white, and her mouth was painted dark red.

She was detached from the room, from the house, and utterly from him—remote and beautiful, cold in resolution. Never in the ten years he had known her had she appeared so wonderfully in possession of herself. And, helplessly, Charles turned away.

He went into the boy's room again, and looked out to see the boy. But twilight had obscured the garden now, shadows hung about it like veils, and Charles could hardly see into the trees. Then he thought that he saw Gordon's shape, hunched on the ground among the slim trunks, and he went out quickly to find him. Perhaps, even now, after everything, it was the boy who, somehow, could help.

ALDOUS HUXLEY

Young Archimedes

IT WAS the view which finally made us take the place. True, the house had its disadvantages. It was a long way out of town and had no telephone. The rent was unduly high, the drainage system poor. On windy nights, when the ill-fitting panes were rattling so furiously in the window-frames that you could fancy yourself in an hotel omnibus, the electric light, for some mysterious reason, used invariably to go out and leave you in the noisy dark. There was a splendid bathroom; but the electric pump, which was supposed to send up water from the rainwater tanks in the terrace, did not work. Punctually every autumn the drinking well ran dry. And our landlady was a liar and a cheat.

But these are the little disadvantages of every hired house, all over the world. For Italy they were not really at all serious. I have seen plenty of houses which had them all and a hundred others, without possessing the compensating advantages of ours—the southward-facing garden and terrace for the winter and spring, the large cool rooms against the midsummer heat, the hilltop air and freedom from mosquitoes, and finally the view.

And what a view it was! Or rather, what a succession of views. For it was different every day; and without stirring from the house one had the impression of an incessant change of scene: all the delights of travel without its fatigues. There were autumn days when all the valleys were filled with mist and the crests of the Apennines rose darkly out of a flat white lake. There were days when the mist invaded even our hilltop and we were enveloped in

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a soft vapour in which the mist-coloured olive trees, that sloped away below our windows towards the valley, disappeared as though into their own spiritual essence; and the only firm and definite things in the small, dim world within which we found ourselves confined were the two tall black cypresses growing on a little projecting terrace a hundred feet down the hill. Black, sharp, and solid, they stood there, twin pillars of Hercules at the extremity of the known universe; and beyond them there was only pale cloud and round them only the cloudy olive trees.

These were the wintry days; but there were days of spring and autumn, days unchangingly cloudless, or—more lovely still—made various by the huge floating shapes of vapour that, snowy above the far-away snow-capped mountains, gradually unfolded, against the pale bright blue, enormous heroic gestures. And in the height of the sky the bellying draperies, the swans, the aerial marbles, hewed and left unfinished by gods grown tired of creation almost before they had begun, drifted sleeping along the wind, changing form as they moved. And the sun would come and go behind them; and now the town in the valley would fade and almost vanish in the shadow, and now, like an immense fretted jewel between the hills, it would glow as though by its own light. And looking across the nearer tributary valley that wound from below our crest down towards the Arno, looking over the low dark shoulder of hill on whose extreme promontory stood the towered church of San Miniato, one saw the huge dome airily hanging on its ribs of masonry, the square campanile, the sharp spire of Santa Croce, and the canopied tower of the Signoria, rising above the intricate maze of houses, distinct and brilliant, like small treasures carved out of precious stones. For a moment only, and then their light would fade away once more, and the travelling beam would pick out, among the indigo hills beyond, a single golden crest.

There were days when the air was wet with passed or with approaching rain, and all the distances seemed miraculously near and clear. The olive trees detached themselves one from another on the distant slopes; the far-away villages were lovely and pathetic like the most exquisite small toys. There were days in summer-time, days of impending thunder when, bright and sunlit against huge bellying masses of black and purple, the hills and the white houses shone as it were precariously, in a dying splendour, on the brink of some fearful calamity.

How the hills changed and varied! Every day and every hour of the day, almost, they were different. There would be moments when, looking across the plain of Florence, one would see only a dark blue silhouette against the sky. The scene had no depth; there was only a hanging curtain painted flatly with the symbols of mountains. And then, suddenly almost, with the passing of a cloud, or when the sun had declined to a certain level in the sky, the flat scene transformed itself; and where there had been only a painted curtain, now there were ranges behind ranges of hills, graduated tone after tone from brown, or grey, or a green gold to far-away blue. Shapes that a moment before had been fused together indiscriminately into a single mass, now came apart into their constituents. Fiesole, which had seemed only a spur of Monte Morello, now revealed itself as the jutting headland of another system of hills,

divided from the nearest bastions of its greater neighbour by a deep and shadowy valley.

At noon, during the heats of summer, the landscape became dim, powdery, vague, and almost colourless under the midday sun; the hills disappeared into the trembling fringes of the sky. But as the afternoon wore on the landscape emerged again, it dropped its anonymity, it climbed back out of nothingness into form and life. And its life, as the sun sank, and slowly sank through the long afternoon, grew richer, grew more intense with every moment. The level light, with its attendant long, dark shadows, laid bare, so to speak, the anatomy of the land; the hills—each western escarpment shining, and each slope averted from the sunlight profoundly shadowed—became massive, jutty, and solid. Little folds and dimples in the seemingly even ground revealed themselves. Eastward from our hilltop, across the plain of the Ema, a great bluff cast its ever-increasing shadow; in the surrounding brightness of the valley a whole town lay eclipsed within it. And as the sun expired on the horizon, the further hills flushed in its warm light, till their illumined flanks were the colour of tawny roses; but the valleys were already filled with the blue mist of evening. And it mounted, mounted; the fire went out of the western windows of the populous slopes; only the crests were still alight, and at last they too were all extinct. The mountains faded and fused together again into a flat painting of mountains against the pale evening sky. In a little while it was night; and if the moon were full, a ghost of the dead scene still haunted the horizons.

Changeful in its beauty, this wide landscape always preserved a quality of humanness and domestication which made it, to my mind at any rate, the best of all landscapes to live with. Day by day one travelled through its different beauties; but the journey, like our ancestors' Grand Tour, was always a journey through civilisation. For all its mountains, its steep slopes and deep valleys, the Tuscan scene is dominated by its inhabitants. They have cultivated every rood of ground that can be cultivated; their houses are thickly scattered even over the hills, and the valleys are populous. Solitary on the hilltop, one is not alone in a wilderness. Man's traces are across the country, and already—one feels it with satisfaction as one looks out across it—for centuries, for thousands of years, it has been his, submissive, tamed, and humanised. The wide, blank moorlands, the sands, the forests of innumerable trees—these are places for occasional visitation, healthful to the spirit which submits itself to them for not too long. But fiendish influences as well as divine haunt these total solitudes. The vegetative life of plants and things is alien and hostile to the human. Men cannot live at ease except where they have mastered their surroundings and where their accumulated lives outnumber and outweigh the vegetative lives about them. Stripped of its dark woods, planted, terraced, and tilled almost to the mountains' tops, the Tuscan landscape is humanised and safe. Sometimes upon those who live in the midst of it there comes a longing for some place that is solitary, inhuman, lifeless, or peopled only with alien life. But the longing is soon satisfied, and one is glad to return to the civilised and submissive scene.

I found that house on the hilltop the ideal dwelling-place. For there, safe in the midst of a humanised landscape, one was yet alone; one could be as

solitary as one liked. Neighbours whom one never sees at close quarters are the ideal and perfect neighbours.

Our nearest neighbours, in terms of physical proximity, lived very near. We had two sets of them, as a matter of fact, almost in the same house with us. One was the peasant family, who lived in a long, low building, part dwelling-house, part stables, storerooms and cowsheds, adjoining the villa. Our other neighbours—intermittent neighbours, however, for they only ventured out of town every now and then, during the most flawless weather—were the owners of the villa, who had reserved for themselves the smaller wing of the huge L-shaped house—a mere dozen rooms or so—leaving the remaining eighteen or twenty to us.

They were a curious couple, our proprietors. An old husband, grey, listless, tottering, seventy at least; and a signora of about forty, short, very plump, with tiny fat hands and feet and a pair of very large, very dark black eyes, which she used with all the skill of a born comedian. Her vitality, if you could have harnessed it and made it do some useful work, would have supplied a whole town with electric light. The physicists talk of deriving energy from the atom; they would be more profitably employed nearer home—in discovering some way of tapping those enormous stores of vital energy which accumulate in unemployed women of sanguine temperament and which, in the present imperfect state of social and scientific organisation, vent themselves in ways that are generally so deplorable: in interfering with other people's affairs, in working up emotional scenes, in thinking about love and making it, and in bothering men till they cannot get on with their work.

Signora Bondi got rid of her superfluous energy, among other ways, by "doing in" her tenants. The old gentleman, who was a retired merchant with a reputation for the most perfect rectitude, was allowed to have no dealings with us. When we came to see the house, it was the wife who showed us round. It was she who, with a lavish display of charm, with irresistible rollings of the eyes, expatiated on the merits of the place, sang the praises of the electric pump, glorified the bathroom (considering which, she insisted, the rent was remarkably moderate), and when we suggested calling in a surveyor to look over the house, earnestly begged us, as though our well-being were her only consideration, not to waste our money unnecessarily in doing anything so superfluous. "After all," she said, "we are honest people. I wouldn't dream of letting you the house except in perfect condition. Have confidence." And she looked at me with an appealing, pained expression in her magnificent eyes, as though begging me not to insult her by my coarse suspiciousness. And leaving us no time to pursue the subject of surveyors any further, she began assuring us that our little boy was the most beautiful angel she had ever seen. By the time our interview with Signora Bondi was at an end, we had definitely decided to take the house.

"Charming woman," I said, as we left the house. But I think Elizabeth was not quite so certain of it as I.

Then the pump episode began.

On the evening of our arrival in the house we switched on the electricity.

The pump made a very professional whirring noise; but no water came out of the taps in the bathroom. We looked at one another doubtfully.

"Charming woman?" Elizabeth raised her eyebrows.

We asked for interviews; but somehow the old gentleman could never see us, and the Signora was invariably out or indisposed. We left notes; they were never answered. In the end, we found that the only method of communicating with our landlords, who were living in the same house with us, was to go down into Florence and send a registered express letter to them. For this they had to sign two separate receipts and even, if we chose to pay forty centimes more, a third incriminating document, which was then returned to us. There could be no pretending, as there always was with ordinary letters or notes, that the communication had never been received. We began at last to get answers to our complaints. The Signora, who wrote all the letters, started by telling us that, naturally, the pump didn't work, as the cisterns were empty, owing to the long drought. I had to walk three miles to the post office in order to register my letter reminding her that there had been a violent thunderstorm only last Wednesday, and that the tanks were consequently more than half full. The answer came back: bath water had not been guaranteed in the contract; and if I wanted it, why hadn't I had the pump looked at before I took the house? Another walk into town to ask the Signora next door whether she remembered her adjurations to us to have confidence in her, and to inform her that the existence in a house of a bathroom was in itself an implicit guarantee of bath water. The reply to that was that the Signora couldn't continue to have communications with people who wrote so rudely to her. After that I put the matter into the hands of a lawyer. Two months later the pump was actually replaced. But we had to serve a writ on the lady before she gave in. And the costs were considerable.

One day, towards the end of the episode, I met the old gentleman in the road, taking his big maremman dog for a walk—or being taken, rather, for a walk by the dog. For where the dog pulled the old gentleman had perforce to follow. And when it stopped to smell, or scratch the ground, or leave against a gatepost its visiting-card or an offensive challenge, patiently, at his end of the leash, the old man had to wait. I passed him standing at the side of the road, a few hundred yards below our house. The dog was sniffing at the roots of one of the twin cypresses which grew on either side of the entry to a farm; I heard the beast growling indignantly to itself, as though it scented an intolerable insult. Old Signor Bondi, leashed to his dog, was waiting. The knees inside the tubular grey trousers were slightly bent. Leaning on his cane, he stood gazing mournfully and vacantly at the view. The whites of his old eyes were discoloured, like ancient billiard balls. In the grey, deeply wrinkled face, his nose was dyspeptically red. His white moustache, ragged and yellowing at the fringes, drooped in a melancholy curve. In his black tie he wore a very large diamond; perhaps that was what Signora Bondi had found so attractive about him.

I took off my hat as I approached. The old man stared at me absently, and it was only when I was already almost past him that he recollected who I was.

"Wait," he called after me, "wait!" And he hastened down the road in

pursuit. Taken utterly by surprise and at a disadvantage—for it was engaged in retorting to the affront imprinted on the cypress roots—the dog permitted itself to be jerked after him. Too much astonished to be anything but obedient, it followed its master. "Wait!"

I waited.

"My dear sir," said the old gentleman, catching me by the lapel of my coat and blowing most disagreeably in my face, "I want to apologise." He looked around him, as though afraid that even here he might be overheard. "I want to apologise," he went on, "about that wretched pump business. I assure you that, if it had been only my affair, I'd have put the thing right as soon as you asked. You were quite right: a bathroom is an implicit guarantee of bath water. I saw from the first that we should have no chance if it came to court. And besides, I think one ought to treat one's tenants as handsomely as one can afford to. But my wife"—he lowered his voice—"the fact is that she likes this sort of thing, even when she knows that she's in the wrong and must lose. And besides, she hoped, I daresay, that you'd get tired of asking and have the job done yourself. I told her from the first that we ought to give in; but she wouldn't listen. You see, she enjoys it. Still, now she sees that it must be done. In the course of the next two or three days you'll be having your bath water. But I thought I'd just like to tell you how . . ." But the Maremmano, which had recovered by this time from its surprise of a moment since, suddenly bounded, growling, up the road. The old gentleman tried to hold the beast, strained at the leash, tottered unsteadily, then gave way and allowed himself to be dragged off. ". . . how sorry I am," he went on, as he receded from me, "that this little misunderstanding . . ." But it was no use. "Good-bye." He smiled politely, made a little deprecating gesture, as though he had suddenly remembered a pressing engagement, and had no time to explain what it was. "Good-bye." He took off his hat and abandoned himself completely to the dog.

A week later the water really did begin to flow, and the day after our first bath Signora Bondi, dressed in dove-grey satin and wearing all her pearls, came to call.

"Is it peace now?" she asked, with a charming frankness, as she shook hands.

We assured her that, so far as we were concerned, it certainly was.

"But why *did* you write me such dreadfully rude letters?" she said, turning on me a reproachful glance that ought to have moved the most ruthless malefactor to contrition. "And then that writ. How *could* you? To a lady . . ."

I mumbled something about the pump and our wanting baths.

"But how could you expect me to listen to you while you were in that mood? Why didn't you set about it differently—politely, charmingly?" She smiled at me and dropped her fluttering eyelids.

I thought it best to change the conversation. It is disagreeable, when one is in the right, to be made to appear in the wrong.

A few weeks later we had a letter—duly registered and by express messenger—in which the Signora asked us whether we proposed to renew our lease (which was only for six months), and notifying us that, if we did, the rent would be raised 25 per cent., in consideration of the improvements which had

been carried out. We thought ourselves lucky, at the end of much bargaining, to get the lease renewed for a whole year with an increase in the rent of only 15 per cent.

It was chiefly for the sake of the view that we put up with these intolerable extortions. But we had found other reasons, after a few days' residence, for liking the house. Of these, the most cogent was that, in the peasant's youngest child, we had discovered what seemed the perfect playfellow for our own small boy. Between little Guido—for that was his name—and the youngest of his brothers and sisters there was a gap of six or seven years. His two elder brothers worked with their father in the fields; since the time of the mother's death, two or three years before we knew them, the eldest sister had ruled the house, and the younger, who had just left school, helped her and in between-whiles kept an eye on Guido, who by this time, however, needed very little looking after; for he was between six and seven years old and as precocious, self-assured, and responsible as the children of the poor, left as they are to themselves almost from the time they can walk, generally are.

Though fully two and a half years older than little Robin—and at that age thirty months are crammed with half a lifetime's experience—Guido took no undue advantage of his superior intelligence and strength. I have never seen a child more patient, tolerant, and untyrannical. He never laughed at Robin for his clumsy efforts to imitate his own prodigious feats; he did not tease or bully, but helped his small companion when he was in difficulties and explained when he could not understand. In return, Robin adored him, regarded him as the model and perfect Big Boy, and slavishly imitated him in every way he could.

These attempts of Robin's to imitate his companion were often exceedingly ludicrous. For by an obscure psychological law, words and actions in themselves quite serious become comic as soon as they are copied; and the more accurately, if the imitation is a deliberate parody, the funnier—for an overloaded imitation of some one we know does not make us laugh so much as one that is almost indistinguishably like the original. The bad imitation is only ludicrous when it is a piece of sincere and earnest flattery which does not quite come off. Robin's imitations were mostly of this kind. His heroic and unsuccessful attempts to perform the feats of strength and skill, which Guido could do with ease, were exquisitely comic. And his careful, long-drawn imitations of Guido's habits and mannerisms were no less amusing. Most ludicrous of all, because most earnestly undertaken and most incongruous in the imitator, were Robin's impersonations of Guido in the pensive mood. Guido was a thoughtful child, given to brooding and sudden abstractions. One would find him sitting in a corner by himself, chin in hand, elbow on knee, plunged, to all appearances, in the profoundest meditation. And sometimes, even in the midst of his play, he would suddenly break off, to stand, his hands behind his back, frowning and staring at the ground. When this happened Robin became overawed and a little disquieted. In a puzzled silence he looked at his companion. "Guido," he would say softly, "Guido." But Guido was generally too much preoccupied to answer; and Robin, not venturing to insist, would creep near him, and throwing himself as nearly as possible into Guido's attitude—stand-

ing Napoleonically, his hands clasped behind him, or sitting in the posture of Michelangelo's Lorenzo the Magnificent—would try to meditate too. Every few seconds he would turn his bright blue eyes towards the elder child to see whether he was doing it quite right. But at the end of a minute he began to grow impatient; meditation wasn't his strong point. "Guido," he called again and, louder, "Guido!" And he would take him by the hand and try to pull him away. Sometimes Guido roused himself from his reverie and went back to the interrupted game. Sometimes he paid no attention. Melancholy, perplexed, Robin had to take himself off to play by himself. And Guido would go on sitting or standing there, quite still; and his eyes, if one looked into them, were beautiful in their grave and pensive calm.

They were large eyes, set far apart and, what was strange in a dark-haired Italian child, of a luminous pale blue-grey colour. They were not always grave and calm, as in these pensive moments. When he was playing, when he talked or laughed, they lit up; and the surface of those clear, pale lakes of thought seemed, as it were, to be shaken into brilliant sun-flashing ripples. Above those eyes was a beautiful forehead, high and steep and domed in a curve that was like the subtle curve of a rose petal. The nose was straight, the chin small and rather pointed, the mouth drooped a little sadly at the corners.

I have a snapshot of the two children sitting together on the parapet of the terrace. Guido sits almost facing the camera, but looking a little to one side and downwards; his hands are crossed in his lap and his expression, his attitude are thoughtful, grave, and meditative. It is Guido in one of those moods of abstraction into which he would pass even at the height of laughter and play—quite suddenly and completely, as though he had all at once taken it into his head to go away and had left the silent and beautiful body behind, like an empty house, to wait for his return. And by his side sits little Robin, turning to look up at him, his face half averted from the camera, but the curve of his cheek showing that he is laughing; one little raised hand is caught at the top of a gesture, the other clutches at Guido's sleeve as though he were urging him to come away and play. And the legs dangling from the parapet have been seen by the blinking instrument in the midst of an impatient wriggle; he is on the point of slipping down and running off to play hide-and-seek in the garden. All the essential characteristics of both the children are in that little snapshot.

"If Robin were not Robin," Elizabeth used to say, "I could almost wish he were Guido."

And even at that time, when I took no particular interest in the child, I agreed with her. Guido seemed to me one of the most charming little boys I had ever seen.

We were not alone in admiring him. Signora Bondi when, in those cordial intervals between our quarrels, she came to call, was constantly speaking of him. "Such a beautiful, beautiful child!" she would exclaim with enthusiasm. "It's really a waste that he should belong to peasants who can't afford to dress him properly. If he were mine, I should put him into black velvet; or little white knickers and a white knitted silk jersey with a red line at the collar and cuffs! or perhaps a white sailor suit would be pretty. And in winter a little

fur coat, with a squirrel skin cap, and possibly Russian boots . . ." Her imagination was running away with her. "And I'd let his hair grow, like a page's, and have it just curled up a little at the tips. And a straight fringe across his forehead. Every one would turn round and stare after us if I took him out with me in Via Tornabuoni."

What you want, I should have liked to tell her, is not a child; it's a clock-work doll or a performing monkey. But I did not say so—partly because I could not think of the Italian for a clock-work doll and partly because I did not want to risk having the rent raised another 15 per cent.

"Ah, if only I had a little boy like that!" She sighed and modestly dropped her eyelids. "I adore children. I sometimes think of adopting one—that is, if my husband would allow it."

I thought of the poor old gentleman being dragged along at the heels of his big white dog and inwardly smiled.

"But I don't know if he would," the Signora was continuing, "I don't know if he would." She was silent for a moment, as though considering a new idea.

A few days later, when we were sitting in the garden after luncheon, drinking our coffee, Guido's father, instead of passing with a nod and the usual cheerful good-day, halted in front of us and began to talk. He was a fine handsome man, not very tall, but well proportioned, quick and elastic in his movements, and full of life. He had a thin brown face, featured like a Roman's and lit by a pair of the most intelligent-looking grey eyes I ever saw. They exhibited almost too much intelligence when, as not infrequently happened, he was trying, with an assumption of perfect frankness and a childlike innocence, to take one in or get something out of one. Delighting in itself, the intelligence shone there mischievously. The face might be ingenuous, impassive, almost imbecile in its expression; but the eyes on these occasions gave him completely away. One knew, when they glittered like that, that one would have to be careful.

Today, however, there was no dangerous light in them. He wanted nothing out of us, nothing of value—only advice, which is a commodity, he knew, that most people are only too happy to part with. But he wanted advice on what was, for us, rather a delicate subject: on Signora Bondi. Carlo had often complained to us about her. The old man is good, he told us, very good and kind indeed. Which meant, I dare say, among other things, that he could easily be swindled. But his wife . . . Well, the woman was a beast. And he would tell us stories of her insatiable rapacity: she was always claiming more than half of the produce which, by the laws of the métayage system, was the proprietor's due. He complained of her suspiciousness: she was for ever accusing him of sharp practices, of downright stealing—him, he struck his breast, the soul of honesty. He complained of her short-sighted avarice: she wouldn't spend enough on manure, wouldn't buy him another cow, wouldn't have electric light installed in the stables. And we had sympathised, but cautiously, without expressing too strong an opinion on the subject. The Italians are wonderfully non-committal in their speech; they will give nothing away to an interested person until they are quite certain that it is right and necessary and, above all, safe to do so. We had lived long enough among them to imitate

their caution. What we said to Carlo would be sure, sooner or later, to get back to Signora Bondi. There was nothing to be gained by unnecessarily embittering our relations with the lady—only another 15 per cent., very likely, to be lost.

Today he wasn't so much complaining as feeling perplexed. The Signora had sent for him, it seemed, and asked him how he would like it if she were to make an offer—it was all very hypothetical in the cautious Italian style—to adopt little Guido. Carlo's first instinct had been to say that he wouldn't like it at all. But an answer like that would have been too coarsely committal. He had preferred to say that he would think about it. And now he was asking for our advice.

Do what you think best, was what in effect we replied. But we gave it distantly but distinctly to be understood that we didn't think that Signora Bondi would make a very good foster-mother for the child. And Carlo was inclined to agree. Besides, he was very fond of the boy.

"But the thing is," he concluded rather gloomily, "that if she has really set her heart on getting hold of the child, there's nothing she won't do to get him—nothing."

He too, I could see, would have liked the physicists to start on unemployed childless women of sanguine temperament before they tried to tackle the atom. Still, I reflected, as I watched him striding away along the terrace, singing powerfully from a brazen gullet as he went, there was force there, there was life enough in those elastic limbs, behind those bright grey eyes, to put up a good fight even against the accumulated vital energies of Signora Bondi.

It was a few days after this that my gramophone and two or three boxes of records arrived from England. They were a great comfort to us on the hilltop, providing as they did the only thing in which that spiritually fertile solitude—otherwise a perfect Swiss Family Robinson's island—was lacking: music. There is not much music to be heard nowadays in Florence. The times when Dr. Burney could tour through Italy, listening to an unending succession of new operas, symphonies, quartets, cantatas, are gone. Gone are the days when a learned musician, inferior only to the Reverend Father Martini of Bologna, could admire what the peasants sang and the strolling players thrummed and scraped on their instruments. I have travelled for weeks through the peninsula and hardly heard a note that was not "Salome" or the Fascists' song. Rich in nothing else that makes life agreeable or even supportable, the northern metropolises are rich in music. That is perhaps the only inducement that a reasonable man can find for living there. The other attractions—organised gaiety, people, miscellaneous conversation, the social pleasures—what are those, after all, but an expense of spirit that buys nothing in return? And then the cold, the darkness, the mouldering dirt, the damp and squalor. . . . No, where there is no necessity that retains, music can be the only inducement. And that, thanks to the ingenious Edison, can now be taken about in a box and unpacked in whatever solitude one chooses to visit. One can live at Benin, or Nuneaton, or Tozeur in the Sahara, and still hear Mozart quartets, and selections from the Well-Tempered Clavichord, and the Fifth Symphony, and the Brahms clarinet quintet, and motets by Palestrina.

Carlo, who had gone down to the station with his mule and cart to fetch the packing case, was vastly interested in the machine.

"One will hear some music again," he said, as he watched me unpacking the gramophone and the disks. "It is difficult to do much oneself."

Still, I reflected, he managed to do a good deal. On warm nights we used to hear him, where he sat at the door of his house, playing his guitar and softly singing; the eldest boy shrilled out the melody on the mandoline, and sometimes the whole family would join in, and the darkness would be filled with their passionate, throaty singing. Piedigrotta songs they mostly sang; and the voices drooped slurringly from note to note, lazily climbed or jerked themselves with sudden sobbing emphases from one tone to another. At a distance and under the stars the effect was not unpleasing.

"Before the war," he went on, "in normal times" (and Carlo had a hope, even a belief, that the normal times were coming back and that life would soon be as cheap and easy as it had been in the days before the flood), "I used to go and listen to the operas at the Politeama. Ah, they were magnificent. But it costs five lire now to get in."

"Too much," I agreed.

"Have you got *Trovatore?*" he asked.

I shook my head.

"Rigoletto?"

"I'm afraid not."

"Bohème? Fanciulla del West? Pagliacci?"

I had to go on disappointing him.

"Not even *Norma?* Or the *Barbiere?"*

I put on Battistini in "La ci darem" out of *Don Giovanni.* He agreed that the singing was good; but I could see that he didn't much like the music. Why not? He found it difficult to explain.

"It's not like *Pagliacci,"* he said at last.

"Not palpitating?" I suggested, using a word with which I was sure he would be familiar; for it occurs in every Italian political speech and patriotic leading article.

"Not palpitating," he agreed.

And I reflected that it is precisely by the difference between *Pagliacci* and *Don Giovanni,* between the palpitating and the non-palpitating, that modern musical taste is separated from the old. The corruption of the best, I thought, is the worst. Beethoven taught music to palpitate with his intellectual and spiritual passion. It has gone on palpitating ever since, but with the passion of inferior men. Indirectly, I thought, Beethoven is responsible for *Parsifal, Pagliacci,* and the *Poem of Fire;* still more indirectly for *Samson and Delilah* and "Ivy, cling to me." Mozart's melodies may be brilliant, memorable, infectious; but they don't palpitate, don't catch you between wind and water, don't send the listener off into erotic ecstasies.

Carlo and his elder children found my gramophone, I am afraid, rather a disappointment. They were too polite, however, to say so openly; they merely ceased, after the first day or two, to take any interest in the machine and the music it played. They preferred the guitar and their own singing.

Guido, on the other hand, was immensely interested. And he liked, not the cheerful dance tunes, to whose sharp rhythms our little Robin loved to go stamping round and round the room, pretending that he was a whole regiment of soldiers, but the genuine stuff. The first record he heard, I remember, was that of the slow movement of Bach's Concerto in D Minor for two violins. That was the disk I put on the turntable as soon as Carlo had left me. It seemed to me, so to speak, the most musical piece of music with which I could refresh my long-parched mind—the coolest and clearest of all draughts. The movement had just got under way and was beginning to unfold its pure and melancholy beauties in accordance with the laws of the most exacting intellectual logic, when the two children, Guido in front and little Robin breathlessly following, came clattering into the room from the loggia.

Guido came to a halt in front of the gramophone and stood there, motionless, listening. His pale blue-grey eyes opened themselves wide; making a little nervous gesture that I had often noticed in him before, he plucked at his lower lip with his thumb and forefinger. He must have taken a deep breath; for I noticed that, after listening for a few seconds, he sharply expired and drew in a fresh gulp of air. For an instant he looked at me—a questioning, astonished, rapturous look—gave a little laugh that ended in a kind of nervous shudder, and turned back towards the source of the incredible sounds. Slavishly imitating his elder comrade, Robin had also taken up his stand in front of the gramophone, and in exactly the same position, glancing at Guido from time to time to make sure that he was doing everything, down to plucking at his lip, in the correct way. But after a minute or so he became bored.

"Soldiers," he said, turning to me; "I want soldiers. Like in London." He remembered the rag-time and the jolly marches round and round the room.

I put my fingers to my lips. "Afterwards," I whispered.

Robin managed to remain silent and still for perhaps another twenty seconds. Then he seized Guido by the arm, shouting, "Vieni, Guido! Soldiers. Soldati. Vieni giuocare soldati."

It was then, for the first time, that I saw Guido impatient. "Vai!" he whispered angrily, slapped at Robin's clutching hand and pushed him roughly away. And he leaned a little closer to the instrument, as though to make up by yet intenser listening for what the interruption had caused him to miss.

Robin looked at him, astonished. Such a thing had never happened before. Then he burst out crying and came to me for consolation.

When the quarrel was made up—and Guido was sincerely repentant, was as nice as he knew how to be when the music had stopped and his mind was free to think of Robin once more—I asked him how he liked the music. He said he thought it was beautiful. But *bello* in Italian is too vague a word, too easily and frequently uttered, to mean very much.

"What did you like best?" I insisted. For he had seemed to enjoy it so much that I was curious to find out what had really impressed him.

He was silent for a moment, pensively frowning. "Well," he said at last, "I liked the bit that went like this." And he hummed a long phrase. "And then there's the other thing singing at the same time—but what are those things," he interrupted himself, "that sing like that?"

"They're called violins," I said.

"Violins." He nodded. "Well, the other violin goes like this." He hummed again. "Why can't one sing both at once? And what is in that box? What makes it make that noise?" The child poured out his questions.

I answered him as best I could, showing him the little spirals on the disk, the needle, the diaphragm. I told him to remember how the string of the guitar trembled when one plucked it; sound is a shaking in the air, I told him, and I tried to explain how those shakings get printed on the black disk. Guido listened to me very gravely, nodding from time to time. I had the impression that he understood perfectly well everything I was saying.

By this time, however, poor Robin was so dreadfully bored that in pity for him I had to send the two children out into the garden to play. Guido went obediently; but I could see that he would have preferred to stay indoors and listen to more music. A little while later, when I looked out, he was hiding in the dark recesses of the big bay tree, roaring like a lion, and Robin, laughing, but a little nervously, as though he were afraid that the horrible noise might possibly turn out, after all, to be the roaring of a real lion, was beating the bush with a stick, and shouting, "Come out, come out! I want to shoot you."

After lunch, when Robin had gone upstairs for his afternoon sleep, he reappeared. "May I listen to the music now?" he asked. And for an hour he sat there in front of the instrument, his head cocked slightly on one side, listening while I put on one disk after another.

Thenceforward he came every afternoon. Very soon he knew all my library of records, had his preferences and dislikes, and could ask for what he wanted by humming the principal theme.

"I don't like that one," he said of Strauss's "Till Eulen Spiegel." "It's like what we sing in our house. Not really like, you know. But somehow rather like, all the same. You understand?" He looked at us perplexedly and appealingly, as though begging us to understand what he meant and so save him from going on explaining. We nodded. Guido went on. "And then," he said, "the end doesn't seem to come properly out of the beginning. It's not like the one you played the first time." He hummed a bar or two from the slow movement of Bach's D Minor Concerto.

"It isn't," I suggested, "like saying: All little boys like playing. Guido is a little boy. Therefore Guido likes playing."

He frowned. "Yes, perhaps that's it," he said at last. "The one you played first is more like that. But, you know," he added, with an excessive regard for truth, "I don't like playing as much as Robin does."

Wagner was among his dislikes; so was Debussy. When I played the record of one of Debussy's Arabesques, he said, "Why does he say the same thing over and over again? He ought to say something new, or go on, or make the thing grow. Can't he think of anything different?" But he was less censorious about the "Après-Midi d'un Faune." "The things have beautiful voices," he said.

Mozart overwhelmed him with delight. The duet from *Don Giovanni,* which his father had found insufficiently palpitating, enchanted Guido. But he preferred the quartets and the orchestral pieces.

"I like music," he said, "better than singing."

Most people, I reflected, like singing better than music; are more interested in the executant than in what he executes, and find the impersonal orchestra less moving than the soloist. The touch of the pianist is the human touch, and the soprano's high C is the personal note. It is for the sake of this touch, that note, that audiences fill the concert halls.

Guido, however, preferred music. True, he liked "La ci darem"; he liked "Deh vieni alla finestra"; he thought "Che soave zefiretto" so lovely that almost all our concerts had to begin with it. But he preferred the other things. The *Figaro* overture was one of his favourites. There is a passage not far from the beginning of the piece, where the first violins suddenly go rocketing up into the heights of loveliness; as the music approached that point, I used always to see a smile developing and gradually brightening on Guido's face, and when, punctually, the thing happened, he clapped his hands and laughed aloud with pleasure.

On the other side of the same disk, it happened, was recorded Beethoven's *Egmont* overture. He liked that almost better than *Figaro.*

"It has more voices," he explained. And I was delighted by the acuteness of the criticism; for it is precisely in the richness of its orchestration that *Egmont* goes beyond *Figaro.*

But what stirred him almost more than anything was the *Coriolan* overture. The third movement of the Fifth Symphony, the second movement of the Seventh, the slow movement of the Emperor Concerto—all these things ran it pretty close. But none excited him so much as *Coriolan.* One day he made me play it three or four times in succession; then he put it away.

"I don't think I want to hear that any more," he said.

"Why not?"

"It's too . . . too . . ." he hesitated, "too big," he said at last. "I don't really understand it. Play me the one that goes like this." He hummed the phrase from the D Minor Concerto.

"Do you like that one better?" I asked.

He shook his head. "No, it's not that exactly. But it's easier."

"Easier?" It seemed to me rather a queer word to apply to Bach.

"I understand it better."

One afternoon, while we were in the middle of our concert, Signora Bondi was ushered in. She began at once to be overwhelmingly affectionate towards the child; kissed him, patted his head, paid him the most outrageous compliments on his appearance. Guido edged away from her.

"And do you like music?" she asked.

The child nodded.

"I think he has a gift," I said. "At any rate, he has a wonderful ear and a power of listening and criticising such as I've never met with in a child of that age. We're thinking of hiring a piano for him to learn on."

A moment later I was cursing myself for my undue frankness in praising the boy. For Signora Bondi began immediately to protest that, if she could have the upbringing of the child, she would give him the best masters, bring out his talent, make an accomplished maestro of him—and, on the way, an

infant prodigy. And at that moment, I am sure, she saw herself sitting maternally, in pearls and black satin, in the lee of the huge Steinway, while an angelic Guido, dressed like little Lord Fauntleroy, rattled out Liszt and Chopin, to the loud delight of a thronged auditorium. She saw the bouquets and all the elaborate floral tributes, heard the clapping and the few well-chosen words with which the veteran maestri, touched almost to tears, would hail the coming of the little genius. It became more than ever important for her to acquire the child.

"You've sent her away fairly ravening," said Elizabeth, when Signora Bondi had gone. "Better tell her next time that you made a mistake, and that the boy's got no musical talent whatever."

In due course, the piano arrived. After giving him the minimum of preliminary instruction, I let Guido loose on it. He began by picking out for himself the melodies he had heard, reconstructing the harmonies in which they were embedded. After a few lessons, he understood the rudiments of musical notation and could read a simple passage at sight, albeit very slowly. The whole process of reading was still strange to him; he had picked up his letters somehow, but nobody had yet taught him to read whole words and sentences.

I took occasion, next time I saw Signora Bondi, to assure her that Guido had disappointed me. There was nothing in his musical talent, really. She professed to be very sorry to hear it; but I could see that she didn't for a moment believe me. Probably she thought that we were after the child too, and wanted to bag the infant prodigy for ourselves, before she could get in her claim, thus depriving her of what she regarded almost as her feudal right. For, after all, weren't they her peasants? If any one was to profit by adopting the child it ought to be herself.

Tactfully, diplomatically, she renewed her negotiations with Carlo. The boy, she put it to him, had genius. It was the foreign gentleman who had told her so, and he was the sort of man, clearly, who knew about such things. If Carlo would let her adopt the child, she'd have him trained. He'd become a great maestro and get engagements in the Argentine and the United States, in Paris and London. He'd earn millions and millions. Think of Caruso, for example. Part of the millions, she explained, would of course come to Carlo. But before they began to roll in, those millions, the boy would have to be trained. But training was very expensive. In his own interest, as well as in that of his son, he ought to let her take charge of the child. Carlo said he would think it over, and again applied to us for advice. We suggested that it would be best in any case to wait a little and see what progress the boy made.

He made, in spite of my assertions to Signora Bondi, excellent progress. Every afternoon, while Robin was asleep, he came for his concert and his lesson. He was getting along famously with his reading; his small fingers were acquiring strength and agility. But what to me was more interesting was that he had begun to make up little pieces on his own account. A few of them I took down as he played them and I have them still. Most of them, strangely enough, as I thought then, are canons. He had a passion for canons. When I explained to him the principles of the form he was enchanted.

"It is beautiful," he said with admiration. "Beautiful, beautiful. And so easy!"

Again the word surprised me. The canon is not, after all, so conspicuously simple. Thenceforward he spent most of his time at the piano in working out little canons for his own amusement. They were often remarkably ingenious. But in the invention of other kinds of music he did not show himself so fertile as I had hoped. He composed and harmonised one or two solemn little airs like hymn tunes, with a few sprightlier pieces in the spirit of the military march. They were extraordinary, of course, as being the inventions of a child. But a great many children can do extraordinary things; we are all geniuses up to the age of ten. But I had hoped that Guido was a child who was going to be a genius at forty; in which case what was extraordinary for an ordinary child was not extraordinary enough for him. "He's hardly a Mozart," we agreed, as we played his little pieces over. I felt, it must be confessed, almost aggrieved. Anything less than a Mozart, it seemed to me, was hardly worth thinking about.

He was not a Mozart. No. But he was somebody, as I was to find out, quite as extraordinary. It was one morning in the early summer that I made the discovery. I was sitting in the warm shade of our westward-facing balcony, working. Guido and Robin were playing in the little enclosed garden below. Absorbed in my work, it was only, I suppose, after the silence had prolonged itself a considerable time that I became aware that the children were making remarkably little noise. There was no shouting, no running about; only a quiet talking. Knowing by experience that when children are quiet it generally means that they are absorbed in some delicious mischief, I got up from my chair and looked over the balustrade to see what they were doing. I expected to catch them dabbing in water, making a bonfire, covering themselves with tar. But what I actually saw was Guido, with a burnt stick in his hand, demonstrating on the smooth paving-stones of the path, that the square on the hypotenuse of a right-angled triangle is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides.

Kneeling on the floor, he was drawing with the point of his blackened stick on the flagstones. And Robin, kneeling imitatively beside him, was growing, I could see, rather impatient with this very slow game.

"Guido," he said. But Guido paid no attention. Pensively frowning, he went on with his diagram. "Guido!" The younger child bent down and then craned round his neck so as to look up into Guido's face. "Why don't you draw a train?"

"Afterwards," said Guido. "But I just want to show you this first. It's *so* beautiful," he added cajolingly.

"But I want a train," Robin persisted.

"In a moment. Do just wait a moment." The tone was almost imploring. Robin armed himself with renewed patience. A minute later Guido had finished both his diagrams.

"There!" he said triumphantly, and straightened himself up to look at them. "Now I'll explain."

And he proceeded to prove the theorem of Pythagoras—not in Euclid's way, but by the simpler and more satisfying method which was, in all probability, employed by Pythagoras himself. He had drawn a square and dissected it, by a pair of crossed perpendiculars, into two squares and two equal rectangles. The equal rectangles he divided up by their diagonals into four equal right-angled triangles. The two squares are then seen to be the squares on the two sides of any one of these triangles other than the hypotenuse. So much for the first diagram. In the next he took the four right-angled triangles into which the rectangles had been divided and rearranged them round the original square so that their right angles filled the corners of the square, the hypotenuses looked inwards and the greater and less sides of the triangles were in continuation along the sides of the square (which are each equal to the sum of these sides). In this way the original square is redissected into four right-angled triangles and the square on the hypotenuse. The four triangles are equal to the two rectangles of the original dissection. Therefore the square on the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the two squares—the squares on the other two sides—into which, with the rectangles, the original square was first dissected.

In very untechnical language, but clearly and with a relentless logic, Guido expounded his proof. Robin listened, with an expression on his bright, freckled face of perfect incomprehension.

"Treno," he repeated, from time to time. "Treno. Make a train."

"In a moment," Guido implored. "Wait a moment. But do just look at this. *Do.*" He coaxed and cajoled. "It's so beautiful. It's so easy."

So easy. . . . The theorem of Pythagoras seemed to explain for me Guido's musical predilections. It was not an infant Mozart we had been cherishing; it was a little Archimedes with, like most of his kind, an incidental musical twist.

"Treno, treno!" shouted Robin, growing more and more restless as the exposition went on. And when Guido insisted on going on with his proof, he lost his temper. "Cattivo Guido," he shouted, and began to hit out at him with his fists.

"All right," said Guido resignedly. "I'll make a train." And with his stick of charcoal he began to scribble on the stones.

I looked on for a moment in silence. It was not a very good train. Guido might be able to invent for himself and prove the theorem of Pythagoras; but he was not much of a draughtsman.

"Guido!" I called. The two children turned and looked up. "Who taught you to draw those squares?" It was conceivable, of course, that somebody might have taught him.

"Nobody." He shook his head. Then, rather anxiously, as though he were afraid there might be something wrong about drawing squares, he went on to apologise and explain. "You see," he said, "it seemed to me so beautiful. Because those squares"—he pointed at the two small squares in the first figure—"are just as big as this one." And, indicating the square on the hypotenuse in the second diagram, he looked up at me with a deprecating smile.

I nodded. "Yes, it's very beautiful," I said—"it's very beautiful indeed."

An expression of delighted relief appeared on his face; he laughed with pleasure. "You see, it's like this," he went on, eager to initiate me into the glorious secret he had discovered. "You cut these two long squares"—he meant the rectangles—"into two slices. And then there are four slices, all just the same, because, because—oh, I ought to have said that before—because these long squares are the same, because those lines, you see . . ."

"But I want a train," protested Robin.

Leaning on the rail of the balcony, I watched the children below. I thought of the extraordinary thing I had just seen and of what it meant.

I thought of the vast differences between human beings. We classify men by the colour of their eyes and hair, the shape of their skulls. Would it not be more sensible to divide them up into intellectual species? There would be even wider gulfs between the extreme mental types than between a Bushman and a Scandinavian. This child, I thought, when he grows up, will be to me, intellectually, what a man is to a dog. And there are other men and women who are, perhaps, almost as dogs to me.

Perhaps the men of genius are the only true men. In all the history of the race there have been only a few thousand real men. And the rest of us—what are we? Teachable animals. Without the help of the real men, we should have found out almost nothing at all. Almost all the ideas with which we are familiar could never have occurred to minds like ours. Plant the seeds there and they will grow; but our minds could never spontaneously have generated them.

There have been whole nations of dogs, I thought; whole epochs in which no Man was born. From the dull Egyptians the Greeks took crude experience and rules of thumb and made sciences. More than a thousand years passed before Archimedes had a comparable successor. There has been only one Buddha, one Jesus, only one Bach that we know of, one Michelangelo.

Is it by a mere chance, I wondered, that a Man is born from time to time? What causes a whole constellation of them to come contemporaneously into being and from out of a single people? Taine thought that Leonardo, Michelangelo, and Raphael were born when they were because the time was ripe for great painters and the Italian scene congenial. In the mouth of a rationalising nineteenth-century Frenchman the doctrine is strangely mystical; it may be none the less true for that. But what of those born out of time? Blake, for example. What of those?

This child, I thought, has had the fortune to be born at a time when he will be able to make good use of his capacities. He will find the most elaborate analytical methods lying ready to his hand; he will have a prodigious experience behind him. Suppose him born while Stonehenge was building; he might have spent a lifetime discovering the rudiments, guessing darkly where now he might have a chance of proving. Born at the time of the Norman Conquest he would have had to wrestle with all the preliminary difficulties created by an inadequate symbolism; it would have taken him long years, for example, to learn the art of dividing MMMCCCCLXXXVIII by MCMXIX. In five years, nowadays, he will learn what it took generations of Men to discover.

And I thought of the fate of all the Men born so hopelessly out of time that they could achieve little or nothing of value. Beethoven born in Greece, I thought, would have had to be content to play thin melodies on the flute or lyre; in those intellectual surroundings it would hardly have been possible for him to imagine the nature of harmony.

From drawing trains, the children in the garden below had gone on to playing trains. They were trotting round and round; with blown round cheeks and pouting mouth, like the cherubic symbol of a wind, Robin puff-puffed, and Guido, holding the skirt of his smock, shuffled behind him, tooting. They ran forward, backed, stopped at imaginary stations, shunted, roared over bridges, crashed through tunnels, met with occasional collisions and derailments. The young Archimedes seemed to be just as happy as the little tow-headed barbarian. A few minutes ago he had been busy with the theroem of Pythagoras. Now, tooting indefatigably along imaginary rails, he was perfectly content to shuffle backwards and forwards among the flower-beds, between the pillars of the loggia, in and out of the dark tunnels of the laurel tree. The fact that one is going to be Archimedes does not prevent one from being an ordinary cheerful child meanwhile. I thought of this strange talent distinct and separate from the rest of the mind, independent, almost, of experience. The typical child-prodigies are musical and mathematical; the other talents ripen slowly under the influence of emotional experience and growth. Till he was thirty Balzac gave proof of nothing but ineptitude; but at four the young Mozart was already a musician, and some of Pascal's most brilliant work was done before he was out of his teens.

In the weeks that followed, I alternated the daily piano lessons with lessons in mathematics. Hints rather than lessons they were; for I only made suggestions, indicated methods, and left the child himself to work out the ideas in detail. Thus I introduced him to algebra by showing him another proof of the theorem of Pythagoras. In this proof one drops a perpendicular from the right angle on to the hypotenuse, and arguing from the fact that the two triangles thus created are similar to one another and to the original triangle, and that the proportions which their corresponding sides bear to one another are therefore equal, one can show in algebraical form that $c^2 + d^2$ (the squares on the other two sides) are equal to $a^2 + b^2$ (the squares on the two segments of the hypotenuse) $+ 2ab$; which last, it is easy to show geometrically, is equal to $(a + b)^2$, or the square on the hypotenuse. Guido was as much enchanted by the rudiments of algebra as he would have been if I had given him an engine worked by steam, with a methylated spirit lamp to heat the boiler; more enchanted, perhaps—for the engine would have got broken, and remaining always itself, would in any case have lost its charm, while the rudiments of algebra continued to grow and blossom in his mind with an unfailing luxuriance. Every day he made the discovery of something which seemed to him exquisitely beautiful; the new toy was inexhaustible in its potentialities.

In the intervals of applying algebra to the second book of Euclid, we experimented with circles; we struck bamboos into the parched earth, measured their shadows at different hours of the day, and drew exciting conclusions from

our observations. Sometimes, for fun, we cut and folded sheets of paper so as to make cubes and pyramids. One afternoon Guido arrived carrying carefully between his small rather grubby hands a flimsy dodecahedron.

"E tanto bello!" he said, as he showed us his paper crystal; and when I asked him how he managed to make it, he merely smiled and said it had been so easy. I looked at Elizabeth and laughed. But it would have been more symbolically to the point, I felt, if I had gone down on all fours, wagged the spiritual outgrowth of my os coccyx, and barked my astonished admiration.

It was an uncommonly hot summer. By the beginning of July our little Robin, unaccustomed to these high temperatures, began to look pale and tired; he was listless, had lost his appetite and energy. The doctor advised mountain air. We decided to spend the next ten or twelve weeks in Switzerland. My parting gift to Guido was the first six books of Euclid in Italian. He turned over the pages, looked ecstatically at the figures.

"If only I knew how to read properly," he said. "I'm so stupid. But now I shall really try to learn."

From our hotel near Grindelwald we sent the child, in Robin's name, various post cards of cows, Alp-horns, Swiss chalets, edelweiss, and the like. We received no answers to these cards; but then we did not expect answers. Guido could not write, and there was no reason why his father or his sisters should take the trouble to write for him. No news, we took it, was good news. And then one day, early in September, there arrived at the hotel a strange letter. The manager had it stuck up on the glass-fronted notice-board in the hall, so that all the guests might see it, and whoever conscientiously thought that it belonged to him might claim it. Passing the board on the way in to lunch, Elizabeth stopped to look at it.

"But it must be from Guido," she said.

I came and looked at the envelope over her shoulder. It was unstamped and black with postmarks. Traced out in pencil, the big uncertain capital letters sprawled across its face. In the first line was written: AL BABBO DI ROBIN, and there followed a travestied version of the name of the hotel and the place. Round the address bewildered postal officials had scrawled suggested emendations. The letter had wandered for a fortnight at least, back and forth across the face of Europe.

"Al Babbo di Robin. To Robin's father," I laughed. "Pretty smart of the postmen to have got it here at all." I went to the manager's office, set forth the justice of my claim to the letter and, having paid the fifty-centime surcharge for the missing stamp, had the case unlocked and the letter given me. We went in to lunch.

"The writing's magnificent," we agreed, laughing, as we examined the address at close quarters. "Thanks to Euclid," I added. "That's what comes of pandering to the ruling passion."

But when I opened the envelope and looked at its contents I no longer laughed. The letter was brief and almost telegraphical in style. "SONO DALLA PADRONA," it ran, "NON MI PIACE HA RUBATO IL MIO LIBRO NON VOGLIO SUONARE PIU VOGLIO TORNARE A CASA VENGA SUBITO GUIDO."

"What is it?"

I handed Elizabeth the letter. "That blasted woman's got hold of him," I said. . . .

Busts of men in Homburg hats, angels bathed in marble tears extinguishing torches, statues of little girls, cherubs, veiled figures, allegories and ruthless realisms—the strangest and most diverse idols beckoned and gesticulated as we passed. Printed indelibly on tin and embedded in the living rock, the brown photographs looked out, under glass, from the humbler crosses, headstones, and broken pillars. Dead ladies in the cubistic geometrical fashions of thirty years ago—two cones of black satin meeting point to point at the waist, and the arms: a sphere to the elbow, a polished cylinder below—smiled mournfully out of their marble frames; the smiling faces, the white hands, were the only recognisably human things that emerged from the solid geometry of their clothes. Men with black moustaches, men with white beards, young clean-shaven men, stared or averted their gaze to show a Roman profile. Children in their stiff best opened wide their eyes, smiled hopefully in anticipation of the little bird that was to issue from the camera's muzzle, smiled sceptically in the knowledge that it wouldn't, smiled laboriously and obediently because they had been told to. In spiky Gothic cottages of marble the richer dead privately reposed; through grilled doors one caught a glimpse of pale Inconsolables weeping, of distraught Geniuses guarding the secret of the tomb. The less prosperous sections of the majority slept in communities, close-crowded but elegantly housed under smooth continuous marble floors, whose every flagstone was the mouth of a separate grave.

These continental cemeteries, I thought, as Carlo and I made our way among the dead, are more frightful than ours, because these people pay more attention to their dead than we do. That primordial cult of corpses, that tender solicitude for their material well-being, which led the ancients to house their dead in stone, while they themselves lived between wattles and under thatch, still lingers here; persists, I thought, more vigorously than with us. There are a hundred gesticulating statues here for every one in an English graveyard. There are more family vaults, more "luxuriously appointed" (as they say of liners and hotels) than one would find at home. And embedded in every tombstone there are photographs to remind the powdered bones within what form they will have to resume on the Day of Judgment; beside each are little hanging lamps to burn optimistically on All Souls' Day. To the Man who built the Pyramids they are nearer, I thought, than we.

"If I had known," Carlo kept repeating, "if only I had known." His voice came to me through my reflections as though from a distance. "At the time he didn't mind at all. How should I have known that he would take it so much to heart afterwards? And she deceived me, she lied to me."

I assured him yet once more that it wasn't his fault. Though, of course, it was, in part. It was mine too, in part; I ought to have thought of the possibility and somehow guarded against it. And he shouldn't have let the child go, even temporarily and on trial, even though the woman was bringing pressure to bear on him. And the pressure had been considerable. They had worked

on the same holding for more than a hundred years, the men of Carlo's family; and now she had made the old man threaten to turn him out. It would be a dreadful thing to leave the place; and besides, another place wasn't so easy to find. It was made quite plain, however, that he could stay if he let her have the child. Only for a little to begin with; just to see how he got on. There would be no compulsion whatever on him to stay if he didn't like it. And it would be all to Guido's advantage; and to his father's, too, in the end. All that the Englishman had said about his not being such a good musician as he had thought at first was obviously untrue—mere jealousy and little-mindedness: the man wanted to take credit for Guido himself, that was all. And the boy, it was obvious, would learn nothing from him. What he needed was a real good professional master.

All the energy that, if the physicists had known their business, would have been driving dynamos, went into this campaign. It began the moment we were out of the house, intensively. She would have more chance of success, the Signora doubtless thought, if we weren't there. And besides, it was essential to take the opportunity when it offered itself and get hold of the child before we could make our bid—for it was obvious to her that we wanted Guido just as much as she did.

Day after day she renewed the assault. At the end of a week she sent her husband to complain about the state of the vines: they were in a shocking condition; he had decided, or very nearly decided, to give Carlo notice. Meekly, shamefacedly, in obedience to higher orders, the old gentleman uttered his threats. Next day Signora Bondi returned to the attack. The padrone, she declared, had been in a towering passion; but she'd do her best, her very best, to mollify him. And after a significant pause she went on to talk about Guido.

In the end Carlo gave in. The woman was too persistent and she held too many trump cards. The child could go and stay with her for a month or two on trial. After that, if he really expressed a desire to remain with her, she could formally adopt him.

At the idea of going for a holiday to the seaside—and it was to the seaside, Signora Bondi told him, that they were going—Guido was pleased and excited. He had heard a lot about the sea from Robin. "Tanta acqua!" It had sounded almost too good to be true. And now he was actually to go and see this marvel. It was very cheerfully that he parted from his family.

But after the holiday by the sea was over, and Signora Bondi had brought him back to her town house in Florence, he began to be homesick. The Signora, it was true, treated him exceedingly kindly, bought him new clothes, took him out to tea in the Via Tornabuoni and filled him up with cakes, iced strawberryade, whipped cream, and chocolates. But she made him practise the piano more than he liked, and what was worse, she took away his Euclid, on the score that he wasted too much time with it. And when he said that he wanted to go home, she put him off with promises and excuses and downright lies. She told him that she couldn't take him at once, but that next week, if he were good and worked hard at his piano meanwhile, next week . . . And when the time came she told him that his father didn't want him back. And she redoubled her petting, gave him expensive presents, and stuffed him

with yet unhealthier foods. To no purpose. Guido didn't like his new life, didn't want to practise scales, pined for his book, and longed to be back with his brothers and sisters. Signora Bondi, meanwhile, continued to hope that time and chocolates would eventually make the child hers; and to keep his family at a distance, she wrote to Carlo every few days letters which still purported to come from the seaside (she took the trouble to send them to a friend, who posted them back again to Florence), and in which she painted the most charming picture of Guido's happiness.

It was then that Guido wrote his letter to me. Abandoned, as he supposed, by his family—for that they shouldn't take the trouble to come to see him when they were so near was only to be explained on the hypothesis that they really had given him up—he must have looked to me as his last and only hope. And the letter, with its fantastic address, had been nearly a fortnight on its way. A fortnight—it must have seemed hundreds of years; and as the centuries succeeded one another, gradually, no doubt, the poor child became convinced that I too had abandoned him. There was no hope left.

"Here we are," said Carlo.

I looked up and found myself confronted by an enormous monument. In a kind of grotto hollowed in the flanks of a monolith of grey sandstone, Sacred Love, in bronze, was embracing a funerary urn. And in bronze letters riveted into the stone was a long legend to the effect that the inconsolable Ernesto Bondi had raised this monument to the memory of his beloved wife, Annunziata, as a token of his undying love for one whom, snatched from him by a premature death, he hoped very soon to join beneath this stone. The first Signora Bondi had died in 1912. I thought of the old man leashed to his white dog; he must always, I reflected, have been a most uxorious husband.

"They buried him here."

We stood there for a long time in silence. I felt the tears coming into my eyes as I thought of the poor child lying there underground. I thought of those luminous grave eyes, and the curve of that beautiful forehead, the droop of the melancholy mouth, of the expression of delight which illumined his face when he learned of some new idea that pleased him, when he heard a piece of music that he liked. And this beautiful small being was dead; and the spirit that inhabited this form, the amazing spirit, that too had been destroyed almost before it had begun to exist.

And the unhappiness that must have preceded the final act, the child's despair, the conviction of his utter abandonment—those were terrible to think of, terrible.

"I think we had better come away now," I said at last, and touched Carlo on the arm. He was standing there like a blind man, his eyes shut, his face slightly lifted towards the light; from between his closed eyelids the tears welled out, hung for a moment, and trickled down his cheeks. His lips trembled and I could see that he was making an effort to keep them still. "Come away," I repeated.

The face which had been still in its sorrow, was suddenly convulsed; he opened his eyes, and through the tears they were bright with a violent anger. "I shall kill her," he said, "I shall kill her. When I think of him throwing him-

self out, falling through the air . . ." With his two hands he made a violent gesture, bringing them down from over his head and arresting them with a sudden jerk when they were on a level with his breast. "And then crash." He shuddered. "She's as much responsible as though she had pushed him down herself. I shall kill her." He clenched his teeth.

To be angry is easier than to be sad, less painful. It is comforting to think of revenge. "Don't talk like that," I said. "It's no good. It's stupid. And what would be the point?" He had had those fits before, when grief became too painful and he had tried to escape from it. Anger had been the easiest way of escape. I had had, before this, to persuade him back into the harder path of grief. "It's stupid to talk like that," I repeated, and I led him away through the ghastly labyrinth of tombs, where death seemed more terrible even than it is.

By the time we had left the cemetery, and were walking down from San Miniato towards the Piazzale Michelangelo below, he had become calmer. His anger had subsided again into sorrow from which it had derived all its strength and its bitterness. In the Piazzale we halted for a moment to look down at the city in the valley below us. It was a day of floating clouds—great shapes, white, golden, and grey; and between them patches of a thin, transparent blue. Its lantern level, almost, with our eyes, the dome of the cathedral revealed itself in all its grandiose lightness, its vastness and aerial strength. On the innumerable brown and rosy roofs of the city the afternoon sunlight lay softly, sumptuously, and the towers were as though varnished and enamelled with an old gold. I thought of all the Men who had lived here and left the visible traces of their spirit and conceived extraordinary things, I thought of the dead child.

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ANGUS WILSON

Realpolitik

JOHN HOBDAY sat on the edge of his desk and swung his left leg with characteristic boyishness. He waited for the staff to get settled in their seats and then spoke with careful informality.

"I know how frightfully busy you are. As a matter of fact I am myself," he said with the half-humorous urchin smile that he used for such jokes. Only his secretary, Veronica, gave the helpful laugh he expected. It was not going to be an easy meeting, he decided. "So I'm not going to waste your time with a lot of talk," he went on. "I just thought . . ." He paused and beat with his pencil against the desk whilst Mrs. Scrutton moved her chair fussily out of the sunlight. "Ready?" he asked with an over-elaborate smile. "Right. Then we'll start again. As I was saying, we're all very busy, but all the same I thought it was time we had a little meeting. I've been here a week now and

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although I've had some very helpful chats with each of you in turn, we've never had a chance to get together and outline our plans." None of the three who formed his audience made any response. Veronica, who remembered him taking over new departments at the Ministry during the war, thought he hasn't got the right tone, he doesn't realize that he's coming up against deeper loyalties with these people, loyalties to scholarship and ideas. She almost felt like letting him fend for himself, but old habits were too strong.

"I'm sure it's what everybody's been wanting," she said in her deep voice. She had gauged rightly, his moment of uncertainty had gone, her faithful bark had guided him at the crucial moment. Mrs. Scrutton tried to discomfort him. She rustled the papers on her lap and whispered audibly to Major Sarson, "Our plans. *His* plans for us would be more honest." But it was too late; she had missed her chance. John merely frowned at the interruption and it was Mrs. Scrutton who was left with burning cheeks, hiding her embarrassment by lighting a fresh cigarette.

"As you know," John went on, and Veronica could tell by the loud, trumpeting, rhetorical note of his voice that he was once more the confident salesman lost in the dream world of the grandiose schemes he was putting before them, "I've got some very big ideas for the Gallery. I'm not an expert in any way, as you people are, but I think that's possibly why Sir Harold's executors chose me for the job. They felt the Gallery had already got its full weight of scholars and experts, what it needed was a man with administrative experience, whose training had led him to take an over-all view of things, to think, shall I say, widely rather than deeply. That's why they got me in. But I'm going to be absolutely frank with you"—tossing a lock of brown, wavy hair from his forehead, he stared at his audience with a wide-eyed appeal—"I need *your* help; without my staff I can get nowhere."

Major Sarson winced slightly. All this theatricality and the loud pitch of John's voice got on his nerves, besides he could feel a draught round his legs. It's like some damned Methodist preacher fellow, he thought.

"You've been grand in this first week," John went on, "absolutely grand. I don't mind telling you now that when I arrived I was dead scared. You'd all been here for years, you knew the collections backwards, you had your own ways of running the place, and above all you'd had the inestimable advantage of knowing Sir Harold, of hearing exactly what was in his mind when he bought this picture or that object, of knowing what his ideals were in giving the public the benefit of his taste and experience. I felt sure you were bound to resent me as an outsider, and I knew I'd have done the same in your place."

The faces in front of him were quite unresponsive. He isn't going to get anywhere with sentimental appeals, thought Veronica, these people are idealists, there's nothing more hard-boiled. The damned fools, thought John, they have the chance of turning this tin pot, cranky provincial gallery into a national institution and they won't play ball. Well, if they can't see which way their own chances lie, they're not getting in the way of mine. They'll have to come to heel or go. His voice became a little sharper, a shade less ingenuous and friendly.

"You've all told me your views in our various little chats. Sometimes we've agreed, sometimes we haven't. You've inclined to the feeling that all is for

the best in the best of all possible worlds, I've felt that some changes were needed, that the scope of the work here wanted broadening, that the organization wanted, let's face it, bringing up to date a bit, and in all this the Board has agreed with me."

Tony Parnell's baby face had grown steadily more pouting and scowling as John had been speaking. To think of this mountebank in charge of the Gallery, a professional careerist, who understood nothing of Sir Harold's ideas and aims, who had even laughed when he'd spoken to him of the metaphysical aspects of technique in painting. He had banked so much on becoming Curator. Sir Harold had spoken so often of him as "my torchbearer, the youngest member of our staff," and now these awful business men who had got control of the estate had put this creature in. Major Sarson and Mrs. Scrutton were too old to fight these changes, he had promised before the meeting that *he* would make the challenge. Now was his opportunity. Red in the face, he opened his mouth, but in his nervousness his voice emerged a high falsetto. John smiled across at Veronica.

"The Board haven't had much opportunity of agreeing with us since they haven't heard our views," Tony squeaked.

"My dear Parnell," said John, and his tone was purposely patronizing and offensive. The old ones he regarded without rancour as dead wood to be cleared away, but Tony he disliked personally for his assumptions of scholarly disinterestedness and moral superiority. "Don't let that worry you. As soon as you've got your ideas clear come along and push them at the Board as much as you like. I shouldn't use too much of your favourite art jargon if I was you; the Board are anxious to help but they're only ordinary business men and they might not understand. If you follow my advice you'll come down to earth a bit, but of course that's entirely your affair."

Mrs. Scrutton fingered the buttons on her checked tweed coat nervously. "There's no need to bully Mr. Parnell," she said.

"Oh, come," said John jocosely, "if Parnell's going to have the ladies on his side I shall have to surrender." To his delight he saw that Tony was frowning with annoyance.

"Do let me deal with this in my own way," Parnell said to Mrs. Scrutton, whose lip began to tremble.

So that severe grey bobbed hair and man's collar and tie could dissolve early into tears, thought John, so much the better.

"Mrs. Scrutton was only trying to help you, Parnell," said Major Sarson. "Don't let us forget our manners, please."

John yawned slightly. "When the little civil war's over," he said, "I'd just like to outline our main functions. As I see them they're these: Relations with the Public, that's you, Parnell; Display, Mrs. Scrutton; Research, Major Sarson. Miss Clay," he indicated Veronica, "is maid of all work. And I, well, I'm the Aunt Sally, ready to stop the bricks and pass on the bouquets."

Major Sarson looked at his watch impatiently. "I quite agree with you, Major," said John; "the sooner we get finished, the better. No true gentlemen continue to hold meetings after opening time." The old man's face twitched violently, no one before had referred overtly to his notorious weakness.

"I'd like to take the public first," said John. "You've done a first-rate job,

Parnell—within its limits. But you haven't gone far enough. You've got real enthusiasm and that's half the battle—but only half. You give the public first-rate value in lectures and catalogues when they get here, but you don't try to get them to come. I know what you're going to say: 'They'll come if they're interested.' But aren't you being a bit hard on the poor, tired, pushed-around public of today? They've got to be told about the place. You've got to compete with the cinema, the football team *and* the fireside radio. In short you've got to advertise and you can't do that unless you have figures." Here John paused and picked up a file of papers.

"You have all the figures there," said Tony sulkily.

"I know," said John, "but don't you think they're just a bit too general? 'So many people visited the Gallery on August 5th, so many on November 3rd.' But what sort of people? Who are we catering for? Were they Chinamen, shopgirls, farmers, or just plain deaf-mutes? To tell us anything these figures want breaking down into groups—so many foreigners, so many over-forties, so many under-twenties. That's the way to build up a picture. Now supposing you run over these figures in the way that I suggest and we'll talk again."

Tony was about to protest that this task was impossible, but John held up his hand. "No, no, time's very short and there's one more point I want to raise before we pass on to display." Mrs. Scrutton drew her coat tightly round her. "It's about the lecture room. Sir Louis Crippen was saying something at the last Board meeting about its not being free for his archaeological society when he needed it. Do you know anything about that?"

Tony Parnell hesitated. "Well, actually," he said, "Mrs. Scrutton makes all the lecture hall arrangements."

"But isn't it the P.R.O.'s pigeon?" asked John.

"Yes," said Tony, "but . . . well . . . Mrs. Scrutton . . ."

"I see," said John coldly. "Perhaps you'd enlighten me, then, Mrs. Scrutton."

The grey bob shook as she answered, an involuntary shake that was to prove the prelude to age's palsy. "Sir Louis asked for Tuesday and Tuesdays are always booked by Miss Copley," she said.

"Miss Copley?"

Mrs. Scrutton guessed that he knew the answer and her reply attempted a rebuke. "Miss Copley is an old and true friend to the Gallery," she said. "She's been giving her lectures to Schools on Tuesdays for many years."

"No doubt," said John, "but I still think Sir Louis should have preference."

"I don't agree at all," said Major Sarson; "it would be most unfair."

"Yes, why should Sir Louis receive special treatment?" asked Mrs. Scrutton.

"Well, frankly," replied John, "because although Miss Copley may be a very old friend, Sir Louis is a very influential one and the Gallery needs influential friends."

Before Mrs. Scrutton there floated Sir Harold's features, like Erasmus she had thought him, the last of the humanists. Major Sarson too remembered his old friend's handshake and his firm clear voice. "Sarson," he had said, "this money came to me through false standards, false distinctions. There shall be no distinctions in its use but those of scholarship." The eyes of both these old people filled with tears.

John turned to Veronica. "You've nothing to do, Miss Clay," he said. "In

back, we had the feeling that the horrible end of the affair had been preordained and lay in the nature of things; that the children had to be present at it was an added impropriety, due to the false colors in which the weird creature presented himself. Luckily for them, they did not know where the comedy left off and the tragedy began; and we let them remain in their happy belief that the whole thing had been a play up till the end.

Torre di Venere lies some fifteen kilometers from Portoclemente, one of the most popular summer resorts on the Tyrrhenian Sea. Portoclemente is urban and elegant and full to overflowing for months on end. Its gay and busy main street of shops and hotels runs down to a wide sandy beach covered with tents and pennanted sand-castles and sunburnt humanity, where at all times a lively social bustle reigns, and much noise. But this same spacious and inviting fine-sanded beach, this same border of pine grove and near, presiding mountains, continues all the way along the coast. No wonder then that some competition of a quiet kind should have sprung up further on. Torre di Venere—the tower that gave the town its name is gone long since, one looks for it in vain—is an offshoot of the larger resort, and for some years remained an idyll for the few, a refuge for more unworldly spirits. But the usual history of such places repeated itself: peace has had to retire further along the coast, to Marina Petriera and dear knows where else. We all know how the world at once seeks peace and puts her to flight—rushing upon her in the fond idea that they two will wed, and where she is, there it can be at home. It will even set up its Vanity Fair in a spot and be capable of thinking that peace is still by its side. Thus Torre—though its atmosphere so far is more modest and contemplative than that of Portoclemente—has been quite taken up, by both Italians and foreigners. It is no longer the thing to go to Portoclemente—though still so much the thing that it is as noisy and crowded as ever. One goes next door, so to speak: to Torre. So much more refined, even, and cheaper to boot. And the attractiveness of these qualities persists, though the qualities themselves long ago ceased to be evident. Torre has got a Grand Hotel. Numerous pensions have sprung up, some modest, some pretentious. The people who own or rent the villas and pinetas overlooking the sea no longer have it all their own way on the beach. In July and August it looks just like the beach at Portoclemente: it swarms with a screaming, squabbling, merrymaking crowd, and the sun, blazing down like mad, peels the skin off their necks. Garish little flat-bottomed boats rock on the glittering blue, manned by children, whose mothers hover afar and fill the air with anxious cries of Nino! and Sandro! and Bice! and Maria! Peddlers step across the legs of recumbent sun-bathers, selling flowers and corals, oysters, lemonade, and *cornetti al burro,* and crying their wares in the breathy, full-throated southern voice.

Such was the scene that greeted our arrival in Torre: pleasant enough, but after all, we thought, we had come too soon. It was the middle of August, the Italian season was still at its height, scarcely the moment for strangers to learn to love the special charms of the place. What an afternoon crowd in the cafés on the front! For instance, in the Esquisito, where we sometimes sat and were served by Mario, that very Mario of whom I shall have presently to tell. It is well-nigh impossible to find a table; and the various orchestras con-

tend together in the midst of one's conversation with bewildering effect. Of course, it is in the afternoon that people come over from Portoclemente. The excursion is a favorite one for the restless denizens of that pleasure resort, and a Fiat motor-bus plies to and fro, coating inch-thick with dust the oleander and laurel hedges along the highroad—a notable if repulsive sight.

Yes, decidedly one should go to Torre in September, when the great public has left. Or else in May, before the water is warm enough to tempt the Southerner to bathe. Even in the before and after seasons Torre is not empty, but life is less national and more subdued. English, French, and German prevail under the tent-awnings and in the pension dining-rooms; whereas in August —in the Grand Hotel, at least, where, in default of private addresses, we had engaged rooms—the stranger finds the field so occupied by Florentine and Roman society that he feels quite isolated and even temporarily *déclassé*.

We had, rather to our annoyance, this experience on the evening we arrived, when we went in to dinner and were shown to our table by the waiter in charge. As a table, it had nothing against it, save that we had already fixed our eyes upon those on the veranda beyond, built out over the water, where little red-shaded lamps glowed—and there were still some tables empty, though it was as full as the dining-room within. The children went into raptures at the festive sight, and without more ado we announced our intention to take our meals by preference in the veranda. Our words, it appeared, were prompted by ignorance; for we were informed, with somewhat embarrassed politeness, that the cozy nook outside was reserved for the clients of the hotel: *ai nostri clienti*. Their clients? But we were their clients. We were not tourists or tippers, but boarders for a stay of some three or four weeks. However, we forbore to press for an explanation of the difference between the likes of us and that clientèle to whom it was vouchsafed to eat out there in the glow of the red lamps, and took our dinner by the prosaic common light of the dining-room chandelier—a thoroughly ordinary and monotonous hotel bill of fare, be it said. In Pensione Eleonora, a few steps landward, the table, as we were to discover, was much better.

And thither it was that we moved, three or four days later, before we had had time to settle in properly at the Grand Hotel. Not on account of the veranda and the lamps. The children, straightway on the best of terms with waiters and pages, absorbed in the joys of life on the beach, promptly forgot those colorful seductions. But now there arose, between ourselves and the veranda clientèle—or perhaps more correctly with the compliant management —one of those little unpleasantnesses which can quite spoil the pleasure of a holiday. Among the guests were some high Roman aristocracy, a Principe X and his family. These grand folk occupied rooms close to our own, and the Principessa, a great and a passionately maternal lady, was thrown into a panic by the vestiges of a whooping-cough which our little ones had lately got over, but which now and then still faintly troubled the unshatterable slumbers of our youngest-born. The nature of this illness is not clear, leaving some play for the imagination. So we took no offense at our elegant neighbor for clinging to the widely held view that whooping-cough is acoustically contagious and quite simply fearing lest her children yield to the bad example set by ours. In

the fullness of her feminine self-confidence she protested to the management, which then, in the person of the proverbial frock-coated manager, hastened to represent to us, with many expressions of regret, that under the circumstances they were obliged to transfer us to the annexe. We did our best to assure him that the disease was in its very last stages, that it was actually over, and presented no danger of infection to anybody. All that we gained was permission to bring the case before the hotel physician—not one chosen by us—by whose verdict we must then abide. We agreed, convinced that thus we should at once pacify the Princess and escape the trouble of moving. The doctor appeared, and behaved like a faithful and honest servant of science. He examined the child and gave his opinion: the disease was quite over, no danger of contagion was present. We drew a long breath and considered the incident closed—until the manager announced that despite the doctor's verdict it would still be necessary for us to give up our rooms and retire to the *dépendance*. Byzantinism like this outraged us. It is not likely that the Principessa was responsible for the willful breach of faith. Very likely the fawning management had not even dared to tell her what the physician said. Anyhow, we made it clear to his understanding that we preferred to leave the hotel altogether and at once—and packed our trunks. We could do so with a light heart, having already set up casual friendly relations with Casa Eleonora. We had noticed its pleasant exterior and formed the acquaintance of its proprietor, Signora Angiolieri, and her husband: she slender and black-haired, Tuscan in type, probably at the beginning of the thirties, with the dead ivory complexion of the southern woman, he quiet and bald and carefully dressed. They owned a larger establishment in Florence and presided only in summer and early autumn over the branch in Torre di Venere. But earlier, before her marriage, our new landlady had been companion, fellow-traveler, wardrobe mistress, yes, friend, of Eleonora Duse and manifestly regarded that period as the crown of her career. Even at our first visit she spoke of it with animation. Numerous photographs of the great actress, with affectionate inscriptions, were displayed about the drawing-room, and other souvenirs of their life together adorned the little tables and étagères. This cult of a so interesting past was calculated, of course, to heighten the advantages of the signora's present business. Nevertheless our pleasure and interest were quite genuine as we were conducted through the house by its owner and listened to her sonorous and staccato Tuscan voice relating anecdotes of that immortal mistress, depicting her suffering saintliness, her genius, her profound delicacy of feeling.

Thither, then, we moved our effects, to the dismay of the staff of the Grand Hotel, who, like all Italians, were very good to children. Our new quarters were retired and pleasant, we were within easy reach of the sea through the avenue of young plane trees that ran down to the esplanade. In the clean, cool dining-room Signora Angiolieri daily served the soup with her own hands, the service was attentive and good, the table capital. We even discovered some Viennese acquaintances, and enjoyed chatting with them after luncheon, in front of the house. They, in their turn, were the means of our finding others—in short, all seemed for the best, and we were heartily glad of the change we had made. Nothing was now wanting to a holiday of the most gratifying kind.

And yet no proper gratification ensued. Perhaps the stupid occasion of our change of quarters pursued us to the new ones we had found. Personally, I admit that I do not easily forget these collisions with ordinary humanity, the naïve misuse of power, the injustice, the sycophantic corruption. I dwelt upon the incident too much, it irritated me in retrospect—quite futilely, of course, since such phenomena are only all too natural and all too much the rule. And we had not broken off relations with the Grand Hotel. The children were as friendly as ever there, the porter mended their toys, and we sometimes took tea in the garden. We even saw the Principessa. She would come out, with her firm and delicate tread, her lips emphatically corallined, to look after her children, playing under the supervision of their English governess. She did not dream that we were anywhere near, for so soon as she appeared in the offing we sternly forbade our little one even to clear his throat.

The heat—if I may bring it in evidence—was extreme. It was African. The power of the sun, directly one left the border of the indigo-blue wave, was so frightful, so relentless, that the mere thought of the few steps between the beach and luncheon was a burden, clad though one might be only in pajamas. Do you care for that sort of thing? Weeks on end? Yes, of course, it is proper to the south, it is classic weather, the sun of Homer, the climate wherein human culture came to flower—and all the rest of it. But after a while it is too much for me, I reach a point where I begin to find it dull. The burning void of the sky, day after day, weighs one down; the high coloration, the enormous naiveté of the unrefracted light—they do, I dare say, induce light-heartedness, a carefree mood born of immunity from downpours and other meteorological caprices. But slowly, slowly, there makes itself felt a lack: the deeper, more complex needs of the northern soul remain unsatisfied. You are left barren—even, it may be, in time, a little contemptuous. True, without that stupid business of the whooping-cough I might not have been feeling these things. I was annoyed, very likely I wanted to feel them and so half-unconsciously seized upon an idea lying ready to hand to induce, or if not to induce, at least to justify and strengthen, my attitude. Up to this point, then, if you like, let us grant some ill will on our part. But the sea; and the mornings spent extended upon the fine sand in face of its eternal splendors—no, the sea could not conceivably induce such feelings. Yet it was none the less true that, despite all previous experience, we were not at home on the beach, we were not happy.

It was too soon, too soon. The beach, as I have said, was still in the hands of the middle-class native. It is a pleasing breed to look at, and among the young we saw much shapeliness and charm. Still, we were necessarily surrounded by a great deal of very average humanity—a middle-class mob, which, you will admit, is not more charming under this sun than under one's own native sky. The voices these women have! It was sometimes hard to believe that we were in the land which is the western cradle of the art of song. *"Fuggièro!"* I can still hear that cry, as for twenty mornings long I heard it close behind me, breathy, full-throated, hideously stressed, with a harsh open *e,* uttered in accents of mechanical despair. *"Fuggièro! Rispondi almeno!"* Answer when I call you! The *sp* in *rispondi* was pronounced like *shp,* as Germans pronounce it; and this, on top of what I felt already, vexed my sensitive

If we only had! We should thus have escaped that fatal Cipolla. But circumstances combined to prevent us from making up our minds to a change. A certain poet says that it is indolence that makes us endure uncomfortable situations. The *aperçu* may serve as an explanation for our inaction. Anyhow, one dislikes voiding the field immediately upon such an event. Especially if sympathy from other quarters encourages one to defy it. And in the Villa Eleonora they pronounced as with one voice upon the injustice of our punishment. Some Italian after-dinner acquaintances found that the episode put their country in a very bad light, and proposed taking the man in the bowler hat to task, as one fellow-citizen to another. But the next day he and his party had vanished from the beach. Not on our account, of course. Though it might be that the consciousness of his impending departure had added energy to his rebuke; in any case his going was a relief. And, furthermore, we stayed because our stay had by now become remarkable in our own eyes, which is worth something in itself, quite apart from the comfort or discomfort involved. Shall we strike sail, avoid a certain experience so soon as it seems not expressly calculated to increase our enjoyment or our self-esteem? Shall we go away whenever life looks like turning in the slightest uncanny, or not quite normal, or even rather painful and mortifying? No, surely not. Rather stay and look matters in the face, brave them out; perhaps precisely in so doing lies a lesson for us to learn. We stayed on and reaped as the awful reward of our constancy the unholy and staggering experience with Cipolla.

I have not mentioned that the after season had begun, almost on the very day we were disciplined by the city authorities. The worshipful gentleman in the bowler hat, our denouncer, was not the only person to leave the resort. There was a regular exodus, on every hand you saw luggage-carts on their way to the station. The beach denationalized itself. Life in Torre, in the cafés and the pinetas, became more homelike and more European. Very likely we might even have eaten at a table in the glass veranda, but we refrained, being content at Signora Angiolieri's—as content, that is, as our evil star would let us be. But at the same time with this turn for the better came a change in the weather: almost to an hour it showed itself in harmony with the holiday calendar of the general public. The sky was overcast; not that it grew any cooler, but the unclouded heat of the entire eighteen days since our arrival, and probably long before that, gave place to a stifling sirocco air, while from time to time a little ineffectual rain sprinkled the velvety surface of the beach. Add to which, that two-thirds of our intended stay at Torre had passed. The colorless, lazy sea, with sluggish jellyfish floating in its shallows, was at least a change. And it would have been silly to feel retrospective longings after a sun that had caused us so many sighs when it burned down in all its arrogant power.

At this juncture, then, it was that Cipolla announced himself. Cavaliere Cipolla he was called on the posters that appeared one day stuck up everywhere, even in the dining-room of Pensione Eleonora. A traveling virtuoso, an entertainer, *"forzatore, illusionista, prestidigitatore,"* as he called himself, who proposed to wait upon the highly respectable population of Torre di Venere with a display of extraordinary phenomena of a mysterious and staggering kind. A conjuror! The bare announcement was enough to turn our

children's heads. They had never seen anything of the sort, and now our present holiday was to afford them this new excitement. From that moment on they besieged us with prayers to take tickets for the performance. We had doubts, from the first, on the score of the lateness of the hour, nine o'clock; but gave way, in the idea that we might see a little of what Cipolla had to offer, probably no great matter, and then go home. Besides, of course, the children could sleep late next day. We bought four tickets of Signora Angiolieri herself, she having taken a number of the stalls on commission to sell them to her guests. She could not vouch for the man's performance, and we had no great expectations. But we were conscious of a need for diversion, and the children's violent curiosity proved catching.

The Cavaliere's performance was to take place in a hall where during the season there had been a cinema with a weekly program. We had never been there. You reached it by following the main street under the wall of the *"palazzo,"* a ruin with a "For sale" sign, that suggested a castle and had obviously been built in lordlier days. In the same street were the chemist, the hairdresser, and all the better shops; it led, so to speak, from the feudal past the bourgeois into the proletarian, for it ended off between two rows of poor fishing-huts, where old women sat mending nets before the doors. And here, among the proletariat, was the hall, not much more, actually, than a wooden shed, though a large one, with a turreted entrance, plastered on either side with layers of gay placards. Some while after dinner, then, on the appointed evening, we wended our way thither in the dark, the children dressed in their best and blissful with the sense of so much irregularity. It was sultry, as it had been for days; there was heat lightning now and then, and a little rain; we proceeded under umbrellas. It took us a quarter of an hour.

Our tickets were collected at the entrance, our places we had to find ourselves. They were in the third row left, and as we sat down we saw that, late though the hour was for the performance, it was to be interpreted with even more laxity. Only very slowly did an audience—who seemed to be relied upon to come late—begin to fill the stalls. These comprised the whole auditorium; there were no boxes. This tardiness gave us some concern. The children's cheeks were already flushed as much with fatigue as with excitement. But even when we entered, the standing-room at the back and in the side aisles was already well occupied. There stood the manhood of Torre di Venere, all and sundry, fisherfolk, rough-and-ready youths with bare forearms crossed over their striped jerseys. We were well pleased with the presence of this native assemblage, which always adds color and animation to occasions like the present; and the children were frankly delighted. For they had friends among these people—acquaintances picked up on afternoon strolls to the further ends of the beach. We would be turning homeward, at the hour when the sun dropped into the sea, spent with the huge effort it had made and gilding with reddish gold the oncoming surf; and we would come upon bare-legged fisherfolk standing in rows, bracing and hauling with long-drawn cries as they drew in the nets and harvested in dripping baskets their catch, often so scanty, of *frutta di mare*. The children looked on, helped to pull, brought out their little stock of Italian words, made friends. So now they exchanged nods with the "standing-room" clientèle; there was

Guiscardo, there Antonio, they knew them by name and waved and called across in half-whispers, getting answering nods and smiles that displayed rows of healthy white teeth. Look, there is even Mario, Mario from the Esquisito, who brings us the chocolate. He wants to see the conjuror, too, and he must have come early, for he is almost in front; but he does not see us, he is not paying attention; that is a way he has, even though he is a waiter. So we wave instead to the man who lets out the little boats on the beach; he is there too, standing at the back.

It had got to a quarter past nine, it got to almost half past. It was natural that we should be nervous. When would the children get to bed? It had been a mistake to bring them, for now it would be very hard to suggest breaking off their enjoyment before it had got well under way. The stalls had filled in time; all Torre, apparently, was there: the guests of the Grand Hotel, the guests of Villa Eleonora, familiar faces from the beach. We heard English and German and the sort of French that Rumanians speak with Italians. Madame Angiolieri herself sat two rows behind us, with her quiet, bald-headed spouse, who kept stroking his mustache with the two middle fingers of his right hand. Everybody had come late, but nobody too late. Cipolla made us wait for him.

He made us wait. That is probably the way to put it. He heightened the suspense by his delay in appearing. And we could see the point of this, too—only not when it was carried to extremes. Towards half past nine the audience began to clap—an amiable way of expressing justifiable impatience, evincing as it does an eagerness to applaud. For the little ones, this was a joy in itself—all children love to clap. From the popular sphere came loud cries of *"Pronti!" "Cominciamo!"* And lo, it seemed now as easy to begin as before it had been hard. A gong sounded, greeted by the standing rows with a many-voiced "Ah-h!" and the curtains parted. They revealed a platform furnished more like a schoolroom than like the theater of a conjuring performance—largely because of the blackboard in the left foreground. There was a common yellow hat-stand, a few ordinary straw-bottomed chairs, and further back a little round table holding a water carafe and glass, also a tray with a liqueur glass and a flask of pale yellow liquid. We had still a few seconds of time to let these things sink in. Then, with no darkening of the house, Cavaliere Cipolla made his entry.

He came forward with a rapid step that expressed his eagerness to appear before his public and gave rise to the illusion that he had already come a long way to put himself at their service—whereas, of course, he had only been standing in the wings. His costume supported the fiction. A man of an age hard to determine, but by no means young; with a sharp, ravaged face, piercing eyes, compressed lips, small black waxed mustache, and a so-called imperial in the curve between mouth and chin. He was dressed for the street with a sort of complicated evening elegance, in a wide black pelerine with velvet collar and satin lining; which, in the hampered state of his arms, he held together in front with his white-gloved hands. He had a white scarf round his neck; a top hat with a curving brim sat far back on his head. Perhaps more than anywhere else the eighteenth century is still alive in Italy, and with it the charlatan and mountebank type so characteristic of the period. Only there, at any rate, does one still encounter really well-preserved specimens. Cipolla had in his whole

appearance much of the historic type; his very clothes helped to conjure up the traditional figure with its blatantly, fantastically foppish air. His pretentious costume sat upon him, or rather hung upon him, most curiously, being in one place drawn too tight, in another a mass of awkward folds. There was something not quite in order about his figure, both front and back—that was plain later on. But I must emphasize the fact that there was not a trace of personal jocularity or clownishness in his pose, manner, or behavior. On the contrary, there was complete seriousness, an absence of any humorous appeal; occasionally even a cross-grained pride, along with that curious, self-satisfied air so characteristic of the deformed. None of all this, however, prevented his appearance from being greeted with laughter from more than one quarter of the hall.

All the eagerness had left his manner. The swift entry had been merely an expression of energy, not of zeal. Standing at the footlights he negligently drew off his gloves, to display long yellow hands, one of them adorned with a seal ring with a lapis-lazuli in a high setting. As he stood there, his small hard eyes, with flabby pouches beneath them, roved appraisingly about the hall, not quickly, rather in a considered examination, pausing here and there upon a face with his lips clipped together, not speaking a word. Then with a display of skill as surprising as it was casual, he rolled his gloves into a ball and tossed them across a considerable distance into the glass on the table. Next from an inner pocket he drew forth a packet of cigarettes; you could see by the wrapper that they were the cheapest sort the government sells. With his fingertips he pulled out a cigarette and lighted it, without looking, from a quick-firing benzine lighter. He drew the smoke deep into his lungs and let it out again, tapping his foot, with both lips drawn in an arrogant grimace and the gray smoke streaming out between broken and saw-edged teeth.

With a keenness equal to his own his audience eyed him. The youths at the rear scowled as they peered at this cocksure creature to search out his secret weaknesses. He betrayed none. In fetching out and putting back the cigarettes his clothes got in his way. He had to turn back his pelerine, and in so doing revealed a riding-whip with a silver claw-handle that hung by a leather thong from his left forearm and looked decidedly out of place. You could see that he had on not evening clothes but a frock-coat, and under this, as he lifted it to get at his pocket, could be seen a striped sash worn about the body. Somebody behind me whispered that this sash went with his title of Cavaliere. I give the information for what it may be worth—personally, I never heard that the title carried such insignia with it. Perhaps the sash was sheer pose, like the way he stood there, without a word, casually and arrogantly puffing smoke into his audience's face.

People laughed, as I said. The merriment had become almost general when somebody in the "standing seats," in a loud, dry voice, remarked: *"Buona sera."*

Cipolla cocked his head. "Who was that?" asked he, as though he had been dared. "Who was that just spoke? Well? First so bold and now so modest? *Paura,* eh?" He spoke with a rather high, asthmatic voice, which yet had a metallic quality. He waited.

"That was me," a youth at the rear broke into the stillness, seeing himself thus challenged. He was not far from us, a handsome fellow in a woolen shirt,

with his coat hanging over one shoulder. He wore his curly, wiry hair in a high, disheveled mop, the style affected by the youth of the awakened Fatherland; it gave him an African appearance that rather spoiled his looks. *"Bè!* That was me. It was your business to say it first, but I was trying to be friendly."

More laughter. The chap had a tongue in his head. *"Ha sciolto lo scilinguágnolo,"* I heard near me. After all, the retort was deserved.

"Ah, bravo!" answered Cipolla. "I like you, *giovanotto.* Trust me, I've had my eye on you for some time. People like you are just in my line. I can use them. And you are the pick of the lot, that's plain to see. You do what you like. Or is it possible you have ever not done what you liked—or even, maybe, what you didn't like? What somebody else liked, in short? Hark ye, my friend, that might be a pleasant change for you, to divide up the willing and the doing and stop tackling both jobs at once. Division of labor, *sistema americano, sa'!* For instance, suppose you were to show your tongue to this select and honorable audience here—your whole tongue, right down to the roots?"

"No, I won't," said the youth, hostilely. "Sticking out your tongue shows a bad bringing-up."

"Nothing of the sort," retorted Cipolla. "You would only be *doing* it. With all due respect to your bringing-up, I suggest that before I count ten, you will perform a right turn and stick out your tongue at the company here further than you knew yourself that you could stick it out."

He gazed at the youth, and his piercing eyes seemed to sink deeper into their sockets. *"Uno!"* said he. He had let his riding-whip slide down his arm and made it whistle once through the air. The boy faced about and put out his tongue, so long, so extendedly, that you could see it was the very uttermost in tongue which he had to offer. Then turned back, stony-faced, to his former position.

"That was me," mocked Cipolla, with a jerk of his head towards the youth. *"Bè!* That was me." Leaving the audience to enjoy its sensations, he turned towards the little round table, lifted the bottle, poured out a small glass of what was obviously cognac, and tipped it up with a practiced hand.

The children laughed with all their hearts. They had understood practically nothing of what had been said, but it pleased them hugely that something so funny should happen, straightaway, between that queer man up there and somebody out of the audience. They had no preconception of what an "evening" would be like and were quite ready to find this a priceless beginning. As for us, we exchanged a glance and I remember that involuntarily I made with my lips the sound that Cipolla's whip had made when it cut the air. For the rest, it was plain that people did not know what to make of a preposterous beginning like this to a sleight-of-hand performance. They could not see why the *giovanotto,* who after all in a way had been their spokesman, should suddenly have turned on them to vent his incivility. They felt that he had behaved like a silly ass and withdrew their countenances from him in favor of the artist, who now came back from his refreshment table and addressed them as follows:

"Ladies and gentlemen," said he, in his wheezing, metallic voice, "you saw just now that I was rather sensitive on the score of the rebuke this hopeful young linguist saw fit to give me"—*"questo linguista di belle speranze"* was

what he said, and we all laughed at the pun. "I am a man who sets some store by himself, you may take it from me. And I see no point in being wished a good-evening unless it is done courteously and in all seriousness. For anything else there is no occasion. When a man wishes me a good-evening he wishes himself one, for the audience will have one only if I do. So this lady-killer of Torre di Venere" (another thrust) "did well to testify that I have one tonight and that I can dispense with any wishes of his in the matter. I can boast of having good evenings almost without exception. One not so good does come my way now and again, but very seldom. My calling is hard and my health not of the best. I have a little physical defect which prevented me from doing my bit in the war for the greater glory of the Fatherland. It is perforce with my mental and spiritual parts that I conquer life—which after all only means conquering oneself. And I flatter myself that my achievements have aroused interest and respect among the educated public. The leading newspapers have lauded me, the *Corriere della Sera* did me the courtesy of calling me a phenomenon, and in Rome the brother of the *Duce* honored me by his presence at one of my evenings. I should not have thought that in a relatively less important place" (laughter here, at the expense of poor little Torre) "I should have to give up the small personal habits which brilliant and elevated audiences had been ready to overlook. Nor did I think I had to stand being heckled by a person who seems to have been rather spoilt by the favors of the fair sex." All this of course at the expense of the youth whom Cipolla never tired of presenting in the guise of *donnaiuolo* and rustic Don Juan. His persistent thin-skinnedness and animosity were in striking contrast to the self-confidence and the worldly success he boasted of. One might have assumed that the *giovanotto* was merely the chosen butt of Cipolla's customary professional sallies, had not the very pointed witticisms betrayed a genuine antagonism. No one looking at the physical parts of the two men need have been at a loss for the explanation, even if the deformed man had not constantly played on the other's supposed success with the fair sex. "Well," Cipolla went on, "before beginning our entertainment this evening, perhaps you will permit me to make myself comfortable."

And he went towards the hat-stand to take off his things.

"Parla benissimo," asserted somebody in our neighborhood. So far, the man had done nothing; but what he had said was accepted as an achievement, by means of that he had made an impression. Among southern peoples speech is a constituent part of the pleasure of living, it enjoys far livelier social esteem than in the north. That national cement, the mother tongue, is paid symbolic honors down here, and there is something blithely symbolical in the pleasure people take in their respect for its forms and phonetics. They enjoy speaking, they enjoy listening; and they listen with discrimination. For the way a man speaks serves as a measure of his personal rank; carelessness and clumsiness are greeted with scorn, elegance and mastery are rewarded with social éclat. Wherefore the small man too, where it is a question of getting his effect, chooses his phrase nicely and turns it with care. On this count, then, at least, Cipolla had won his audience; though he by no means belonged to the class of men which

the Italian, in a singular mixture of moral and esthetic judgments, labels *"simpatico."*

After removing his hat, scarf, and mantle he came to the front of the stage, settling his coat, pulling down his cuffs with their large cuff-buttons, adjusting his absurd sash. He had very ugly hair; the top of his head, that is, was almost bald, while a narrow, black-varnished frizz of curls ran from front to back as though stuck on; the side hair, likewise blackened, was brushed forward to the corners of the eyes—it was, in short, the hairdressing of an old-fashioned circus-director, fantastic, but entirely suited to his outmoded personal type and worn with so much assurance as to take the edge off the public's sense of humor. The little physical defect of which he had warned us was now all too visible, though the nature of it was even now not very clear: the chest was too high, as is usual in such cases; but the corresponding malformation of the back did not sit between the shoulders, it took the form of a sort of hips or buttocks hump, which did not indeed hinder his movements but gave him a grotesque and dipping stride at every step he took. However, by mentioning his deformity beforehand he had broken the shock of it, and a delicate propriety of feeling appeared to reign throughout the hall.

"At your service," said Cipolla. "With your kind permission, we will begin the evening with some arithmetical tests."

Arithmetic? That did not sound much like sleight-of-hand. We began to have our suspicions that the man was sailing under a false flag, only we did not yet know which was the right one. I felt sorry on the children's account; but for the moment they were content simply to be there.

The numerical test which Cipolla now introduced was as simple as it was baffling. He began by fastening a piece of paper to the upper right-hand corner of the blackboard; then lifting it up, he wrote something underneath. He talked all the while, relieving the dryness of his offering by a constant flow of words, and showed himself a practiced speaker, never at a loss for conversational turns of phrase. It was in keeping with the nature of his performance, and at the same time vastly entertained the children, that he went on to eliminate the gap between stage and audience, which had already been bridged over by the curious skirmish with the fisher lad: he had representatives from the audience mount the stage, and himself descended the wooden steps to seek personal contact with his public. And again, with individuals, he fell into his former taunting tone. I do not know how far that was a deliberate feature of his system; he preserved a serious, even a peevish air, but his audience, at least the more popular section, seemed convinced that that was all part of the game. So then, after he had written something and covered the writing by the paper, he desired that two persons should come up on the platform and help to perform the calculations. They would not be difficult, even for people not clever at figures. As usual, nobody volunteered, and Cipolla took care not to molest the more select portion of his audience. He kept to the populace. Turning to two sturdy young louts standing behind us, he beckoned them to the front, encouraging and scolding by turns. They should not stand there gaping, he said, unwilling to oblige the company. Actually, he got them in motion; with clumsy tread they came down the middle aisle, climbed the steps, and stood in front of the blackboard,

grinning sheepishly at their comrades' shouts and applause. Cipolla joked with them for a few minutes, praised their heroic firmness of limb and the size of their hands, so well calculated to do this service for the public. Then he handed one of them the chalk and told him to write down the numbers as they were called out. But now the creature declared that he could not write! *"Non so scrivere,"* said he in his gruff voice, and his companion added that neither did he.

God knows whether they told the truth or whether they wanted to make game of Cipolla. Anyhow, the latter was far from sharing the general merriment which their confession aroused. He was insulted and disgusted. He sat there on a straw-bottomed chair in the center of the stage with his legs crossed, smoking a fresh cigarette out of his cheap packet; obviously it tasted the better for the cognac he had indulged in while the yokels were stumping up the steps. Again he inhaled the smoke and let it stream out between curling lips. Swinging his leg, with his gaze sternly averted from the two shamelessly chuckling creatures and from the audience as well, he stared into space as one who withdraws himself and his dignity from the contemplation of an utterly despicable phenomenon.

"Scandalous," said he, in a sort of icy snarl. "Go back to your places! In Italy everybody can write—in all her greatness there is no room for ignorance and unenlightenment. To accuse her of them, in the hearing of this international company, is a cheap joke, in which you yourselves cut a very poor figure and humiliate the government and the whole country as well. If it is true that Torre di Venere is indeed the last refuge of such ignorance, then I must blush to have visited the place—being, as I already was, aware of its inferiority to Rome in more than one respect—"

Here Cipolla was interrupted by the youth with the Nubian coiffure and his jacket across his shoulder. His fighting spirit, as we now saw, had only abdicated temporarily, and he now flung himself into the breach in defense of his native heath.

That will do, said he loudly. That's enough jokes about Torre. We all come from the place and we won't stand strangers making fun of it. These two chaps are our friends. Maybe they are no scholars, but even so they may be straighter than some folks in the room who are so free with their boasts about Rome, though they did not build it either."

That was capital. The young man had certainly cut his eyeteeth. And this sort of spectacle was good fun, even though it still further delayed the regular performance. It is always fascinating to listen to an altercation. Some people it simply amuses, they take a sort of kill-joy pleasure in not being principals. Others feel upset and uneasy, and my sympathies are with these latter, although on the present occasion I was under the impression that all this was part of the show—the analphabetic yokels no less than the *giovanotto* with the jacket. The children listened well pleased. They understood not at all, but the sound of the voices made them hold their breath. So this was a "magic evening"—at least it was the kind they have in Italy. They expressly found it "lovely."

Cipolla had stood up and with two of his scooping strides was at the footlights.

"Well, well, see who's here!" said he with grim cordiality. "An old acquaintance! A young man with his heart at the end of his tongue" (he used the word *linguaccia,* which means a coated tongue, and gave rise to much hilarity). "That will do, my friends," he turned to the yokels. "I do not need you now, I have business with this deserving young man here, *con questo torregiano di Venere,* this tower of Venus, who no doubt expects the gratitude of the fair as a reward for his prowess—"

"Ah, non scherziamo! We're talking earnest," cried out the youth. His eyes flashed, and he actually made as though to pull off his jacket and proceed to direct methods of settlement.

Cipolla did not take him too seriously. We had exchanged apprehensive glances; but he was dealing with a fellow-countryman and had his native soil beneath his feet. He kept quite cool and showed complete mastery of the situation. He looked at his audience, smiled, and made a sideways motion of the head towards the young cockerel as though calling the public to witness how the man's bumptiousness only served to betray the simplicity of his mind. And then, for the second time, something strange happened, which set Cipolla's calm superiority in an uncanny light, and in some mysterious and irritating way turned all the explosiveness latent in the air into matter for laughter.

Cipolla drew still nearer to the fellow, looking him in the eye with a peculiar gaze. He even came half-way down the steps that led into the auditorium on our left, so that he stood directly in front of the trouble-maker, on slightly higher ground. The riding-whip hung from his arm.

"My son, you do not feel much like joking," he said. "It is only too natural, for anyone can see that you are not feeling too well. Even your tongue, which leaves something to be desired on the score of cleanliness, indicates acute disorder of the gastric system. An evening entertainment is no place for people in your state; you yourself, I can tell, were of several minds whether you would not do better to put on a flannel bandage and go to bed. It was not good judgment to drink so much of that very sour white wine this afternoon. Now you have such a colic you would like to double up with the pain. Go ahead, don't be embarrassed. There is a distinct relief that comes from bending over, in cases of intestinal cramp."

He spoke thus, word for word, with quiet impressiveness and a kind of stern sympathy, and his eyes, plunged the while deep in the young man's, seemed to grow very tired and at the same time burning above their enlarged tear-ducts—they were the strangest eyes, you could tell that not manly pride alone was preventing the young adversary from withdrawing his gaze. And presently, indeed, all trace of its former arrogance was gone from the bronzed young face. He looked open-mouthed at the Cavaliere and the open mouth was drawn in a rueful smile.

"Double over," repeated Cipolla. "What else can you do? With a colic like that you *must* bend. Surely you will not struggle against the performance of a perfectly natural action just because somebody suggests it to you?"

Slowly the youth lifted his forearms, folded and squeezed them across his body; it turned a little sideways, then bent, lower and lower, the feet shifted, the knees turned inward, until he had become a picture of writhing pain, until

he all but groveled upon the ground. Cipolla let him stand for some seconds thus, then made a short cut through the air with his whip and went with his scooping stride back to the little table, where he poured himself out a cognac.

"Il boit beaucoup," asserted a lady behind us. Was that the only thing that struck her? We could not tell how far the audience grasped the situation. The fellow was standing upright again, with a sheepish grin—he looked as though he scarcely knew how it had all happened. The scene had been followed with tense interest and applauded at the end; there were shouts of *"Bravo, Cipolla!"* and *"Bravo, giovanotto!"* Apparently the issue of the duel was not looked upon as a personal defeat for the young man. Rather the audience encouraged him as one does an actor who succeeds in an unsympathetic role. Certainly his way of screwing himself up with cramp had been highly picturesque, its appeal was directly calculated to impress the gallery—in short, a fine dramatic performance. But I am not sure how far the audience were moved by that natural tactfulness in which the south excels, or how far it penetrated into the nature of what was going on.

The Cavaliere, refreshed, had lighted another cigarette. The numerical tests might now proceed. A young man was easily found in the back row who was willing to write down on the blackboard the numbers as they were dictated to him. Him too we knew; the whole entertainment had taken on an intimate character through our acquaintance with so many of the actors. This was the man who worked at the greengrocer's in the main street; he had served us several times, with neatness and dispatch. He wielded the chalk with clerkly confidence, while Cipolla descended to our level and walked with his deformed gait through the audience, collecting numbers as they were given, in two, three, and four places, and calling them out to the grocer's assistant, who wrote them down in a column. In all this, everything on both sides was calculated to amuse, with its jokes and its oratorical asides. The artist could not fail to hit on foreigners, who were not ready with their figures, and with them he was elaborately patient and chivalrous, to the great amusement of the natives, whom he reduced to confusion in their turn, by making them translate numbers that were given in English or French. Some people gave dates concerned with great events in Italian history. Cipolla took them up at once and made patriotic comments. Somebody shouted "Number one!" The Cavaliere, incensed at this as at every attempt to make game of him, retorted over his shoulder that he could not take less than two-place figures. Whereupon another joker cried out "Number two!" and was greeted with the applause and laughter which every reference to natural functions is sure to win among southerners.

When fifteen numbers stood in a long straggling row on the board, Cipolla called for a general adding-match. Ready reckoners might add in their heads, but pencil and paper were not forbidden. Cipolla, while the work went on, sat on his chair near the blackboard, smoked and grimaced, with the complacent, pompous air cripples so often have. The five-place addition was soon done. Somebody announced the answer, somebody else confirmed it, a third had arrived at a slightly different result, but the fourth agreed with the first and second. Cipolla got up, tapped some ash from his coat, and lifted the paper at the

upper right-hand corner of the board to display the writing. The correct answer, a sum close on a million, stood there; he had written it down beforehand.

Astonishment, and loud applause. The children were overwhelmed. How had he done that, they wanted to know. We told them it was a trick, not easily explainable offhand. In short, the man was a conjuror. This was what a sleight-of-hand evening was like, so now they knew. First the fisherman had cramp, and then the right answer was written down beforehand—it was all simply glorious, and we saw with dismay that despite the hot eyes and the hand of the clock at almost half past ten, it would be very hard to get them away. There would be tears. And yet it was plain that this magician did not "magick"—at least not in the accepted sense, of manual dexterity—and that the entertainment was not at all suitable for children. Again, I do not know, either, what the audience really thought. Obviously there was grave doubt whether its answers had been given of "free choice"; here and there an individual might have answered of his own motion, but on the whole Cipolla certainly selected his people and thus kept the whole procedure in his own hands and directed it towards the given result. Even so, one had to admire the quickness of his calculations, however much one felt disinclined to admire anything else about the performance. Then his patriotism, his irritable sense of dignity—the Cavaliere's own countrymen might feel in their element with all that and continue in a laughing mood; but the combination certainly gave us outsiders food for thought.

Cipolla himself saw to it—though without giving them a name—that the nature of his powers should be clear beyond a doubt to even the least-instructed person. He alluded to them, of course, in his talk—and he talked without stopping—but only in vague, boastful, self-advertising phrases. He went on awhile with experiments on the same lines as the first, merely making them more complicated by introducing operations in multiplying, subtracting, and dividing; then he simplified them to the last degree in order to bring out the method. He simply had numbers "guessed" which were previously written under the paper; and the guess was nearly always right. One guesser admitted that he had had in mind to give a certain number, when Cipolla's whip went whistling through the air, and a quite different one slipped out, which proved to be the "right" one. Cipolla's shoulders shook. He pretended admiration for the powers of the people he questioned. But in all his compliments there was something fleering and derogatory; the victims could scarcely have relished them much, although they smiled, and although they might easily have set down some part of the applause to their own credit. Moreover, I had not the impression that the artist was popular with his public. A certain ill will and reluctance were in the air, but courtesy kept such feelings in check, as did Cipolla's competency and his stern self-confidence. Even the riding-whip, I think, did much to keep rebellion from becoming overt.

From tricks with numbers he passed to tricks with cards. There were two packs, which he drew out of his pockets, and so much I still remember, that the basis of the tricks he played with them was as follows: from the first pack he drew three cards and thrust them without looking at them inside his coat. Another person then drew three out of the second pack, and these turned out

to be the same as the first three—not invariably all the three, for it did happen that only two were the same. But in the majority of cases Cipolla triumphed, showing his three cards with a little bow in acknowledgment of the applause with which his audience conceded his possession of strange powers—strange whether for good or evil. A young man in the front row, to our right, an Italian, with proud, finely chiseled features, rose up and said that he intended to assert his own will in his choice and consciously to resist any influence, of whatever sort. Under these circumstances, what did Cipolla think would be the result? "You will," answered the Cavaliere, "make my task somewhat more difficult thereby. As for the result, your resistance will not alter it in the least. Freedom exists, and also the will exists; but freedom of the will does not exist, for a will that aims at its own freedom aims at the unknown. You are free to draw or not to draw. But if you draw, you will draw the right cards—the more certainly, the more willfully obstinate your behavior."

One must admit that he could not have chosen his words better, to trouble the waters and confuse the mind. The refractory youth hesitated before drawing. Then he pulled out a card and at once demanded to see if it was among the chosen three. "But why?" queried Cipolla. "Why do things by halves?" Then, as the other defiantly insisted, *"E servito,"* said the juggler, with a gesture of exaggerated servility; and held out the three cards fanwise, without looking at them himself. The left-hand card was the one drawn.

Amid general applause, the apostle of freedom sat down. How far Cipolla employed small tricks and manual dexterity to help out his natural talents, the deuce only knew. But even without them the result would have been the same: the curiosity of the entire audience was unbounded and universal, everybody both enjoyed the amazing character of the entertainment and unanimously conceded the professional skill of the performer. *"Lavora bene,"* we heard, here and there in our neighborhood; it signified the triumph of objective judgment over antipathy and repressed resentment.

After his last, incomplete, yet so much the more telling success, Cipolla had at once fortified himself with another cognac. Truly he did "drink a lot" and the fact made a bad impression. But obviously he needed the liquor and the cigarettes for the replenishment of his energy, upon which, as he himself said, heavy demands were made in all directions. Certainly in the intervals he looked very ill, exhausted and hollow-eyed. Then the little glassful would redress the balance, and the flow of lively, self-confident chatter run on, while the smoke he inhaled gushed out gray from his lungs. I clearly recall that he passed from the card-tricks to parlor games—the kind based on certain powers which in human nature are higher or else lower than human reason: on intuition and "magnetic" transmission; in short, upon a low type of manifestation. What I do not remember is the precise order things came in. And I will not bore you with a description of these experiments; everybody knows them, everybody has at one time or another taken part in this finding of hidden articles, this blind carrying out of a series of acts, directed by a force that proceeds from organism to organism by unexplored paths. Everybody has had his little glimpse into the equivocal, impure, inexplicable nature of the occult, has been conscious of both curiosity and contempt, has shaken his head over the human tendency of those

who deal in it to help themselves out with humbuggery, though, after all, the humbuggery is no disproof whatever of the genuineness of the other elements in the dubious amalgam. I can only say here that each single circumstance gains in weight and the whole greatly in impressiveness when it is a man like Cipolla who is the chief actor and guiding spirit in the sinister business. He sat smoking at the rear of the stage, his back to the audience while they conferred. The object passed from hand to hand which it was his task to find, with which he was to perform some action agreed upon beforehand. Then he would start to move zigzag through the hall, with his head thrown back and one hand outstretched, the other clasped in that of a guide who was in the secret but enjoined to keep himself perfectly passive, with his thoughts directed upon the agreed goal. Cipolla moved with the bearing typical in these experiments: now groping upon a false start, now with a quick forward thrust, now pausing as though to listen and by sudden inspiration correcting his course. The roles seemed reversed, the stream of influence was moving in the contrary direction, as the artist himself pointed out, in his ceaseless flow of discourse. The suffering, receptive, performing part was now his, the will he had before imposed on others was shut out, he acted in obedience to a voiceless common will which was in the air. But he made it perfectly clear that it all came to the same thing. The capacity for self-surrender, he said, for becoming a tool, for the most unconditional and utter self-abnegation, was but the reverse side of that other power to will and to command. Commanding and obeying formed together one single principle, one indissoluble unity; he who knew how to obey knew also how to command, and conversely; the one idea was comprehended in the other, as people and leader were comprehended in one another. But that which was *done,* the highly exacting and exhausting performance, was in every case his, the leader's and mover's, in whom the will became obedience, the obedience will, whose person was the cradle and womb of both, and who thus suffered enormous hardship. Repeatedly he emphasized the fact that his lot was a hard one—presumably to account for his need of stimulant and his frequent recourse to the little glass.

Thus he groped his way forward, like a blind seer, led and sustained by the mysterious common will. He drew a pin set with a stone out of its hiding-place in an Englishwoman's shoe, carried it, halting and pressing on by turns, to another lady—Signora Angiolieri—and handed it to her on bended knee, with the words it had been agreed he was to utter. "I present you with this in token of my respect," was the sentence. Their sense was obvious, but the words themselves not easy to hit upon, for the reason that they had been agreed on in French; the language complication seemed to us a little malicious, implying as it did a conflict between the audience's natural interest in the success of the miracle, and their desire to witness the humiliation of this presumptuous man. It was a strange sight: Cipolla on his knees before the signora, wrestling, amid efforts at speech, after knowledge of the preordained words. "I must say something," he said, "and I feel clearly what it is I must say. But I also feel that if it passed my lips it would be wrong. Be careful not to help me unintentionally!" he cried out, though very likely that was precisely what he was hoping for. *"Pensez très fort,"* he cried all at once, in bad French, and then burst out with

the required words—in Italian, indeed, but with the final substantive pronounced in the sister tongue, in which he was probably far from fluent: he said *vénération* instead of *venerazione,* with an impossible nasal. And this partial success, after the complete success before it, the finding of the pin, the presentation of it on his knees to the right person—was almost more impressive than if he had got the sentence exactly right, and evoked bursts of admiring applause.

Cipolla got up from his knees and wiped the perspiration from his brow. You understand that this experiment with the pin was a single case, which I describe because it sticks in my memory. But he changed his method several times and improvised a number of variations suggested by his contact with his audience; a good deal of time thus went by. He seemed to get particular inspiration from the person of our landlady; she drew him on to the most extraordinary displays of clairvoyance. "It does not escape me, madame," he said to her, "that there is something unusual about you, some special and honorable distinction. He who has eyes to see descries about your lovely brow an aureola—if I mistake not, it once was stronger than now—a slowly paling radiance . . . hush, not a word! Don't help me. Beside you sits your husband—yes?" He turned towards the silent Signor Angiolieri. "You are the husband of this lady, and your happiness is complete. But in the midst of this happiness memories rise . . . the past, signora, so it seems to me, plays an important part in your present. You knew a king . . . has not a king crossed your path in bygone days?"

"No," breathed the dispenser of our midday soup, her golden-brown eyes gleaming in the noble pallor of her face.

"No? No, not a king; I meant that generally, I did not mean literally a king. Not a king, not a prince, and a prince after all, a king of a loftier realm; it was a great artist, at whose side you once—you would contradict me, and yet I am not wholly wrong. Well, then! It was a woman, a great, a world-renowned woman artist, whose friendship you enjoyed in your tender years, whose sacred memory overshadows and transfigures your whole existence. Her name? Need I utter it, whose fame has long been bound up with the Fatherland's, immortal as its own? Eleonora Duse," he finished, softly and with much solemnity.

The little woman bowed her head, overcome. The applause was like a patriotic demonstration. Nearly everyone there knew about Signora Angiolieri's wonderful past; they were all able to confirm the Cavaliere's intuition—not least the present guests of Casa Eleonora. But we wondered how much of the truth he had learned as the result of professional inquiries made on his arrival. Yet I see no reason at all to cast doubt, on rational grounds, upon powers which, before our very eyes, became fatal to their possessor.

At this point there was an intermission. Our lord and master withdrew. Now I confess that almost ever since the beginning of my tale I have looked forward with dread to this moment in it. The thoughts of men are mostly not hard to read; in this case they are very easy. You are sure to ask why we did not choose this moment to go away—and I must continue to owe you an answer. I do not know why. I cannot defend myself. By this time it was certainly eleven, probably later. The children were asleep. The last series of tests had been too long, nature had had her way. They were sleeping in our laps, the little one on mine, the boy on his mother's. That was, in a way, a consolation; but at the same time

it was also ground for compassion and a clear leading to take them home to bed. And I give you my word that we wanted to obey this touching admonition, we seriously wanted to. We roused the poor things and told them it was now high time to go. But they were no sooner conscious than they began to resist and implore—you know how horrified children are at the thought of leaving before the end of a thing. No cajoling has any effect, you have to use force. It was so lovely, they wailed. How did we know what was coming next? Surely we could not leave until after the intermission; they liked a little nap now and again—only not go home, only not go to bed, while the beautiful evening was still going on!

We yielded, but only for the moment, of course—so far as we knew—only for a little while, just a few minutes longer. I cannot excuse our staying, scarcely can I even understand it. Did we think, having once said A, we had to say B—having once brought the children hither we had to let them stay? No, it is not good enough. Were we ourselves so highly entertained? Yes, and no. Our feelings for Cavaliere Cipolla were of a very mixed kind, but so were the feelings of the whole audience, if I mistake not, and nobody left. Were we under the sway of a fascination which emanated from this man who took so strange a way to earn his bread; a fascination which he gave out independently of the program and even between the tricks and which paralyzed our resolve? Again, sheer curiosity may account for something. One was curious to know how such an evening turned out; Cipolla in his remarks having all along hinted that he had tricks in his bag stranger than any he had yet produced.

But all that is not it—or at least it is not all of it. More correct it would be to answer the first question with another. Why had we not left Torre di Venere itself before now? To me the two questions are one and the same, and in order to get out of the impasse I might simply say that I had answered it already. For, as things had been in Torre in general: queer, uncomfortable, troublesome, tense, oppressive, so precisely they were here in this hall tonight. Yes, more than precisely. For it seemed to be the fountainhead of all the uncanniness and all the strained feelings which had oppressed the atmosphere of our holiday. This man whose return to the stage we were awaiting was the personification of all that; and, as we had not gone away in general, so to speak, it would have been inconsistent to do it in the particular case. You may call this an explanation, you may call it inertia, as you see fit. Any argument more to the purpose I simply do not know how to adduce.

Well, there was an interval of ten minutes, which grew into nearly twenty. The children remained awake. They were enchanted by our compliance, and filled the break to their own satisfaction by renewing relations with the popular sphere, with Antonio, Guiscardo, and the canoe man. They put their hands to their mouths and called messages across, appealing to us for the Italian words. "Hope you have a good catch tomorrow, a whole netful!" They called to Mario, Esquisito Mario: *"Mario, una cioccolata e biscotti!"* And this time he heeded and answered with a smile: *"Subito, signorini!"* Later we had reason to recall this kindly, if rather absent and pensive smile.

Thus the interval passed, the gong sounded. The audience, which had scattered in conversation, took their places again, the children sat up straight in

their chairs with their hands in their laps. The curtain had not been dropped. Cipolla came forward again, with his dipping stride, and began to introduce the second half of the program with a lecture.

Let me state once for all that this self-confident cripple was the most powerful hypnotist I have ever seen in my life. It was pretty plain now that he threw dust in the public eye and advertised himself as a prestidigitator on account of police regulations which would have prevented him from making his living by the exercise of his powers. Perhaps this eye-wash is the usual thing in Italy; it may be permitted or even connived at by the authorities. Certainly the man had from the beginning made little concealment of the actual nature of his operations; and this second half of the program was quite frankly and exclusively devoted to one sort of experiment. While he still practiced some rhetorical circumlocutions, the tests themselves were one long series of attacks upon the will-power, the loss or compulsion of volition. Comic, exciting, amazing by turns, by midnight they were still in full swing; we ran the gamut of all the phenomena this natural-unnatural field has to show, from the unimpressive at one end of the scale to the monstrous at the other. The audience laughed and applauded as they followed the grotesque details; shook their heads, clapped their knees, fell very frankly under the spell of this stern, self-assured personality. At the same time I saw signs that they were not quite complacent, not quite unconscious of the peculiar ignominy which lay, for the individual and for the general, in Cipolla's triumphs.

Two main features were constant in all the experiments: the liquor glass and the claw-handled riding-whip. The first was always invoked to add fuel to his demoniac fires; without it, apparently, they might have burned out. On this score we might even have felt pity for the man; but the whistle of his scourge, the insulting symbol of his domination, before which we all cowered, drowned out every sensation save a dazed and out-braved submission to his power. Did he then lay claim to our sympathy to boot? I was struck by a remark he made —it suggested no less. At the climax of his experiments, by stroking and breathing upon a certain young man who had offered himself as a subject and already proved himself a particularly susceptible one, he had not only put him into the condition known as deep trance and extended his insensible body by neck and feet across the backs of two chairs, but had actually sat down on the rigid form as on a bench, without making it yield. The sight of this unholy figure in a frock-coat squatted on the stiff body was horrible and incredible; the audience, convinced that the victim of this scientific diversion must be suffering, expressed its sympathy: *"Ah, poveretto!"* Poor soul, poor soul! *"Poor soul!"* Cipolla mocked them, with some bitterness. "Ladies and gentlemen, you are barking up the wrong tree. *Sono io il poveretto.* I am the person who is suffering, I am the one to be pitied." We pocketed the information. Very good. Maybe the experiment was at his expense, maybe it was he who had suffered the cramp when the *giovanotto* over there had made the faces. But appearances were all against it; and one does not feel like saying *poveretto* to a man who is suffering to bring about the humiliation of others.

I have got ahead of my story and lost sight of the sequence of events. To this day my mind is full of the Cavaliere's feats of endurance; only I do not recall

them in their order—which does not matter. So much I do know: that the longer and more circumstantial tests, which got the most applause, impressed me less than some of the small ones which passed quickly over. I remember the young man whose body Cipolla converted into a board, only because of the accompanying remarks which I have quoted. An elderly lady in a cane-seated chair was lulled by Cipolla in the delusion that she was on a voyage to India and gave a voluble account of her adventures by land and sea. But I found this phenomenon less impressive than one which followed immediately after the intermission. A tall, well-built, soldierly man was unable to lift his arm, after the hunchback had told him that he could not and given a cut through the air with his whip. I can still see the face of that stately, mustachioed colonel smiling and clenching his teeth as he struggled to regain his lost freedom of action. A staggering performance! He seemed to be exerting his will, and in vain; the trouble, however, was probably simply that he could not will. There was involved here that recoil of the will upon itself which paralyzes choice—as our tyrant had previously explained to the Roman gentleman.

Still less can I forget the touching scene, at once comic and horrible, with Signora Angiolieri. The Cavaliere, probably in his first bold survey of the room, had spied out her ethereal lack of resistance to his power. For actually he bewitched her, literally drew her out of her seat, out of her row, and away with him whither he willed. And in order to enhance his effect, he bade Signor Angiolieri call upon his wife by her name, to throw, as it were, all the weight of his existence and his rights in her into the scale, to rouse by the voice of her husband everything in his spouse's soul which could shield her virtue against the evil assaults of magic. And how vain it all was! Cipolla was standing at some distance from the couple, when he made a single cut with his whip through the air. It caused our landlady to shudder violently and turn her face towards him. "Sofronia!" cried Signor Angiolieri—we had not known that Signora Angiolieri's name was Sofronia. And he did well to call, everybody saw that there was no time to lose. His wife kept her face turned in the direction of the diabolical Cavaliere, who with his ten long yellow fingers was making passes at his victim, moving backwards as he did so, step by step. Then Signora Angiolieri, her pale face gleaming, rose up from her seat, turned right round, and began to glide after him. Fatal and forbidding sight! Her face as though moonstruck, stiff-armed, her lovely hands lifted a little at the wrists, the feet as it were together, she seemed to float slowly out of her row and after the tempter. "Call her, sir, keep on calling," prompted the redoubtable man. And Signor Angiolieri, in a weak voice, called: "Sofronia!" Ah, again and again he called; as his wife went further off he even curved one hand round his lips and beckoned with the other as he called. But the poor voice of love and duty echoed unheard, in vain, behind the lost one's back; the signora swayed along, moonstruck, deaf, enslaved; she glided into the middle aisle and down it towards the fingering hunchback, towards the door. We were convinced, we were driven to the conviction, that she would have followed her master, had he so willed it, to the ends of the earth.

"Accidente!" cried out Signor Angiolieri, in genuine affright, springing up as the exit was reached. But at the same moment the Cavaliere put aside, as it

were, the triumphal crown and broke off. "Enough, signora, I thank you," he said, and offered his arm to lead her back to her husband. "Signor," he greeted the latter, "here is your wife. Unharmed, with my compliments, I give her into your hands. Cherish with all the strength of your manhood a treasure which is so wholly yours, and let your zeal be quickened by knowing that there are powers stronger than reason or virtue, and not always so magnanimously ready to relinquish their prey!"

Poor Signor Angiolieri, so quiet, so bald! He did not look as though he would know how to defend his happiness, even against powers much less demoniac than these which were now adding mockery to frightfulness. Solemnly and pompously the Cavaliere retired to the stage, amid applause to which his eloquence gave double strength. It was this particular episode, I feel sure, that set the seal upon his ascendancy. For now he made them dance, yes, literally; and the dancing lent a dissolute, abandoned, topsy-turvy air to the scene, a drunken abdication of the critical spirit which had so long resisted the spell of this man. Yes, he had had to fight to get the upper hand—for instance against the animosity of the young Roman gentleman, whose rebellious spirit threatened to serve others as a rallying-point. But it was precisely upon the importance of example that the Cavaliere was so strong. He had the wit to make his attack at the weakest point and to choose as his first victim that feeble, ecstatic youth whom he had previously made into a board. The master had but to look at him, when this young man would fling himself back as though struck by lightning, place his hands rigidly at his sides, and fall into a state of military somnambulism, in which it was plain to any eye that he was open to the most absurd suggestion that might be made to him. He seemed quite content in his abject state, quite pleased to be relieved of the burden of voluntary choice. Again and again he offered himself as a subject and gloried in the model facility he had in losing consciousness. So now he mounted the platform, and a single cut of the whip was enough to make him dance to the Cavaliere's orders, in a kind of complacent ecstasy, eyes closed, head nodding, lank limbs flying in all directions.

It looked unmistakably like enjoyment, and other recruits were not long in coming forward: two other young men, one humbly and one well dressed, were soon jigging alongside the first. But now the gentleman from Rome bobbed up again, asking defiantly if the Cavaliere would engage to make him dance too, even against his will.

"Even against your will," answered Cipolla, in unforgettable accents. That frightful *"anche se non vuole"* still rings in my ears. The struggle began. After Cipolla had taken another little glass and lighted a fresh cigarette he stationed the Roman at a point in the middle aisle and himself took up a position some distance behind him, making his whip whistle through the air as he gave the order: *"Balla!"* His opponent did not stir. *"Balla!"* repeated the Cavaliere incisively, and snapped his whip. You saw the young man move his neck round in his collar; at the same time one hand lifted slightly at the wrist, one ankle turned outward. But that was all, for the time at least; merely a tendency to twitch, now sternly repressed, now seeming about to get the upper hand. It escaped nobody that here a heroic obstinacy, a fixed resolve to resist, must needs

be conquered; we were beholding a gallant effort to strike out and save the honor of the human race. He twitched but danced not; and the struggle was so prolonged that the Cavaliere had to divide his attention between it and the stage, turning now and then to make his riding-whip whistle in the direction of the dancers, as it were to keep them in leash. At the same time he advised the audience that no fatigue was involved in such activities, however long they went on, since it was not the automatons up there who danced, but himself. Then once more his eye would bore itself into the back of the Roman's neck and lay siege to the strength of purpose which defied him.

One saw it waver, that strength of purpose, beneath the repeated summons and whip-crackings. Saw with an objective interest which yet was not quite free from traces of sympathetic emotion—from pity, even from a cruel kind of pleasure. If I understand what was going on, it was the negative character of the young man's fighting position which was his undoing. It is likely that *not* willing is not a practicable state of mind; *not* to want to do something may be in the long run a mental content impossible to subsist on. Between not willing a certain thing and not willing at all—in other words, yielding to another person's will—there may lie too small a space for the idea of freedom to squeeze into. Again, there were the Cavaliere's persuasive words, woven in among the whip-crackings and commands, as he mingled effects that were his own secret with others of a bewilderingly psychological kind. *"Balla!"* said he. "Who wants to torture himself like that? Is forcing yourself your idea of freedom? *Una ballatina!* Why, your arms and legs are aching for it. What a relief to give way to them—there, you are dancing already! That is no struggle any more, it is a pleasure!" And so it was. The jerking and twitching of the refractory youth's limbs had at last got the upper hand; he lifted his arms, then his knees, his joints quite suddenly relaxed, he flung his legs and danced, and amid bursts of applause the Cavaliere led him to join the row of puppets on the stage. Up there we could see his face as he "enjoyed" himself; it was clothed in a broad grin and the eyes were half-shut. In a way, it was consoling to see that he was having a better time than he had had in the hour of his pride.

His "fall" was, I may say, an epoch. The ice was completely broken, Cipolla's triumph had reached its height. The Circe's wand, that whistling leather whip with the claw handle, held absolute sway. At one time—it must have been well after midnight—not only were there eight or ten persons dancing on the little stage, but in the hall below a varied animation reigned, and a long-toothed Anglo-Saxoness in a pince-nez left her seat of her own motion to perform a tarantella in the center aisle. Cipolla was lounging in a cane-seated chair at the left of the stage, gulping down the smoke of a cigarette and breathing it impudently out through his bad teeth. He tapped his foot and shrugged his shoulders, looking down upon the abandoned scene in the hall; now and then he snapped his whip backwards at a laggard upon the stage. The children were awake at the moment. With shame I speak of them. For it was not good to be here, least of all for them; that we had not taken them away can only be explained by saying that we had caught the general devil-may-careness of the hour. By that time it was all one. Anyhow, thank goodness, they lacked understanding for the disreputable side of the entertainment, and in their innocence were per-

petually charmed by the unheard-of indulgence which permitted them to be present at such a thing as a magician's "evening." Whole quarter-hours at a time they drowsed on our laps, waking refreshed and rosy-cheeked, with sleep-drunken eyes, to laugh to bursting at the leaps and jumps the magician made those people up there make. They had not thought it would be so jolly; they joined with their clumsy little hands in every round of applause. And jumped for joy upon their chairs, as was their wont, when Cipolla beckoned to their friend Mario from the Esquisito, beckoned to him just like a picture in a book, holding his hand in front of his nose and bending and straightening the forefinger by turns.

Mario obeyed. I can see him now going up the stairs to Cipolla, who continued to beckon him, in that droll, picture-book sort of way. He hesitated for a moment at first; that, too, I recall quite clearly. During the whole evening he had lounged against a wooden pillar at the side entrance, with his arms folded, or else with his hands thrust into his jacket pockets. He was on our left, near the youth with the militant hair, and had followed the performance attentively, so far as we had seen, if with no particular animation and God knows how much comprehension. He could not much relish being summoned thus, at the end of the evening. But it was only too easy to see why he obeyed. After all, obedience was his calling in life; and then, how should a simple lad like him find it within his human capacity to refuse compliance to a man so throned and crowned as Cipolla at that hour? Willy-nilly he left his column and with a word of thanks to those making way for him he mounted the steps with a doubtful smile on his full lips.

Picture a thickset youth of twenty years, with clipt hair, a low forehead, and heavy-lidded eyes of an indefinite gray, shot with green and yellow. These things I knew from having spoken with him, as we often had. There was a saddle of freckles on the flat nose, the whole upper half of the face retreated behind the lower, and that again was dominated by thick lips that parted to show the salivated teeth. These thick lips and the veiled look of the eyes lent the whole face a primitive melancholy—it was that which had drawn us to him from the first. In it was not the faintest trace of brutality—indeed, his hands would have given the lie to such an idea, being unusually slender and delicate even for a southerner. They were hands by which one liked being served.

We knew him humanly without knowing him personally, if I may make that distinction. We saw him nearly every day, and felt a certain kindness for his dreamy ways, which might at times be actual inattentiveness, suddenly transformed into a redeeming zeal to serve. His mien was serious, only the children could bring a smile to his face. It was not sulky, but ungratiating, without intentional effort to please—or, rather, it seemed to give up being pleasant in the conviction that it could not succeed. We should have remembered Mario in any case, as one of those homely recollections of travel which often stick in the mind better than more important ones. But of his circumstances we knew no more than that his father was a petty clerk in the Municipio and his mother took in washing.

His white waiter's-coat became him better than the faded striped suit he

wore, with a gay colored scarf instead of a collar, the ends tucked into his jacket. He neared Cipolla, who however did not leave off that motion of his finger before his nose, so that Mario had to come still closer, right up to the chair-seat and the master's legs. Whereupon the latter spread out his elbows and seized the lad, turning him so that we had a view of his face. Then gazed him briskly up and down, with a careless, commanding eye.

"Well, *ragazzo mio,* how comes it we make acquaintance so late in the day? But believe me, I made yours long ago. Yes, yes, I've had you in my eye this long while and known what good stuff you were made of. How could I go and forget you again? Well, I've had a good deal to think about. . . . Now tell me, what is your name? The first name, that's all I want."

"My name is Mario," the young man answered, in a low voice.

"Ah, Mario. Very good. Yes, yes, there is such a name, quite a common name, a classic name too, one of those which preserve the heroic traditions of the Fatherland. *Bravo! Salve!"* And he flung up his arm slantingly above his crooked shoulder, palm outward, in the Roman salute. He may have been slightly tipsy by now, and no wonder; but he spoke as before, clearly, fluently, and with emphasis. Though about this time there had crept into his voice a gross, autocratic note, and a kind of arrogance was in his sprawl.

"Well, now, Mario *mio,"* he went on, "it's a good thing you came this evening, and that's a pretty scarf you've got on; it is becoming to your style of beauty. It must stand you in good stead with the girls, the pretty pretty girls of Torre—"

From the row of youths, close by the place where Mario had been standing, sounded a laugh. It came from the youth with the militant hair. He stood there, his jacket over his shoulder, and laughed outright, rudely and scornfully.

Mario gave a start. I think it was a shrug, but he may have started and then hastened to cover the movement by shrugging his shoulders, as much as to say that the neckerchief and the fair sex were matters of equal indifference to him.

The Cavaliere gave a downward glance.

"We needn't trouble about him," he said. "He is jealous, because your scarf is so popular with the girls, maybe partly because you and I are so friendly up here. Perhaps he'd like me to put him in mind of his colic—I could do it free of charge. Tell me, Mario. You've come here this evening for a bit of fun—and in the daytime you work in an ironmonger's shop?"

"In a café," corrected the youth.

"Oh, in a café. That's where Cipolla nearly came a cropper! What you are is a cup-bearer, a Ganymede—I like that, it is another classical allusion—*Salvietta!"* Again the Cavaliere saluted, to the huge gratification of his audience.

Mario smiled too. "But before that," he interpolated, in the interest of accuracy, "I worked for a while in a shop in Portoclemente." He seemed visited by a natural desire to assist the prophecy by dredging out its essential features.

"There, didn't I say so? In an ironmonger's shop?"

"They kept combs and brushes," Mario got round it.

"Didn't I say that you were not always a Ganymede? Not always at the sign of the serviette? Even when Cipolla makes a mistake, it is a kind that makes you believe in him. Now tell me: Do you believe in me?"

An indefinite gesture.

"A half-way answer," commented the Cavaliere. "Probably it is not easy to win your confidence. Even for me, I can see, it is not so easy. I see in your features a reserve, a sadness, *un tratto di malinconia* . . . tell me" (he seized Mario's hand persuasively) "have you troubles?"

"Nossignore," answered Mario, promptly and decidedly.

"You *have* troubles," insisted the Cavaliere, bearing down the denial by the weight of his authority. "Can't I see? Trying to pull the wool over Cipolla's eyes, are you? Of course, about the girls—it is a girl, isn't it? You have love troubles?"

Mario gave a vigorous head-shake. And again the *giovanotto's* brutal laugh rang out. The Cavaliere gave heed. His eyes were roving about somewhere in the air; but he cocked an ear to the sound, then swung his whip backwards, as he had once or twice before in his conversation with Mario, that none of his puppets might flag in their zeal. The gesture had nearly cost him his new prey: Mario gave a sudden start in the direction of the steps. But Cipolla had him in his clutch.

"Not so fast," said he. "That would be fine, wouldn't it? So you want to skip, do you, Ganymede, right in the middle of the fun, or, rather, when it is just beginning? Stay with me, I'll show you something nice. I'll convince you. You have no reason to worry, I promise you. This girl—you know her and others know her too—what's her name? Wait! I read the name in your eyes, it is on the tip of my tongue and yours too—"

"Silvestra!" shouted the *giovanotto* from below.

The Cavaliere's face did not change.

"Aren't there the forward people?" he asked, not looking down, more as in undisturbed converse with Mario. "Aren't there the young fighting-cocks that crow in season and out? Takes the word out of your mouth, the conceited fool, and seems to think he has some special right to it. Let him be. But Silvestra, your Silvestra—ah, what a girl that is! What a prize! Brings your heart into your mouth to see her walk or laugh or breathe, she is so lovely. And her round arms when she washes, and tosses her head back to get the hair out of her eyes! An angel from paradise!"

Mario stared at him, his head thrust forward. He seemed to have forgotten the audience, forgotten where he was. The red rings round his eyes had got larger, they looked as though they were painted on. His thick lips parted.

"And she makes you suffer, this angel," went on Cipolla, "or, rather, you make yourself suffer for her—there is a difference, my lad, a most important difference, let me tell you. There are misunderstandings in love, maybe nowhere else in the world are there so many. I know what you are thinking: what does this Cipolla, with his little physical defect, know about love? Wrong, all wrong, he knows a lot. He has a wide and powerful understanding of its workings, and it pays to listen to his advice. But let's leave Cipolla out, cut him out altogether and think only of Silvestra, your peerless Silvestra! What! Is she to give any young gamecock the preference, so that he can laugh while you cry? To prefer him to a chap like you, so full of feeling and so sympathetic? Not very likely, is it? It is impossible—we know better, Cipolla and

she. If I were to put myself in her place and choose between the two of you, a tarry lout like that—a codfish, a sea-urchin—and a Mario, a knight of the serviette, who moves among gentlefolk and hands round refreshments with an air—my word, but my heart would speak in no uncertain tones—it knows to whom I gave it long ago. It is time that he should see and understand, my chosen one! It is time that you see me and recognize me, Mario, my beloved! Tell me, who am I?"

It was grisly, the way the betrayer made himself irresistible, wreathed and coquetted with his crooked shoulder, languished with the puffy eyes, and showed his splintered teeth in a sickly smile. And alas, at his beguiling words, what was come of our Mario? It is hard for me to tell, hard as it was for me to see; for here was nothing less than an utter abandonment of the inmost soul, a public exposure of timid and deluded passion and rapture. He put his hands across his mouth, his shoulders rose and fell with his pantings. He could not, it was plain, trust his eyes and ears for joy, and the one thing he forgot was precisely that he could not trust them. "Silvestra!" he breathed, from the very depths of his vanquished heart.

"Kiss me!" said the hunchback. "Trust me, I love thee. Kiss me here." And with the tip of his index finger, hand, arm, and little finger outspread, he pointed to his cheek, near the mouth. And Mario bent and kissed him.

It had grown very still in the room. That was a monstrous moment, grotesque and thrilling, the moment of Mario's bliss. In that evil span of time, crowded with a sense of the illusiveness of all joy, one sound became audible, and that not quite at once, but on the instant of the melancholy and ribald meeting between Mario's lips and the repulsive flesh which thrust itself forward for his caress. It was the sound of a laugh, from the *giovanotto* on our left. It broke into the dramatic suspense of the moment, coarse, mocking, and yet—or I must have been grossly mistaken—with an undertone of compassion for the poor bewildered, victimized creature. It had a faint ring of that *"Poveretto"* which Cipolla had declared was wasted on the wrong person, when he claimed the pity for his own.

The laugh still rang in the air when the recipient of the caress gave his whip a little swish, low down, close to his chair-leg, and Mario started up and flung himself back. He stood in that posture staring, his hands one over the other on those desecrated lips. Then he beat his temples with his clenched fists, over and over; turned and staggered down the steps, while the audience applauded, and Cipolla sat there with his hands in his lap, his shoulders shaking. Once below, and even while in full retreat, Mario hurled himself round with legs flung wide apart; one arm flew up, and two flat shattering detonations crashed through applause and laughter.

There was instant silence. Even the dancers came to a full stop and stared about, struck dumb. Cipolla bounded from his seat. He stood with his arms spread out, slanting as though to ward everybody off, as though next moment he would cry out: "Stop! Keep back! Silence! What was that?" Then, in that instant, he sank back in his seat, his head rolling on his chest; in the next he had fallen sideways to the floor, where he lay motionless, a huddled heap of clothing, with limbs awry.

The commotion was indescribable. Ladies hid their faces, shuddering, on the breasts of their escorts. There were shouts for a doctor, for the police. People flung themselves on Mario in a mob, to disarm him, to take away the weapon that hung from his fingers—that small, dull-metal, scarcely pistol-shaped tool with hardly any barrel—in how strange and unexpected a direction had fate leveled it!

And now—now finally, at last—we took the children and led them towards the exit, past the pair of *carabinieri* just entering. Was that the end, they wanted to know, that they might go in peace? Yes, we assured them, that was the end. An end of horror, a fatal end. And yet a liberation—for I could not, and I cannot, but find it so!

JAMES JOYCE

A Little Cloud

EIGHT years before he had seen his friend off at the North Wall and wished him godspeed. Gallaher had got on. You could tell that at once by his travelled air, his well-cut tweed suit, and fearless accent. Few fellows had talents like his and fewer still could remain unspoiled by such success. Gallaher's heart was in the right place and he had deserved to win. It was something to have a friend like that.

Little Chandler's thoughts ever since lunchtime had been of his meeting with Gallaher, of Gallaher's invitation and of the great city London where Gallaher lived. He was called Little Chandler because, though he was but slightly under the average stature, he gave one the idea of being a little man. His hands were white and small, his frame was fragile, his voice was quiet and his manners were refined. He took the greatest care of his fair silken hair and moustache and used perfume discreetly on his handkerchief. The half-moons of his nails were perfect and when he smiled you caught a glimpse of a row of childish white teeth.

As he sat at his desk in the King's Inns he thought what changes those eight years had brought. The friend whom he had known under a shabby and necessitous guise had become a brilliant figure on the London Press. He turned often from his tiresome writing to gaze out of the office window. The glow of a late autumn sunset covered the grass plots and walks. It cast a shower of kindly golden dust on the untidy nurses and decrepit old men who drowsed on the benches; it flickered upon all the moving figures—on the children who ran screaming along the gravel paths and on everyone who passed through the gardens. He watched the scene and thought of life; and (as always happened

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when he thought of life) he became sad. A gentle melancholy took possession of him. He felt how useless it was to struggle against fortune, this being the burden of wisdom which the ages had bequeathed to him.

He remembered the books of poetry upon his shelves at home. He had bought them in his bachelor days and many an evening, as he sat in the little room off the hall, he had been tempted to take one down from the bookshelf and read out something to his wife. But shyness had always held him back; and so the books had remained on their shelves. At times he repeated lines to himself and this consoled him.

When his hour had struck he stood up and took leave of his desk and of his fellow-clerks punctiliously. He emerged from under the feudal arch of the King's Inns, a neat modest figure, and walked swiftly down Henrietta Street. The golden sunset was waning and the air had grown sharp. A horde of grimy children populated the street. They stood or ran in the roadway or crawled up the steps before the gaping doors or squatted like mice upon the thresholds. Little Chandler gave them no thought. He picked his way deftly through all that minute vermin-like life and under the shadow of the gaunt spectral mansions in which the old nobility of Dublin had roystered. No memory of the past touched him, for his mind was full of a present joy.

He had never been in Corless's but he knew the value of the name. He knew that people went there after the theatre to eat oysters and drink liqueurs; and he had heard that the waiters there spoke French and German. Walking swiftly by at night he had seen cabs drawn up before the door and richly dressed ladies, escorted by cavaliers, alight and enter quickly. They wore noisy dresses and many wraps. Their faces were powdered and they caught up their dresses, when they touched earth, like alarmed Atalantas. He had always passed without turning his head to look. It was his habit to walk swiftly in the street even by day and whenever he found himself in the city late at night he hurried on his way apprehensively and excitedly. Sometimes, however, he courted the causes of his fear. He chose the darkest and narrowest streets and, as he walked boldly forward, the silence that was spread about his footsteps troubled him, the wandering, silent figures troubled him; and at times a sound of low fugitive laughter made him tremble like a leaf.

He turned to the right towards Capel Street. Ignatius Gallaher on the London Press! Who would have thought it possible eight years before? Still, now that he reviewed the past, Little Chandler could remember many signs of future greatness in his friend. People used to say that Ignatius Gallaher was wild. Of course, he did mix with a rakish set of fellows at that time, drank freely and borrowed money on all sides. In the end he had got mixed up in some shady affair, some money transaction: at least, that was one version of his flight. But nobody denied him talent. There was always a certain . . . something in Ignatius Gallaher that impressed you in spite of yourself. Even when he was out at elbows and at his wits' end for money he kept up a bold face. Little Chandler remembered (and the remembrance brought a slight flush of pride to his cheek) one of Ignatius Gallaher's sayings when he was in a tight corner:

"Half time now, boys," he used to say lightheartedly. "Where's my considering cap?"

That was Ignatius Gallaher all out; and, damn it, you couldn't but admire him for it.

Little Chandler quickened his pace. For the first time in his life he felt himself superior to the people he passed. For the first time his soul revolted against the dull inelegance of Capel Street. There was no doubt about it: if you wanted to succeed you had to go away. You could do nothing in Dublin. As he crossed Grattan Bridge he looked down the river towards the lower quays and pitied the poor stunted houses. They seemed to him a band of tramps, huddled together along the river-banks, their old coats covered with dust and soot, stupefied by the panorama of sunset and waiting for the first chill of night to bid them arise, shake themselves and begone. He wondered whether he could write a poem to express his idea. Perhaps Gallaher might be able to get it into some London paper for him. Could he write something original? He was not sure what idea he wished to express but the thought that a poetic moment had touched him took life within him like an infant hope. He stepped onward bravely.

Every step brought him nearer to London, farther from his own sober inartistic life. A light began to tremble on the horizon of his mind. He was not so old—thirty-two. His temperament might be said to be just at the point of maturity. There were so many different moods and impressions that he wished to express in verse. He felt them within him. He tried to weigh his soul to see if it was a poet's soul. Melancholy was the dominant note of his temperament, he thought, but it was a melancholy tempered by recurrences of faith and resignation and simple joy. If he could give expression to it in a book of poems perhaps men would listen. He would never be popular: he saw that. He could not sway the crowd but he might appeal to a little circle of kindred minds. The English critics, perhaps, would recognise him as one of the Celtic school by reason of the melancholy tone of his poems; besides that, he would put in allusions. He began to invent sentences and phrases from the notice which his book would get. *"Mr. Chandler has the gift of easy and graceful verse."* . . . *"A wistful sadness pervades these poems."* . . . *"The Celtic note."* It was a pity his name was not more Irish-looking. Perhaps it would be better to insert his mother's name before the surname: Thomas Malone Chandler, or better still: T. Malone Chandler. He would speak to Gallaher about it.

He pursued his revery so ardently that he passed his street and had to turn back. As he came near Corless's his former agitation began to overmaster him and he halted before the door in indecision. Finally he opened the door and entered.

The light and noise of the bar held him at the doorways for a few moments. He looked about him, but his sight was confused by the shining of many red and green wine-glasses. The bar seemed to him to be full of people and he felt that the people were observing him curiously. He glanced quickly to right and left (frowning slightly to make his errand appear serious), but when his sight cleared a little he saw that nobody had turned to look at him: and there, sure enough, was Ignatius Gallaher leaning with his back against the counter and his feet planted far apart.

"Hallo, Tommy, old hero, here you are! What is it to be? What will you

have? I'm taking whisky: better stuff than we get across the water. Soda? Lithia? No mineral? I'm the same. Spoils the flavour. . . . Here, *garçon,* bring us two halves of malt whisky, like a good fellow. . . . Well, and how have you been pulling along since I saw you last? Dear God, how old we're getting! Do you see any signs of aging in me—eh, what? A little grey and thin on the top—what?"

Ignatius Gallaher took off his hat and displayed a large closely cropped head. His face was heavy, pale and clean-shaven. His eyes, which were of bluish slate-colour, relieved his unhealthy pallor and shone out plainly above the vivid orange tie he wore. Between these rival features the lips appeared very long and shapeless and colourless. He bent his head and felt with two sympathetic fingers the thin hair at the crown. Little Chandler shook his head as a denial. Ignatius Gallaher put on his hat again.

"It pulls you down," he said, "press life. Always hurry and scurry, looking for copy and sometimes not finding it: and then, always to have something new in your stuff. Damn proofs and printers, I say, for a few days. I'm deuced glad, I can tell you, to get back to the old country. Does a fellow good, a bit of a holiday. I feel a ton better since I landed again in dear dirty Dublin. . . . Here you are, Tommy. Water? Say when."

Little Chandler allowed his whisky to be very much diluted.

"You don't know what's good for you, my boy," said Ignatius Gallaher. "I drink mine neat."

"I drink very little as a rule," said Little Chandler modestly. "An odd half-one or so when I meet any of the old crowd: that's all."

"Ah, well," said Ignatius Gallaher, cheerfully, "here's to us and to old times and old acquaintance."

They clinked glasses and drank the toast.

"I met some of the old gang today," said Ignatius Gallaher. "O'Hara seems to be in a bad way. What's he doing?"

"Nothing," said Little Chandler. "He's gone to the dogs."

"But Hogan has a good sit, hasn't he?"

"Yes; he's in the Land Commission."

"I met him one night in London and he seemed to be very flush. . . . Poor O'Hara! Boose, I suppose?"

"Other things, too," said Little Chandler shortly.

Ignatius Gallaher laughed.

"Tommy," he said, "I see you haven't changed an atom. You're the very same serious person that used to lecture me on Sunday mornings when I had a sore head and a fur on my tongue. You'd want to knock about a bit in the world. Have you never been anywhere even for a trip?"

"I've been to the Isle of Man," said Little Chandler.

Ignatius Gallaher laughed.

"The Isle of Man!" he said. "Go to London or Paris: Paris, for choice. That'd do you good."

"Have you seen Paris?"

"I should think I have! I've knocked about there a little."

"And is it really so beautiful as they say?" asked Little Chandler.

He sipped a little of his drink while Ignatius Gallaher finished his boldly.

"Beautiful?" said Ignatius Gallaher, pausing on the word and on the flavour of his drink. "It's not so beautiful, you know. Of course, it is beautiful. . . . But it's the life of Paris; that's the thing. Ah, there's no city like Paris for gaiety, movement, excitement. . . ."

Little Chandler finished his whisky and, after some trouble, succeeded in catching the barman's eye. He ordered the same again.

"I've been to the Moulin Rouge," Ignatius Gallaher continued when the barman had removed their glasses, "and I've been to all the Bohemian cafés. Hot stuff! Not for a pious chap like you, Tommy."

Little Chandler said nothing until the barman returned with two glasses: then he touched his friend's glass lightly and reciprocated the former toast. He was beginning to feel somewhat disillusioned. Gallaher's accent and way of expressing himself did not please him. There was something vulgar in his friend which he had not observed before. But perhaps it was only the result of living in London amid the bustle and competition of the Press. The old personal charm was still there under this new gaudy manner. And, after all, Gallaher had lived, he had seen the world. Little Chandler looked at his friend enviously.

"Everything in Paris is gay," said Ignatius Gallaher. "They believe in enjoying life—and don't you think they're right? If you want to enjoy yourself properly you must go to Paris. And, mind you, they've a great feeling for the Irish there. When they heard I was from Ireland they were ready to eat me, man."

Little Chandler took four or five sips from his glass.

"Tell me," he said, "is it true that Paris is so . . . immoral as they say?"

Ignatius Gallaher made a catholic gesture with his right arm.

"Every place is immoral," he said. "Of course you do find spicy bits in Paris. Go to one of the students' balls, for instance. That's lively, if you like, when the *cocottes* begin to let themselves loose. You know what they are, I suppose?"

"I've heard of them," said Little Chandler.

Ignatius Gallaher drank off his whisky and shook his head.

"Ah," he said, "you may say what you like. There's no woman like the Parisienne—for style, for go."

"Then it is an immoral city," said Little Chandler, with timid insistence—"I mean, compared with London or Dublin?"

"London!" said Ignatius Gallaher. "It's six of one and half-a-dozen of the other. You ask Hogan, my boy. I showed him a bit about London when he was over there. He'd open your eye. . . . I say, Tommy, don't make punch of that whisky: liquor up."

"No, really. . . ."

"O, come on, another one won't do you any harm. What is it? The same again, I suppose?"

"Well . . . all right."

"*François,* the same again. . . . Will you smoke, Tommy?"

Ignatius Gallaher produced his cigar-case. The two friends lit their cigars and puffed at them in silence until their drinks were served.

"I'll tell you my opinion," said Ignatius Gallaher, emerging after some time from the clouds of smoke in which he had taken refuge, "it's a rum world. Talk of immorality! I've heard of cases—what am I saying?—I've known them: cases of . . . immorality. . . ."

Ignatius Gallaher puffed thoughtfully at his cigar and then, in a calm historian's tone, he proceeded to sketch for his friend some pictures of the corruption which was rife abroad. He summarised the vices of many capitals and seemed inclined to award the palm to Berlin. Some things he could not vouch for (his friends had told him), but of others he had had personal experience. He spared neither rank nor caste. He revealed many of the secrets of religious houses on the Continent and described some of the practices which were fashionable in high society and ended by telling, with details, a story about an English duchess—a story which he knew to be true. Little Chandler was antonished.

"Ah, well," said Ignatius Gallaher, "here we are in old jog-along Dublin where nothing is known of such things."

"How dull you must find it," said Little Chandler, "after all the other places you've seen!"

"Well," said Ignatius Gallaher, "it's a relaxation to come over here, you know. And, after all, it's the old country, as they say, isn't it? You can't help having a certain feeling for it. That's human nature. . . . But tell me something about yourself. Hogan told me you had . . . tasted the joys of connubial bliss. Two years ago, wasn't it?"

Little Chandler blushed and smiled.

"Yes," he said. "I was married last May twelve months."

"I hope it's not too late in the day to offer my best wishes," said Ignatius Gallaher. "I didn't know your address or I'd have done so at the time."

He extended his hand, which Little Chandler took.

"Well, Tommy," he said, "I wish you and yours every joy in life, old chap, and tons of money, and may you never die till I shoot you. And that's the wish of a sincere friend, an old friend. You know that?"

"I know that," said Little Chandler.

"Any youngsters?" said Ignatius Gallaher.

Little Chandler blushed again.

"We have one child," he said.

"Son or daughter?"

"A little boy."

Ignatius Gallaher slapped his friend sonorously on the back.

"Bravo," he said, "I wouldn't doubt you, Tommy."

Little Chandler smiled, looked confusedly at his glass and bit his lower lip with three childishly white front teeth.

"I hope you'll spend an evening with us," he said, "before you go back. My wife will be delighted to meet you. We can have a little music and—"

"Thanks awfully, old chap," said Ignatius Gallaher, "I'm sorry we didn't meet earlier. But I must leave tomorrow night."

"Tonight, perhaps . . . ?"

"I'm awfully sorry, old man. You see I'm over here with another fellow,

clever young chap he is too, and we arranged to go to a little card-party. Only for that. . . ."

"O, in that case. . . ."

"But who knows?" said Ignatius Gallaher considerately. "Next year I may take a little skip over here now that I've broken the ice. It's only a pleasure deferred."

"Very well," said Little Chandler, "the next time you come we must have an evening together. That's agreed now, isn't it?"

"Yes, that's agreed," said Ignatius Gallaher. "Next year if I come, *parole d'honneur.*"

"And to clinch the bargain," said Little Chandler, "we'll just have one more now."

Ignatius Gallaher took out a large gold watch and looked at it.

"Is it to be the last?" he said. "Because you know, I have an a.p."

"O, yes, positively," said Little Chandler.

"Very well, then," said Ignatius Gallaher, "let us have another one as a *deoc an doruis*—that's good vernacular for a small whisky, I believe."

Little Chandler ordered the drinks. The blush which had risen to his face a few moments before was establishing itself. A trifle made him blush at any time: and now he felt warm and excited. Three small whiskies had gone to his head and Gallaher's strong cigar had confused his mind, for he was a delicate and abstinent person. The adventure of meeting Gallaher after eight years, of finding himself with Gallaher in Corless's surrounded by lights and noise, of listening to Gallaher's stories and of sharing for a brief space Gallaher's vagrant and triumphant life, upset the equipoise of his sensitive nature. He felt acutely the contrast between his own life and his friend's, and it seemed to him unjust. Gallaher was his inferior in birth and education. He was sure that he could do something better than his friend had ever done, or could ever do, something higher than mere tawdry journalism if he only got the chance. What was it that stood in his way? His unfortunate timidity! He wished to vindicate himself in some way, to assert his manhood. He saw behind Gallaher's refusal of his invitation. Gallaher was only patronising him by his friendliness just as he was patronising Ireland by his visit.

The barman brought their drinks. Little Chandler pushed one glass towards his friend and took up the other boldly.

"Who knows?" he said, as they lifted their glasses. "When you come next year I may have the pleasure of wishing long life and happiness to Mr. and Mrs. Ignatius Gallaher."

Ignatius Gallaher in the act of drinking closed one eye expressively over the rim of his glass. When he had drunk he smacked his lips decisively, set down his glass and said:

"No blooming fear of that, my boy. I'm going to have my fling first and see a bit of life and the world before I put my head in the sack—if I ever do."

"Some day you will," said Little Chandler calmly.

Ignatius Gallaher turned his orange tie and slate-blue eyes full upon his friend.

"You think so?" he said.

"You'll put your head in the sack," repeated Little Chandler stoutly, "like everyone else if you can find the girl."

He had slightly emphasised his tone and he was aware that he had betrayed himself; but, though the colour had heightened in his cheek, he did not flinch from his friend's gaze. Ignatius Gallaher watched him for a few moments and then said:

"If ever it occurs, you may bet your bottom dollar there'll be no mooning and spooning about it. I mean to marry money. She'll have a good fat account at the bank or she won't do for me."

Little Chandler shook his head.

"Why, man alive," said Ignatius Gallaher, vehemently, "do you know what it is? I've only to say the word and tomorrow I can have the woman and the cash. You don't believe it? Well, I know it. There are hundreds—what am I saying?—thousands of rich Germans and Jews, rotten with money, that'd only be too glad. . . . You wait a while, my boy. See if I don't play my cards properly. When I go about a thing I mean business, I tell you. You just wait."

He tossed his glass to his mouth, finished his drink and laughed loudly. Then he looked thoughtfully before him and said in a calmer tone:

"But I'm in no hurry. They can wait. I don't fancy tying myself up to one woman, you know."

He imitated with his mouth the act of tasting and made a wry face.

"Must get a bit stale, I should think," he said. . . .

Little Chandler sat in the room off the hall, holding a child in his arms. To save money they kept no servant but Annie's young sister Monica came for an hour or so in the morning and an hour or so in the evening to help. But Monica had gone home long ago. It was a quarter to nine. Little Chandler had come home late for tea and, moreover, he had forgotten to bring Annie home the parcel of coffee from Bewley's. Of course she was in a bad humour and gave him short answers. She said she would do without any tea but when it came near the time at which the shop at the corner closed she decided to go out herself for a quarter of a pound of tea and two pounds of sugar. She put the sleeping child deftly in his arms and said:

"Here. Don't waken him."

A little lamp with a white china shade stood upon the table and its light fell over a photograph which was enclosed in a frame of crumpled horn. It was Annie's photograph. Little Chandler looked at it, pausing at the thin tight lips. She wore the pale blue summer blouse which he had brought her home as a present one Saturday. It had cost him ten and elevenpence; but what an agony of nervousness it had cost him! How he had suffered that day, waiting at the shop door until the shop was empty, standing at the counter and trying to appear at his ease while the girl piled ladies' blouses before him, paying at the desk and forgetting to take up the odd penny of his change, being called back by the cashier, and finally, striving to hide his blushes as he left the shop by examining the parcel to see if it was securely tied. When he brought the blouse home Annie kissed him and said it was very pretty and stylish; but when she heard the price she threw the blouse on the table and said it was a

regular swindle to charge ten and elevenpence for it. At first she wanted to take it back but when she tried it on she was delighted with it, especially with the make of the sleeves, and kissed him and said he was very good to think of her.

Hm! . . .

He looked coldly into the eyes of the photograph and they answered coldly. Certainly they were pretty and the face itself was pretty. But he found something mean in it. Why was it so unconscious and ladylike? The composure of the eyes irritated him. They repelled him and defied him: there was no passion in them, no rapture. He thought of what Gallaher had said about rich Jewesses. Those dark Oriental eyes, he thought, how full they are of passion, of voluptuous longing! . . . Why had he married the eyes in the photograph?

He caught himself up at the question and glanced nervously round the room. He found something mean in the pretty furniture which he had bought for his house on the hire system. Annie had chosen it herself and it reminded him of her. It too was prim and pretty. A dull resentment against his life awoke within him. Could he not escape from his little house? Was it too late for him to try to live bravely like Gallaher? Could he go to London? There was the furniture still to be paid for. If he could only write a book and get it published, that might open the way for him.

A volume of Byron's poems lay before him on the table. He opened it cautiously with his left hand lest he should waken the child and began to read the first poem in the book:

> Hushed are the winds and still the evening gloom,
> Not e'en a Zephyr wanders through the grove,
> Whilst I return to view my Margaret's tomb
> And scatter flowers on the dust I love.

He paused. He felt the rhythm of the verse about him in the room. How melancholy it was! Could he, too, write like that, express the melancholy of his soul in verse? There were so many things he wanted to describe: his sensation of a few hours before on Grattan Bridge, for example. If he could get back again into that mood. . . .

The child awoke and began to cry. He turned from the page and tried to hush it: but it would not be hushed. He began to rock it to and fro in his arms but its wailing cry grew keener. He rocked it faster while his eyes began to read the second stanza:

> Within this narrow cell reclines her clay,
> That clay where once . . .

It was useless. He couldn't read. He couldn't do anything. The wailing of the child pierced the drum of his ear. It was useless, useless! He was a prisoner for life. His arms trembled with anger and suddenly bending to the child's face he shouted:

"Stop!"

The child stopped for an instant, had a spasm of fright and began to scream. He jumped up from his chair and walked hastily up and down the room

with the child in his arms. It began to sob piteously, losing its breath for four or five seconds, and then bursting out anew. The thin walls of the room echoed the sound. He tried to soothe it but it sobbed more convulsively. He looked at the contracted and quivering face of the child and began to be alarmed. He counted seven sobs without a break between them and caught the child to his breast in fright. If it died! . . .

The door was burst open and a young woman ran in, panting.

"What is it? What is it?" she cried.

The child, hearing its mother's voice, broke out into a paroxysm of sobbing.

"It's nothing, Annie . . . it's nothing. . . . He began to cry . . ."

She flung her parcels on the floor and snatched the child from him.

"What have you done to him?" she cried, glaring into his face.

Little Chandler sustained for one moment the gaze of her eyes and his heart closed together as he met the hatred in them. He began to stammer.

"It's nothing. . . . He . . . he began to cry. . . . I couldn't . . . I didn't do anything. . . . What?"

Giving no heed to him she began to walk up and down the room, clasping the child tightly in her arms and murmuring:

"My little man! My little mannie! Was 'ou frightened, love? . . . There now, love! There now! . . . Lambabaun! Mamma's little lamb of the world! . . . There now!"

Little Chandler felt his cheeks suffused with shame and he stood back out of the lamplight. He listened while the paroxysm of the child's sobbing grew less and less; and tears of remorse started to his eyes.

D. H. LAWRENCE

The Blind Man

ISABEL PERVIN was listening for two sounds—for the sound of wheels on the drive outside and for the noise of her husband's footsteps in the hall. Her dearest and oldest friend, a man who seemed almost indispensable to her living, would drive up in the rainy dusk of the closing November day. The trap had gone to fetch him from the station. And her husband, who had been blinded in Flanders, and who had a disfiguring mark on his brow, would be coming in from the outhouses.

He had been home for a year now. He was totally blind. Yet they had been very happy. The Grange was Maurice's own place. The back was a farmstead, and the Wernhams, who occupied the rear premises, acted as farmers. Isabel lived with her husband in the handsome rooms in front. She and he had been almost entirely alone together since he was wounded. They talked

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and sang and read together in a wonderful and unspeakable intimacy. Then she reviewed books for a Scottish newspaper, carrying on her old interest, and he occupied himself a good deal with the farm. Sightless, he could still discuss everything with Wernham, and he could also do a good deal of work about the place—menial work, it is true, but it gave him satisfaction. He milked the cows, carried in the pails, turned the separator, attended to the pigs and horses. Life was still very full and strangely serene for the blind man, peaceful with the almost incomprehensible peace of immediate contact in darkness. With his wife he had a whole world, rich and real and invisible.

They were newly and remotely happy. He did not even regret the loss of his sight in these times of dark, palpable joy. A certain exultance swelled his soul.

But as time wore on, sometimes the rich glamour would leave them. Sometimes, after months of this intensity, a sense of burden overcame Isabel, a weariness, a terrible ennui, in that silent house approached between a colonnade of tall-shafted pines. Then she felt she would go mad, for she could not bear it. And sometimes he had devastating fits of depression, which seemed to lay waste his whole being. It was worse than depression—a black misery, when his own life was a torture to him, and when his presence was unbearable to his wife. The dread went down to the roots of her soul as these black days recurred. In a kind of panic she tried to wrap herself up still further in her husband. She forced the old spontaneous cheerfulness and joy to continue. But the effort it cost her was almost too much. She knew she could not keep it up. She felt she would scream with the strain, and would give anything, anything, to escape. She longed to possess her husband utterly; it gave her inordinate joy to have him entirely to herself. And yet, when again he was gone in a black and massive misery, she could not bear him, she could not bear herself; she wished she could be snatched away off the earth altogether, anything rather than live at this cost.

Dazed, she schemed for a way out. She invited friends, she tried to give him some further connection with the outer world. But it was no good. After all their joy and suffering, after their dark, great year of blindness and solitude and unspeakable nearness, other people seemed to them both shallow, rattling, rather impertinent. Shallow prattle seemed presumptuous. He became impatient and irritated, she was wearied. And so they lapsed into their solitude again. For they preferred it.

But now, in a few weeks' time, her second baby would be born. The first had died, an infant, when her husband first went out to France. She looked with joy and relief to the coming of the second. It would be her salvation. But also she felt some anxiety. She was thirty years old, her husband was a year younger. They both wanted the child very much. Yet she could not help feeling afraid. She had her husband on her hands, a terrible joy to her, and a terrifying burden. The child would occupy her love and attention. And then, what of Maurice? What would he do? If only she could feel that he, too, would be at peace and happy when the child came! She did so want to luxuriate in a rich, physical satisfaction of maternity. But the man, what would

he do? How could she provide for him, how avert those shattering black moods of his, which destroyed them both?

She sighed with fear. But at this time Bertie Reid wrote to Isabel. He was her old friend, a second or third cousin, a Scotchman, as she was a Scotchwoman. They had been brought up near to one another, and all her life he had been her friend, like a brother, but better than her own brothers. She loved him—though not in the marrying sense. There was a sort of kinship between them, an affinity. They understood one another instinctively. But Isabel would never have thought of marrying Bertie. It would have seemed like marrying in her own family.

Bertie was a barrister and a man of letters, a Scotchman of the intellectual type, quick, ironical, sentimental, and on his knees before the woman he adored but did not want to marry. Maurice Pervin was different. He came of a good old country family—the Grange was not a very great distance from Oxford. He was passionate, sensitive, perhaps over-sensitive, wincing—a big fellow with heavy limbs and a forehead that flushed painfully. For his mind was slow, as if drugged by the strong provincial blood that beat in his veins. He was very sensitive to his own mental slowness, his feelings being quick and acute. So that he was just the opposite to Bertie, whose mind was much quicker than his emotions, which were not so very fine.

From the first the two men did not like each other. Isabel felt that they ought to get on together. But they did not. She felt that if only each could have the clue to the other there would be such a rare understanding between them. It did not come off, however. Bertie adopted a slightly ironical attitude, very offensive to Maurice, who returned the Scotch irony with English resentment, a resentment which deepened sometimes into stupid hatred.

This was a little puzzling to Isabel. However, she accepted it in the course of things. Men were made freakish and unreasonable. Therefore, when Maurice was going out to France for the second time, she felt that, for her husband's sake, she must discontinue her friendship with Bertie. She wrote to the barrister to this effect. Bertram Reid simply replied that in this, as in all other matters, he must obey her wishes, if these were indeed her wishes.

For nearly two years nothing had passed between the two friends. Isabel rather gloried in the fact; she had no compunction. She had one great article of faith, which was, that husband and wife should be so important to one another, that the rest of the world simply did not count. She and Maurice were husband and wife. They loved one another. They would have children. Then let everybody and everything else fade into insignificance outside this connubial felicity. She professed herself quite happy and ready to receive Maurice's friends. She was happy and ready: the happy wife, the ready woman in possession. Without knowing why, the friends retired abashed, and came no more. Maurice, of course, took as much satisfaction in this connubial absorption as Isabel did.

He shared in Isabel's literary activities, she cultivated a real interest in agriculture and cattle-raising. For she, being at heart perhaps an emotional enthusiast, always cultivated the practical side of life and prided herself on her mastery of practical affairs. Thus the husband and wife had spent the five

years of their married life. The last had been one of blindness and unspeakable intimacy. And now Isabel felt a great indifference coming over her, a sort of lethargy. She wanted to be allowed to bear her child in peace, to nod by the fire and drift vaguely, physically, from day to day. Maurice was like an ominous thunder-cloud. She had to keep waking up to remember him.

When a little note came from Bertie, asking if he were to put up a tombstone to their dead friendship, and speaking of the real pain he felt on account of her husband's loss of sight, she felt a pang, a fluttering agitation of reawakening. And she read the letter to Maurice.

"Ask him to come down," he said.

"Ask Bertie to come here!" she re-echoed.

"Yes—if he wants to."

Isabel paused for a few moments.

"I know he wants to—he'd only be too glad," she replied. "But what about you, Maurice? How would you like it?"

"I should like it."

"Well—in that case— But I thought you didn't care for him—"

"Oh, I don't know. I might think differently of him now," the blind man replied. It was rather abstruse to Isabel.

"Well, dear," she said, "if you're quite sure—"

"I'm sure enough. Let him come," said Maurice.

So Bertie was coming, coming this evening, in the November rain and darkness. Isabel was agitated, racked with her old restlessness and indecision. She had always suffered from this pain of doubt, just an agonizing sense of uncertainty. It had begun to pass off, in the lethargy of maternity. Now it returned, and she resented it. She struggled as usual to maintain her calm, composed, friendly bearing, a sort of mask she wore over all her body.

A woman had lighted a tall lamp beside the table and spread the cloth. The long dining-room was dim, with its elegant but rather severe pieces of old furniture. Only the round table glowed softly under the light. It had a rich, beautiful effect. The white cloth glistened and dropped its heavy, pointed lace corners almost to the carpet, the china was old and handsome, creamy-yellow, with a blotched pattern of harsh red and deep blue, the cups large and bell-shaped, the teapot gallant. Isabel looked at it with superficial appreciation.

Her nerves were hurting her. She looked automatically again at the high, uncurtained windows. In the last dusk she could just perceive outside a huge fir-tree swaying its boughs: it was as if she thought it rather than saw it. The rain came flying on the window panes. Ah, why had she no peace? These two men, why did they tear at her? Why did they not come—why was there this suspense?

She sat in a lassitude that was really suspense and irritation. Maurice, at least, might come in—there was nothing to keep him out. She rose to her feet. Catching sight of her reflection in a mirror, she glanced at herself with a slight smile of recognition, as if she were an old friend to herself. Her face was oval and calm, her nose a little arched. Her neck made a beautiful line down to her shoulder. With hair knotted loosely behind, she had something of a

warm, maternal look. Thinking this of herself, she arched her eyebrows and her rather heavy eyelids, with a little flicker of a smile, and for a moment her grey eyes looked amused and wicked, a little sardonic, out of her transfigured Madonna face.

Then, resuming her air of womanly patience—she was really fatally self-determined—she went with a little jerk towards the door. Her eyes were slightly reddened.

She passed down the wide hall and through a door at the end. Then she was in the farm premises. The scent of dairy, and of farm-kitchen, and of farm-yard and of leather almost overcame her: but particularly the scent of dairy. They had been scalding out the pans. The flagged passage in front of her was dark, puddled, and wet. Light came out from the open kitchen door. She went forward and stood in the doorway. The farm-people were at tea, seated at a little distance from her, round a long, narrow table, in the centre of which stood a white lamp. Ruddy faces, ruddy hands holding food, red mouths working, heads bent over the tea-cups: men, land-girls, boys: it was tea-time, feeding-time. Some faces caught sight of her. Mrs. Wernham, going round behind the chairs with a large black teapot, halting slightly in her walk, was not aware of her for a moment. Then she turned suddenly.

"Oh, is it Madam!" she exclaimed. "Come in, then, come in! We're at tea." And she dragged forward a chair.

"No, I won't come in," said Isabel. "I'm afraid I interrupt your meal."

"No—no—not likely, Madam, not likely."

"Hasn't Mr. Pervin come in, do you know?"

"I'm sure I couldn't say! Missed him, have you, Madam?"

"No, I only wanted him to come in," laughed Isabel, as if shyly.

"Wanted him, did ye? Get up, boy—get up, now—"

Mrs. Wernham knocked one of the boys on the shoulder. He began to scrape to his feet, chewing largely.

"I believe he's in top stable," said another face from the table.

"Ah! No, don't get up. I'm going myself," said Isabel.

"Don't you go out of a dirty night like this. Let the lad go. Get along wi' ye, boy," said Mrs. Wernham.

"No, no," said Isabel, with a decision that was always obeyed. "Go on with your tea, Tom. I'd like to go across to the stable, Mrs. Wernham."

"Did ever you hear tell!" exclaimed the woman.

"Isn't the trap late?" asked Isabel.

"Why, no," said Mrs. Wernham, peering into the distance at the tall, dim clock. "No, Madam—we can give it another quarter or twenty minutes yet, good—yes, every bit of a quarter."

"Ah! It seems late when darkness falls so early," said Isabel.

"It do, that it do. Bother the days, that they draw in so," answered Mrs. Wernham. "Proper miserable!"

"They are," said Isabel, withdrawing.

She pulled on her overshoes, wrapped a large tartan shawl around her, put on a man's felt hat, and ventured out along the causeways of the first yard. It was very dark. The wind was roaring in the great elms behind the out-

houses. When she came to the second yard the darkness seemed deeper. She was unsure of her footing. She wished she had brought a lantern. Rain blew against her. Half she liked it, half she felt unwilling to battle.

She reached at last the just visible door of the stable. There was no sign of a light anywhere. Opening the upper half, she looked in: into a simple well of darkness. The smell of horses, and ammonia, and of warmth was startling to her, in that full night. She listened with all her ears but could hear nothing save the night, and the stirring of a horse.

"Maurice!" she called, softly and musically, though she was afraid. "Maurice —are you there?"

Nothing came from the darkness. She knew the rain and wind blew in upon the horses, the hot animal life. Feeling it wrong, she entered the stable and drew the lower half of the door shut, holding the upper part close. She did not stir, because she was aware of the presence of the dark hind-quarters of the horses, though she could not see them, and she was afraid. Something wild stirred in her heart.

She listened intensely. Then she heard a small noise in the distance—far away, it seemed—the chink of a pan, and a man's voice speaking a brief word. It would be Maurice, in the other part of the stable. She stood motionless, waiting for him to come through the partition door. The horses were so terrifyingly near to her, in the invisible.

The loud jarring of the inner door-latch made her start; the door was opened. She could hear and feel her husband entering and invisibly passing among the horses near to her, darkness as they were, actively intermingled. The rather low sound of his voice as he spoke to the horses came velvety to her nerves. How near he was, and how invisible! The darkness seemed to be in a strange swirl of violent life, just upon her. She turned giddy.

Her presence of mind made her call quietly and musically:

"Maurice! Maurice—dear-ar!"

"Yes," he answered. "Isabel?"

She saw nothing, and the sound of his voice seemed to touch her.

"Hello!" she answered cheerfully, straining her eyes to see him. He was still busy, attending to the horses near her, but she saw only darkness. It made her almost desperate.

"Won't you come in, dear?" she said.

"Yes, I'm coming. Just half a minute. Stand over—now! Trap's not come, has it?"

"Not yet," said Isabel.

His voice was pleasant and ordinary, but it had a slight suggestion of the stable to her. She wished he would come away. Whilst he was so utterly invisible, she was afraid of him.

"How's the time?" he asked.

"Not yet six," she replied. She disliked to answer into the dark. Presently he came very near to her, and she retreated out of doors.

"The weather blows in here," he said, coming steadily forward, feeling for the doors. She shrank away. At last she could dimly see him.

"Bertie won't have much of a drive," he said, as he closed the doors.

"He won't indeed!" said Isabel calmly, watching the dark shape at the door.

"Give me your arm, dear," she said.

She pressed his arm close to her, as she went. But she longed to see him, to look at him. She was nervous. He walked erect, with face rather lifted, but with a curious tentative movement of his powerful, muscular legs. She could feel the clever, careful, strong contact of his feet with the earth, as she balanced against him. For a moment he was a tower of darkness to her, as if he rose out of the earth.

In the house-passage he wavered and went cautiously, with a curious look of silence about him as he felt for the bench. Then he sat down heavily. He was a man with rather sloping shoulders, but with heavy limbs, powerful legs that seemed to know the earth. His head was small, usually carried high and light. As he bent down to unfasten his gaiters and boots he did not look blind. His hair was brown and crisp, his hands were large, reddish, intelligent, the veins stood out in the wrists; and his thighs and knees seemed massive. When he stood up his face and neck were surcharged with blood, the veins stood out on his temples. She did not look at his blindness.

Isabel was always glad when they had passed through the dividing door into their own regions of repose and beauty. She was a little afraid of him, out there in the animal grossness of the back. His bearing also changed, as he smelt the familiar indefinable odour that pervaded his wife's surroundings, a delicate, refined scent, very faintly spicy. Perhaps it came from the potpourri bowls.

He stood at the foot of the stairs, arrested, listening. She watched him, and her heart sickened. He seemed to be listening to fate.

"He's not here yet," he said. "I'll go up and change."

"Maurice," she said, "you're not wishing he wouldn't come, are you?"

"I couldn't quite say," he answered. "I feel myself rather on the qui vive."

"I can see you are," she answered. And she reached up and kissed his cheek. She saw his mouth relax into a slow smile.

"What are you laughing at?" she said roguishly.

"You consoling me," he answered.

"Nay," she answered. "Why should I console you? You know we love each other—you know how married we are! What does anything else matter?"

"Nothing at all, my dear."

He felt for her face and touched it, smiling.

"You're all right, aren't you?" he asked anxiously.

"I'm wonderfully all right, love," she answered. "It's you I am a little troubled about, at times."

"Why me?" he said, touching her cheeks delicately with the tips of his fingers. The touch had an almost hypnotizing effect on her.

He went away upstairs. She saw him mount into the darkness, unseeing and unchanging. He did not know that the lamps on the upper corridor were unlighted. He went on into the darkness with unchanging step. She heard him in the bath-room.

Pervin moved about almost unconsciously in his familiar surroundings, dark though everything was. He seemed to know the presence of objects

before he touched them. It was a pleasure to him to rock thus through a world of things, carried on the flood in a sort of blood-prescience. He did not think much or trouble much. So long as he kept this sheer immediacy of blood-contact with the substantial world he was happy, he wanted no intervention of visual consciousness. In this state there was a certain rich positivity, bordering sometimes on rapture. Life seemed to move in him like a tide lapping, lapping, and advancing, enveloping all things darkly. It was a pleasure to stretch forth the hand and meet the unseen object, clasp it, and possess it in pure contact. He did not try to remember, to visualize. He did not want to. The new way of consciousness substituted itself in him.

The rich suffusion of this state generally kept him happy, reaching its culmination in the consuming passion for his wife. But at times the flow would seem to be checked and thrown back. Then it would beat inside him like a tangled sea, and he was tortured in the shattered chaos of his own blood. He grew to dread this arrest, this throw-back, this chaos inside himself, when he seemed merely at the mercy of his own powerful and conflicting elements. How to get some measure of control or surety, this was the question. And when the question rose maddening in him, he would clench his fists as if he would compel the whole universe to submit to him. But it was in vain. He could not even compel himself.

Tonight, however, he was still serene, though little tremors of unreasonable exasperation ran through him. He had to handle the razor very carefully, as he shaved, for it was not at one with him, he was afraid of it. His hearing also was too much sharpened. He heard the woman lighting the lamps on the corridor, and attending to the fire in the visitors' room. And then, as he went to his room, he heard the trap arrive. Then came Isabel's voice, lifted and calling, like a bell ringing:

"Is it you, Bertie? Have you come?"

And a man's voice answered out of the wind:

"Hello, Isabel! There you are."

"Have you had a miserable drive? I'm so sorry we couldn't send a closed carriage. I can't see you at all, you know."

"I'm coming. No, I liked the drive—it was like Perthshire. Well, how are you? You're looking fit as ever, as far as I can see."

"Oh, yes," said Isabel. "I'm wonderfully well. How are you? Rather thin, I think—"

"Worked to death—everybody's old cry. But I'm all right, Ciss. How's Pervin?—isn't he here?"

"Oh, yes, he's upstairs changing. Yes, he's awfully well. Take off your wet things; I'll send them to be dried."

"And how are you both, in spirits? He doesn't fret?"

"No—no, not at all. No, on the contrary, really. We've been wonderfully happy, incredibly. It's more than I can understand—so wonderful: the nearness, and the peace—"

"Ah! Well, that's awfully good news—"

They moved away. Pervin heard no more. But a childish sense of desolation had come over him, as he heard their brisk voices. He seemed shut out—like

a child that is left out. He was aimless and excluded, he did not know what to do with himself. The helpless desolation came over him. He fumbled nervously as he dressed himself, in a state almost of childishness. He disliked the Scotch accent in Bertie's speech, and the slight response it found on Isabel's tongue. He disliked the slight purr of complacency in the Scottish speech. He disliked intensely the glib way in which Isabel spoke of their happiness and nearness. It made him recoil. He was fretful and beside himself like a child, he had almost a childish nostalgia to be included in the life circle. And at the same time he was a man, dark and powerful and infuriated by his own weakness. By some fatal flaw, he could not be by himself, he had to depend on the support of another. And this very dependence enraged him. He hated Bertie Reid, and at the same time he knew the hatred was nonsense, he knew it was the outcome of his own weakness.

He went downstairs. Isabel was alone in the dining-room. She watched him enter, head erect, his feet tentative. He looked so strong-blooded and healthy and, at the same time, cancelled. Cancelled—that was the word that flew across her mind. Perhaps it was his scar suggested it.

"You heard Bertie come, Maurice?" she said.

"Yes—isn't he here?"

"He's in his room. He looks very thin and worn."

"I suppose he works himself to death."

A woman came in with a tray—and after a few minutes Bertie came down. He was a little dark man, with a very big forehead, thin, wispy hair, and sad, large eyes. His expression was inordinately sad—almost funny. He had odd, short legs.

Isabel watched him hesitate under the door, and glance nervously at her husband. Pervin heard him and turned.

"Here you are, now," said Isabel. "Come, let us eat."

Bertie went across to Maurice.

"How are you, Pervin?" he said, as he advanced.

The blind man stuck his hand out into space, and Bertie took it.

"Very fit. Glad you've come," said Maurice.

Isabel glanced at them, and glanced away, as if she could not bear to see them.

"Come," she said. "Come to table. Aren't you both awfully hungry? I am, tremendously."

"I'm afraid you waited for me," said Bertie, as they sat down.

Maurice had a curious monolithic way of sitting in a chair, erect and distant. Isabel's heart always beat when she caught sight of him thus.

"No," she replied to Bertie. "We're very little later than usual. We're having a sort of high tea, not dinner. Do you mind? It gives us such a nice long evening, uninterrupted."

"I like it," said Bertie.

Maurice was feeling, with curious little movements, almost like a cat kneading her bed, for his plate, his knife and fork, his napkin. He was getting the whole geography of his cover into his consciousness. He sat erect and inscrutable, remote-seeming. Bertie watched the static figure of the blind man, the

delicate tactile discernment of the large, ruddy hands, and the curious mindless silence of the brow, above the scar. With difficulty he looked away, and without knowing what he did, picked up a little crystal bowl of violets from the table, and held them to his nose.

"They are sweet-scented," he said. "Where do they come from?"

"From the garden—under the windows," said Isabel.

"So late in the year—and so fragrant! Do you remember the violets under Aunt Bell's south wall?"

The two friends looked at each other and exchanged a smile, Isabel's eyes lighting up.

"Don't I?" she replied. "Wasn't she queer!"

"A curious old girl," laughed Bertie. "There's a streak of freakishness in the family, Isabel."

"Ah—but not in you and me, Bertie," said Isabel. "Give them to Maurice, will you?" she added, as Bertie was putting down the flowers. "Have you smelled the violets, dear? Do!—they are so scented."

Maurice held out his hand, and Bertie placed the tiny bowl against his large, warm-looking fingers. Maurice's hand closed over the thin white fingers of the barrister. Bertie carefully extricated himself. Then the two watched the blind man smelling the violets. He bent his head and seemed to be thinking. Isabel waited.

"Aren't they sweet, Maurice?" she said at last, anxiously.

"Very," he said. And he held out the bowl. Bertie took it. Both he and Isabel were a little afraid, and deeply disturbed.

The meal continued. Isabel and Bertie chatted spasmodically. The blind man was silent. He touched his food repeatedly, with quick, delicate touches of his knife-point, then cut irregular bits. He could not bear to be helped. Both Isabel and Bertie suffered: Isabel wondered why. She did not suffer when she was alone with Maurice. Bertie made her conscious of a strangeness.

After the meal the three drew their chairs to the fire, and sat down to talk. The decanters were put on a table near at hand. Isabel knocked the logs on the fire, and clouds of brilliant sparks went up the chimney. Bertie noticed a slight weariness in her bearing.

"You will be glad when your child comes now, Isabel?" he said.

She looked up to him with a quick wan smile.

"Yes, I shall be glad," she answered. "It begins to seem long. Yes, I shall be very glad. So will you, Maurice, won't you?" she added.

"Yes, I shall," replied her husband.

"We are both looking forward so much to having it," she said.

"Yes, of course," said Bertie.

He was a bachelor, three or four years older than Isabel. He lived in beautiful rooms overlooking the river, guarded by a faithful Scottish manservant. And he had his friends among the fair sex—not lovers, friends. So long as he could avoid any danger of courtship or marriage, he adored a few good women with constant and unfailing homage, and he was chivalrously fond of quite a number. But if they seemed to encroach on him, he withdrew and detested them.

Isabel knew him very well, knew his beautiful constancy, and kindness, also his incurable weakness, which made him unable ever to enter into close contact of any sort. He was ashamed of himself because he could not marry, could not approach women physically. He wanted to do so. But he could not. At the centre of him he was afraid, helplessly and even brutally afraid. He had given up hope, had ceased to expect any more that he could escape his own weakness. Hence he was a brilliant and successful barrister, also a litterateur of high repute, a rich man, and a great social success. At the centre he felt himself neuter, nothing.

Isabel knew him well. She despised him even while she admired him. She looked at his sad face, his little short legs, and felt contempt of him. She looked at his dark grey eyes, with their uncanny, almost childlike, intuition, and she loved him. He understood amazingly—but she had no fear of his understanding. As a man she patronized him.

And she turned to the impassive, silent figure of her husband. He sat leaning back, with folded arms, and face a little uptilted. His knees were straight and massive. She sighed, picked up the poker, and again began to prod the fire, to rouse the clouds of soft brilliant sparks.

"Isabel tells me," Bertie began suddenly, "that you have not suffered unbearably from the loss of sight."

Maurice straightened himself to attend but kept his arms folded.

"No," he said, "not unbearably. Now and again one struggles against it, you know. But there are compensations."

"They say it is much worse to be stone deaf," said Isabel.

"I believe it is," said Bertie. "Are there compensations?" he added to Maurice.

"Yes. You cease to bother about a great many things." Again Maurice stretched his figure, stretched the strong muscles of his back, and leaned backwards, with uplifted face.

"And that is a relief," said Bertie. "But what is there in place of the bothering? What replaces the activity?"

There was a pause. At length the blind man replied, as out of a negligent, unattentive thinking:

"Oh, I don't know. There's a good deal when you're not active."

"Is there?" said Bertie. "What, exactly? It always seems to me that when there is no thought and no action, there is nothing."

Again Maurice was slow in replying.

"There is something," he replied. "I couldn't tell you what it is."

And the talk lapsed once more, Isabel and Bertie chatting gossip and reminiscence, the blind man silent.

At length Maurice rose restlessly, a big obtrusive figure. He felt tight and hampered. He wanted to go away.

"Do you mind," he said, "if I go and speak to Wernham?"

"No—go along, dear," said Isabel.

And he went out. A silence came over the two friends. At length Bertie said:

"Nevertheless, it is a great deprivation, Cissie."

"It is, Bertie. I know it is."

"Something lacking all the time," said Bertie.

"Yes, I know. And yet—and yet—Maurice is right. There is something else, something there, which you never knew was there, and which you can't express."

"What is there?" asked Bertie.

"I don't know—it's awfully hard to define it—but something strong and immediate. There's something strange in Maurice's presence—indefinable—but I couldn't do without it. I agree that it seems to put one's mind to sleep. But when we're alone I miss nothing; it seems awfully rich, almost splendid, you know."

"I'm afraid I don't follow," said Bertie.

They talked desultorily. The wind blew loudly outside, rain chattered on the window-panes, making a sharp drum-sound because of the closed, mellow-golden shutters inside. The logs burned slowly, with hot, almost invisible small flames. Bertie seemed uneasy, there were dark circles round his eyes. Isabel, rich with her approaching maternity, leaned looking into the fire. Her hair curled in odd, loose strands, very pleasing to the man. But she had a curious feeling of old woe in her heart, old, timeless night-woe.

"I suppose we're all deficient somewhere," said Bertie.

"I suppose so," said Isabel wearily.

"Damned, sooner or later."

"I don't know," she said, rousing herself. "I feel quite all right, you know. The child coming seems to make me indifferent to everything, just placid. I can't feel that there's anything to trouble about, you know."

"A good thing, I should say," he replied slowly.

"Well, there it is. I suppose it's just Nature. If only I felt I needn't trouble about Maurice, I should be perfectly content—"

"But you feel you must trouble about him?"

"Well—I don't know—" She even resented this much effort.

The night passed slowly. Isabel looked at the clock. "I say," she said. "It's nearly ten o'clock. Where can Maurice be? I'm sure they're all in bed at the back. Excuse me a moment."

She went out, returning almost immediately.

"It's all shut up and in darkness," she said. "I wonder where he is. He must have gone out to the farm—"

Bertie looked at her.

"I suppose he'll come in," he said.

"I suppose so," she said. "But it's unusual for him to be out now."

"Would you like me to go out and see?"

"Well—if you wouldn't mind. I'd go, but—" She did not want to make the physical effort.

Bertie put on an old overcoat and took a lantern. He went out from the side door. He shrank from the wet and roaring night. Such weather had a nervous effect on him: too much moisture everywhere made him feel almost imbecile. Unwilling, he went through it all. A dog barked violently at him. He peered in all the buildings. At last, as he opened the upper door of a sort of intermediate barn, he heard a grinding noise, and looking in, holding up his lantern, saw Maurice, in his shirtsleeves, standing listening, holding the

handle of a turnip-pulper. He had been pulping sweet roots, a pile of which lay dimly heaped in a corner behind him.

"That you, Wernham?" said Maurice, listening.

"No, it's me," said Bertie.

A large, half-wild grey cat was rubbing at Maurice's leg. The blind man stooped to rub its sides. Bertie watched the scene, then unconsciously entered and shut the door behind him. He was in a high sort of barn-place, from which, right and left, ran off the corridors in front of the stalled cattle. He watched the slow, stooping motion of the other man, as he caressed the great cat.

Maurice straightened himself.

"You came to look for me?" he said.

"Isabel was a little uneasy," said Bertie.

"I'll come in. I like messing about doing these jobs."

The cat had reared her sinister, feline length against his leg, clawing at his thigh affectionately. He lifted her claws out of his flesh.

"I hope I'm not in your way at all at the Grange here," said Bertie, rather shy and stiff.

"My way? No, not a bit. I'm glad Isabel has somebody to talk to. I'm afraid it's I who am in the way. I know I'm not very lively company. Isabel's all right, don't you think? She's not unhappy, is she?"

"I don't think so."

"What does she say?"

"She says she's very content—only a little troubled about you."

"Why me?"

"Perhaps afraid that you might brood," said Bertie, cautiously.

"She needn't be afraid of that." He continued to caress the flattened grey head of the cat with his fingers. "What I am a bit afraid of," he resumed, "is that she'll find me a dead weight, always alone with me down here."

"I don't think you need think that," said Bertie, though this was what he feared himself.

"I don't know," said Maurice. "Sometimes I feel it isn't fair that she's saddled with me." Then he dropped his voice curiously. "I say," he asked, secretly struggling, "is my face much disfigured? Do you mind telling me?"

"There is the scar," said Bertie, wondering. "Yes, it is a disfigurement. But more pitiable than shocking."

"A pretty bad scar, though," said Maurice.

"Oh, yes."

There was a pause.

"Sometimes I feel I am horrible," said Maurice, in a low voice, talking as if to himself. And Bertie actually felt a quiver of horror.

"That's nonsense," he said.

Maurice again straightened himself, leaving the cat.

"There's no telling," he said. Then again, in an odd tone, he added: "I don't really know you, do I?"

"Probably not," said Bertie.

"Do you mind if I touch you?"

The lawyer shrank away instinctively. And yet, out of very philanthropy, he said, in a small voice: "Not at all."

But he suffered as the blind man stretched out a strong, naked hand to him. Maurice accidentally knocked off Bertie's hat.

"I thought you were taller," he said, starting. Then he laid his hand on Bertie Reid's head, closing the dome of the skull in a soft, firm grasp, gathering it, as it were; then, shifting his grasp and softly closing again, with a fine, close pressure, till he had covered the skull and the face of the smaller man, tracing the brows, and touching the full, closed eyes, touching the small nose and the nostrils, the rough, short moustache, the mouth, the rather strong chin. The hand of the blind man grasped the shoulder, the arm, the hand of the other man. He seemed to take him, in the soft, travelling grasp.

"You seem young," he said quietly, at last.

The lawyer stood almost annihilated, unable to answer.

"Your head seems tender, as if you were young," Maurice repeated. "So do your hands. Touch my eyes, will you?—touch my scar."

Now Bertie quivered with revulsion. Yet he was under the power of the blind man, as if hypnotized. He lifted his hand, and laid the fingers on the scar, on the scarred eyes. Maurice suddenly covered them with his own hand, pressed the fingers of the other man upon his disfigured eye-sockets, trembling in every fibre, and rocking slightly, slowly, from side to side. He remained thus for a minute or more, whilst Bertie stood as if in a swoon, unconscious, imprisoned.

Then suddenly Maurice removed the hand of the other man from his brow, and stood holding it in his own.

"Oh, my God," he said, "we shall know each other now, shan't we? We shall know each other now."

Bertie could not answer. He gazed mute and terrorstruck, overcome by his own weakness. He knew he could not answer. He had an unreasonable fear, lest the other man should suddenly destroy him. Whereas Maurice was actually filled with hot, poignant love, the passion of friendship. Perhaps it was this very passion of friendship which Bertie shrank from most.

"We're all right together now, aren't we?" said Maurice. "It's all right now, as long as we live, so far as we're concerned?"

"Yes," said Bertie, trying by any means to escape.

Maurice stood with head lifted, as if listening. The new delicate fulfilment of mortal friendship had come as a revelation and surprise to him, something exquisite and unhoped-for. He seemed to be listening to hear if it were real.

Then he turned for his coat.

"Come," he said, "we'll go to Isabel."

Bertie took the lantern and opened the door. The cat disappeared. The two men went in silence along the causeways. Isabel, as they came, thought their footsteps sounded strange. She looked up pathetically and anxiously for their entrance. There seemed a curious elation about Maurice. Bertie was haggard, with sunken eyes.

"What is it?" she asked.

"We've become friends," said Maurice, standing with his feet apart, like a strange colossus.

"Friends!" re-echoed Isabel. And she looked again at Bertie. He met her eyes with a furtive, haggard look; his eyes were as if glazed with misery.

"I'm so glad," she said, in sheer perplexity.

"Yes," said Maurice.

He was indeed so glad. Isabel took his hand with both hers, and held it fast.

"You'll be happier now, dear," she said.

But she was watching Bertie. She knew that he had one desire—to escape from this intimacy, this friendship, which had been thrust upon him. He could not bear it that he had been touched by the blind man, his insane reserve broken in. He was like a mollusc whose shell is broken.

HENRY JAMES

The Birthplace

I

IT SEEMED to them at first, the offer, too good to be true, and their friend's letter, addressed to them to feel, as he said, the ground, to sound them as to inclinations and possibilities, had almost the effect of a brave joke at their expense. Their friend, Mr. Grant-Jackson, a highly preponderant pushing person, great in discussion and arrangement, abrupt in overture, unexpected, if not perverse, in attitude, and almost equally acclaimed and objected to in the wide midland region to which he had taught, as the phrase was, the size of his foot—their friend had launched his bolt quite out of the blue and had thereby so shaken them as to make them fear almost more than hope. The place had fallen vacant by the death of one of the two ladies, mother and daughter, who had discharged its duties for fifteen years; the daughter was staying on alone, to accommodate, but had found, though extremely mature, an opportunity of marriage that involved retirement, and the question of the new incumbents was not a little pressing. The want thus determined was of a united couple of some sort, of the right sort, a pair of educated and competent sisters possibly preferred, but a married pair having its advantages if other qualifications were marked. Applicants, candidates, besiegers of the door of every one supposed to have a voice in the matter, were already beyond counting, and Mr. Grant-Jackson, who was in his way diplomatic and whose voice, though not perhaps of the loudest, possessed notes of insistence, had found his preference fixing itself on some person or brace of persons who had been decent and dumb. The Gedges appeared to have struck him as waiting in

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silence—though absolutely, as happened, no busybody had brought them, far away in the North, a hint either of bliss or of danger; and the happy spell, for the rest, had obviously been wrought in him by a remembrance which, though now scarcely fresh, had never before borne any such fruit.

Morris Gedge had for a few years, as a young man, carried on a small private school of the order known as preparatory, and had happened then to receive under his roof the small son of the great man, who was not at that time so great. The little boy, during an absence of his parents from England, had been dangerously ill, so dangerously that they had been recalled in haste, though with inevitable delays, from a far country—they had gone to America, with the whole continent and the great sea to cross again—and had got back to find the child saved, but saved, as couldn't help coming to light, by the extreme devotion and perfect judgement of Mrs. Gedge. Without children of her own she had particularly attached herself to this tiniest and tenderest of her husband's pupils, and they had both dreaded as a dire disaster the injury to their little enterprise that would be caused by their losing him. Nervous anxious sensitive persons, with a pride—as they were for that matter well aware—above their position, never, at the best, to be anything but dingy, they had nursed him in terror and had brought him through in exhaustion. Exhaustion, as befell, had thus overtaken them early and had for one reason and another managed to assert itself as their permanent portion. The little boy's death would, as they said, have done for them, yet his recovery hadn't saved them; with which it was doubtless also part of a shy but stiff candour in them that they didn't regard themselves as having in a more indirect manner laid up treasure. Treasure was not to be, in any form whatever, of their dreams or of their waking sense; and the years that followed had limped under their weight, had now and then rather grievously stumbled, had even barely escaped laying them in the dust. The school hadn't prospered, had but dwindled to a close. Gedge's health had failed and still more every sign in him of a capacity to publish himself as practical. He had tried several things, he had tried many, but the final appearance was of their having tried him not less. They mostly, at the time I speak of, were trying his successors, while he found himself, with an effect of dull felicity that had come in this case from the mere postponement of change, in charge of the grey town-library of Blackport-on-Dwindle, all granite, fog and female fiction. This was a situation in which his general intelligence—admittedly his strong point—was doubtless imaged, around him, as feeling less of a strain than that mastery of particulars in which he was recognised as weak.

It was at Blackport-on-Dwindle that the silver shaft reached and pierced him; it was as an alternative to dispensing dog's-eared volumes the very titles of which, on the lips of innumerable glib girls, were a challenge to his nerves, that the wardenship of so different a temple presented itself. The stipend named exceeded little the slim wage at present paid him, but even had it been less the interest and the honour would have struck him as determinant. The

which he was to preside—though he had always lacked occasion to
—figured to him as the most sacred known to the steps of men,
ne of the supreme poet, the Mecca of the English-speaking race.

The tears came into his eyes sooner still than into his wife's while he looked about with her at their actual narrow prison, so grim with enlightenment, so ugly with industry, so turned away from any dream, so intolerable to any taste. He felt as if a window had opened into a great green woodland, a woodland that had a name all glorious, immortal, that was peopled with vivid figures, each of them renowned, and that gave out a murmur, deep as the sound of the sea, which was the rustle in forest shade of all the poetry, the beauty, the colour of life. It would be prodigious that of this transfigured world *he* should keep the key. No—he couldn't believe it, not even when Isabel, at sight of his face, came and helpfully kissed him. He shook his head with a strange smile. "We shan't get it. Why should we? It's perfect."

"If we don't he'll simply have been cruel; which is impossible when he has waited all this time to be kind." Mrs. Gedge did believe—she *would;* since the wide doors of the world of poetry had suddenly pushed back for them it was in the form of poetic justice that they were first to know it. She had her faith in their patron; it was sudden, but now complete. "He remembers—that's all; and that's our strength."

"And what's *his?*" Gedge asked. "He may want to put us through, but that's a different thing from being able. What are our special advantages?"

"Well, that we're just the thing." Her knowledge of the needs of the case was as yet, thanks to scant information, of the vaguest, and she had never, more than her husband, stood on the sacred spot; but she saw herself waving a nicely-gloved hand over a collection of remarkable objects and saying to a compact crowd of gaping awestruck persons: "And now, please, *this* way." She even heard herself meeting with promptness and decision an occasional enquiry from a visitor in whom audacity had prevailed over awe. She had once been with a cousin, years before, to a great northern castle, and that was the way the housekeeper had taken them round. And it was not moreover, either, that she thought of herself as a housekeeper: she was well above that, and the wave of her hand wouldn't fail to be such as to show it. This and much else she summed up as she answered her mate. "Our special advantages are that you're a gentleman."

"Oh!" said Gedge as if he had never thought of it, and yet as if too it were scarce worth thinking of.

"I see it all," she went on; "they've *had* the vulgar—they find they don't do. We're poor and we're modest, but any one can see what we are."

Gedge wondered. "Do you mean—?" More modest than she, he didn't know quite what she meant.

"We're refined. We know how to speak."

"Do we?"—he still, suddenly, wondered.

But she was from the first surer of everything than he; so that when a few weeks more had elapsed and the shade of uncertainty—though it was only a shade—had grown almost to sicken him, her triumph was to come with the news that they were fairly named. "We're on poor pay, though we manage"—she had at the present juncture contended for her point. "But we're highly cultivated, and for them to get *that,* don't you see? without getting too much with it in the way of pretensions and demands, must be precisely their dream.

We've no social position, but we don't *mind* that we haven't, do we? a bit; which is because we know the difference between realities and shams. We hold to reality, and that gives us common sense, which the vulgar have less than anything and which yet must be wanted there, after all, as well as anywhere else."

Her companion followed her, but musingly, as if his horizon had within a few moments grown so great that he was almost lost in it and required a new orientation. The shining spaces surrounded him; the association alone gave a nobler arch to the sky. "Allow that we hold also a little to the romance. It seems to me that that's the beauty. We've missed it all our life, and now it's come. We shall be at headquarters for it. We shall have our fill of it."

She looked at his face, at the effect in it of these prospects, and her own lighted as if he had suddenly grown handsome. "Certainly—we shall live as in a fairy-tale. But what I mean is that we shall give, in a way—and so gladly—quite as much as we get. With all the rest of it we're for instance neat." Their letter had come to them at breakfast, and she picked a fly out of the butter-dish. "It's the way we'll *keep* the place"—with which she removed from the sofa to the top of the cottage-piano a tin of biscuits that had refused to squeeze into the cupboard. At Blackport they were in lodgings—of the lowest description, she had been known to declare with a freedom felt by Blackport to be slightly invidious. The Birthplace—and that itself, after such a life, was exaltation—wouldn't be lodgings, since a house close beside it was set apart for the warden, a house joining on to it as a sweet old parsonage is often annexed to a quaint old church. It would all together be their home, and such a home as would make a little world that they would never want to leave. She dwelt on the gain, for that matter, to their income; as obviously, though the salary was not a change for the better, the house given them would make all the difference. He assented to this, but absently, and she was almost impatient at the range of his thoughts. It was as if something, for him—the very swarm of them—veiled the view; and he presently of himself showed what it was.

"What I can't get over is its being such a man—!" He almost, from inward emotion, broke down.

"Such a man—?"

"Him, *him*, HIM!" It was too much.

"Grant-Jackson? Yes, it's a surprise, but one sees how he has been meaning, all the while, the right thing by us."

"I mean *Him*," Gedge returned more coldly; "our becoming familiar and intimate—for that's what it will come to. We shall just live with Him."

"Of course—it *is* the beauty." And she added quite gaily: "The more we do the more we shall love Him."

"No doubt—but it's rather awful. The more we *know* Him," Gedge reflected, "the more we shall love Him. We don't as yet, you see, know Him so very tremendously."

"We do so quite as well, I imagine, as the sort of people they've had. And that probably isn't—unless you care, as we do—so awfully necessary. For there are the facts."

"Yes—there are the facts."

"I mean the principal ones. They're all that the people—the people who come—want."

"Yes—they must be all *they* want."

"So that they're all that those who've been in charge have needed to know."

"Ah," he said as if it were a question of honour, "*we* must know everything."

She cheerfully acceded: she had the merit, he felt, of keeping the case within bounds. "Everything. But about him personally," she added, "there isn't, is there? so very very much."

"More, I believe, than there used to be. They've made discoveries."

It was a grand thought. "Perhaps *we* shall make some!"

"Oh I shall be content to be a little better up in what has been done." And his eyes rested on a shelf of books, half of which, little worn but much faded, were of the florid "gift" order and belonged to the house. Of those among them that were his own most were common specimens of the reference sort, not excluding an old Bradshaw and a catalogue of the town-library. "We've not even a Set of our own. Of the Works," he explained in quick repudiation of the sense, perhaps more obvious, in which she might have taken it.

As a proof of their scant range of possessions this sounded almost abject, till the painful flush with which they met on the admission melted presently into a different glow. It was just for that kind of poorness that their new situation was, by its intrinsic charm, to console them. And Mrs. Gedge had a happy thought. "Wouldn't the Library more or less have them?"

"Oh no, we've nothing of that sort: for what do you take us?" This, however, was but the play of Gedge's high spirits: the form both depression and exhilaration most frequently took with him being a bitterness on the subject of the literary taste of Blackport. No one was so deeply acquainted with it. It acted with him in fact as so lurid a sign of the future that the charm of the thought of removal was sharply enhanced by the prospect of escape from it. The institution he served didn't of course deserve the particular reproach into which his irony had flowered; and indeed if the several Sets in which the Works were present were a trifle dusty, the dust was a little his own fault. To make up for that now he had the vision of immediately giving his time to the study of them; he saw himself indeed, inflamed with a new passion, earnestly commenting and collating. Mrs. Gedge, who had suggested that, till their move should come, they ought to read Him regularly of an evening—certain as they were to do it still more when in closer quarters with Him—Mrs. Gedge felt also, in her degree, the spell; so that the very happiest time of their anxious life was perhaps to have been the series of lamplight hours, after supper, in which, alternately taking the book, they declaimed, they almost performed, their beneficent author. He became speedily more than their author—their personal friend, their universal light, their final authority and divinity. Where in the world, they were already asking themselves, would they have been without Him? By the time their appointment arrived in form their relation to Him had immensely developed. It was amusing to Morris Gedge that he had so lately blushed for his ignorance, and he made this remark to his wife during the last hour they were able to give their study be-

fore proceeding, across half the country, to the scene of their romantic future. It was as if, in deep close throbs, in cool afterwaves that broke of a sudden and bathed his mind, all possession and comprehension and sympathy, all the truth and the life and the story, had come to him, and come, as the newspapers said, to stay. "It's absurd," he didn't hesitate to say, "to talk of our not 'knowing.' So far as we don't it's because we're dunces. He's *in* the thing, over His ears, and the more we get into it the more we're with Him. I seem to myself at any rate," he declared, "to *see* Him in it as if He were painted on the wall."

"Oh *doesn't* one rather, the dear thing? And don't you feel where it is?" Mrs. Gedge finely asked. "We see Him because we love Him—that's what we do. How can we not, the old darling—with what He's doing for us? There's no light"—she had a sententious turn—"like true affection."

"Yes, I suppose that's it. And yet," her husband mused, "I see, confound me, the faults."

"That's because you're so critical. You see them, but you don't mind them. You see them, but you forgive them. You mustn't mention them *there*. We shan't, you know, be there for *that.*"

"Dear no!" he laughed: "we'll chuck out any one who hints at them."

II

If the sweetness of the preliminary months had been great, great too, though almost excessive as agitation, was the wonder of fairly being housed with Him, of treading day and night in the footsteps He had worn, of touching the objects, or at all events the surfaces, the substances, over which His hands had played, which His arms, His shoulders had rubbed, of breathing the air—or something not too unlike it—in which His voice had sounded. They had had a little at first their bewilderments, their disconcertedness; the place was both humbler and grander than they had exactly prefigured, more at once of a cottage and of a museum, a little more archaically bare and yet a little more richly official. But the sense was strong with them that the point of view, for the inevitable ease of the connexion, patiently, indulgently awaited them; in addition to which, from the first evening, after closing-hour, when the last blank pilgrim had gone, the mere spell, the mystic presence—as if they had had it quite to themselves—were all they could have desired. They had received, at Grant-Jackson's behest and in addition to a table of instructions and admonitions by the number and in some particulars by the nature of which they found themselves slightly depressed, various little guides, manuals, travellers' tributes, literary memorials and other catch-penny publications; which, however, were to be for the moment swallowed up in the interesting episode of the induction or initiation appointed for them in advance at the hands of several persons whose relation to the establishment was, as superior to their own, still more official, and at those in especial of one of the ladies who had for so many years borne the brunt. About the instructions from above, about the shilling books and the well-known facts and the full-blown legend, the supervision, the subjection, the submission, the view as of a cage in which he should circulate and a groove in which he should slide, Gedge

had preserved a certain play of mind; but all power of reaction appeared suddenly to desert him in the presence of his so visibly competent predecessor and as an effect of her good offices. He had not the resource, enjoyed by his wife, of seeing himself, with impatience, attired in black silk of a make characterised by just the right shade of austerity; so that this firm smooth expert and consummately respectable middle-aged person had him somehow, on the whole ground, completely at her mercy.

It was evidently something of a rueful moment when, as a lesson—she being for the day or two still in the field—he accepted Miss Putchin's suggestion of "going round" with her and with the successive squads of visitors she was there to deal with. He appreciated her method—he saw there had to *be* one; he admired her as succinct and definite; for there were the facts, as his wife had said at Blackport, and they were to be disposed of in the time; yet he felt a very little boy as he dangled, more than once, with Mrs. Gedge, at the tail of the human comet. The idea had been that they should by this attendance more fully embrace the possible accidents and incidents, so to put it, of the relation to the great public in which they were to find themselves; and the poor man's excited perception of the great public rapidly became such as to resist any diversion meaner than that of the admirable manner of their guide. It wandered from his gaping companions to that of the priestess in black silk, whom he kept asking himself if either he or Isabel could hope by any possibility ever remotely to resemble; then it bounded restlessly back to the numerous persons who revealed to him as it had never yet been revealed the happy power of the simple to hang upon the lips of the wise. The great thing seemed to be—and quite surprisingly—that the business was easy and the strain, which as a strain they had feared, moderate; so that he might have been puzzled, had he fairly caught himself in the act, by his recognising as the last effect of the impression an odd absence of the power really to rest in it, an agitation deep within him that vaguely threatened to grow. "It isn't, you see, so very complicated," the black silk lady seemed to throw off, with everything else, in her neat crisp cheerful way; in spite of which he already, the very first time—that is after several parties had been in and out and up and down—went so far as to wonder if there weren't more in it than she imagined. She was, so to speak, kindness itself—was all encouragement and reassurance; but it was just her slightly coarse redolence of these very things that, on repetition, before they parted, dimmed a little, as he felt, the light of his acknowledging smile. This again she took for a symptom of some pleading weakness in him—he could never be as brave as she; so that she wound up with a few pleasant words from the very depth of her experience. "You'll get into it, never fear—it will *come;* and then you'll feel as if you had never done anything else." He was afterwards to know that, on the spot, at this moment, he must have begun to wince a little at such a menace; that he might come to feel as if he had never done anything but what Miss Putchin did loomed for him, in germ, as a penalty to pay. The support she offered, none the less, continued to strike him; she put the whole thing on so sound a basis when she said: "You see they're so nice about it—they take such an interest. And they never do a thing they shouldn't. That was always everything to mother and me." "They,"

Gedge had already noticed, referred constantly and hugely, in the good woman's talk, to the millions who shuffled through the house; the pronoun in question was for ever on her lips, the hordes it represented filled her consciousness, the addition of their numbers ministered to her glory. Mrs. Gedge promptly fell in. "It must be indeed delightful to see the effect on so many and to feel that one may perhaps do something to make it—well, permanent." But he was kept silent by his becoming more sharply aware that this was a new view, for him, of the reference made, that he had never thought of the quality of the place as derived from Them, but from Somebody Else, and that They, in short, seemed to have got into the way of crowding Him out. He found himself even a little resenting this for Him—which perhaps had something to do with the slightly invidious cast of his next enquiry.

"And are They always, as one might say—a—stupid?"

"Stupid!" She stared, looking as if no one *could* be such a thing in such a connexion. No one had ever been anything but neat and cheerful and fluent, except to be attentive and unobjectionable and, so far as was possible, American.

"What I mean is," he explained, "is there any perceptible proportion that take an interest in Him?"

His wife stepped on his toe; she deprecated levity. But his mistake fortunately was lost on their friend. "That's just why they come, that they take such an interest. I sometimes think they take more than about anything else in the world." With which Miss Putchin looked about at the place. "It *is* pretty, don't you think, the way they've got it now?" This, Gedge saw, was a different "They"; it applied to the powers that were—the people who had appointed him, the governing, visiting Body, in respect to which he was afterwards to remark to Mrs. Gedge that a fellow—it was the difficulty—didn't know "where to have her." His wife, at a loss, questioned at that moment the necessity of having her anywhere, and he said, good-humouredly "Of course; it's all right." He was in fact content enough with the last touches their friend had given the picture. "There are many who know all about it when they come, and the Americans often are tremendously up. Mother and me really enjoyed"—it was her only slip—"the interest of the Americans. We've sometimes had ninety a day, and all wanting to see and hear everything. But you'll work them off; you'll see the way—it's all experience." She came back for his comfort to that. She came back also to other things: she did justice to the considerable class who arrived positive and primed. "There are those who know more about it than you do. But *that* only comes from their interest."

"Who know more about what?" Gedge enquired.

"Why about the place. I mean they have their ideas—of what everything is, and *where* it is, and what it isn't and where it *should* be. They do ask questions," she said, yet not so much in warning as in the complacency of being herself seasoned and sound; "and they're down on you when they think you go wrong. As if you ever could! You know too much," she astutely smiled; "or you *will*."

"Oh you mustn't know *too* much, must you?" And Gedge now smiled as he knew, he thought, what he meant.

"Well, you must know as much as anybody else. I claim at any rate that I do," Miss Putchin declared. "They never really caught me out."

"I'm very certain of *that*"—and Mrs. Gedge had an elation almost personal.

"Surely," he said, "I don't want to be caught out." She rejoined that in such a case he would have *Them* down on him, and he saw that this time she meant the powers above. It quickened his sense of all the elements that were to reckon with, yet he felt at the same time that the powers above were not what he should most fear. "I'm glad," he observed, "that they ever ask questions; but I happened to notice, you know, that no one did today."

"Then you missed several—and no loss. There were three or four put to me too silly to remember. But of course they mostly *are* silly."

"You mean the questions?"

She laughed with all her cheer. "Yes, sir; I don't mean the answers."

Whereupon, for a moment snubbed and silent, he felt like one of the crowd. Then it made him slightly vicious. "I didn't know but you meant the people in general—till I remembered that I'm to understand from you that *they're* wise, only occasionally breaking down."

It wasn't really till then, he thought, that she lost patience; and he had had, much more than he meant no doubt, a cross-questioning air. "You'll see for yourself." Of which he was sure enough. He was in fact so ready to take this that she came round to full accommodation, put it frankly that every now and then they broke out—not the silly, oh no, the intensely enquiring. "We've had quite lively discussions, don't you know, about well-known points. They want it all *their* way, and I know the sort that are going to as soon as I see them. That's one of the things you do—you get to know the sorts. And if it's what you're afraid of—their taking you up," she was further gracious enough to say, "you needn't mind a bit. What *do* they know, after all, when for us it's our life? I've never moved an inch, because, you see, I shouldn't have been here if I didn't know where I was. No more will *you* be a year hence—you know what I mean, putting it impossibly—if *you* don't. I expect you do, in spite of your fancies." And she dropped once more to bed-rock. "There are the facts. Otherwise where would any of us be? That's all you've got to go upon. A person, however cheeky, can't have them *his* way just because he takes it into his head. There can only be *one* way, and," she gaily added as she took leave of them, "I'm sure it's quite enough!"

III

Gedge not only assented eagerly—one way *was* quite enough if it were the right one—but repeated it, after this conversation, at odd moments, several times over to his wife. "There can only be one way, one way," he continued to remark—though indeed much as if it were a joke; till she asked him how many more he supposed she wanted. He failed to answer this question, but resorted to another repetition. "There are the facts, the facts," which perhaps, however, he kept a little more to himself, sounding it at intervals in different parts of the house. Mrs. Gedge was full of comment on their clever introductress, though not restrictively save in the matter of her speech, "Me and mother," and a general tone—which certainly was not their sort of thing. "I don't know," he said, "perhaps it comes with the place, since speaking in immortal verse doesn't seem

to come. It must be, one seems to see, one thing or the other. I dare say that in a few months I shall also be at it—'me and the wife.'"

"Why not 'me and the missus' at once?" Mrs. Gedge resentfully enquired. "I don't think," she observed at another time, "that I quite know what's the matter with you."

"It's only that I'm excited, awfully excited—as I don't see how one can't be. You wouldn't have a fellow drop into this berth as into an appointment at the Post Office. Here on the spot it goes to my head—how can that be helped? But we shall live into it, and perhaps," he said with an implication of the other possibility that was doubtless but part of his fine ecstasy, "we shall live through it." The place acted on his imagination—how, surely, shouldn't it? And his imagination acted on his nerves, and these things together, with the general vividness and the new and complete immersion, made rest for him almost impossible, so that he could scarce go to bed at night and even during the first week more than once rose in the small hours to move about, up and down, with his lamp—standing, sitting, listening, wondering, in the stillness, as if positively to recover some echo, to surprise some secret, of the *genius loci*. He couldn't have explained it—and didn't in fact need to explain it, at least to himself, since the impulse simply held him and shook him; but the time after closing, the time above all after the people—Them, as he felt himself on the way habitually to put it, predominant, insistent, all in the foreground—brought him, or ought to have brought him, he seemed to see, nearer to the enshrined Presence, enlarging the opportunity for communion and intensifying the sense of it. These nightly prowls, as he called them, were disquieting to his wife, who had no disposition to share in them, speaking with decision of the whole place as just the place to be forbidding after dark. She rejoiced in the distinctness, contiguous though it was, of their own little residence, where she trimmed the lamp and stirred the fire and heard the kettle sing, repairing the while the omissions of the small domestic who slept out; she foresaw herself, with some promptness, drawing rather sharply the line between her own precinct and that in which the great spirit might walk. It would be with them, the great spirit, all day—even if indeed on her making that remark, and in just that form, to her husband, he replied with a queer "But will he though?" And she vaguely imaged the development of a domestic antidote after a while, precisely, in the shape of curtains more markedly drawn and everything most modern and lively, tea, "patterns," the newspapers, the female fiction itself that they had reacted against at Blackport, quite defiantly cultivated.

These possibilities, however, were all right, as her companion said it was, all the first autumn—they had arrived at summer's end; and he might have been more than content with a special set of his own that he had access to from behind, passing out of their low door for the few steps between it and the Birthplace. With his lamp ever so carefully guarded and his nursed keys that made him free of treasures, he crossed the dusky interval so often that she began to qualify it as a habit that "grew." She spoke of it almost as if he had taken to drink, and he humoured that view of it by allowing the cup to be strong. This had been in truth altogether his immediate sense of it; strange and deep for him the spell of silent sessions before familiarity and, to some small extent, dis-

appointment had set in. The exhibitional side of the establishment had struck him, even on arrival, as qualifying too much its character; he scarce knew what he might best have looked for, but the three or four rooms bristled overmuch, in the garish light of day, with busts and relics, not even ostensibly always *His,* old prints and old editions, old objects fashioned in His likeness, furniture "of the time" and autographs of celebrated worshippers. In the quiet hours and the deep dusk, none the less, under the play of the shifted lamp and that of his own emotion, these things too recovered their advantage, ministered to the mystery, or at all events to the impression, seemed consciously to offer themselves as personal to the poet. Not one of them was really or unchallengeably so, but they had somehow, through long association, got, as Gedge always phrased it, into the secret, and it was about the secret he asked them while he restlessly wandered. It wasn't till months had elapsed that he found how little they had to tell him, and he was quite at his ease with them when he knew they were by no means where his sensibility had first placed them. They were as out of it as he; only, to do them justice, they had made him immensely feel. And still, too, it was not they who had done that most, since his sentiment had gradually cleared itself to deep, to deeper refinements.

The Holy of Holies of the Birthplace was the low, the sublime Chamber of Birth, sublime because, as the Americans usually said—unlike the natives they mostly found words—it was so pathetic; and pathetic because it was—well, really nothing else in the world that one could name, number or measure. It was as empty as a shell of which the kernel has withered, and contained neither busts nor prints nor early copies; it contained only the Fact—*the* Fact itself—which, as he stood sentient there at midnight, our friend, holding his breath, allowed to sink into him. He *had* to take it as the place where the spirit would most walk and where He would therefore be most to be met, with possibilities of recognition and reciprocity. He hadn't, most probably—*He* hadn't—much inhabited the room, as men weren't apt, as a rule, to convert to their later use and involve in their wider fortune the scene itself of their nativity. But as there were moments when, in the conflict of theories, the sole certainty surviving for the critic threatened to be that He had not—unlike other successful men—*not* been born, so Gedge, though little of a critic, clung to the square feet of space that connected themselves, however feebly, with the positive appearance. He was little of a critic—he was nothing of one; he hadn't pretended to the character before coming, nor come to pretend to it; also, luckily for him, he was seeing day by day how little use he could possibly have for it. It would be to him, the attitude of a high expert, distinctly a stumbling-block, and that he rejoiced, as the winter waned, in his ignorance, was one of the propositions he betook himself, in his odd manner, to enunciating to his wife. She denied it, for hadn't she in the first place been present, wasn't she still present, at his pious, his tireless study of everything connected with the subject?—so present that she had herself learned more about it than had ever seemed likely. Then in the second place he wasn't to proclaim on the house-tops any point at which he might be weak, for who knew, if it should get abroad that they were ignorant, what effect might be produced—?

"On the attraction"—he took her up—"of the Show?"

He had fallen into the harmless habit of speaking of the place as the "Show"; but she didn't mind this so much as to be diverted by it. "No; on the attitude of the Body. You know they're pleased with us, and I don't see why you should want to spoil it. We got in by a tight squeeze—you know we've had evidence of that, and that it was about as much as our backers could manage. But we're proving a comfort to them, and it's absurd of you to question your suitability to people who were content with the Putchins."

"I don't, my dear," he returned, "question anything; but if I should do so it would be precisely because of the greater advantage constituted for the Putchins by the simplicity of their spirit. They were kept straight by the quality of their ignorance—which was denser even than mine. It was a mistake in us from the first to have attempted to correct or to disguise ours. We should have waited simply to become good parrots, to learn our lesson—all on the spot here, so little of it is wanted—and squawk it off."

"Ah 'squawk,' love—what a word to use about Him!"

"It isn't about Him—nothing's about Him. None of Them care tuppence about Him. The only thing They care about is this empty shell—or rather, for it isn't empty, the extraneous preposterous stuffing of it."

"Preposterous?"—he made her stare with this as he hadn't yet done.

At sight of her look, however—the gleam, as it might have been, of a queer suspicion—he bent to her kindly and tapped her cheek. "Oh it's all right. We *must* fall back on the Putchins. Do you remember what she said?—'They've made it so pretty now.' They *have* made it pretty, and it's a first-rate show. It's a first-rate show and a first-rate billet, and He was a first-rate poet, and you're a first-rate woman—to put up so sweetly, I mean, with my nonsense."

She appreciated his domestic charm and she justified that part of his tribute which concerned herself. "I don't care how much of your nonsense you talk to me, so long as you *keep* it all for me and don't treat *Them* to it."

"The pilgrims? No," he conceded—"it isn't fair to Them. They mean well."

"What complaint have we after all to make of Them so long as They don't break off bits—as They used, Miss Putchin told us, so awfully—in order to conceal them about Their Persons? She broke Them at least of that."

"Yes," Gedge mused again; "I wish awfully she hadn't!"

"You'd like the relics destroyed, removed? That's all that's wanted!"

"There *are* no relics."

"There won't be any *soon*—unless you take care." But he was already laughing, and the talk wasn't dropped without his having patted her once more. An impression or two nevertheless remained with her from it, as he saw from a question she asked him on the morrow. "What did you mean yesterday about Miss Putchin's simplicity—it's keeping her 'straight'? Do you mean mentally?"

Her "mentally" was rather portentous, but he practically confessed. "Well, it kept her up. I mean," he amended, laughing, "it kept her down."

It was really as if she had been a little uneasy. "You consider there's a danger of your being affected? You know what I mean—of its going to your head. You do know," she insisted as he said nothing. "Through your caring for him so. You'd certainly be right in that case about its having been a mistake for you to plunge so deep." And then as his listening without reply, though with his

look a little sad for her, might have denoted that, allowing for extravagance of statement, he saw there was something in it: "Give up your prowls. Keep it for daylight. Keep it for *Them.*"

"Ah," he smiled, "if one could! My prowls," he added, "are what I most enjoy. They're the only time, as I've told you before, that I'm really with *Him.* Then I don't see the place. He isn't the place."

"I don't care for what you 'don't see,'" she returned with vivacity; "the question is of what you do see."

Well, if it was, he waited before meeting it. "Do you know what I sometimes do?" And then as she waited too: "In the Birthroom there, when I look in late, I often put out my light. That makes it better."

"Makes what—?"

"Everything."

"What is it then you see in the dark?"

"Nothing!" said Morris Gedge.

"And what's the pleasure of that?"

"Well, what the American ladies say. It's so fascinating!"

IV

The autumn was brisk, as Miss Putchin had told them it would be, but business naturally fell off with the winter months and the short days. There was rarely an hour indeed without a call of some sort, and they were never allowed to forget that they kept the shop in all the world, as they might say, where custom was least fluctuating. The seasons told on it, as they tell on travel, but no other influence, consideration or convulsion to which the population of the globe is exposed. This population, never exactly in simultaneous hordes, but in a full swift and steady stream, passed through the smoothly-working mill and went, in its variety of degrees duly impressed and edified, on its artless way. Gedge gave himself up, with much ingenuity of spirit, to trying to keep in relation with it; having even at moments, in the early time, glimpses of the chance that the impressions gathered from so rare an opportunity for contact with the general mind might prove as interesting as anything else in the connexion. Types, classes, nationalities, manners, diversities of behaviour, modes of seeing, feeling, of expression, would pass before him and become for him, after a fashion, the experience of an untravelled man. His journeys had been short and saving, but poetic justice again seemed inclined to work for him in placing him just at the point in all Europe perhaps where the confluence of races was thickest. The theory at any rate carried him on, operating helpfully for the term of his anxious beginnings and gilding in a manner—it was the way he characterised the case to his wife—the somewhat stodgy gingerbread of their daily routine. They hadn't known many people and their visting-list was small—which made it again poetic justice that they should be visited on such a scale. They dressed and were at home, they were under arms and received, and except for the offer of refreshment—and Gedge had his view that there would eventually be a *buffet* farmed out to a great firm—their hospitality would have made them princely if mere hospitality ever did. Thus they were launched, and it was interesting; so that from having been ready to drop, originally, with

fatigue they emerged as even-winded and strong on the legs as if they had had an Alpine holiday. This experience, Gedge opined, also represented, as a gain, a like seasoning of the spirit—by which he meant a certain command of impenetrable patience.

The patience was needed for the particular feature of the ordeal that, by the time the lively season was with them again, had disengaged itself as the sharpest—the immense assumption of veracities and sanctities, of the general soundness of the legend, with which every one arrived. He was well provided certainly for meeting it, and he gave all he had, yet he had sometimes the sense of a vague resentment on the part of his pilgrims at his not ladling out their fare with a bigger spoon. An irritation had begun to grumble in him during the comparatively idle months of winter when a pilgrim would turn up singly. The pious individual, entertained for the half-hour, had occasionally seemed to offer him the promise of beguilement or the semblance of a personal relation; it came back again to the few pleasant calls he had received in the course of a life almost void of social amenity. Sometimes he liked the person, the face, the speech: an educated man, a gentleman, not one of the herd; a graceful woman, vague, accidental, unconscious of him, but making him wonder, while he hovered, who she was. These chances represented for him light yearnings and faint flutters; they acted indeed within him to a special, an extraordinary tune. He would have liked to talk with such stray companions, to talk with them *really,* to talk with them as he might have talked had he met them where he couldn't meet them—at dinner, in the "world," on a visit at a country-house. Then he could have said—and about the shrine and the idol always—things he couldn't say now. The form in which his irritation first came to him was that of his feeling obliged to say to them—to the single visitor, even when sympathetic, quite as to the gaping group—the particular things, a dreadful dozen or so, that they expected. If he had thus arrived at characterising these things as dreadful the reason touched the very point that, for a while turning everything over, he kept dodging, not facing, trying to ignore. The point was that he was on his way to become two quite different persons, the public and the private—as to which it would somehow have to be managed that these persons should live together. He was splitting into halves, unmistakably—he who, whatever else he had been, had at least always been so entire and in his way so solid. One of the halves, or perhaps even, since the split promised to be rather unequal, one of the quarters, was the keeper, the showman, the priest of the idol; the other piece was the poor unsuccessful honest man he had always been.

There were moments when he recognised this primary character as he had never done before; when he in fact quite shook in his shoes at the idea that it perhaps had in reserve some supreme assertion of its identity. It was honest, verily, just by reason of the possibility. It was poor and unsuccessful because here it was just on the verge of quarrelling with its bread and butter. Salvation would be of course—the salvation of the showman—rigidly to *keep* it on the verge; not to let it, in other words, overpass by an inch. He might count on this, he said to himself, if there weren't any public—if there weren't thousands of people demanding of him what he was paid for. He saw the

approach of the stage at which they would affect him, the thousands of people—and perhaps even more the earnest individual—as coming really to see if he were earning his wage. Wouldn't he soon begin to fancy them in league with the Body, practically deputed by it—given, no doubt, a kindled suspicion—to look in and report observations? It was the way he broke down with the lonely pilgrim that led to his first heart-searchings—broke down as to the courage required for damping an uncritical faith. What they all most wanted was to feel that everything was "just as it was"; only the shock of having to part with that vision was greater than any individual could bear unsupported. The bad moments were upstairs in the Birthroom, for here the forces pressing on the very edge assumed a dire intensity. The mere expression of eye, all-credulous, omnivorous and fairly moistening in the act, with which many persons gazed about, might eventually make it difficult for him to remain fairly civil. Often they came in pairs—sometimes one had come before—and then they explained to each other. He in that case never corrected; he listened, for the lesson of listening: after which he would remark to his wife that there was no end to what he was learning. He saw that if he should really ever break down it would be with her he would begin. He had given her hints and digs enough, but she was so inflamed with appreciation that she either didn't feel them or pretended not to understand.

This was the greater complication that, with the return of the spring and the increase of the public, her services were more required. She took the field with him from an early hour; she was present with the party above while he kept an eye, and still more an ear, on the party below; and how could he know, he asked himself, what she might say to them and what she might suffer *Them* to say—or in other words, poor wretches, to believe—while removed from his control? Some day or other, and before too long, he couldn't but think, he must have the matter out with her—the matter, namely, of the *morality* of their position. The morality of women was special—he was getting lights on that. Isabel's conception of her office was to cherish and enrich the legend. It was already, the legend, very taking, but what was she there for but to make it more so? She certainly wasn't there to chill any natural piety. If it was all in the air—all in their "eye," as the vulgar might say—that He *had* been born in the Birthroom, where was the value of the sixpences they took? where the equivalent they had engaged to supply? "Oh dear, yes—just about *here";* and she must tap the place with her foot. "Altered? Oh dear, no—save in a few trifling particulars; you see the place—and isn't that just the charm of it?—quite as *He* saw it. Very poor and homely, no doubt; but that's just what's so wonderful." He didn't want to hear her, and yet he didn't want to give her her head; he didn't want to make difficulties or to snatch the bread from her mouth. But he must none the less give her a warning before they had gone *too* far. That was the way, one evening in June, he put it to her; the affluence, with the finest weather, having lately been of the largest and the crowd all day fairly gorged with the story. "We mustn't, you know, go *too* far."

The odd thing was that she had now ceased even to be conscious of what troubled him—she was so launched in her own career. "Too far for what?"

"To save our immortal souls. We mustn't, love, tell too many lies."

She looked at him with dire reproach. "Ah now are you going to begin again?"

"I never *have* begun; I haven't wanted to worry you. But, you know, we don't know anything about it." And then as she stared, flushing: "About His having been born up there. About anything really. Not the least little scrap that would weigh in any other connexion as evidence. So don't rub it in so."

"Rub it in how?"

"That He *was* born—" But at sight of her face he only sighed. "Oh dear, oh dear!"

"Don't you think," she replied cuttingly, "that He was born anywhere?"

He hesitated—it was such an edifice to shake. "Well, we don't know. There's very little *to* know. He covered His tracks as no other human being has ever done."

She was still in her public costume and hadn't taken off the gloves she made a point of wearing as a part of that uniform; she remembered how the rustling housekeeper in the Border castle, on whom she had begun modelling herself, had worn them. She seemed official and slightly distant. "To cover His tracks He must have had to exist. Have we got to give *that* up?"

"No, I don't ask you to give it up *yet*. But there's very little to go upon."

"And is that what I'm to tell Them in return for everything?"

Gedge waited—he walked about. The place was doubly still after the bustle of the day, and the summer evening rested on it as a blessing, making it, in its small state and anciently, mellow and sweet. It was good to be there and it would be good to stay. At the same time there was something incalculable in the effect on one's nerves of the great gregarious density. This was an attitude that had nothing to do with degrees and shades, the attitude of wanting all or nothing. And you couldn't talk things over with it. You could only do that with friends, and then but in cases where you were sure the friends wouldn't betray you.

"Couldn't you adopt," he replied at last, "a slightly more discreet method? What we can say is that things have been *said;* that's all *we* have to do with. 'And is this really'—when they jam their umbrellas into the floor—'the very *spot* where He was born?' 'So it has, from a long time back, been described as being.' Couldn't one meet Them, to be decent a little, in some such way as that?"

She looked at him very hard. "Is that the way *you* meet them?"

"No; I've kept on lying—without scruple, without shame."

"Then why do you haul me up?"

"Because it has seemed to me we might, like true companions, work it out a little together."

This was not strong, he felt, as, pausing with his hands in his pockets, he stood before her; and he knew it as weaker still after she had looked at him a minute. "Morris Gedge, I propose to be *your* true companion, and I've come here to stay. That's all I've got to say." It was not, however, for "You had better try yourself and see," she presently added. "Give the place, give the story away, by so much as a look, and—well, I'd allow you about nine days. Then you'd see."

He feigned, to gain time, an innocence. "They'd take it so ill?" And then as she said nothing: "They'd turn and rend me? They'd tear me to pieces?"

But she wouldn't make a joke of it. "They wouldn't *have* it, simply."

"No—They wouldn't. That's what I say. They won't."

"You had better," she went on, "begin with Grant-Jackson. But even that isn't necessary. It would get to him, it would get to the Body, like wildfire."

"I see," said poor Gedge. And indeed for the moment he did see, while his companion followed up what she believed her advantage.

"Do you consider it's *all* a fraud?"

"Well, I grant you there was somebody. But the details are naught. The links are missing. The evidence—in particular about that room upstairs, in itself our Casa Santa—is *nil*. It was so awfully long ago." Which he knew again sounded weak.

"Of course it was awfully long ago—that's just the beauty and the interest. Tell Them, *tell* Them," she continued, "that the evidence is *nil*, and I'll tell Them something else." She spoke it with such meaning that his face seemed to show a question, to which she was on the spot of replying "I'll tell Them you're a—" She stopped, however, changing it. "I'll tell Them exactly the opposite. And I'll find out what you say—it won't take long—to do it. If we tell different stories *that* possibly may save us."

"I see what you mean. It would perhaps, as an oddity, have a success of curiosity. It might become a draw. Still, They but want broad masses." And he looked at her sadly. "You're no more than one of Them."

"If it's being no more than one of Them to love it," she answered, "then I certainly am. And I'm not ashamed of my company."

"To love *what?*" said Morris Gedge.

"To love to think He was born there."

"You think too much. It's bad for you." He turned away with his chronic moan. But it was without losing what she called after him.

"I decline to let the place down." And what was there indeed to say? They *were* there to keep it up.

V

He kept it up through the summer, but with the queerest consciousness, at times, of the want of proportion between his secret rage and the spirit of those from whom the friction came. He said to himself—so sore his sensibility had grown—that They were gregariously ferocious at the very time he was seeing Them as individually mild. He said to himself that They were mild only because *he* was—he flattered himself that he was divinely so, considering what he might be; and that he should, as his wife had warned him, soon enough have news of it were he to deflect by a hair's breadth from the line traced for him. *That* was the collective fatuity—that it was capable of turning on the instant both to a general and to a particular resentment. Since the least breath of discrimination would get him the sack without mercy, it was absurd, he reflected, to speak of his discomfort as light. He was gagged, he was goaded, as in omnivorous companies he doubtless sometimes showed by a strange silent glare. They'd get him the sack for that as well, if he didn't look out; therefore wasn't it in effect ferocity when you mightn't even hold your

tongue? They wouldn't let you off with silence—they insisted on your committing yourself. It was the pound of flesh—they *would* have it; so under his coat he bled. But a wondrous peace, by exception, dropped on him one afternoon at the end of August. The pressure had, as usual, been high, but it had diminished with the fall of day, and the place was empty before the hour for closing. Then it was that, within a few minutes of this hour, there presented themselves a pair of pilgrims to whom in the ordinary course he would have remarked that they were, to his regret, too late. He was to wonder afterwards why the course had at sight of the visitors—a gentleman and a lady, appealing and fairly young—shown for him as other than ordinary; the consequence sprang doubtless from something rather fine and unnameable, something for example in the tone of the young man or in the light of his eye, after hearing the statement on the subject of the hour. "Yes, we know it's late; but it's just, I'm afraid, *because* of that. We've had rather a notion of escaping the crowd—as I suppose you mostly have one now; and it was really on the chance of finding you alone—!"

These things the young man said before being quite admitted, and they were words any one might have spoken who hadn't taken the trouble to be punctual or who desired, a little ingratiatingly, to force the door. Gedge even guessed at the sense that might lurk in them, the hint of a special tip if the point were stretched. There were no tips, he had often thanked his stars, at the Birthplace; there was the charged fee and nothing more; everything else was out of order, to the relief of a palm not formed by nature as a scoop. Yet in spite of everything, in spite especially of the almost audible chink of the gentleman's sovereigns, which might in another case exactly have put him out, he presently found himself, in the Birthroom, access to which he had gracefully enough granted, almost treating the visit as personal and private. The reason—well, the reason would have been, if anywhere, in something naturally persuasive on the part of the couple; unless it had been rather again, in the way the young man, once he was in the place, met the caretaker's expression of face, held it a moment and seemed to wish to sound it. That they were Americans was promptly clear, and Gedge could very nearly have told what kind; he had arrived at the point of distinguishing kinds, though the difficulty might have been with him now that the case before him was rare. He saw it suddenly in the light of the golden midland evening which reached them through low old windows, saw it with a rush of feeling, unexpected and smothered, that made him a moment wish to keep it before him as a case of inordinate happiness. It made him feel old shabby poor, but he watched it no less intensely for its doing so. They were children of fortune, of the greatest, as it might seem to Morris Gedge, and they were of course lately married; the husband, smooth-faced and soft, but resolute and fine, several years older than the wife, and the wife vaguely, delicately, irregularly, but mercilessly pretty. Somehow the world was theirs; they gave the person who took the sixpences at the Birthplace such a sense of the high luxury of freedom as he had never had. The thing was that the world was theirs not simply because they had money—he had seen rich people enough—but because they could in a supreme degree think and feel and say what they

liked. They had a nature and a culture, a tradition, a facility of some sort—and all producing in them an effect of positive beauty—that gave a light to their liberty and an ease to their tone. These things moreover suffered nothing from the fact that they happened to be in mourning; this was probably worn for some lately-deceased opulent father—if not some delicate mother who would be sure to have been a part of the source of the beauty; and it affected Gedge, in the gathered twilight and at his odd crisis, as the very uniform of their distinction.

He couldn't quite have said afterwards by what steps the point had been reached, but it had become at the end of five minutes a part of their presence in the Birthroom, a part of the young man's look, a part of the charm of the moment, and a part above all of a strange sense within him of "Now or never!" that Gedge had suddenly, thrillingly, let himself go. He hadn't been definitely conscious of drifting to it; he had been, for that, too conscious merely of thinking how different, in all their range, were such a united couple from another united couple known to him. They were everything he and his wife weren't; this was more than anything else the first lesson of their talk. Thousands of couples of whom the same was true certainly had passed before him, but none of whom it was true with just that engaging intensity. And just *because* of their transcendent freedom; that was what, at the end of five minutes, he saw it all come back to. The husband, who had been there at some earlier time, had his impression, which he wished now to make his wife share. But he already, Gedge could see, hadn't concealed it from her. A pleasant irony in fine our friend seemed to taste in the air—he who hadn't yet felt free to taste his own.

"I think you weren't here four years ago"—that was what the young man had almost begun by remarking. Gedge liked his remembering it, liked his frankly speaking to him; all the more that he had offered, as it were, no opening. He had let them look about below and then had taken them up, but without words, without the usual showman's song, of which he would have been afraid. The visitors didn't ask for it; the young man had taken the matter out of his hands by himself dropping for the benefit of the young woman a few detached remarks. What Gedge oddly felt was that these remarks were not inconsiderate of him; he had heard others, both of the priggish order and the crude, that might have been called so. And as the young man hadn't been aided to this cognition of him as new, it already began to make for them a certain common ground. The ground became immense when the visitor presently added with a smile: "There was a good lady, I recollect, who had a great deal to say."

It was the gentleman's smile that had done it; the irony *was* there. "Ah there had been a great deal said." And Gedge's look at his interlocutor doubtless showed his sense of being sounded. It was extraordinary of course that a perfect stranger should have guessed the travail of his spirit, should have caught the gleam of his inner commentary. That probably leaked in spite of him out of his poor old eyes. "Much of it, in such places as this," he heard himself adding, "is of course said very irresponsibly." *Such places as this!*—he winced at the words as soon as he had uttered them.

There was no wincing, however, on the part of his pleasant companions. "Exactly so; the whole thing becomes a sort of stiff smug convention—like a dressed-up sacred doll in a Spanish church—which you're a monster if you touch."

"A monster," Gedge assented, meeting his eyes.

The young man smiled, but he thought looking at him a little harder. "A blasphemer."

"A blasphemer."

It seemed to do his visitor good—he certainly *was* looking at him harder. Detached as he was he was interested—he was at least amused. "Then you don't claim or at any rate don't insist—? I mean you personally."

He had an identity for him, Gedge felt, that he couldn't have had for a Briton, and the impulse was quick in our friend to testify to this perception. "I don't insist to *you*."

The young man laughed. "It really—I assure you if I may—wouldn't do any good. I'm too awfully interested."

"Do you mean," his wife lightly enquired, "in—a—pulling it down? That's rather in what you've said to me."

"Has he said to you," Gedge intervened, though quaking a little, "that he would like to pull it down?"

She met, in her free sweetness, this appeal with such a charm! "Oh perhaps not quite the *house*—!"

"Good. You see we live on it—I mean *we* people."

The husband laughed, but had now so completely ceased to look about him that there seemed nothing left for him but to talk avowedly with the caretaker. "I'm interested," he explained, "in what I think *the* interesting thing—or at all events the eternally tormenting one. The fact of the abysmally little that, in proportion, we know."

"In proportion to what?" his companion asked.

"Well, to what there must have been—to what in fact there *is*—to wonder about. That's the interest; it's immense. He escapes us like a thief at night, carrying off—well, carrying off everything. And people pretend to catch Him like a flown canary, over whom you can close your hand, and put Him back in the cage. He won't *go* back; he won't *come* back. He's not"—the young man laughed—"such a fool! It makes Him the happiest of all great men."

He had begun by speaking to his wife, but had ended, with his friendly, his easy, his indescribable competence, for Gedge—poor Gedge who quite held his breath and who felt, in the most unexpected way, that he had somehow never been in such good society. The young wife, who for herself meanwhile had continued to look about, sighed out, smiled out—Gedge couldn't have told which—her little answer to these remarks. "It's rather a pity, you know, that He *isn't* here. I mean as Goethe's at Weimar. For Goethe *is* at Weimar."

"Yes, my dear; that's Goethe's bad luck. There he sticks. *This* man isn't anywhere. I defy you to catch Him."

"Why not say, beautifully," the young woman laughed, "that, like the wind, He's everywhere?"

It wasn't of course the tone of discussion, it was the tone of pleasantry,

though of better pleasantry, Gedge seemed to feel, and more within his own appreciation, than he had ever listened to; and this was precisely why the young man could go on without the effect of irritation, answering his wife but still with eyes for their companion. "I'll be hanged if He's *here!*"

It was almost as if he were taken—that is, struck and rather held—by their companion's unruffled state, which they hadn't meant to ruffle, but which suddenly presented its interest, perhaps even projected its light. The gentleman didn't know, Gedge was afterwards to say to himself, how that hypocrite was inwardly all of a tremble, how it seemed to him his fate was being literally pulled down on his head. He was trembling for the moment certainly too much to speak; abject he might be, but he didn't want his voice to have the absurdity of a quaver. And the young woman—charming creature!—still had another word. It was for the guardian of the spot, and she made it in her way delightful. They had remained in the Holy of Holies, where she had been looking for a minute, with a ruefulness just marked enough to be pretty, at the queer old floor. "Then if you say it *wasn't* in this room He was born—well, what's the use?"

"What's the use of what?" her husband asked. "The use, you mean, of our coming here? Why the place is charming in itself. And it's also interesting," he added to Gedge, "to know how you get on."

Gedge looked at him a moment in silence, but answering the young woman first. If poor Isabel, he was thinking, could only have been like that!—not as to youth, beauty, arrangement of hair or picturesque grace of hat—these things he didn't mind; but as to sympathy, facility, light perceptive, and yet not cheap, detachment! "I don't say it wasn't—but I don't say it *was.*"

"Ah but doesn't that," she returned, "come very much to the same thing? And don't They want also to see where He had His dinner and where He had His tea?"

"They want everything," said Morris Gedge. "They want to see where He hung up His hat and where He kept His boots and where His mother boiled her pot."

"But if you don't show them—?"

"They show *me.* It's in all their little books."

"You mean," the husbnad asked, "that you've only to hold your tongue?"

"I try to," said Gedge.

"Well," his visitor smiled, "I see you *can.*"

Gedge hesitated. "I can't."

"Oh well," said his friend, "what does it matter?"

"I do speak," he continued. "I can't sometimes not."

"Then how do you get on?"

Gedge looked at him more abjectly, to his own sense, than ever at any one —even at Isabel when she frightened him. "I don't get on. I speak," he said—"since I've spoken to *you.*"

"Oh *we* shan't hurt you!" the young man reassuringly laughed.

The twilight meanwhile had sensibly thickened, the end of the visit was indicated. They turned together out of the upper room and came down the narrow stair. The words just exchanged might have been felt as producing an

awkwardness which the young woman gracefully felt the impulse to dissipate. "You must rather wonder why we've come." And it was the first note for Gedge of a further awkwardness—as if he had definitely heard it make the husband's hand, in a full pocket, begin to fumble.

It was even a little awkwardly that the husband still held off. "Oh we like it as it is. There's always *something.*" With which they had approached the door of egress.

"What is there, please?" asked Morris Gedge, not yet opening the door, since he would fain have kept the pair on, and conscious only for a moment after he had spoken that his question was just having for the young man too dreadfully wrong a sound. This personage wondered yet feared, and had evidently for some minutes been putting himself a question; so that, with his preoccupation, the caretaker's words had represented to him inevitably: "What is there, please, for *me?*" Gedge already knew with it moreover that he wasn't stopping him in time. He had uttered that challenge to show he himself wasn't afraid, and he must have had in consequence, he was subsequently to reflect, a lamentable air of waiting.

The visitor's hand came out. "I hope I may take the liberty—?" What afterwards happened our friend scarcely knew, for it fell into a slight confusion, the confusion of a queer gleam of gold—a sovereign fairly thrust at him; of a quick, almost violent motion on his own part, which, to make the matter worse, might well have sent the money rolling on the floor; and then of marked blushes all round and a sensible embarrassment; producing indeed in turn rather oddly and ever so quickly an increase of communion. It was as if the young man had offered him money to make up to him for having, as it were, led him on, and then, perceiving the mistake, but liking him the better for his refusal, had wanted to obliterate this aggravation of his original wrong. He had done so, presently, while Gedge got the door open, by saying the best thing he could, and by saying it frankly and gaily. "Luckily it doesn't at all affect the *work!*"

The small town-street, quiet and empty in the summer eventide, stretched to right and left, with a gabled and timbered house or two, and fairly seemed to have cleared itself to congruity with the historic void over which our friends, lingering an instant to converse, looked at each other. The young wife, rather, looked about a moment at all there wasn't to be seen, and then, before Gedge had found a reply to her husband's remark, uttered, evidently in the interest of conciliation, a little question of her own that she tried to make earnest. "It's our unfortunate ignorance, you mean, that doesn't?"

"Unfortunate or fortunate. I like it so," said the husband. " 'The play's the thing.' Let the author alone."

Gedge, with his key on his forefinger, leaned against the door-post, took in the stupid little street and was sorry to see them go—they seemed so to abandon him. "That's just what They won't do—nor let *me* do. It's all I want—to let the author alone. Practically"—he felt himself getting the last of his chance —"there *is* no author; that is for us to deal with. There are all the immortal people—*in* the work; but there's nobody else."

"Yes," said the young man—"that's what it comes to. There should really, to clear the matter up, be no such Person."

"As you say," Gedge returned, "it's what it comes to. There *is* no such Person."

The evening air listened, in the warm thick midland stillness, while the wife's little cry rang out. "But *wasn't* there—?"

"There was somebody," said Gedge against the door-post. "But They've killed Him. And, dead as He is, They keep it up, They do it over again, They kill Him every day."

He was aware of saying this so grimly—more than he wished—that his companions exchanged a glance and even perhaps looked as if they felt him extravagant. That was really the way Isabel had warned him all the others would be looking if he should talk to Them as he talked to *her*. He liked, however, for that matter, to hear how he should sound when pronounced incapable through deterioration of the brain. "Then if there's no author, if there's nothing to be said but that there isn't anybody," the young woman smilingly asked, "why in the world should there be a house?"

"There shouldn't," said Morris Gedge.

Decidedly, yes, he affected the young man. "Oh, I don't say, mind you, that you should pull it down!"

"Then where would you *go?*" their companion sweetly enquired.

"That's what my wife asks," Gedge returned.

"Then keep it up, keep it up!" And the husband held out his hand.

"That's what my wife says," Gedge went on as he shook it.

The young woman, charming creature, emulated the other visitor; she offered their remarkable friend her handshake. "Then mind your wife."

The poor man faced her gravely. "I would if she were such a wife as you!"

VI

It had made for him, all the same, an immense difference; it had given him an extraordinary lift, so that a certain sweet aftertaste of his freedom might a couple of months later have been suspected of aiding to produce for him another and really a more considerable adventure. It was an absurd way to reason, but he had been, to his imagination, for twenty minutes in good society—that being the term that best described for him the company of people to whom he hadn't to talk, as he phrased it, rot. It was his title to good society that he had, in his doubtless awkward way affirmed; and the difficulty was just that, having affirmed it, he couldn't take back the affirmation. Few things had happened to him in life, that is few that were agreeable, but at least *this* had, and he wasn't so constructed that he could go on as if it hadn't. It was going on as if it had, however, that landed him, alas! in the situation unmistakably marked by a visit from Grant-Jackson late one afternoon toward the end of October. This had been the hour of the call of the young Americans. Every day that hour had come round something of the deep throb of it, the successful secret, woke up; but the two occasions were, of a truth, related only by being so intensely opposed. The secret had been successful in that he had said nothing of it to Isabel, who, occupied in their own quarter while the incident lasted, had neither heard the visitors arrive nor seen them depart. It was on the other hand scarcely successful in guarding itself from

indirect betrayals. There were two persons in the world at least who felt as he did; they were persons also who had treated him, benignly, as feeling after *their* style; who had been ready in fact to overflow in gifts as a sign of it, and though they were now off in space they were still with him sufficiently in spirit to make him play, as it were, with the sense of their sympathy. This in turn made him, as he was perfectly aware, more than a shade or two reckless, so that, in his reaction from that gluttony of the public for false facts which had from the first tormented him, he fell into the habit of sailing, as he would have said, too near the wind, or in other words—all in presence of the people—of washing his hands of the legend. He had crossed the line—he knew it; he had struck wild—They drove him to it; he had substituted, by a succession of uncontrollable profanities, an attitude that couldn't be understood for an attitude that but too evidently *had* been.

This was of course the franker line, only he hadn't taken it, alas! for frankness—hadn't in the least really adopted it at all, but had been simply himself caught up and disposed of by it, hurled by his fate against the bedizened walls of the temple, quite in the way of a priest possessed to excess of the god, or, more vulgarly, that of a blind bull in a china-shop—an animal to which he often compared himself. He had let himself fatally go, in fine, just for irritation, for rage, having, in his predicament, nothing whatever to do with frankness—a luxury reserved for quite other situations. It had always been his view that one lived to learn; he had learned something every hour of his life, though people mostly never knew what, in spite of its having generally been—hadn't it?—at somebody's expense. What he was at present continually learning was the sense of a form of words heretofore so vain—the famous "false position" that had so often helped out a phrase. One used names in that way without knowing what they were worth; then of a sudden, one fine day, their meaning grew bitter in the mouth. This was a truth with the relish of which his fireside hours were occupied, and he was aware of how much it exposed a man to look so perpetually as if something had disagreed with him. The look to be worn at the Birthplace was properly the beatific, and when once it had fairly been missed by those who took it for granted, who indeed paid sixpence for it—like the table-wine in provincial France it was *compris*—one would be sure to have news of the remark.

News accordingly was what Gedge had been expecting—and what he knew, above all, had been expected by his wife, who had a way of sitting at present as with an ear for a certain knock. She didn't watch him, didn't follow him about the house, at the public hours, to spy upon his treachery; and that could touch him even though her averted eyes went through him more than her fixed. Her mistrust was so perfectly expressed by her manner of showing she trusted that he never felt so nervous, never tried so to keep straight, as when she most let him alone. When the crowd thickened and they had of necessity to receive together he tried himself to get off by allowing her as much as possible the word. When people appealed to him he turned to her—and with more of ceremony than their relation warranted: he couldn't help *this* either, if it seemed ironic—as to the person most concerned or most competent. He flattered himself at these moments that no one would have guessed her being

his wife; especially as, to do her justice, she met his manner with a wonderful grim bravado—grim, so to say, for himself, grim by its outrageous cheerfulness for the simple-minded. The lore she *did* produce for them, the associations of the sacred spot she developed, multiplied, embroidered; the things in short she said and the stupendous way she said them! She wasn't a bit ashamed, since why need virtue be ever ashamed? It *was* virtue, for it put bread into his mouth—he meanwhile on his side taking it out of hers. He had seen Grant-Jackson on the October day in the Birthplace itself—the right setting of course for such an interview; and what had occurred was that, precisely, when the scene had ended and he had come back to their own sitting-room, the question she put to him for information was: "Have you settled it that I'm to starve?"

She had for a long time said nothing to him so straight—which was but a proof of her real anxiety; the straightness of Grant-Jackson's visit, following on the very slight sinuosity of a note shortly before received from him, made tension show for what it was. By this time, really, however, his decision had been taken; the minutes elapsing between his reappearance at the domestic fireside and his having, from the other threshold, seen Grant-Jackson's broad well-fitted back, the back of a banker and a patriot, move away, had, though few, presented themselves to him as supremely critical. They formed, as it were, the hinge of his door, that door actually ajar so as to show him a possible fate beyond it, but which, with his hand, in a spasm, thus tightening on the knob, he might either open wide or close partly or altogether. He stood at autumn dusk in the little museum that constituted the vestibule of the temple, and there, as with a concentrated push at the crank of a windlass, he brought himself round. The portraits on the walls seemed vaguely to watch for it; it was in their august presence—kept dimly august for the moment by Grant-Jackson's impressive check of his application of a match to the vulgar gas—that the great man had uttered, as if it said all, his "You know, my dear fellow, really—!" He had managed it with the special tact of a fat man, always, when there *was* any, very fine; he had got the most out of the time, the place, the setting, all the little massed admonitions and symbols; confronted there with his victim on the spot that he took occasion to name afresh as, to *his* piety and patriotism, the most sacred on earth, he had given it to be understood that in the first place he was lost in amazement and that in the second he expected a single warning now to suffice. Not to insist too much moreover on the question of gratitude, he would let his remonstrance rest, if need be, solely on the question of taste. *As* a matter of taste alone—! But he was surely not to be obliged to follow that up. Poor Gedge indeed would have been sorry to oblige him, for he saw it was exactly to the atrocious taste of unthankfulness the allusion was made. When he said he wouldn't dwell on what the fortunate occupant of the post owed him for the stout battle originally fought on his behalf, he simply meant he *would*. That was his tact—which, with everything else that has been mentioned, in the scene, to help, really had the ground to itself. The day *had* been when Gedge couldn't have thanked him enough—though he had thanked him, he considered, almost fulsomely—and nothing, nothing that he could coherently or reputably name, had happened

since then. From the moment he was pulled up, in short, he had no case, and if he exhibited, instead of one, only hot tears in his eyes, the mystic gloom of the temple either prevented his friend from seeing them or rendered it possible that they stood for remorse. He had dried them, with the pads formed by the base of his bony thumbs, before he went in to Isabel. This was the more fortunate as, in spite of her enquiry, prompt and pointed, he but moved about the room looking at her hard. Then he stood before the fire a little with his hands behind him and his coat-tails divided, quite as the person in permanent possession. It was an indication his wife appeared to take in; but she put nevertheless presently another question. "You object to telling me what he said?"

"He said 'You know, my dear fellow, really—!' "

"And is that all?"

"Practically. Except that I'm a thankless beast."

"Well!" she responded, not with dissent.

"You mean that I *am?"*

"Are those the words he used?" she asked with a scruple.

Gedge continued to think. "The words he used were that I give away the Show and that, from several sources, it has come round to Them."

"As of course a baby would have known!" And then as her husband said nothing: "Were *those* the words he used?"

"Absolutely. He couldn't have used better ones."

"Did he call it," Mrs. Gedge enquired, "the 'Show'?"

"Of course he did. The Biggest on Earth."

She winced, looking at him hard—she wondered, but only for a moment. "Well, it *is."*

"Then it's something," Gedge went on, "to have given *that* away. But," he added, "I've taken it back."

"You mean you've been convinced?"

"I mean I've been scared."

"At last, at last!" she gratefully breathed.

"Oh it was easily done. It was only two words. But here I am."

Her face was now less hard for him. "And what two words?"

" 'You know, Mr. Gedge, that it simply won't do.' That was all. But it was the way such a man says them."

"I'm glad then," Mrs. Gedge frankly averred, "that he *is* such a man. How did you ever think it *could* do?"

"Well, it was my critical sense. I didn't ever know I had one—till They came and (by putting me here) waked it up in me. Then I had somehow, don't you see? to live with it; and I seemed to feel that, with one thing and another, giving it time and in the long run, it might, it *ought* to, come out on top of the heap. Now that's where, he says, it simply won't 'do.' So I must put it—I *have* put it—at the bottom."

"A very good place then for a critical sense!" And Isabel, more placidly now, folded her work. *"If,* that is, you can only keep it there. If it doesn't struggle up again."

"It can't struggle." He was still before the fire, looking round at the warm

low room, peaceful in the lamplight, with the hum of the kettle for the ear, with the curtain drawn over the leaded casement, a short moreen curtain artfully chosen by Isabel for the effect of the olden time, its virtue of letting the light within show ruddy to the street. "It's dead," he went on; "I killed it just now."

He really spoke so that she wondered. "Just now?"

"There in the other place—I strangled it, poor thing, in the dark. If you'll go out and see, there must be blood. Which, indeed," he added, "on an altar of sacrifice, is all right. But the place is for ever spattered."

"I don't want to go out and see." She locked her hands over the needlework folded on her knee, and he knew, with her eyes on him, that a look he had seen before was in her face. "You're off your head, you know, my dear, in a way." Then, however, more cheeringly: "It's a good job it hasn't been too late."

"Too late to get it under?"

"Too late for Them to give you the second chance that I thank God you accept."

"Yes, if it *had* been—!" And he looked away as through the ruddy curtain and into the chill street. Then he faced her again. "I've scarcely got over my fright yet. I mean," he went on, "for you."

"And I mean for *you*. Suppose what you had come to announce to me now were that we had *got* the sack. How should I enjoy, do you think, seeing you turned out? Yes, out *there!*" she added as his eyes again moved from their little warm circle to the night of early winter on the other side of the pane, to the rare quick footsteps, to the closed doors, to the curtains drawn like their own, behind which the small flat town, intrinsically dull, was sitting down to supper.

He stiffened himself as he warmed his back; he held up his head, shaking himself a little as if to shake the stoop out of his shoulders, but he had to allow she was right. "What would have become of us?"

"What indeed? We should have begged our bread—or I should be taking in washing."

He was silent a little. "I'm too old. I should have begun sooner."

"Oh God forbid!" she cried.

"The pinch," he pursued, "is that I can do nothing else."

"Nothing whatever!" she agreed with elation.

"Whereas here—if I cultivate it—I perhaps *can* still lie. But I must cultivate it."

"Oh you old dear!" And she got up to kiss him.

"I'll do my best," he said.

VII

"Do you remember us?" the gentleman asked and smiled—with the lady beside him smiling too; speaking so much less as an earnest pilgrim or as a tiresome tourist than as an old acquaintance. It was history repeating itself as Gedge had somehow never expected, with almost everything the same except that the evening was now a mild April-end, except that the visitors had put off mourning and showed all their bravery—besides showing, as he doubtless did himself, though so differently, for a little older; except, above all, that

—oh seeing them again suddenly affected him not a bit as the thing he'd have supposed it. "We're in England again and we were near; I've a brother at Oxford with whom we've been spending a day, so that we thought we'd come over." This the young man pleasantly said while our friend took in the queer fact that he must himself seem to them rather coldly to gape. They had come in the same way at the quiet close; another August had passed, and this was the second spring; the Birthplace, given the hour, was about to suspend operations till the morrow; the last lingerer had gone and the fancy of the visitors was once more for a look round by themselves. This represented surely no greater presumption than the terms on which they had last parted with him seemed to warrant; so that if he did inconsequently stare it was just in fact because he was so supremely far from having forgotten them. But the sight of the pair luckily had a double effect, and the first precipitated the second—the second being really his sudden vision that everything perhaps depended for him on his recognising no complication. He must go straight on, since it was what had for more than a year now so handsomely answered; he must brazen it out consistently, since that only was what his dignity was at last reduced to. He mustn't be afraid in one way any more than he had been in another; besides which it came over him to the point of his flushing for it that their visit, in its essence, must have been for himself. It was good society again, and *they* were the same. It wasn't for him therefore to behave as if he couldn't meet them.

These deep vibrations, on Gedge's part, were as quick as they were deep; they came in fact all at once, so that his response, his declaration that it was all right—"Oh *rather;* the hour doesn't matter for *you!*"—had hung fire but an instant; and when they were well across the threshold and the door closed behind them, housed in the twilight of the temple, where, as before, the votive offerings glimmered on the walls, he drew the long breath of one who might by a self-betrayal have done something too dreadful. For what had brought them back was indubitably not the glamour of the shrine itself—since he had had a glimpse of their analysis of that quantity; but their critical (not to say their sentimental) interest in the queer case of the priest. Their call was the tribute of curiosity, of sympathy, of a compassion really, as such things went, exquisite—a tribute *to* that queerness which entitled them to the frankest welcome. They had wanted, for the generous wonder of it, to judge how he was getting on, how such a man in such a place *could;* and they had doubtless more than half-expected to see the door opened by somebody who had succeeded him. Well, somebody *had*—only with a strange equivocation; as they would have, poor things, to make out themselves, an embarrassment for which he pitied them. Nothing could have been more odd, but verily it was this troubled vision of their possible bewilderment, and this compunctious view of such a return for their amenity, that practically determined in him his tone. The lapse of the months had but made their name familiar to him; they had on the other occasion inscribed it, among the thousand names, in the current public register, and he had since then, for reasons of his own, reasons of feeling, again and again turned back to it. It was nothing in itself; it told him nothing—"Mr. and Mrs. B. D. Hayes, New York"—one of those American

labels that were just like every other American label and that were precisely the most remarkable thing about people reduced to achieving an identity in such other ways. They could be Mr. and Mrs. B. D. Hayes and yet could be, with all presumptions missing—well, what these callers were. It had quickly enough indeed cleared the situation a little further that his friends had absolutely, the other time, as it came back to him, warned him of his original danger, their anxiety about which had been the last note sounded among them. What he was afraid of, with this reminiscence, was that, finding him still safe, they would, the next thing, definitely congratulate him and perhaps even, no less candidly, ask him how he had managed. It was with the sense of nipping some such enquiry in the bud that, losing no time and holding himself with a firm grip, he began on the spot, downstairs, to make plain to them how he had managed. He routed the possibility of the question in short by the assurance of his answer. "Yes, yes, I'm still here; I suppose it *is* in a manner to one's profit that one does, such as it is, one's best." He did his best on the present occasion, did it with the gravest face he had ever worn and a soft serenity that was like a large damp sponge passed over their previous meeting—over everything in it, that is, but the fact of its pleasantness.

"We stand here, you see, in the old living-room, happily still to be reconstructed in the mind's eye, in spite of the havoc of time, which we have fortunately of late years been able to arrest. It was of course rude and humble, but it must have been snug and quaint, and we have at least the pleasure of knowing that the tradition in respect to the features that do remain is delightfully uninterrupted. Across that threshold He habitually passed; through those low windows, in childhood, He peered out into the world that He was to make so much happier by the gift to it of His genius; over the boards of this floor—that is over *some* of them, for we mustn't be carried away!—his little feet often pattered; and the beams of this ceiling (we must really in some places take care of *our* heads!) he endeavoured, in boyish strife, to jump up and touch. It's not often that in the early home of genius and renown the whole tenor of existence is laid so bare, not often that we are able to retrace, from point to point and from step to step, its connexion with objects, with influences—to build it round again with the little solid facts out of which it sprang. This therefore, I need scarcely remind you, is what makes the small space between these walls—so modest to measurement, so insignificant of aspect—unique on all the earth. *There's nothing like it,*" Morris Gedge went on, insisting as solemnly and softly, for his bewildered hearers, as over a pulpit-edge; "there's nothing at all like it anywhere in the world. There's nothing, only reflect, for the combination of greatness and, as we venture to say, of intimacy. You may find elsewhere perhaps absolutely fewer changes, but where shall you find a *Presence* equally diffused, uncontested and undisturbed? Where in particular shall you find, on the part of the abiding spirit, an equally towering eminence? You may find elsewhere eminence of a considerable order, but where shall you find *with* it, don't you see, changes after all so few and the contemporary element caught so, as it were, in the very fact?" His visitors, at first confounded but gradually spellbound, were still gaping with the universal gape—wondering, he judged, into what strange pleasantry

he had been suddenly moved to explode, and yet beginning to see in him an intention beyond a joke, so that they started, at this point, they almost jumped, when, by as rapid a transition, he made, toward the old fireplace, a dash that seemed to illustrate precisely the act of eager catching. "It is in this old chimney-corner, the quaint inglenook of our ancestors—just there in the far angle, where His little stool was placed, and where, I dare say, if we could look close enough, we should find the hearthstone scraped with His little feet —that we see the inconceivable child gazing into the blaze of the old oaken logs and making out there pictures and stories, see Him conning, with curly bent head, His well-worn hornbook, or poring over some scrap of an ancient ballad, some page of some such rudely-bound volume of chronicles as lay, we may be sure, in His father's window-seat."

It was, he even himself felt at this moment, wonderfully done; no auditors, for all his thousands, had ever yet so inspired him. The odd slightly alarmed shyness in the two faces, as if in a drawing-room, in their "good society" exactly, some act incongruous, something grazing the indecent, had abruptly been perpetrated, the painful reality of which stayed itself before coming home —the visible effect on his friends in fine wound him up as to the sense that *they* were worth the trick. It came of itself now—he had got it so by heart; but perhaps really it had never come so well, with the staleness so disguised, the interest so renewed and the clerical unction demanded by the priestly character so successfully distilled. Mr. Hayes of New York had more than once looked at his wife, and Mrs. Hayes of New York had more than once looked at her husband—only, up to now, with a stolen glance, with eyes it hadn't been easy to detach from the remarkable countenance by the aid of which their entertainer held them. At present, however, after an exchange less furtive, they ventured on a sign that they hadn't been appealed to in vain. "Charming, charming, Mr. Gedge!" Mr. Hayes broke out. "We feel that we've caught you in the mood."

His wife hastened to assent—it eased the tension. "It *would* be quite the way; except," she smiled, "that you'd be too dangerous. You've really a genius!"

Gedge looked at her hard, but yielding no inch, even though she touched him there at a point of consciousness that quivered. This was the prodigy for him, and had been, the year through—that he did it all, he found, easily, did it better than he had done anything else in life; with so high and broad an effect, in truth, an inspiration so rich and free, that his poor wife now, literally, had been moved more than once to fresh fear. She had had her bad moments, he knew, after taking the measure of his new direction—moments of readjusted suspicion in which she wondered if he hadn't simply adopted another, a different perversity. There would be more than one fashion of giving away the Show, and wasn't *this* perhaps a question of giving it away by excess? He could dish them by too much romance as well as by too little; she hadn't hitherto fairly grasped that there might *be* too much. It was a way like another, at any rate, of reducing the place to the absurd; which reduction, if he didn't look out, would reduce *them* again to the prospect of the streets, and this time surely without appeal. It all depended indeed—he knew

she knew that—on how much Grant-Jackson and the others, how much the Body, in a word, would take. He knew she knew what he himself held it would take—that he considered no limit could be imputed to the quantity. They simply wanted it piled up, and so did every one else; wherefore if no one reported him as before why were They to be uneasy? It was in consequence of idiots tempted to reason that he had been dealt with before; but as there was now no form of idiocy that he didn't systematically flatter, goading it on really to its *own* private doom, who was ever to pull the string of the guillotine? The axe was in the air—yes; but in a world gorged to satiety there were no revolutions. And it had been vain for Isabel to ask if the other thunder-growl also hadn't come out of the blue. There was actually proof positive that the winds were now at rest. How could they be more so?—he appealed to the receipts. These were golden days—the Show had never so flourished. So he had argued, so he was arguing still—and, it had to be owned, with every appearance in his favour. Yet if he inwardly winced at the tribute to his plausibility rendered by his flushed friends, this was because he felt in it the real ground of his optimism. The charming woman before him acknowledged his "genius" as he himself had had to do. He had been surprised at his facility until he had grown used to it. Whether or no he had, as a fresh menace to his future, found a new perversity, he had found a vocation much older, evidently, than he had at first been prepared to recognise. He had done himself injustice. He liked to be brave because it came so easy; he could measure it off by the yard. It was in the Birthroom, above all, that he continued to do this, having ushered up his companions without, as he was still more elated to feel, the turn of a hair. She might take it as she liked, but he had had the lucidity—all, that is, for his own safety—to meet without the grace of an answer the homage of her beautiful smile. She took it apparently, and her husband took it, but as a part of his odd humour, and they followed him aloft with faces now a little more responsive to the manner in which on *that* spot he would naturally come out. He came out, according to the word of his assured private receipt, "strong." He missed a little, in truth, the usual round-eyed question from them—the inveterate artless cue with which, from moment to moment, clustered troops had for a year obliged him. Mr. and Mrs. Hayes were from New York, but it was a little like singing, as he had heard one of his Americans once say about something, to a Boston audience. He did none the less what he could, and it was ever his practice to stop still at a certain spot in the room and, after having secured attention by look and gesture, suddenly shoot off: "Here!"

They always understood, the good people—he could fairly love them now for it; they always said breathlessly and unanimously "There?" and stared down at the designated point quite as if some trace of the grand event were still to be made out. This movement produced he again looked round. "Consider it well: *the* spot of earth—!" "Oh but it isn't *earth!*" the boldest spirit—there was always a boldest—would generally pipe out. Then the guardian of the Birthplace would be truly superior—as if the unfortunate had figured the Immortal coming up, like a potato, through the soil. "I'm not suggesting that He was born on the bare ground. He was born *here!*"—with an uncompro-

mising dig of his heel. "There ought to be a brass, with an inscription, let in." "Into the floor?"—it always came. "Birth and burial: seedtime, summer, autumn!"—that always, with its special right cadence, thanks to his unfailing spring, came too. "Why not as well as into the pavement of the church?—you've *seen* our grand old church?" The former of which questions nobody ever answered—abounding, on the other hand, to make up, in relation to the latter. Mr. and Mrs. Hayes even were at first left dumb by it—not indeed, to do them justice, having uttered the word that called for it. They had uttered no word while he kept the game up, and (though that made it a little more difficult) he could yet stand triumphant before them after he had finished with his flourish. Only then it was that Mr. Hayes of New York broke silence.

"Well, if we wanted to see I think I may say we're quite satisfied. As my wife says, it *would* seem your line." He spoke now, visibly, with more ease, as if a light had come: though he made no joke of it, for a reason that presently appeared. They were coming down the little stair, and it was on the descent that his companion added her word.

"Do you know what we half *did* think—?" And then to her husband: "Is it dreadful to tell him?" They were in the room below, and the young woman, also relieved, expressed the feeling with gaiety. She smiled as before at Morris Gedge, treating him as a person with whom relations were possible, yet remaining just uncertain enough to invoke Mr. Hayes's opinion. "We *have* awfully wanted—from what we had heard." But she met her husband's graver face; he was not quite out of the wood. At this she was slightly flurried—but she cut it short. "You must know—don't you?—that, with the crowds who listen to you, we'd have heard."

He looked from one to the other, and once more again, with force, something came over him. They had kept him in mind, they were neither ashamed nor afraid to show it, and it was positively an interest on the part of this charming creature and this keen cautious gentleman, an interesting resisting oblivion and surviving separation, that had governed their return. Their other visit had been the brightest thing that had ever happened to him, but this was the gravest; so that at the end of a minute something broke in him and his mask dropped of itself. He chucked, as he would have said, consistency; which, in its extinction, left the tears in his eyes. His smile was therefore queer. "Heard how I'm going it?"

The young man, though still looking at him hard, felt sure, with this, of his own ground. "Of course you're tremendously talked about. You've gone round the world."

"You've heard of me in America?"

"Why almost of nothing else!"

"That was what made us feel—!" Mrs. Hayes contributed.

"That you must see for yourselves?" Again he compared, poor Gedge, their faces. "Do you mean I excite—a—scandal?"

"Dear no! Admiration. You renew so," the young man observed, "the interest."

"Ah there it is!" said Gedge with eyes of adventure that seemed to rest beyond the Atlantic.

"They listen, month after month, when they're out here, as you must have seen; then they go home and talk. But they sing your praise."

Our friend could scarce take it in. "Over *there!*"

"Over there. I think you must be even in the papers."

"Without abuse?"

"Oh we don't abuse every one."

Mrs. Hayes, in her beauty, it was clear, stretched the point. "They rave about you."

"Then they *don't* know?"

"Nobody knows," the young man declared; "it wasn't any one's knowledge, at any rate, that made us uneasy."

"It was your own? I mean your own sense?"

"Well, call it that. We remembered, and we wondered what had happened. So," Mr. Hayes now frankly laughed, "we came to see."

Gedge stared through his film of tears. "Came from America to see *me?*"

"Oh a part of the way. But we wouldn't, in England, have missed you."

"And now we *haven't!*" the young woman soothingly added.

Gedge still could only gape at the candour of the tribute. But he tried to meet them—it was what was least poor for him—in their own key. "Well, how do you like it?"

Mrs. Hayes, he thought—if their answer were important—laughed a little nervously. "Oh you see."

Once more he looked from one to the other. "It's too beastly easy, you know."

Her husband raised his eyebrows. "You conceal your art. The emotion—yes; that must be easy; the general tone must flow. But about your facts—you've so many: how do you get *them* through?"

Gedge wondered. "You think I get too many—?"

At this they were amused together. "That's just what we came to see!"

"Well, you know, I've felt my way; I've gone step by step; you wouldn't believe how I've tried it on. *This*—where you see me—is where I've come out." After which, as they said nothing: "You hadn't thought I *could* come out?"

Again they just waited, but the husband spoke: "Are you so awfully sure you *are* out?"

Gedge drew himself up in the manner of his moments of emotion, almost conscious even that, with his sloping shoulders, his long lean neck and his nose so prominent in proportion to other matters, he resembled the more a giraffe. It was now at last he really caught on. "I *may* be in danger again—and the danger is what has moved you? Oh!" the poor man fairly moaned. His appreciation of it quite weakened him, yet he pulled himself together. "You've your view of my danger?"

It was wondrous how, with that note definitely sounded, the air was cleared. Lucid Mr. Hayes, at the end of a minute, had put the thing in a nutshell. "I don't know what you'll think of us—for being so beastly curious."

"I think," poor Gedge grimaced, "you're only too beastly kind."

"It's all your own fault," his friend returned, "for presenting us (who are not idiots, say) with so striking a picture of a crisis. At our other visit, you

remember," he smiled, "you created an anxiety for the opposite reason. Therefore if *this* should again be a crisis for you, you'd really give us the case with an ideal completeness."

"You make me wish," said Morris Gedge, "that it might be one."

"Well, don't try—for our amusement—to bring one on. I don't see, you know, how you can have much margin. Take care—take care."

Gedge did it pensive justice. "Yes, that was what you said a year ago. You did me the honour to be uneasy—as my wife was."

Which determined on the young woman's part an immediate question. "May I ask then if Mrs. Gedge is now at rest?"

"No—since you do ask. *She* fears at least that I go too far; she doesn't believe in my margin. You see we *had* our scare after your visit. They came down."

His friends were all interest. "Ah! They came down?"

"Heavy. They brought *me* down. That's *why—*"

"Why you *are* down?" Mrs. Hayes sweetly demanded.

"Ah but my dear man," her husband interposed, "you're not down; you're *up!* You're only up a different tree, but you're up at the tip-top."

"You mean I take it too high?"

"That's exactly the question," the young man answered; "and the possibility, as matching your first danger, is just what we felt we couldn't, if you didn't mind, miss the measure of."

Gedge gazed at him. "I feel that I know what you at bottom *hoped.*"

"We at bottom 'hope,' surely, that you're all right?"

"In spite of the fool it makes of every one?"

Mr. Hayes of New York smiled. "Say *because* of that. We only ask to believe every one *is* a fool!"

"Only you haven't been, without reassurance, able to imagine fools of the size that my case demands?" And Gedge had a pause while, as if on the chance of some proof, his companion waited. "Well, I won't pretend to you that your anxiety hasn't made me, doesn't threaten to make me, a bit nervous; though I don't quite understand it if, as you say, people but rave about me."

"Oh *that* report was from the other side; people in our country so very easily rave. You've seen small children laugh to shrieks when tickled in a new place. So there are amiable millions with us who are but small shrieking children. They perpetually present new places for the tickler. What we've seen in further lights," Mr. Hayes good-humouredly pursued, "is your people *here*—the Committee, the Board, or whatever the powers to whom you're responsible."

"Call them my friend Grant-Jackson then—my original backer, though I admit for that reason perhaps my most formidable critic. It's with him practically I deal; or rather it's by him I'm dealt with—*was* dealt with before. I stand or fall by him. But he has given me my head."

"Mayn't he then want you," Mrs. Hayes enquired, "just to show as flagrantly running away."

"Of course—I see what you mean. I'm riding, blindly, for a fall, and They're watching (to be tender of me!) for the smash that may come of itself. It's

Machiavellic—but everything's possible. And what did you just now mean," Gedge asked—"especially if you've only heard of my prosperity—by your 'further lights'?"

His friends for an instant looked embarrassed, but Mr. Hayes came to the point. "We've heard of your prosperity, but we've also, remember, within a few minutes, heard *you.*"

"I was determined you *should,*" said Gedge. "I'm good then—but I overdo?" His strained grin was still sceptical.

Thus challenged, at any rate, his visitor pronounced. "Well, if you don't; if at the end of six months more it's clear that you haven't overdone; then, *then—*"

"Then what?"

"Then it's great."

"But it is great—greater than anything of the sort ever was. I overdo, thank goodness, yes; or I would if it were a thing you *could.*"

"Oh well, if there's *proof* that you can't—!" With which and an expressive gesture Mr. Hayes threw up his fears.

His wife, however, for a moment seemed unable to let them go. "Don't They want then *any* truth?—none even for the mere look of it?"

"The look of it," said Morris Gedge, "is what I give!"

It made them, the others, exchange a look of their own. Then she smiled. "Oh, well, if they think so—!"

"You at least don't? You're like my wife—which indeed, I remember," Gedge added, "is a similarity I expressed a year ago the wish for! At any rate I frighten *her.*"

The young husband, with an "Ah wives are terrible!" smoothed it over, and their visit would have failed of further excuse had not at this instant a movement at the other end of the room suddenly engaged them. The evening had so nearly closed in, though Gedge, in the course of their talk, had lighted the lamp nearest them, that they had not distinguished, in connexion with the opening of the door of communication to the warden's lodge, the appearance of another person, an eager woman who in her impatience had barely paused before advancing. Mrs. Gedge—her identity took but a few seconds to become vivid—was upon them, and she had not been too late for Mr. Hayes's last remark. Gedge saw at once that she had come with news; no need even, for that certitude, of her quick retort to the words in the air—"You may say as well, sir, that they're often, poor wives, terrified!" She knew nothing of the friends whom, at so unnatural an hour, he was showing about; but there was no livelier sign for him that this didn't matter than the possibility with which she intensely charged her "Grant-Jackson, to see you at once!"—letting it, so to speak, fly in his face.

"He has been with you?"

"Only a minute—he's there. But it's you he wants to see."

He looked at the others. "And what does he want, dear?"

"God knows! There it is. It's his horrid hour—it *was* that other time."

She had nervously turned to the others, overflowing to them, in her dismay, for all their strangeness—quite, as he said to himself, like a woman of the

people. She was the bareheaded goodwife talking in the street about the row in the house, and it was in this character that he instantly introduced her: "My dear doubting wife, who will do her best to entertain you while I wait upon our friend." And he explained to her as he could his now protesting companions—"Mr. and Mrs. Hayes of New York, who have been here before." He knew, without knowing why, that her announcement chilled him; he failed at least to see why it should chill him so much. His good friends had themselves been visibly affected by it, and heaven knew that the depths of brooding fancy in him were easily stirred by contact. If they had wanted a crisis they accordingly had found one, albeit they had already asked leave to retire before it. This he wouldn't have. "Ah no, you must really see!"

"But we shan't be able to bear it, you know," said the young woman, "if it *is* to turn you out."

Her crudity attested her sincerity, and it was the latter, doubtless, that instantly held Mrs. Gedge. "It *is* to turn us out."

"Has he told you that, madam?" Mr. Hayes enquired of her—it being wondrous how the breath of doom had drawn them together.

"No, not told me; but there's something in him there—I mean in his awful manner—that matches too well with other things. We've seen," said the poor pale lady, "other things enough."

The young woman almost clutched her. "Is his manner very awful?"

"It's simply the manner," Gedge interposed, "of a very great man."

"Well, very great men," said his wife, "are very awful things."

"It's exactly," he laughed, "what we're finding out! But I mustn't keep him waiting. Our friends here," he went on, "are directly interested. You mustn't, mind you let them go until we know."

Mr. Hayes, however, held him; he found himself stayed. "We're so directly interested that I want you to understand this. If anything happens—"

"Yes?" said Gedge, all gentle as he faltered.

"Well, *we* must set you up."

Mrs. Hayes quickly abounded. "Oh *do* come to us!"

Again he could but take them in. They were really wonderful folk. And with it all but Mr. and Mrs. Hayes! It affected even Isabel through her alarm; though the balm, in a manner, seemed to foretell the wound. He had reached the threshold of his own quarters; he stood there as at the door of the chamber of judgement. But he laughed; at least he could be gallant in going up for sentence. "Very good then—I'll come to you!"

This was very well, but it didn't prevent his heart, a minute later, at the end of the passage, from thumping with beats he could count. He had paused again before going in; on the other side of this second door his poor future was to be let loose at him. It was broken, at best, and spiritless, but wasn't Grant-Jackson there like a beast-tamer in a cage, all tights and spangles and circus attitudes, to give it a cut with the smart official whip and make it spring at him? It was during this moment that he fully measured the effect for his nerves of the impression made on his so oddly earnest friends—whose earnestness he verily, in the spasm of this last effort, came within an ace of resenting. They had upset him by contact; he was afraid literally of meeting his doom on

his knees; it wouldn't have taken much more, he absolutely felt, to make him approach with his forehead in the dust the great man whose wrath was to be averted. Mr. and Mrs. Hayes of New York had brought tears to his eyes, but was it to be reserved for Grant-Jackson to make him cry like a baby? He wished, yes, while he palpitated, that Mr. and Mrs. Hayes of New York hadn't had such an eccentricity of interest, for it seemed somehow to come from *them* that he was going so fast to pieces. Before he turned the knob of the door, however, he had another queer instant; making out that it had been, strictly, his case that was interesting, his funny power, however accidental, to show as in a picture the attitude of others—not his poor pale personality. It was this latter quantity, none the less, that was marching to execution. It is to our friend's credit that he *believed,* as he prepared to turn the knob, that he was going to be hanged; and it's certainly not less to his credit that his wife, on the chance, had his supreme thought. Here it was that—possibly with his last articulate breath—he thanked his stars, such as they were, for Mr. and Mrs. Hayes of New York. At least they would take care of her.

They were doing that certainly with some success when he returned to them ten minutes later. She sat between them in the beautified Birthplace, and he couldn't have been sure afterwards that each wasn't holding her hand. The three together had at any rate the effect of recalling to him—it was too whimsical—some picture, a sentimental print, seen and admired in his youth, a "Waiting for the Verdict," a "Counting the Hours," or something of that sort; humble respectability in suspense about humble innocence. He didn't know how he himself looked, and he didn't care; the great thing was that he wasn't crying—though he might have been; the glitter in his eyes was assuredly dry, though that there *was* a glitter, or something slightly to bewilder, the faces of the others as they rose to meet him sufficiently proved. His wife's eyes pierced his own, but it was Mrs. Hayes of New York who spoke. "*Was* it then for that—?"

He only looked at them at first—he felt he might now enjoy it. "Yes, it was for 'that.' I mean it was about the way I've been going on. He came to speak of it."

"And he's gone?" Mr. Hayes permitted himself to enquire.

"He's gone."

"It's over?" Isabel hoarsely asked.

"It's over."

"Then we go?"

This it was that he enjoyed. "No, my dear; we stay."

There was fairly a triple gasp; relief took time to operate. "Then why did he come?"

"In the fulness of his kind heart and of *Their* discussed and decreed satisfaction. To express Their sense—!"

Mr. Hayes broke into a laugh, but his wife wanted to know. "Of the grand work you're doing?"

"Of the way I polish it off. They're most handsome about it. The receipts, it appears, speak—"

He was nursing his effect; Isabel intently watched him and the others hung on his lips. "Yes, speak—?"

"Well, volumes. They tell the truth."

At this Mr. Hayes laughed again. "Oh *they* at least do?"

Near him thus once more Gedge knew their intelligence as one—which was so good a consciousness to get back that his tension now relaxed as by the snap of a spring and he felt his old face at ease. "So you can't say," he continued, "that we don't want it."

"I bow to it," the young man smiled. "It's what I said then. It's *great.*"

"It's great," said Morris Gedge. "It couldn't be greater."

His wife still watched him; her irony hung behind. "Then we're just as we were?"

"No, not as we were."

She jumped at it. "Better?"

"Better. They give us a rise."

"Of income?"

"Of our sweet little stipend—by a vote of the Committee. That's what, as Chairman, he came to announce."

The very echoes of the Birthplace were themselves, for the instant, hushed; the warden's three companions showed in the conscious air a struggle for their own breath. But Isabel, almost with a shriek, was the first to recover hers. "They double us?"

"Well—call it that. 'In recognition.' There you are." Isabel uttered another sound—but this time inarticulate; partly because Mrs. Hayes of New York had already jumped at her to kiss her. Mr. Hayes meanwhile, as with too much to say, but put out his hand, which our friend took in silence. So Gedge had the last word. "And there *you* are!"

A NOVEL

VICTORY, like Conrad's own life, is many stories in one. It is most obviously a romantic thriller. Axel Heyst, a rather mysterious, cultivated, and sensitive aristocrat, living alone on a South Sea island, rescues a lovely young English girl from the clutches of Schomberg, a brutal hotelkeeper. Three gangsters, incited by the frustrated Schomberg, invade the idyllic retreat of Heyst and the girl. The story ends, in the midst of a wild tropical thunderstorm, with five violent deaths. Conrad explains in the Preface and Note to *Victory,* reprinted on page 212, that the principal characters were based on real persons he had known in his own romantic life.

Born in the Ukraine in 1857, Conrad (Jósef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski) lived in exile with his parents after the abortive Polish rebellion of 1863 against the Tsarist government. His mother died in 1865, and his father, a Polish literary and political leader, in 1869. Conrad became the ward of a well-to-do uncle, and in 1874 he began his adventurous wanderings, first as a gun-runner for the Carlist party in Spain and for a group in South America, and then as a sailor. He first visited England in 1878, and by the time he became a British subject in 1886 he had learned the English language and had earned a ship master's rating. Before he gave up the sea in 1894, and married and settled down to writing in England, he had sailed all over the world in all kinds of ships—wool-clippers, South Sea traders, and Congo river steamers. John Galsworthy reports his first meeting with Conrad, March 1893, on the English sailing ship *Torrens* in Adelaide harbor. Galsworthy's first sight was of Conrad directing the stowage of cargo. "Very dark he looked in the burning sunlight—tanned with a peaked brown beard, and dark brown eyes, over which lids were deeply folded." The first night out Conrad was busy fighting a fire in the hold, and he was in charge during a hurricane off the Leeuwin. Galsworthy recalls Conrad's popularity with his men, and especially the tales he told of his adventures, of ships and storm, of Polish revolution, of gun-running, Malay seas, the Congo, and "of men and men." "Fascination was Conrad's great characteristic—the fascination of vivid expressiveness and zest, of his deeply affectionate heart, and his far-ranging subtle mind. He was extraordinarily perceptive and receptive."

It was "but natural," as Conrad remarks in the Note to *Victory,* that persons and events "buried in a corner of my memory should suddenly

get out into the light of the world. . . . They were there, they had to come out; and this is a sufficient excuse for a writer of tales who had taken to his trade . . . without any moral intention but that which pervades the whole scheme of this world of senses." That "intention" is clarified in Conrad's Preface to *The Nigger of the Narcissus* (1897-98), the third of over sixty stories and volumes, of which *Victory* (1914-15) is the nineteenth. A work of art, asserted Conrad in that earlier preface, should be a "single-minded attempt to render the highest kind of justice to the visible universe, by bringing to light the truth, manifold and one, underlying its every aspect." The writer's chief task is "to make you hear, to make you feel,—it is, before all, to make you *see*." Like Henry James, Conrad wanted first of all to render the look of things as precisely and vividly as possible. At the same time he wanted to suggest the moral universe mirrored in the "world of senses." The result, as we said at the beginning, is many stories in one, a composition at once as adventurous and as thoughtful as Conrad's own career.

The excitement of the novel as romantic thriller is heightened by suspense and tight motivation. Beneath the sensational surface is a network of psychological motives. Heyst has withdrawn from the world of action and emotional involvement because he had been influenced when young by a father who preached a philosophy of skeptical passivism. Schomberg is attracted to the girl because he is married to an altogether unattractive wife. The final catastrophe is precipitated because the leader of the gangsters has an unnatural aversion to women. The suspense in this psychologically motivated chain of incidents is increased by the use of dramatic irony. Through a series of shifts in point of view the reader is given information a step in advance of the characters with whom he is next identified. For example, we learn about the approaching gangsters and their plot before we join the unsuspecting Heyst and Lena in the seeming safety of their island.

Beneath the novel as romantic thriller and as psychological network is the novel as philosophical pattern, in which characters embody ideas and moral attitudes. Heyst's philosophical career is from disillusionment to affirmation. At the beginning he denies the existence of justice and the possibility of faithful human relationships. His father had taught him that the world is a factory in which men are paid in counterfeit money. His experience with life in the rescue of Morrison and the management of the unsuccessful Tropical Belt Coal Company confirms his intellectual cynicism. He concludes "that he who forms a tie is lost," and, "Appearance—

you can't have anything else." His conviction of evil is embodied in the persons of the three gangsters, "a spectre, a cat, and an ape," diabolical intelligence, instinctive savagery, and brute force. Against them, as Heyst's only defense, is pitted Lena's faith and devotion. The final victory in the midst of physical defeat is Heyst's acceptance of Lena and of what she symbolizes, which is expressed in his cry: "Woe to the man whose heart has not learned while young to hope, to love—and to put his trust in life."

The presence of the many stories in one helps to explain the vitality of *Victory,* to explain Conrad's statement: "It is a book in which I have tried to grasp at more life stuff than perhaps in any other of my works." The vitality, the "life stuff," comes through from the separate "stories" taken individually—the suspense of the action-packed plot, the vivid suggestiveness of the description, the tightness of the psychological motivation, the importance of the philosophical pattern. It comes through, too, because of the power these elements have of suggesting older, more mythical formulations—the beautiful princess in rags, the enchanted hero warmed to life and redeemed by love, the recovery of spring through self-sacrifice and the fiery convulsion of nature. It comes through most strongly, however, at those moments in the novel, as in life, when the various "stories" interpenetrate, support, and surcharge one another. At those moments we are like Henry James's ideal artist, one on whom nothing is lost. Illustrations of this are on every hand. Schomberg's hotel is useful to the plot as a plausible center of action and information; at the same time it is a symbol of one philosophical view of the world, where "we are camped like bewildered travellers in a garish, unrestful hotel." Schomberg's gossip propels the plot; it is a reflection of his frustration, and it illustrates Heyst's early conviction that there is only appearance, that man is only what he is maliciously reported to be. Opposed to Schomberg is Davidson. As the captain of an island steamer he too helps to knit the plot; but his interest in people is humane rather than egocentric and malicious. The sensitive spirit in his obese body is also an emblem of the world, one of the "facts" ignored by the early Heyst, who had prided himself on collecting and facing facts, and one which prepares us for the selflessness of Lena. Lena's pretended submission to the gangster, Ricardo, complicates the plot and heightens the suspense; it serves simultaneously as a test of Heyst's faith, of the philosophy that holds appearance to be the true reality, and of the gangster's shrewdness that misinterprets her silence as consent. Perhaps the most striking moments of increased awareness are provided by the

concentration of context-charged meaning in simple statements. Lena's first words on entering Heyst's island bungalow are: "I am here—out of the sun." "Nothing can break in on us here," says Heyst. "This thing," says the gangster leader plotting the attack on Heyst's supposed treasure, "is not like our other tries. . . . It's a sort of test." *Victory,* in short, is a novel that makes us *see.*

JOSEPH CONRAD

Victory

PART I

I

THERE is, as every schoolboy knows in this scientific age, a very close chemical relation between coal and diamonds. It is the reason, I believe, why some people allude to coal as "black diamonds." Both these commodities represent wealth; but coal is a much less portable form of property. There is, from that point of view, a deplorable lack of concentration in coal. Now, if a coal-mine could be put into one's waistcoat pocket—but it can't! At the same time, there is a fascination in coal, the supreme commodity of the age in which we are camped like bewildered travellers in a garish, unrestful hotel. And I suppose those two considerations, the practical and the mystical, prevented Heyst—Axel Heyst—from going away.

The Tropical Belt Coal Company went into liquidation. The world of finance is a mysterious world in which, incredible as the fact may appear, evaporation precedes liquidation. First the capital evaporates, and then the company goes into liquidation. These are very unnatural physics, but they account for the persistent inertia of Heyst, at which we "out there" used to laugh among ourselves—but not inimically. An inert body can do no harm to any one, provokes no hostility, is scarcely worth derision. It may, indeed, be in the way sometimes; but this could not be said of Axel Heyst. He was out of everybody's way, as if he were perched on the highest peak of the Himalayas, and in a sense as conspicuous. Every one in that part of the world knew him, dwelling on his little island. An island is but the top of a mountain. Axel Heyst, perched on it immovably, was surrounded, instead of the imponderable stormy and transparent ocean of air merging into infinity, by a tepid, shallow sea; a passionless off-shoot of the great waters which embrace the continents of this globe. His most frequent visitors were shadows, the shadows of clouds,

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relieving the monotony of the inanimate, brooding sunshine of the tropics. His nearest neighbour—I am speaking now of things showing some sort of animation—was an indolent volcano which smoked faintly all day with its head just above the northern horizon, and at night levelled at him, from amongst the clear stars, a dull red glow, expanding and collapsing spasmodically like the end of a gigantic cigar puffed at intermittently in the dark. Axel Heyst was also a smoker; and when he lounged out on his verandah with his cheroot, the last thing before going to bed, he made in the night the same sort of glow and of the same size as that other one so many miles away.

In a sense, the volcano was company to him in the shades of the night—which were often too thick, one would think, to let a breath of air through. There was seldom enough wind to blow a feather along. On most evenings of the year Heyst could have sat outside with a naked candle to read one of the books left him by his late father. It was not a mean store. But he never did that. Afraid of mosquitoes, very likely. Neither was he ever tempted by the silence to address any casual remarks to the companion glow of the volcano. He was not mad. Queer chap—yes, that may have been said, and in fact was said; but there is a tremendous difference between the two, you will allow.

On the nights of full moon the silence around Samburan—the "Round Island" of the charts—was dazzling; and in the flood of cold light Heyst could see his immediate surroundings, which had the aspect of an abandoned settlement invaded by the jungle: vague roofs above low vegetation, broken shadows of bamboo fences in the sheen of long grass, something like an overgrown bit of road slanting among ragged thickets towards the shore only a couple of hundred yards away, with a black jetty and a mound of some sort, quite inky on its unlighted side. But the most conspicuous object was a gigantic blackboard raised on two posts and presenting to Heyst, when the moon got over that side, the white letters "T. B. C. Co." in a row at least two feet high. These were the initials of the Tropical Belt Coal Company, his employers—his late employers, to be precise.

According to the unnatural mysteries of the financial world, the T. B. C. Company's capital having evaporated in the course of two years, the company went into liquidation—forced, I believe, not voluntary. There was nothing forcible in the process, however. It was slow; and while the liquidation—in London and Amsterdam—pursued its languid course, Axel Heyst, styled in the prospectus "manager in the tropics," remained at his post on Samburan, the No. 1 coaling-station of the company.

And it was not merely a coaling-station. There was a coal-mine there, with an outcrop in the hillside less than five hundred yards from the rickety wharf and the imposing blackboard. The company's object had been to get hold of all the outcrops on tropical islands and exploit them locally. And, Lord knows, there were any amount of outcrops. It was Heyst who had located most of them in this part of the tropical belt during his rather aimless wanderings, and being a ready letter-writer had written pages and pages about them to his friends in Europe. At least, so it was said.

We doubted whether he had any visions of wealth—for himself, at any rate. What he seemed mostly concerned for was the "stride forward," as he ex-

pressed it, in the general organisation of the universe, apparently. He was heard by more than a hundred persons in the islands talking of a "great stride forward for these regions." The convinced wave of the hand which accompanied the phrase suggested tropical distances being impelled onward. In connection with the finished courtesy of his manner, it was persuasive, or at any rate silencing—for a time, at least. Nobody cared to argue with him when he talked in this strain. His earnestness could do no harm to anybody. There was no danger of any one taking seriously his dream of tropical coal, so what was the use of hurting his feelings?

Thus reasoned men in reputable business offices where he had his entrée as a person who came out East with letters of introduction—and modest letters of credit, too—some years before these coal-outcrops began to crop up in his playfully courteous talk. From the first there was some difficulty in making him out. He was not a traveller. A traveller arrives and departs, goes on somewhere. Heyst did not depart. I met a man once—the manager of the branch of the Oriental Banking Corporation in Malacca—to whom Heyst exclaimed, in no connection with anything in particular (it was in the billiard-room of the club):

"I am enchanted with these islands!"

He shot it out suddenly, *à propos des bottes,* as the French say, and while chalking his cue. And perhaps it was some sort of enchantment. There are more spells than your commonplace magicians ever dreamed of.

Roughly speaking, a circle with a radius of eight hundred miles drawn round a point in North Borneo was in Heyst's case a magic circle. It just touched Manila, and he had been seen there. It just touched Saigon, and he was likewise seen there once. Perhaps these were his attempts to break out. If so, they were failures. The enchantment must have been an unbreakable one. The manager—the man who heard the exclamation—had been so impressed by the tone, fervour, rapture, what you will, or perhaps by the incongruity of it that he had related the experience to more than one person.

"Queer chap, that Swede," was his only comment; but this is the origin of the name "Enchanted Heyst" which some fellows fastened on our man.

He also had other names. In his early years, long before he got so becomingly bald on the top, he went to present a letter of introduction to Mr. Tesman of Tesman Brothers, a Sourabaya firm—tip-top house. Well, Mr. Tesman was a kindly, benevolent old gentleman. He did not know what to make of that caller. After telling him that they wished to render his stay among the islands as pleasant as possible, and that they were ready to assist him in his plans, and so on, and after receiving Heyst's thanks—you know the usual kind of conversation—he proceeded to query in a slow, paternal tone:

"Are you interested in—?"

"Facts," broke in Heyst in his courtly voice. "There's nothing worth knowing but facts. Hard facts! Facts alone, Mr. Tesman."

I don't know if old Tesman agreed with him or not, but he must have spoken about it, because, for a time, our man got the name of "Hard Facts." He had the singular good fortune that his sayings stuck to him and became part of his name. Thereafter he mooned about the Java Sea in some of the

Tesman's trading schooners, and then vanished, on board an Arab ship, in the direction of New Guinea. He remained so long in that outlying part of his enchanted circle that he was nearly forgotten before he swam into view again in a native proa full of Goram vagabonds, burnt black by the sun, very lean, his hair much thinned, and a portfolio of sketches under his arm. He showed these willingly, but was very reserved as to anything else. He had had an "amusing time," he said. A man who will go to New Guinea for fun—well!

Later, years afterward, when the last vestiges of youth had gone off his face and all the hair off the top of his head, and his red-gold pair of horizontal moustaches had grown to really noble proportions, a certain disreputable white man fastened upon him an epithet. Putting down with a shaking hand a long glass emptied of its contents—paid for by Heyst—he said, with that deliberate sagacity which no mere water-drinker ever attained:

"Heyst's a puffect g'n'lman. Puffect! But he's a ut-uto-utopist."

Heyst had just come out of the place of public refreshment where this pronouncement was voiced. Utopist, eh? Upon my word, the only thing I heard him say which might have had a bearing on the point was his invitation to old McNab himself. Turning with that finished courtesy of attitude, movement, voice, which was his obvious characteristic, he had said with delicate playfulness:

"Come along and quench your thirst with us, Mr. McNab!"

Perhaps that was it. A man who could propose, even playfully, to quench old McNab's thirst must have been an utopist, a pursuer of chimæras; for of downright irony Heyst was not prodigal. And, may be, this was the reason why he was generally liked. At that epoch in his life, in the fulness of his physical development, of a broad, martial presence, with his bald head and long moustaches, he resembled the portraits of Charles XII of adventurous memory. However, there was no reason to think that Heyst was in any way a fighting man.

II

It was about this time that Heyst became associated with Morrison on terms about which people were in doubt. Some said he was a partner, others said he was a sort of paying guest, but the real truth of the matter was more complex. One day Heyst turned up in Timor. Why in Timor, of all places in the world, no one knows. Well, he was mooning about Delli, that highly pestilential place, possibly in search of some undiscovered facts, when he came in the street upon Morrison, who, in his way, was also an "enchanted" man. When you spoke to Morrison of going home—he was from Dorsetshire—he shuddered. He said it was dark and wet there; that it was like living with your head and shoulders in a moist gunny-bag. That was only his exaggerated style of talking. Morrison was "one of us." He was owner and master of the *Capricorn,* trading brig, and was understood to be doing well with her, except for the drawback of too much altruism. He was the dearly beloved friend of a quantity of God-forsaken villages up dark creeks and obscure bays, where he traded for "produce." He would often sail through awfully dangerous channels up to some miserable settlement, only to find a very hungry population clamorous for rice, and without so much "produce" between them as would have filled

Morrison's suit-case. Amid general rejoicings, he would land the rice all the same, explain to the people that it was an advance, that they were in debt to him now; would preach to them energy and industry, and make an elaborate note in a pocket-diary which he always carried; and this would be the end of that transaction. I don't know if Morrison thought so, but the villagers had no doubt whatever about it. Whenever a coast village sighted the brig it would begin to beat all its gongs and hoist all its streamers, and all its girls would put flowers in their hair and the crowd would line the river bank, and Morrison would beam and glitter at all this excitement through his single eyeglass with an air of intense gratification. He was tall and lantern-jawed, and clean-shaven, and looked like a barrister who had thrown his wig to the dogs.

We used to remonstrate with him:

"You will never see any of your advances if you go on like this, Morrison."

He would put on a knowing air.

"I shall squeeze them yet some day—never you fear. And that reminds me"—pulling out his inseparable pocketbook—"there's that So-and-So village. They are pretty well off again; I may just as well squeeze them to begin with."

He would make a ferocious entry in the pocketbook:

Memo:—Squeeze the So-and-So village at the first time of calling.

Then he would stick the pencil back and snap the elastic on with inflexible finality; but he never began the squeezing. Some men grumbled at him. He was spoiling the trade. Well, perhaps to a certain extent; not much. Most of the places he traded with were unknown not only to geography but also to the traders' special lore which is transmitted by word of mouth, without ostentation, and forms the stock of mysterious local knowledge. It was hinted also that Morrison had a wife in each and every one of them, but the majority of us repulsed these innuendoes with indignation. He was a true humanitarian and rather ascetic than otherwise.

When Heyst met him in Delli, Morrison was walking along the street, his eyeglass tossed over his shoulder, his head down, with the hopeless aspect of those hardened tramps one sees on our roads trudging from workhouse to workhouse. Being hailed across the street he looked up with a wild worried expression. He was really in trouble. He had come the week before into Delli, and the Portuguese authorities, on some pretence of irregularity in his papers, had inflicted a fine upon him and had arrested his brig.

Morrison never had any spare cash in hand. With his system of trading it would have been strange if he had; and all these debts entered in the pocketbook weren't good enough to raise a *milreis* on—let alone a shilling. The Portuguese officials begged him not to distress himself. They gave him a week's grace, and then proposed to sell the brig at auction. This meant ruin for Morrison; and when Heyst hailed him across the street in his usual courtly tone, the week was nearly out.

Heyst crossed over, and said with a slight bow, and in the manner of a prince addressing another prince on a private occasion:

"What an unexpected pleasure. Would you have any objection to drink something with me in that infamous wine-shop over there? The sun is really too strong to talk in the street."

The haggard Morrison followed obediently into a sombre, cool hovel which he would have disdained to enter at any other time. He was distracted. He did not know what he was doing. You could have led him over the edge of a precipice just as easily as into that wine-shop. He sat down like an automaton. He was speechless, but he saw a glass full of rough red wine before him, and emptied it. Heyst meantime, politely watchful, had taken a seat opposite.

"You are in for a bout of fever, I fear," he said sympathetically.

Poor Morrison's tongue was loosened at last.

"Fever!" he cried. "Give me fever. Give me plague. They are diseases. One gets over them. But I am being murdered. I am being murdered by the Portuguese. The gang here downed me at last among them. I am to have my throat cut the day after tomorrow."

In the face of this passion Heyst made, with his eyebrows, a slight motion of surprise which would not have been misplaced in a drawing-room. Morrison's despairing reserve had broken down. He had been wandering with a dry throat all over that miserable town of mud hovels, silent, with no soul to turn to in his distress, and positively maddened by his thoughts; and suddenly he had stumbled on a white man, figuratively and actually white—for Morrison refused to accept the racial whiteness of the Portuguese officials. He let himself go for the mere relief of violent speech, his elbows planted on the table, his eyes bloodshot, his voice nearly gone, the brim of his round pith hat shading an unshaven, livid face. His white clothes, which he had not taken off for three days, were dingy. He looked already gone to the bad, past redemption. The sight was shocking to Heyst; but he let nothing of it appear in his bearing, concealing his impression under that consummate good-society manner of his. Polite attention, what's due from one gentleman listening to another, was what he showed; and, as usual, it was catching; so that Morrison pulled himself together and finished his narrative in a conversational tone, with a man-of-the-world air.

"It's a villainous plot. Unluckily, one is helpless. That scoundrel Cousinho—Andreas, you know—has been coveting the brig for years. Naturally, I would never sell. She is not only my livelihood; she's my life. So he has hatched this pretty little plot with the chief of the customs. The sale, of course, will be a farce. There's no one here to bid. He will get the brig for a song—no, not even that—a line of a song. You have been some years now in the islands, Heyst. You know us all; you have seen how we live. Now you shall have the opportunity to see how some of us end; for it is the end, for me. I can't deceive myself any longer. You see it,—don't you?"

Morrison had pulled himself together, but one felt the snapping strain on his recovered self-possession. Heyst was beginning to say that he "could very well see all the bearings of this unfortunate—" when Morrison interrupted him jerkily.

"Upon my word, I don't know why I have been telling you all this. I suppose seeing a thoroughly white man made it impossible to keep my trouble to myself. Words can't do it justice; but since I've told you so much I may as well tell you more. Listen. This morning on board, in my cabin I went down on my knees and prayed for help. I went down on my knees!"

"You are a believer, Morrison?" asked Heyst with a distinct note of respect.

"Surely I am not an infidel."

Morrison was swiftly reproachful in his answer, and there came a pause, Morrison perhaps interrogating his conscience, and Heyst preserving a mien of unperturbed, polite interest.

"I prayed like a child, of course. I believe in children praying—well, women, too, but I rather think God expects men to be more self-reliant. I don't hold with a man everlastingly bothering the Almighty with his silly troubles. It seems such cheek. Anyhow, this morning I—I have never done any harm to any God's creature knowingly—I prayed. A sudden impulse—I went flop on my knees; so you may judge—"

They were gazing earnestly into each other's eyes. Poor Morrison added, as a discouraging afterthought:

"Only this is such a God-forsaken spot."

Heyst inquired with a delicate intonation whether he might know the amount for which the brig was seized.

Morrison suppressed an oath, and named curtly a sum which was in itself so insignificant that any other person than Heyst would have exclaimed at it. And even Heyst could hardly keep incredulity out of his politely modulated voice as he asked if it was a fact that Morrison had not that amount in hand.

Morrison hadn't. He had only a little English gold, a few sovereigns, on board. He had left all his spare cash with the Tesmans, in Samarang, to meet certain bills which would fall due while he was away on his cruise. Anyhow that money would not have been any more good to him than if it had been in the innermost depths of the infernal regions. He said all this brusquely. He looked with sudden disfavour at that noble forehead, at those great martial moustaches, at the tired eyes of the man sitting opposite him. Who the devil was he? What was he, Morrison, doing there, talking like this? Morrison knew no more of Heyst than the rest of us trading in the Archipelago did. Had the Swede suddenly risen and hit him on the nose, he could not have been taken more aback than when this stranger, this nondescript wanderer, said with a little bow across the table:

"Oh! if that's the case I would be very happy if you'd allow me to be of use!"

Morrison didn't understand. This was one of those things that don't happen—unheard of things. He had no real inkling of what it meant, till Heyst said definitely:

"I can lend you the amount."

"You have the money?" whispered Morrison. "Do you mean here, in your pocket?"

"Yes, on me. Glad to be of use."

Morrison, staring open-mouthed, groped over his shoulder for the cord of the eyeglass hanging down his back. When he found it, he stuck it in his eye hastily. It was as if he expected Heyst's usual white suit of the tropics to change into a shining garment flowing down to his toes, and a pair of great dazzling wings to sprout on the Swede's shoulders—and didn't want to miss a single detail of the transformation. But if Heyst was an angel from on high, sent in

answer to prayer, he did not betray his heavenly origin by outward signs. So, instead of going on his knees, as he felt inclined to do, Morrison stretched out his hand, which Heyst grasped with formal alacrity and a polite murmur in which "Trifle—delighted—of service," could be just distinguished.

"Miracles do happen," thought the awestruck Morrison. To him, as to all of us in the islands, this wandering Heyst, who didn't toil or spin visibly, seemed the very last person to be the agent of Providence in an affair concerned with money. The fact of his turning up in Timor or anywhere else was no more wonderful than the settling of a sparrow on one's window-sill at any given moment. But that he should carry a sum of money in his pocket seemed somehow inconceivable.

So inconceivable that as they were trudging together through the sand of the roadway to the custom-house—another mud hovel—to pay the fine, Morrison broke into a cold sweat, stopped short, and exclaimed in faltering accents:

"I say! You aren't joking, Heyst?"

"Joking!" Heyst's blue eyes went hard as he turned them on the discomposed Morrison. "In what way, may I ask?" he continued with austere politeness.

Morrison was abashed.

"Forgive me, Heyst. You must have been sent by God in answer to my prayer. But I have been nearly off my chump for three days with worry; and it suddenly struck me: 'What if it's the Devil who has sent him?' "

"I have no connection with the supernatural," said Heyst graciously, moving on. "Nobody has sent me. I just happened along."

"I know better," contradicted Morrison. "I may be unworthy, but I have been heard. I know it. I feel it. For why should you offer—"

Heyst inclined his head, as from respect for a conviction in which he could not share. But he stuck to his point by muttering that in the presence of an odious fact like this, it was natural—

Later in the day, the fine paid, and the two of them on board the brig, from which the guard had been removed, Morrison—who, besides being a gentleman, was also an honest fellow—began to talk about repayment. He knew very well his inability to lay by any sum of money. It was partly the fault of circumstances and partly of his temperament; and it would have been very difficult to apportion the responsibility between the two. Even Morrison himself could not say, while confessing to the fact. With a worried air he ascribed it to fatality.

"I don't know how it is that I've never been able to save. It's some sort of curse. There's always a bill or two to meet."

He plunged his hand into his pocket for the famous notebook so well known in the islands, the fetish of his hopes, and fluttered the pages feverishly.

"And yet—look," he went on. "There it is—more than five thousand dollars owing. Surely that's something."

He ceased suddenly. Heyst, who had been all the time trying to look as unconcerned as he could, made reassuring noises in his throat. But Morrison was not only honest. He was honourable, too; and on this stressful day, before this

amazing emissary of Providence and in the revulsion of his feelings, he made his great renunciation. He cast off the abiding illusion of his existence.

"No. No. They are no good. I'll never be able to squeeze them. Never. I've been saying for years I would; but I give it up. I never really believed I could. Don't reckon on that, Heyst. I have robbed you."

Poor Morrison actually laid his head on the cabin table, and remained in that crushed attitude while Heyst talked to him soothingly with the utmost courtesy. The Swede was as much distressed as Morrison; for he understood the other's feelings perfectly. No decent feeling was ever scorned by Heyst. But he was incapable of outward cordiality of manner, and he felt acutely his defect. Consummate politeness is not the right tonic for an emotional collapse. They must have had, both of them, a fairly painful time of it in the cabin of the brig. In the end Morrison, casting desperately for an idea in the blackness of his despondency, hit upon the notion of inviting Heyst to travel with him in his brig and have a share in his trading ventures up to the amount of his loan.

It is characteristic of Heyst's unattached, floating existence that he was in a position to accept this proposal. There is no reason to think that he wanted particularly just then to go poking aboard the brig into all the holes and corners of the Archipelago where Morrison picked up most of his trade. Far from it; but he would have consented to almost any arrangement in order to put an end to the harrowing scene in the cabin. There was at once a great transformation act: Morrison raising his diminished head and sticking the glass in his eye to look affectionately at Heyst, a bottle being uncorked, and so on. It was agreed that nothing should be said to any one of this transaction. Morrison, you understand, was not proud of the episode, and he was afraid of being unmercifully chaffed.

"An old bird like me! To let myself be trapped by those damned Portuguese rascals! I should never hear the last of it. We must keep it dark."

From quite other motives, among which his native delicacy was the principal, Heyst was even more anxious to bind himself to silence. A gentleman would naturally shrink from the part of heavenly messenger that Morrison would force upon him. It made Heyst uncomfortable, as it was. And perhaps he did not care that it should be known that he had some means, whatever they might have been—sufficient, at any rate, to enable him to lend money to people. These two had a duet down there, like conspirators in a comic opera, of "Sh—ssh, shssh! Secrecy! Secrecy!" It must have been funny, because they were very serious about it.

And for a time the conspiracy was successful in so far that we all concluded that Heyst was boarding with the good-natured—some said: sponging on the imbecile—Morrison, in his brig. But you know how it is with all such mysteries. There is always a leak somewhere. Morrison himself, not a perfect vessel by any means, was bursting with gratitude, and under the stress he must have let out something vague—enough to give the island gossip a chance. And you know how kindly the world is in its comments on what it does not understand. A rumour sprang out that Heyst, having obtained some mysterious hold on Morrison, had fastened himself on him and was sucking him dry. Those who had traced these mutters back to their origin were very careful not to believe

them. The originator, it seems, was a certain Schomberg, a big, manly, bearded creature of the Teutonic persuasion, with an ungovernable tongue which surely must have worked on a pivot. Whether he was a Lieutenant of the Reserve, as he declared, I don't know. Out there he was by profession a hotel-keeper, first in Bangkok, then somewhere else, and ultimately in Sourabaya. He dragged after him up and down that section of the tropical belt a silent, frightened little woman with long ringlets, who smiled at one stupidly, showing a blue tooth. I don't know why so many of us patronized his various establishments. He was a noxious ass, and he satisfied his lust for silly gossip at the cost of his customers. It was he who, one evening, as Morrison and Heyst went past the hotel—they were not his regular patrons—whispered mysteriously to the mixed company assembled on the verandah:

"The spider and the fly just gone by, gentlemen." Then, very important and confidential, his thick paw at the side of his mouth: "We are among ourselves; well, gentlemen, all I can say is, don't you ever get mixed up with that Swede. Don't you ever get caught in his web."

III

Human nature being what it is, having a silly side to it as well as a mean side, there were not a few who pretended to be indignant on no better authority than a general propensity to believe every evil report; and a good many others who found it simply funny to call Heyst the Spider—behind his back, of course. He was as serenely unconscious of this as of his several other nicknames. But soon people found other things to say of Heyst; not long afterward he came very much to the fore in larger affairs. He blossomed out into something definite. He filled the public eye as the manager on the spot of the Tropical Belt Coal Company with offices in London and Amsterdam, and other things about it that sounded and looked grandiose. The offices in the two capitals may have consisted—and probably did—of one room in each; but at that distance, out East there, all this had an air. We were more puzzled than dazzled, it is true; but even the most sober-minded among us began to think that there was something in it. The Tesmans appointed agents, a contract for government mail-boats secured, the era of steam beginning for the islands—a great stride forward—Heyst's stride!

And all this sprang from the meeting of the cornered Morrison and of the wandering Heyst, which may or may not have been the direct outcome of a prayer. Morrison was not an imbecile, but he seemed to have got himself into a state of remarkable haziness as to his exact position towards Heyst. For, if Heyst had been sent with money in his pocket by a direct decree of the Almighty in answer to Morrison's prayer then there was no reason for special gratitude, since obviously he could not help himself. But Morrison believed both in the efficacy of prayer and in the infinite goodness of Heyst. He thanked God with awed sincerity for His mercy, and could not thank Heyst enough for the service rendered as between man and man. In this (highly creditable) tangle of strong feelings Morrison's gratitude insisted on Heyst's partnership in the great discovery. Ultimately we heard that Morrison had gone home through the Suez Canal in order to push the magnificent coal idea personally

in London. He parted from his brig and disappeared from our ken; but we heard that he had written a letter or letters to Heyst, saying that London was cold and gloomy; that he did not like either the men or things, that he was "as lonely as a crow in a strange country." In truth, he pined after the *Capricorn*—I don't mean only the tropic; I mean the ship too. Finally he went into Dorsetshire to see his people, caught a bad cold, and died with extraordinary precipitation in the bosom of his appalled family. Whether his exertions in the City of London had enfeebled his vitality I don't know; but I believe it was this visit which put life into the coal idea. Be it as it may, the Tropical Belt Coal Company was born very shortly after Morrison, the victim of gratitude and his native climate, had gone to join his forefathers in a Dorsetshire churchyard.

Heyst was immensely shocked. He got the news in the Moluccas through the Tesmans, and then disappeared for a time. It appears that he stayed with a Dutch government doctor in Amboyna, a friend of his who looked after him for a bit in his bungalow. He became visible again rather suddenly, his eyes sunk in his head, and with a sort of guarded attitude, as if afraid someone would reproach him with the death of Morrison.

Naïve Heyst! As if anybody would. . . . Nobody amongst us had any interest in men who went home. They were all right; they did not count any more. Going to Europe was nearly as final as going to Heaven. It removed a man from the world of hazard and adventure.

As a matter of fact, many of us did not hear of this death till months afterward—from Schomberg, who disliked Heyst gratuitously and made up a piece of sinister whispered gossip:

"That's what comes of having anything to do with that fellow. He squeezes you dry like a lemon, then chucks you out—sends you home to die. Take warning by Morrison."

Of course, we laughed at the innkeeper's suggestions of black mystery. Several of us heard that Heyst was prepared to go to Europe himself, to push on his coal enterprise personally; but he never went. It wasn't necessary. The company was formed without him, and his nomination of manager in the tropics came out to him by post.

From the first he had selected Samburan, or Round Island, for the central station. Some copies of the prospectus issued in Europe, having found their way out East, were passed from hand to hand. We greatly admired the map which accompanied them for the edification of the shareholders. On it Samburan was represented as the central spot of the Eastern Hemisphere with its name engraved in enormous capitals. Heavy lines radiated from it in all directions through the tropics, figuring a mysterious and effective star—lines of influence or lines of distance, or something of that sort. Company promoters have an imagination of their own. There's no more romantic temperament on earth than the temperament of a company promoter. Engineers came out, coolies were imported, bungalows were put up on Samburan, a gallery driven into the hillside, and actually some coal got out.

These manifestations shook the soberest minds. For a time everybody in the islands was talking of the Tropical Belt Coal, and even those who smiled

quietly to themselves were only hiding their uneasiness. Oh, yes; it had come, and anybody could see what would be the consequences—the end of the individual trader, smothered under a great invasion of steamers. We could not afford to buy steamers. Not we. And Heyst was the manager.

"You know, Heyst, enchanted Heyst."

"Oh, come! He has been no better than a loafer around here as far back as any of us can remember."

"Yes, said he was looking for facts. Well, he's got hold of one that will do for all of us," commented a bitter voice.

"That's what they call development—and be hanged to it!" muttered another.

Never was Heyst talked about so much in the tropical belt before.

"Isn't he a Swedish baron or something?"

"He, a baron? Get along with you!"

For my part I haven't the slightest doubt that he was. While he was still drifting amongst the islands, enigmatical and disregarded like an insignificant ghost, he told me so himself on a certain occasion. It was a long time before he materialised in this alarming way into the destroyer of our little industry—Heyst the Enemy.

It became the fashion with a good many to speak of Heyst as the Enemy. He was very concrete, very visible now. He was rushing all over the Archipelago, jumping in and out of local mail-packets as if they had been tramcars, here, there, and everywhere—organising with all his might. This was no mooning about. This was business. And this sudden display of purposeful energy shook the incredulity of the most sceptical more than any scientific demonstration of the value of these coal-outcrops could have done. It was impressive. Schomberg was the only one who resisted the infection. Big, manly in a portly style, and profusely bearded, with a glass of beer in his thick paw, he would approach some table where the topic of the hour was being discussed, would listen for a moment, and then come out with his invariable declaration:

"All this is very well, gentlemen; but he can't throw any of his coal-dust in my eyes. There's nothing in it. Why, there can't be anything in it. A fellow like that for manager? Phoo!"

Was it the clairvoyance of imbecile hatred, or mere stupid tenacity of opinion, which ends sometimes by scoring against the world in a most astonishing manner? Most of us can remember instances of triumphant folly; and that ass Schomberg triumphed. The T. B. C. Co. went into liquidation, as I began by telling you. The Tesmans washed their hands of it. The Government cancelled those famous contracts. The talk died out, and presently it was remarked here and there that Heyst had faded completely away. He had become invisible, as in those early days when he used to make a bolt clear out of sight in his attempts to break away from the enchantment of "these isles," either in the direction of New Guinea or in the direction of Saigon—to cannibals or to cafés. The enchanted Heyst! Had he at last broken the spell? Had he died? We were too indifferent to wonder over-much. You see we had on the whole liked him well enough. And liking is not sufficient to keep going the interest one takes in a human being. With hatred, apparently, it is otherwise. Schomberg couldn't

forget Heyst. The keen, manly Teutonic creature was a good hater. A fool often is.

"Good evening, gentlemen. Have you got everything you want? So! Good! You see? What was I always telling you? Aha! There was nothing in it. I knew it. But what I would like to know is what became of that—Swede."

He put a stress on the word Swede as if it meant scoundrel. He detested Scandinavians generally. Why? Goodness only knows. A fool like that is unfathomable. He continued:

"It's five months or more since I have spoken to anybody who has seen him."

As I have said, we were not much interested; but Schomberg, of course, could not understand that. He was grotesquely dense. Whenever three people came together in his hotel, he took good care that Heyst should be with them.

"I hope the fellow did not go and drown himself," he would add with a comical earnestness that ought to have made us shudder; only our crowd was superficial, and did not apprehend the psychology of this pious hope.

"Why? Heyst isn't in debt to you for drinks, is he?" somebody asked him once with shallow scorn.

"Drinks! Oh dear no!"

The innkeeper was not mercenary. Teutonic temperament seldom is. But he put on a sinister expression to tell us that Heyst had not paid perhaps three visits altogether to his "establishment." This was Heyst's crime, for which Schomberg wished him nothing less than a long and tormented existence. Observe the Teutonic sense of proportion and nice forgiving temper.

At last, one afternoon, Schomberg was seen approaching a group of his customers. He was obviously in high glee. He squared his manly chest with great importance.

"Gentlemen, I have news of him. Who? Why, that Swede. He is still on Samburan. He's never been away from it. The company is gone, the engineers are gone, the clerks are gone, the coolies are gone, everything's gone; but there he sticks. Captain Davidson, coming by from the westward, saw him with his own eyes. Something white on the wharf; so he steamed in and went ashore in a small boat. Heyst, right enough. Put a book into his pocket, always very polite. Been strolling on the wharf and reading. 'I remain in possession here,' he told Captain Davidson. What I want to know is what he gets to eat there. A piece of dried fish now and then—what? That's coming down pretty low for a man who turned up his nose at my table d'hôte!"

He winked with immense malice. A bell started ringing, and he led the way to the dining-room as if into a temple, very grave, with the air of a benefactor of mankind. His ambition was to feed it at a profitable price, and his delight was to talk of it behind its back. It was very characteristic of him to gloat over the idea of Heyst having nothing decent to eat.

IV

A few of us who were sufficiently interested went to Davidson for details. These were not many. He told us that he passed to the north of Samburan on purpose to see what was going on. At first, it looked as if that side of the

island had been altogether abandoned. This was what he expected. Presently, above the dense mass of vegetation that Samburan presents to view, he saw the head of the flagstaff without a flag. Then, while steaming across the slight indentation which for a time was known officially as Black Diamond Bay, he made out with his glass the white figure on the coaling-wharf. It could be no one but Heyst.

"I thought for certain he wanted to be taken off, so I steamed in. He made no signs. However, I lowered a boat. I could not see another living being anywhere. Yes. He had a book in his hand. He looked exactly as we have always seen him—very neat, white shoes, cork helmet. He explained to me that he had always had a taste for solitude. It was the first I ever heard of it, I told him. He only smiled. What could I say? He isn't the sort of man one can speak familiarly to. There's something in him. One doesn't care to.

" 'But what's the object? Are you thinking of keeping possession of the mine?' I asked him.

" 'Something of the sort,' he says. 'I am keeping hold.'

" 'But all this is as dead as Julius Cæsar,' I cried. 'In fact, you have nothing worth holding on to, Heyst.'

" 'Oh, I am done with facts,' " says he, putting his hand to his helmet sharply with one of his short bows.

Thus dismissed, Davidson went on board his ship, swung her out, and as he was steaming away he watched from the bridge Heyst walking shoreward along the wharf. He marched into the long grass and vanished—all but the top of his white cork helmet, which seemed to swim in a green sea. Then that too disappeared, as if it had sunk into the living depths of the tropical vegetation, which is more jealous of men's conquests than the ocean, and which was about to close over the last vestiges of the liquidated Tropical Belt Coal Company—A. Heyst, manager in the East.

Davidson, a good, simple fellow in his way, was strangely affected. It is to be noted that he knew very little of Heyst. He was one of those whom Heyst's finished courtesy of attitude and intonation most strongly disconcerted. He himself was a fellow of fine feeling, I think, though of course he had no more polish than the rest of us. We were naturally a hail-fellow-well-met crowd, with standards of our own—no worse, I daresay, than other people's; but polish was not one of them. Davidson's fineness was real enough to alter the course of the steamer he commanded. Instead of passing to the south of Samburan, he made it his practice to take the passage along the north shore, within about a mile of the wharf.

"He can see us if he likes to see us," remarked Davidson. Then he had an after-thought: "I say! I hope he won't think I am intruding, eh?"

We reassured him on the point of correct behaviour. The sea is open to all.

This slight deviation added some ten miles to Davidson's round trip, but as that was sixteen hundred miles it did not matter much.

"I have told my owner of it," said the conscientious commander of the *Sissie*.

His owner had a face like an ancient lemon. He was small and wizened—which was strange, because generally a Chinaman, as he grows in prosperity, puts on inches of girth and stature. To serve a Chinese firm is not so bad. Once

they become convinced you deal straight by them, their confidence becomes unlimited. You can do no wrong. So Davidson's old Chinaman squeaked hurriedly:

"All right, all right, all right. You do what you like, captain."

And there was an end of the matter; not altogether, though. From time to time the Chinaman used to ask Davidson about the white man. He was still there, eh?

"I never see him," Davidson had to confess to his owner, who would peer at him silently through round, horn-rimmed spectacles, several sizes too large for his little old face. "I never see him."

To me, on occasions, he would say:

"I haven't a doubt he's there. He hides. It's very unpleasant." Davidson was a little vexed with Heyst. "Funny thing," he went on. "Of all the people I speak to, nobody ever asks after him but that Chinaman of mine—and Schomberg," he added after a while.

Yes, Schomberg, of course. He was asking everybody about everything, and arranging the information into the most scandalous shape his imagination could invent. From time to time he would step up, his blinking, cushioned eyes, his thick lips, his very chestnut beard, looking full of malice.

" 'Evening, gentlemen. Have you got all you want? So! Good! Well, I am told the jungle has choked the very sheds in Black Diamond Bay. Fact. He's a hermit in the wilderness now. But what can this manager get to eat there? It beats me."

Sometimes a stranger would inquire with natural curiosity:

"Who? What manager?"

"Oh, a certain Swede,"—with a sinister emphasis, as if he were saying "a certain brigand."—"Well known here. He's turned hermit from shame. That's what the devil does when he's found out."

Hermit. This was the latest of the more or less witty labels applied to Heyst during his aimless pilgrimage in this section of the tropical belt, where the inane clacking of Schomberg's tongue vexed our ears.

But apparently Heyst was not a hermit by temperament. The sight of his kind was not invincibly odious to him. We must believe this, since for some reason or other he did come out from his retreat for a while. Perhaps it was only to see whether there were any letters for him at the Tesmans. I don't know. No one knows. But this reappearance shows that his detachment from the world was not complete. And incompleteness of any sort leads to trouble. Axel Heyst ought not to have cared for his letters—or whatever it was that brought him out after something more than a year and a half in Samburan. But it was of no use. He had not the hermit's vocation! That was the trouble, it seems.

Be this as it may, he suddenly reappeared in the world, broad chest, bald forehead, long moustaches, polite manner, and all—the complete Heyst, even to the kindly, sunken eyes on which there still rested the shadow of Morrison's death. Naturally, it was Davidson who had given him a lift out of his forsaken island. There were no other opportunities, unless some native craft were passing by—a very remote and unsatisfactory chance to wait for. Yes, he came out with Davidson, to whom he volunteered the statement that

it was only for a short time—a few days, no more. He meant to go back to Samburan.

Davidson expressing his horror and incredulity of such foolishness, Heyst explained that when the company came into being he had his few belongings sent out from Europe.

To Davidson as to any of us, the idea of Heyst, the wandering, drifting, unattached Heyst, having any belongings of the sort that can furnish a house was startlingly novel. It was grotesquely fantastic. It was like a bird owning real property.

"Belongings? Do you mean chairs and tables?" Davidson asked with unconcealed astonishment.

Heyst did mean that. "My poor father died in London. It has been all stored there ever since," he explained.

"For all these years?" exclaimed Davidson, thinking how long we all had known Heyst flitting from tree to tree in a wilderness.

"Even longer," said Heyst, who had understood very well.

This seemed to imply that he had been wandering before he came under our observation. In what regions? At what early age? Mystery. Perhaps he was a bird that had never had a nest.

"I left school early," he remarked once to Davidson, on the passage. "It was in England. A very good school. I was not a shining success there."

The confessions of Heyst. Not one of us—with the probable exception of Morrison, who was dead—had ever heard so much of his history. It looks as if the experience of hermit life had the power to loosen one's tongue, doesn't it?

During that memorable passage, in the *Sissie,* which took about two days, he volunteered other hints—for you could not call it information—about his history. And Davidson was interested. He was interested not because the hints were exciting but because of that innate curiosity about our fellows which is a trait of human nature. Davidson's existence too, running the *Sissie* along the Java Sea and back again, was distinctly monotonous and, in a sense, lonely. He never had any sort of company on board. Native deck-passengers in plenty, of course, but never a white man, so the presence of Heyst for two days must have been a godsend. Davidson was telling us all about it afterward. Heyst said that his father had written a lot of books. He was a philosopher.

"Seems to me he must have been something of a crank, too," was Davidson's comment. "Apparently he had quarrelled with his people in Sweden. Just the sort of father you would expect Heyst to have. Isn't he a bit of a crank himself? He told me that directly his father died he lit out into the wide world on his own, and had been on the move till he fetched up against this famous coal business. Fits the son of his father somehow, don't you think?"

For the rest, Heyst was as polite as ever. He offered to pay for his passage; but when Davidson refused to hear of it he seized him heartily by the hand, gave one of his courtly bows, and declared that he was touched by his friendly proceedings.

"I am not alluding to this trifling amount which you decline to take," he went on, giving a shake to Davidson's hand. "But I am touched by your humanity." Another shake. "Believe me, I am profoundly aware of having been

an object of it." Final shake of the hand. All this meant that Heyst understood in a proper sense the little *Sissie's* periodical appearance in sight of his hermitage.

"He's a genuine gentleman," Davidson said to us. "I was really sorry when he went ashore."

We asked him where he had left Heyst.

"Why, in Sourabaya—where else?"

The Tesmans had their principal counting-house in Sourabaya. There had long existed a connection between Heyst and the Tesmans. The incongruity of a hermit having agents did not strike us, nor yet the absurdity of a forgotten cast-off, derelict manager of a wrecked, collapsed, vanished enterprise, having business to attend to. We said Sourabaya, of course, and took it for granted that he would stay with one of the Tesmans. One of us even wondered what sort of reception he would get; for it was known that Julius Tesman was unreasonably bitter about the Tropical Belt Coal fiasco. But Davidson set us right. It was nothing of the kind. Heyst went to stay in Schomberg's hotel, going ashore in the hotel launch. Not that Schomberg would think of sending his launch alongside a mere trader like the *Sissie*. But she had been meeting a coasting mail-packet, and had been signalled to. Schomberg himself was steering her.

"You should have seen Schomberg's eyes bulge out when Heyst jumped in with an ancient brown leather bag!" said Davidson. "He pretended not to know who it was—at first, anyway. I didn't go ashore with them. We didn't stay more than a couple of hours altogether. Landed two thousand cocoanuts and cleared out. I have agreed to pick him up again on my next trip in twenty days' time."

V

Davidson happened to be two days late on his return trip; no great matter, certainly, but he made a point of going ashore at once, during the hottest hour of the afternoon, to look for Heyst. Schomberg's hotel stood back in an extensive enclosure containing a garden, some large trees, and, under their spreading boughs, a detached "hall available for concerts and other performances," as Schomberg worded it in his advertisements. Torn and fluttering bills, intimating in heavy red capitals "Concerts every night," were stuck on the brick pillars on each side of the gateway.

The walk had been long and confoundedly sunny. Davidson stood wiping his wet neck and face on what Schomberg called "the piazza." Several doors opened on to it, but all the screens were down. Not a soul was in sight, not even a China boy—nothing but a lot of painted iron chairs and tables. Solitude, shade, and gloomy silence—and a faint, treacherous breeze which came from under the trees and quite unexpectedly caused the melting Davidson to shiver slightly—the little shiver of the tropics which in Sourabaya, especially, often means fever and the hospital to the incautious white man.

The prudent Davidson sought shelter in the nearest darkened room. In the artificial dusk, beyond the levels of shrouded billiard-tables, a white form heaved up from two chairs on which it had been extended. The middle of the day, table-d'hôte tiffin once over, was Schomberg's easy time. He lounged out,

portly, deliberate, on the defensive, the great fair beard like a cuirass over his manly chest. He did not like Davidson, never a very faithful client of his. He hit a bell on one of the tables as he went by, and asked in a distant, Officer-of-the-Reserve manner:

"You desire?"

The good Davidson still sponging his wet neck, declared with simplicity that he had come to fetch away Heyst, as agreed.

"Not here!"

A Chinaman appeared in response to the bell. Schomberg turned to him very severely:

"Take the gentleman's order."

Davidson had to be going. Couldn't wait—only begged that Heyst should be informed that the *Sissie* would leave at midnight.

"Not—here, I am telling you!"

Davidson slapped his thigh in concern.

"Dear me! Hospital, I suppose." A natural enough surmise in a very feverish locality.

The Lieutenant of the Reserve only pursed up his mouth and raised his eyebrows without looking at him. It might have meant anything, but Davidson dismissed the hospital idea with confidence. However, he had to get hold of Heyst between this and midnight.

"He has been staying here?" he asked.

"Yes, he was staying here."

"Can you tell me where he is now?" Davidson went on placidly. Within himself he was beginning to grow anxious, having developed the affection of a self-appointed protector towards Heyst. The answer he got was:

"Can't tell. It's none of my business," accompanied by majestic oscillations of the hotel-keeper's head, hinting at some awful mystery.

Davidson was placidity itself. It was his nature. He did not betray his sentiments, which were not favourable to Schomberg.

"I am sure to find out at the Tesmans' office," he thought. But it was a very hot hour, and if Heyst was down at the port he would have learned already that the *Sissie* was in. It was even possible that Heyst had already gone on board, where he could enjoy a coolness denied to the town. Davidson, being stout, was much preoccupied with coolness and inclined to immobility. He lingered awhile, as if irresolute. Schomberg, at the door, looking out, affected perfect indifference. He could not keep it up, though. Suddenly he turned inward and asked with brusque rage:

"You wanted to see him?"

"Why, yes," said Davidson. "We agreed to meet—"

"Don't you bother. He doesn't care about that now."

"Doesn't he?"

"Well, you can judge for yourself. He isn't here, is he? You take my word for it. Don't you bother about him. I am advising you as a friend."

"Thank you," said Davidson, inwardly startled at the savage tone. "I think I will sit down for a moment and have a drink, after all."

This was not what Schomberg had expected to hear. He called brutally:

"Boy!"

The Chinaman approached, and after referring him to the white man by a nod the hotel-keeper departed, muttering to himself. Davidson heard him gnash his teeth as he went.

Davidson sat alone with the billiard-tables as if there had been not a soul staying in the hotel. His placidity was so genuine that he was not unduly fretting himself over the absence of Heyst or the mysterious manners Schomberg had treated him to. He was considering these things in his own fairly shrewd way. Something had happened; and he was loath to go away to investigate, being restrained by a presentiment that somehow enlightenment would come to him there. A poster of "Concerts Every Evening," like those on the gate, but in a good state of preservation, hung on the wall fronting him. He looked at it idly and was struck by the fact—then not so very common—that it was a ladies' orchestra; "Zangiacomo's eastern tour—eighteen performers." The poster stated that they had had the honour of playing their select repertoire before various colonial excellencies, also before pashas, sheiks, chiefs, H. H. the Sultan of Mascate, etc., etc.

Davidson felt sorry for the eighteen lady-performers. He knew what that sort of life was like, the sordid conditions and brutal incidents of such tours led by such Zangiacomos who often were anything but musicians by profession. While he was staring at the poster, a door somewhere at his back opened, and a woman came in who was looked upon as Schomberg's wife, no doubt with truth. As somebody remarked cynically once, she was too unattractive to be anything else. The opinion that he treated her abominably was based on her frightened expression. Davidson lifted his hat to her. Mrs. Schomberg gave him an inclination of her sallow head and incontinently sat down behind a sort of raised counter, facing the door, with a mirror and rows of bottles at her back. Her hair was very elaborately done with two ringlets on the left side of her scraggy neck; her dress was of silk, and she had come on duty for the afternoon. For some reason or other Schomberg exacted this from her, though she added nothing to the fascinations of the place. She sat there in the smoke and noise, like an enthroned idol, smiling stupidly over the billiards from time to time, speaking to no one, and no one speaking to her. Schomberg himself took no more interest in her than may be implied in a sudden and totally unmotived scowl. Otherwise the very Chinaman ignored her existence.

She had interrupted Davidson in his reflections. Being alone with her, her silence and open-eyed immobility made him uncomfortable. He was easily sorry for people. It seemed rude not to take any notice of her. He said, in allusion to the poster: "Are you having these people in the house?"

She was so unused to being addressed by customers that at the sound of his voice she jumped in her seat. Davidson was telling us afterward that she jumped exactly like a figure made of wood, without losing her rigid immobility. She did not even move her eyes; but she answered him freely, though her very lips seemed made of wood.

"They stayed here over a month. They are gone now. They played every evening."

"Pretty good, were they?"

To this she said nothing; and as she kept on staring fixedly in front of her, her silence disconcerted Davidson. It looked as if she had not heard him—which was impossible. Perhaps she drew the line of speech at the expression of opinions. Schomberg might have trained her, for domestic reasons, to keep them to herself. But Davidson felt in honour obliged to converse; so he said, putting his own interpretation on this surprising silence:

"I see—not much account. Such bands hardly ever are. An Italian lot, Mrs. Schomberg, to judge by the name of the boss?"

She shook her head negatively.

"No. He is a German really; only he dyes his hair and beard black for business. Zangiacomo is his business name."

"That's a curious fact," said Davidson. His head being full of Heyst, it occurred to him that she might be aware of other facts. This was a very amazing discovery to any one who looked at Mrs. Schomberg. Nobody had ever suspected her of having a mind, I mean even a little of it, I mean any at all. One was inclined to think of her as an It—an automaton, a very plain dummy, with an arrangement for bowing the head at times and smiling stupidly now and then. Davidson viewed her profile with a flattened nose, a hollow cheek, and one staring, unwinking, goggle eye. He asked himself: Did that speak just now? Will it speak again? It was as exciting, for the mere wonder of it, as trying to converse with a mechanism. A smile played about the fat features of Davidson; the smile of a man making an amusing experiment. He spoke again to her:

"But the other members of that orchestra were real Italians, were they not?"

Of course, he didn't care. He wanted to see whether the mechanism would work again. It did. It said they were not. They were of all sorts, apparently. It paused, with the one goggle eye immovably gazing down the whole length of the room and through the door opening on to the "piazza." It paused, then went on in the same low pitch:

"There was even one English girl."

"Poor devil!" said Davidson. "I suppose these women are not much better than slaves really. Was that fellow with the dyed beard decent in his way?"

The mechanism remained silent. The sympathetic soul of Davidson drew its own conclusions.

"Beastly life for these women!" he said. "When you say an English girl, Mrs. Schomberg, do you really mean a young girl? Some of these orchestra girls are no chicks."

"Young enough," came the low voice out of Mrs. Schomberg's unmoved physiognomy.

Davidson, encouraged, remarked that he was sorry for her. He was easily sorry for people.

"Where did they go to from here?" he asked.

"She did not go with them. She ran away."

This was the pronouncement Davidson obtained next. It introduced a new sort of interest.

"Well! Well!" he exclaimed placidly; and then, with the air of a man who knows life: "Who with?" he inquired with assurance.

Mrs. Schomberg's immobility gave her an appearance of listening intently. Perhaps she was really listening, but Schomberg must have been finishing his sleep in some distant part of the house. The silence was profound, and lasted long enough to become startling. Then, enthroned above Davidson, she whispered at last:

"That friend of yours."

"Oh, you know I am here looking for a friend," said Davidson hopefully. "Won't you tell me—"

"I've told you."

"Eh?"

A mist seemed to roll away from before Davidson's eyes, disclosing something he could not believe.

"You can't mean it!" he cried. "He's not the man for it." But the last words came out in a faint voice. Mrs. Schomberg never moved her head the least bit. Davidson, after the shock which made him sit up, went slack all over.

"Heyst! Such a perfect gentleman!" he exclaimed weakly.

Mrs. Schomberg did not seem to have heard him. This startling fact did not tally somehow with the idea Davidson had of Heyst. He never talked of women, he never seemed to think of them, or to remember that they existed; and then all at once—like this! Running off with a casual orchestra girl!

"You might have knocked me down with a feather," Davidson told us some time afterward.

By then he was taking an indulgent view of both the parties to that amazing transaction. First of all, on reflection, he was by no means certain that it prevented Heyst from being a perfect gentleman, as before. He confronted our open grins or quiet smiles with a serious round face. Heyst had taken the girl away to Samburan; and that was no joking matter. The loneliness, the ruins of the spot, had impressed Davidson's simple soul. They were incompatible with the frivolous comments of people who had not seen it. That black jetty, sticking out of the jungle into the empty sea; those roof-ridges of deserted houses peeping dismally above the long grass! Ough! The gigantic and funereal blackboard sign of the Tropical Belt Coal Company, still emerging from a wild growth of bushes like an inscription stuck above a grave figured by the tall heap of unsold coal at the shore end of the wharf, added to the general desolation.

Thus the sensitive Davidson. The girl must have been miserable indeed to follow a strange man to such a spot. Heyst had, no doubt, told her the truth. He was a gentleman. But no words could do justice to the conditions of life on Samburan. A desert island was nothing to it. Moreover, when you were cast away on a desert island—why, you could not help yourself; but to expect a fiddle-playing girl out of an ambulant ladies' orchestra to remain content there for a day, for one single day, was inconceivable. She would be frightened at the first sight of it. She would scream.

The capacity for sympathy in these stout, placid men! Davidson was stirred

to the depths; and it was easy to see that it was about Heyst that he was concerned. We asked him if he had passed that way lately.

"Oh, yes. I always do—about half a mile off."

"Seen anybody about?"

"No, not a soul. Not a shadow."

"Did you blow your whistle?"

"Blow the whistle? You think I would do such a thing?"

He rejected the mere possibility of such an unwarrantable intrusion. Wonderfully delicate fellow, Davidson!

"Well, but how do you know that they are there?" he was naturally asked.

Heyst had entrusted Mrs. Schomberg with a message for Davidson—a few lines in pencil on a scrap of crumpled paper. It was to the effect that an unforeseen necessity was driving him away before the appointed time. He begged Davidson's indulgence for the apparent discourtesy. The woman of the house —meaning Mrs. Schomberg—would give him the facts, though unable to explain them, of course.

"What was there to explain?" wondered Davidson dubiously. "He took a fancy to that fiddle-playing girl, and—"

"And she to him, apparently," I suggested.

"Wonderfully quick work," reflected Davidson. "What do you think will come of it?"

"Repentance, I should say. But how is it that Mrs. Schomberg has been selected for a confidante?"

For indeed a waxwork figure would have seemed more useful than that woman whom we all were accustomed to see sitting elevated above the two billiard-tables—without expression, without movement, without voice, without sight.

"Why, she helped the girl to bolt," said Davidson, turning at me his innocent eyes, rounded by the state of constant amazement in which this affair had left him, like those shocks of terror or sorrow which sometimes leave their victim afflicted by nervous trembling. It looked as though he would never get over it.

"Mrs. Schomberg jerked Heyst's note, twisted like a pipe-light, into my lap while I sat there unsuspecting," Davidson went on. "Directly I had recovered my senses, I asked her what on earth she had to do with it that Heyst should leave it with her. And then, behaving like a painted image rather than a live woman, she whispered, just loud enough for me to hear:

" 'I helped them. I got her things together, tied them up in my own shawl, and threw them into the compound out of a back window. I did it.'

"That woman that you would say hadn't the pluck to lift her little finger!" marvelled Davidson in his quiet, slightly panting voice. "What do you think of that?"

I thought she must have had some interest of her own to serve. She was too lifeless to be suspected of impulsive compassion. It was impossible to think that Heyst had bribed her. Whatever means he had, he had not the means to do that. Or could it be that she was moved by that disinterested passion for

delivering a woman to a man which in respectable spheres is called match-making?—a highly irregular example of it!

"It must have been a very small bundle," remarked Davidson further.

"I imagine the girl must have been specially attractive," I said.

"I don't know. She was miserable. I don't suppose it was more than a little linen and a couple of these white frocks they wear on the platform."

Davidson pursued his own train of thought. He supposed that such a thing had never been heard of in the history of the tropics. For where could you find any one to steal a girl out of an orchestra? No doubt fellows here and there took a fancy to some pretty one—but it was not for running away with her. Oh dear no! It needed a lunatic like Heyst.

"Only think what it means," wheezed Davidson, imaginative under his invincible placidity. "Just only try to think! Brooding alone on Samburan has upset his brain. He never stopped to consider, or he couldn't have done it. No sane man . . . How is a thing like that to go on? What's he going to do with her in the end? It's madness."

"You say that he's mad. Schomberg tells us that he must be starving on his island; so he may end yet by eating her," I suggested.

Mrs. Schomberg had had no time to enter into details, Davidson told us. Indeed, the wonder was that they had been left alone so long. The drowsy afternoon was slipping by. Footsteps and voices resounded on the verandah—I beg pardon, the piazza; the scraping of chairs, the ping of a smitten bell. Customers were turning up. Mrs. Schomberg was begging Davidson hurriedly, but without looking at him, to say nothing to any one, when on a half-uttered word her nervous whisper was cut short. Through a small inner door Schomberg came in, his hair brushed, his beard combed neatly, but his eyelids still heavy from his nap. He looked with suspicion at Davidson, and even glanced at his wife; but he was baffled by the natural placidity of the one and the acquired habit of immobility in the other.

"Have you sent out the drinks?" he asked surlily.

She did not open her lips, because just then the head boy appeared with a loaded tray, on his way out. Schomberg went to the door and greeted the customers outside, but did not join them. He remained blocking half the doorway, with his back to the room, and was still there when Davidson, after sitting still for a while, rose to go. At the noise he made Schomberg turned his head, watched him lift his hat to Mrs. Schomberg and receive her wooden bow accompanied by a stupid grin, and then looked away. He was loftily dignified. Davidson stopped at the door, deep in his simplicity.

"I am sorry you won't tell me anything about my friend's absence," he said. "My friend Heyst, you know. I suppose the only course for me now is to make inquiries down at the port. I shall hear something there, I don't doubt."

"Make inquiries of the devil!" replied Schomberg in a hoarse mutter.

Davidson's purpose in addressing the hotel-keeper had been mainly to make Mrs. Schomberg safe from suspicion; but he would fain have heard something more of Heyst's exploit from another point of view. It was a shrewd try. It was successful in a rather startling way, because the hotel-keeper's point of view was horribly abusive. All of a sudden, in the same hoarse sinister tone,

he proceeded to call Heyst many names, of which "pig-dog" was not the worst, with such vehemence that he actually choked himself. Profiting from the pause, Davidson, whose temperament could withstand worse shocks, remonstrated in an undertone:

"It's unreasonable to get so angry as that. Even if he had run off with your cash-box—"

The big hotel-keeper bent down and put his infuriated face close to Davidson's.

"My cash-box! My—he—look here, Captain Davidson! He ran off with a girl. What do I care for the girl? The girl is nothing to me."

He shot out an infamous word which made Davidson start. That's what the girl was; and he reiterated the assertion that she was nothing to him. What he was concerned for was the good name of his house. Wherever he had been established, he had always had "artist parties" staying in his house. One recommended him to the others; but what would happen now, when it got about that leaders ran the risk in his house—his house—of losing members of their troupe? And just now, when he had spent seven hundred and thirty-four guilders in building a concert-hall in his compound. Was that a thing to do in a respectable hotel? The cheek, the indecency, the impudence, the atrocity! Vagabond, impostor, swindler, ruffian, *schwein-hund!*

He had seized Davidson by a button of his coat, detaining him in the doorway, and exactly in the line of Mrs. Schomberg's stony gaze. Davidson stole a glance in that direction and thought of making some sort of reassuring sign to her, but she looked so bereft of senses, and almost of life, perched up there, that it seemed not worth while. He disengaged his button with firm placidity. Thereupon, with a last stifled curse, Schomberg vanished somewhere within, to try and compose his spirits in solitude. Davidson stepped out on the verandah. The party of customers there had become aware of the explosive interlude in the doorway. Davidson knew one of these men, and nodded to him in passing; but his acquaintance called out:

"Isn't he in a filthy temper? He's been like that ever since."

The speaker laughed aloud, while all the others sat smiling. Davidson stopped.

"Yes, rather." His feelings were, he told us, those of bewildered resignation; but of course that was no more visible to the others than the emotions of a turtle when it withdraws into its shell.

"It seems unreasonable," he murmured thoughtfully.

"Oh, but they had a scrap!" the other said.

"What do you mean? Was there a fight!—a fight with Heyst?" asked Davidson, much perturbed, if somewhat incredulous.

"Heyst? No, these two—the bandmaster, the fellow who's taking these women about and our Schomberg. Signor Zangiacomo ran amuck in the morning, and went for our worthy friend. I tell you, they were rolling on the floor together on this very verandah, after chasing each other all over the house, doors slamming, women screaming, seventeen of them, in the dining-room; Chinamen up the trees—Hey, John! You climb tree to see the fight, eh?"

The boy, almond-eyed and impassive, emitted a scornful grunt, finished wiping the table, and withdrew.

"That's what it was—a real, go-as-you-please scrap. And Zangiacomo began it. Oh, here's Schomberg. Say, Schomberg, didn't he fly at you, when the girl was missed, because it was you who insisted that the artists should go about the audience during the interval?"

Schomberg had reappeared in the doorway. He advanced. His bearing was stately, but his nostrils were extraordinarily expanded, and he controlled his voice with apparent effort.

"Certainly. That was only business. I quoted him special terms and all for your sake, gentlemen. I was thinking of my regular customers. There's nothing to do in the evenings in this town. I think, gentlemen, you were all pleased at the opportunity of hearing a little good music; and where's the harm of offering a grenadine, or what not, to a lady artist? But that fellow—that Swede—he got round the girl. He got round all the people out here. I've been watching him for years. You remember how he got round Morrison."

He changed front abruptly, as if on parade, and marched off. The customers at the table exchanged glances silently. Davidson's attitude was that of a spectator. Schomberg's moody pacing of the billiard-room could be heard on the verandah.

"And the funniest part is," resumed the man who had been speaking before —an English clerk in a Dutch house—"the funniest part is that before nine o'clock that same morning those two were driving together in a gharry down to the port, to look for Heyst and the girl. I saw them rushing around making inquiries. I don't know what they would have done to the girl, but they seemed quite ready to fall upon your Heyst, Davidson, and kill him on the quay."

He had never, he said, seen anything so queer. Those two investigators working feverishly to the same end were glaring at each other with surprising ferocity. In hatred and mistrust they entered a steam-launch, and went flying from ship to ship all over the harbour, causing no end of sensation. The captains of vessels, coming on shore later in the day, brought tales of a strange invasion, and wanted to know who were the two offensive lunatics in a steam-launch, apparently after a man and a girl, and telling a story of which one could make neither head nor tail. Their reception by the roadstead was generally unsympathetic, even to the point of the mate of an American ship bundling them out over the rail with unseemly precipitation.

Meantime Heyst and the girl were a good few miles away, having gone in the night on board one of the Tesman schooners bound to the eastward. This was known afterward from the Javanese boatmen whom Heyst hired for the purpose at three o'clock in the morning. The Tesman schooner had sailed at daylight with the usual land breeze, and was probably still in sight in the offing at the time. However, the two pursuers after their experience with the American mate made for the shore. On landing, they had another violent row in the German language. But there was no second fight; and finally, with looks of fierce animosity, they got together into a gharry—obviously with the frugal

view of sharing expenses—and drove away, leaving an astonished little crowd of Europeans and natives on the quay.

After hearing this wondrous tale, Davidson went away from the hotel verandah, which was filling with Schomberg's regular customers. Heyst's escapade was the general topic of conversation. Never before had that unaccountable individual been the cause of so much gossip, he judged. No! Not even in the beginnings of the Tropical Belt Coal Company when becoming for a moment a public character he was the object of silly criticism and unintelligent envy for every vagabond and adventurer in the islands. Davidson concluded that people liked to discuss that sort of scandal better than any other.

I asked him if he believed that this was such a great scandal after all.

"Heavens, no!" said that excellent man who, himself, was incapable of any impropriety of conduct. "But it isn't a thing I would have done myself; I mean even if I had not been married."

There was no implied condemnation in the statement; rather something like regret. Davidson shared my suspicion that this was in its essence the rescue of a distressed human being. Not that we were two romantics, tingeing the world to the hue of our temperament, but that both of us had been acute enough to discover a long time ago that Heyst was.

"I shouldn't have had the pluck," he continued. "I see a thing all round, as it were; but Heyst doesn't, or else he would have been scared. You don't take a woman into a desert jungle without being made sorry for it sooner or later, in one way or another; and Heyst being a gentleman only makes it worse."

VI

We said no more about Heyst on that occasion, and it so happened that I did not meet Davidson again for some three months. When we did come together, almost the first thing he said to me was:

"I've seen him."

Before I could explain, he assured me that he had taken no liberty, that he had not intruded. He was called in. Otherwise he would not have dreamed of breaking in upon Heyst's privacy.

"I am certain you wouldn't," I assured him, concealing my amusement at his wonderful delicacy. He was the most delicate man that ever took a small steamer to and fro amongst the islands. But his humanity, which was not less strong and praiseworthy, had induced him to take his steamer past Samburan wharf (at an average distance of a mile) every twenty-three days—exactly. Davidson was delicate, humane and regular.

"Heyst called you in?" I asked, interested.

Yes, Heyst had called him in as he was going by on his usual date. Davidson was examining the shore through his glasses with his unwearied and punctual humanity as he steamed past Samburan.

"I saw a man in white. It could only have been Heyst. He had fastened some sort of enormous flag to a bamboo pole, and was waving it at the end of the old wharf."

Davidson didn't like to take his steamer alongside—for fear of being in-

discreet, I suppose; but he steered close inshore, stopped his engines, and lowered a boat. He went himself in that boat, which was manned, of course, by his Malay seamen.

Heyst, when he saw the boat pulling towards him, dropped his signalling-pole; and when Davidson arrived, he was kneeling down engaged busily in unfastening the flag from it.

"Was there anything wrong?" I inquired, Davidson having paused in his narrative and my curiosity being naturally aroused. You must remember that Heyst as the Archipelago knew him was not—what shall I say—was not a signalling sort of man.

"The very words that came out of my mouth," said Davidson, "before I laid the boat against the piles. I could not help it."

Heyst got up from his knees and began carefully folding up the flag thing, which struck Davidson as having the dimensions of a blanket.

"No, nothing wrong," he cried. His white teeth flashed agreeably below the coppery horizontal bar of his long moustaches.

I don't know whether it was his delicacy or his obesity which prevented Davidson from clambering upon the wharf. He stood up in the boat, and, above him, Heyst stooped low with urbane smiles, thanking him and apologizing for the liberty, exactly in his usual manner. Davidson had expected some change in the man, but there was none. Nothing in him betrayed the momentous fact that within that jungle there was a girl, a performer in a ladies' orchestra, whom he had carried straight off the concert platform into the wilderness. He was not ashamed or defiant or abashed about it. He might have been a shade confidential when addressing Davidson. And his words were enigmatical.

"I took this course of signalling to you," he said to Davidson, "because to preserve appearances might be of the utmost importance. Not to me, of course. I don't care what people may say, and of course no one can hurt me. I suppose I have done a certain amount of harm, since I allowed myself to be tempted into action. It seemed innocent enough, but all action is bound to be harmful. It is devilish. That is why this world is evil upon the whole. But I have done with it! I shall never lift a little finger again. At one time I thought that intelligent observation of facts was the best way of cheating the time which is allotted to us whether we want it or not, but now I have done with observation, too."

Imagine poor, simple Davidson being addressed in such terms alongside an abandoned, decaying wharf jutting out of tropical bush. He had never heard anybody speak like this before; certainly not Heyst, whose conversation was concise, polite, with a faint ring of playfulness in the cultivated tones of his voice.

"He's gone mad," Davidson thought to himself.

But, looking at the physiognomy above him on the wharf, he was obliged to dismiss the notion of common, crude lunacy. It was truly most unusual talk. Then he remembered—in his surprise he had lost sight of it—that Heyst now had a girl there. This bizarre discourse was probably the effect of the girl.

Davidson shook off the absurd feeling, and asked, wishing to make clear his friendliness, and not knowing what else to say:

"You haven't run short of stores or anything like that?"

Heyst smiled and shook his head.

"No, no. Nothing of the kind. We are fairly well off here. Thanks, all the same. If I have taken the liberty to detain you, it is not from any uneasiness for myself and my—companion. The person I was thinking of when I made up my mind to invoke your assistance is Mrs. Schomberg."

"I have talked with her," interjected Davidson.

"Oh! You? Yes, I hoped she would find means to—"

"But she didn't tell me much," interrupted Davidson, who was not averse from hearing something—he hardly knew what.

"H'm—yes. But that note of mine? Yes? She found an opportunity to give it to you? That's good, very good. She's more resourceful than one would give her credit for."

"Women often are," remarked Davidson. The strangeness from which he had suffered, merely because his interlocutor had carried off a girl, wore off as the minutes went by. "There's a lot of unexpectedness about women," he generalized with a didactic aim which seemed to miss its mark; for the next thing Heyst said was:

"This is Mrs. Schomberg's shawl!" He touched the stuff hanging over his arm. "An Indian thing, I believe," he added, glancing at his arm sideways.

"It isn't of particular value," said Davidson truthfully.

"Very likely. The point is that it belongs to Schomberg's wife. That Schomberg seems to be an unconscionable ruffian—don't you think so?"

Davidson smiled faintly.

"We out here have got used to him," he said, as if excusing a universal and guilty toleration of a manifest nuisance. "I'd hardly call him that. I only know him as a hotel-keeper."

"I never knew him even as that—not till this time, when you were so obliging as to take me to Sourabaya. I went to stay there from economy. The Netherlands House is very expensive, and they expect you to bring your own servant with you. It's a nuisance."

"Of course, of course," protested Davidson hastily.

After a short silence Heyst returned to the matter of the shawl. He wanted to send it back to Mrs. Schomberg. He said that it might be very awkward for her if she were unable, if asked, to produce it. This had given him, Heyst, much uneasiness. She was terrified of Schomberg. Apparently she had reason to be.

Davidson had remarked that, too. Which did not prevent her, he pointed out, from making a fool of him, in a way, for the sake of a stranger.

"Oh! You know!" said Heyst. "Yes, she helped me—us."

"She told me so. I had quite a talk with her," Davidson informed him. "Fancy any one having a talk with Mrs. Schomberg! If I were to tell the fellows they wouldn't believe me. How did you get round her, Heyst? How did you think of it? Why, she looks too stupid to understand human speech and

too scared to shoo a chicken away. Oh, the women, the women! You don't know what there may be in the quietest of them."

"She was engaged in the task of defending her position in life," said Heyst. "It's a very respectable task."

"Is that it? I had some idea it was that," confessed Davidson.

He then imparted to Heyst the story of the violent proceedings following on the discovery of his flight. Heyst's polite attention to the tale took on a sombre cast; but he manifested no surprise, and offered no comment. When Davidson had finished he handed down the shawl into the boat, and Davidson promised to do his best to return it to Mrs. Schomberg in some secret fashion. Heyst expressed his thanks in a few simple words, set off by his manner of finished courtesy. Davidson prepared to depart. They were not looking at each other. Suddenly Heyst spoke:

"You understand that this was a case of odious persecution, don't you? I became aware of it and—"

It was a view which the sympathetic Davidson was capable of appreciating.

"I am not surprised to hear it," he said placidly. "Odious enough, I dare say. And you, of course—not being a married man—were free to step in. Ah, well!"

He sat down in the stern-sheets, and already had the steering lines in his hands when Heyst observed abruptly:

"The world is a bad dog. It will bite you if you give it a chance; but I think that here we can safely defy the fates."

When relating all this to me, Davidson's only comment was:

"Funny notion of defying the fates—to take a woman in tow!"

VII

Some considerable time afterward—we did not meet very often—I asked Davidson how he had managed about the shawl and heard that he had tackled his mission in a direct way, and had found it easy enough. At the very first call he made in Samarang he rolled the shawl as tightly as he could into the smallest possible brown paper parcel, which he carried ashore with him. His business in the town being transacted, he got into a gharry with the parcel and drove to the hotel. With his previous experience, he timed his arrival accurately for the hour of Schomberg's siesta. Finding the place empty as on the former occasion, he marched into the billiard-room, took a seat at the back, near the sort of dais which Mrs. Schomberg would in due course come to occupy, and broke the slumbering silence of the house by thumping a bell vigorously. Of course a Chinaman appeared promptly. Davidson ordered a drink and sat tight.

"I would have ordered twenty drinks one after another, if necessary," he said—Davidson's a very abstemious man—"rather than take that parcel out of the house again. Couldn't leave it in a corner without letting the woman know it was there. It might have turned out worse for her than not bringing the thing back at all."

And so he waited, ringing the bell again and again, and swallowing two or three iced drinks which he did not want. Presently, as he hoped it would

happen, Mrs. Schomberg came in, silk dress, long neck, ringlets, scared eyes, and silly grin—all complete. Probably that lazy beast had sent her out to see who was the thirsty customer waking up the echoes of the house at this quiet hour. Bow, nod—and she clambered up to her post behind the raised counter, looking so helpless, so inane, as she sat there, that if it hadn't been for the parcel, Davidson declared, he would have thought he had merely dreamed of all that had passed between them. He ordered another drink, to get the Chinaman out of the room, and then seized the parcel, which was reposing on a chair near him, and with no more than a mutter—"This is something of yours"—he rammed it swiftly into a recess in the counter, at her feet. There! The rest was her affair. And just in time, too. Schomberg turned up, yawning affectedly, almost before Davidson had regained his seat. He cast about suspicious and irate glances. An invincible placidity of expression helped Davidson wonderfully at the moment, and the other, of course, could have no grounds for the slightest suspicion of any sort of understanding between his wife and this customer.

As to Mrs. Schomberg, she sat there like a joss, Davidson was lost in admiration. He believed, now, that the woman had been putting it on for years. She never even winked. It was immense! The insight he had obtained almost frightened him; he couldn't get over his wonder at knowing more of the real Mrs. Schomberg than anybody in the Islands, including Schomberg himself. She was a miracle of dissimulation. No wonder Heyst got the girl away from under two men's noses, if he had her to help with the job!

The greatest wonder, after all, was Heyst getting mixed up with petticoats. The fellow's life had been open to us for years and nothing could have been more detached from feminine associations. Except that he stood drinks to people on suitable occasions, like any other man, this observer of facts seemed to have no connection with earthly affairs and passions. The very courtesy of his manner, the flavour of playfulness in the voice set him apart. He was like a feather floating lightly in the work-a-day atmosphere which was the breath of our nostrils. For this reason whenever this looker-on took contact with things he attracted attention. First, it was the Morrison partnership of mystery; then came the great sensation of the Tropical Belt Coal where indeed varied interests were involved: a real business matter. And then came this elopement, this incongruous phenomenon of self-assertion, the greatest wonder of all, astonishing and amusing.

Davidson admitted to me that the hubbub was subsiding; and the affair would have been already forgotten, perhaps, if that ass Schomberg had not kept on gnashing his teeth publicly about it. It was really provoking that Davidson should not be able to give one some idea of the girl. Was she pretty? He didn't know. He had stayed the whole afternoon in Schomberg's hotel, mainly for the purpose of finding out something about her. But the story was growing stale. The parties at the tables on the verandah had other, fresher, events to talk about and Davidson shrank from making direct inquiries. He sat placidly there, content to be disregarded and hoping for some chance word to turn up. I shouldn't wonder if the good fellow hadn't been dozing. It's difficult to give you an adequate idea of Davidson's placidity.

Presently Schomberg, wandering about, joined a party that had taken the table next to Davidson's.

"A man like that Swede, gentlemen, is a public danger," he began. "I remember him for years. I won't say anything of his spying—well, he used to say himself he was looking for out-of-the-way facts, and what is that if not spying? He was spying into everybody's business. He got hold of Captain Morrison, squeezed him dry, like you would an orange, and scared him off to Europe to die there. Everybody knows that Captain Morrison had a weak chest. Robbed first and murdered afterward! I don't mince words—not I. Next he gets up that swindle of the Belt Coal. You all know about it. And now, after lining his pockets with other people's money, he kidnaps a white girl belonging to an orchestra which is performing in my public room for the benefit of my patrons, and goes off to live like a prince on that island, where nobody can get at him. A dam' silly girl . . . It's disgusting—tfui!"

He spat. He choked with rage—for he saw visions, no doubt. He jumped up from his chair, and went away to flee from them—perhaps. He went into the room where Mrs. Schomberg sat. Her aspect could not have been very soothing to the sort of torment from which he was suffering.

Davidson did not feel called upon to defend Heyst. His proceeding was to enter into conversation with one and another, casually, and showing no particular knowledge of the affair, in order to discover something about the girl. Was she anything out of the way? Was she pretty? She couldn't have been markedly so. She had not attracted special notice. She was young—on that everybody agreed. The English clerk of Tesmans remembered that she had a sallow face. He was respectable and highly proper. He was not the sort to associate with such people. Most of these women were fairly battered specimens. Schomberg had them housed in what he called the Pavilion, in the grounds, where they were hard at it mending and washing their white dresses, and could be seen hanging them out to dry between the trees, like a lot of washerwomen. They looked very much like middle-aged washerwomen on the platform, too. But the girl had been living in the main building along with the boss, the director, the fellow with the black beard, and a hard-bitten, oldish woman who took the piano and was understood to be the fellow's wife.

This was not a very satisfactory result. Davidson stayed on, and even joined the table-d'hôte dinner, without gleaning any more information. He was resigned.

"I suppose," he wheezed placidly, "I am bound to see her some day."

He meant to take the Samburan channel every trip, as before, of course.

"Yes," I said. "No doubt you will. Some day Heyst will be signalling to you again; and I wonder what it will be for."

Davidson made no reply. He had his own ideas about that, and his silence concealed a good deal of thought. We spoke no more of Heyst's girl. Before we separated, he gave me a piece of unrelated observation.

"It's funny," he said, "but I fancy there's some gambling going on in the evening at Schomberg's place, on the quiet. I've noticed men strolling away in twos and threes towards that hall where the orchestra used to play. The windows must be specially well shuttered, because I could not spy the smallest

gleam of light from that direction; but I can't believe that those beggars would go in there only to sit and think of their sins in the dark."

"That's strange. It's incredible that Schomberg should risk that sort of thing," I said.

PART II

I

AS WE know, Heyst had gone to stay in Schomberg's hotel in complete ignorance that his person was odious to that worthy. When he arrived, Zangiacomo's Ladies' Orchestra had been established there for some time.

The business which had called him out from his seclusion in his lost corner of the Eastern seas was with the Tesmans, and it had something to do with money. He transacted it quickly, and then found himself with nothing to do while he awaited Davidson, who was to take him back to his solitude; for back to his solitude Heyst meant to go. He whom we used to refer to as the Enchanted Heyst was suffering from thorough disenchantment. Not with the islands, however. The Archipelago has a lasting fascination. It is not easy to shake off the spell of island life. Heyst was disenchanted with life as a whole. His scornful temperament, beguiled into action, suffered from failure in a subtle way unknown to men accustomed to grapple with the realities of common human enterprise. It was like the gnawing pain of useless apostasy, a sort of shame before his own betrayed nature; and, in addition, he also suffered from plain, downright remorse. He deemed himself guilty of Morrison's death. A rather absurd feeling, since no one could possibly have foreseen the horrors of the cold, wet summer lying in wait for poor Morrison at home.

It was not in Heyst's character to turn morose; but his mental state was not compatible with a sociable mood. He spent his evenings sitting apart on the verandah of Schomberg's hotel. The lamentations of string instruments issued from the building in the hotel compound, the approaches to which were decorated with Japanese paper lanterns strung up between the trunks of several big trees. Scraps of tunes more or less plaintive reached his ears. They pursued him even into his bedroom, which opened into an upstairs verandah. The fragmentary and rasping character of these sounds made their intrusion inexpressibly tedious in the long run. Like most dreamers, to whom it is given sometimes to hear the music of the spheres, Heyst, the wanderer of the Archipelago, had a taste for silence which he had been able to gratify for years. The islands are very quiet. One sees them lying about, clothed in their dark garments of leaves, in a great hush of silver and azure, where the sea without murmurs meets the sky in a ring of magic stillness. A sort of smiling somnolence broods over them; the very voices of their people are soft and subdued, as if afraid to break some protecting spell.

Perhaps this was the very spell which had enchanted Heyst in the early days. For him, however, that was broken. He was no longer enchanted, though he was still a captive of the islands. He had no intention to leave them ever. Where could he have gone to, after all these years? Not a single soul belonging to him lived anywhere on earth. Of this fact—not such a remote

one, after all—he had only lately become aware; for it is failure that makes a man enter into himself and reckon up his resources. And though he had made up his mind to retire from the world in hermit fashion, yet he was irrationally moved by this sense of loneliness which had come to him in the hour of renunciation. It hurt him. Nothing is more painful than the shock of sharp contradictions that lacerate our intelligence and our feelings.

Meantime Schomberg watched Heyst out of the corner of his eye. Towards the unconscious object of his enmity he preserved a distant Lieutenant-of-the-Reserve demeanour. Nudging certain of his customers with his elbow, he begged them to observe what airs "that Swede" was giving himself.

"I really don't know why he has come to stay in my house. This place isn't good enough for him. I wish to goodness he had gone somewhere else to show off his superiority. Here I have got up this series of concerts for you gentlemen, just to make things a little brighter generally; and do you think he'll condescend to step in and listen to a piece or two of an evening? Not he. I know him of old. There he sits at the dark end of the piazza, all the evening long—planning some new swindle, no doubt. For twopence I would ask him to go and look for quarters somewhere else; only one doesn't like to treat a white man like that out in the tropics. I don't know how long he means to stay, but I'm willing to bet a trifle that he'll never work himself up to the point of spending the fifty cents of entrance money for the sake of a little good music."

Nobody cared to bet, or the hotel-keeper would have lost. One evening Heyst was driven to desperation by the rasped, squeaked, scraped snatches of tunes pursuing him even to his hard couch, with a mattress as thin as a pancake and a diaphanous mosquito net. He descended among the trees, where the soft glow of Japanese lanterns picked out parts of their great rugged trunks, here and there, in the great mass of darkness under the lofty foliage. More lanterns, of the shape of cylindrical concertinas, hanging in a row from a slack string, decorated the doorway of what Schomberg called grandiloquently "my concert-hall." In his desperate mood Heyst ascended three steps, lifted a calico curtain, and went in.

The uproar in that small, barn-like structure, built of imported pine boards, and raised clear of the ground, was simply stunning. An instrumental uproar, screaming, grunting, whining, sobbing, scraping, squeaking some kind of lively air; while a grand piano, operated upon by a bony, red-faced woman with bad-tempered nostrils, rained hard notes like hail through the tempest of fiddles. The small platform was filled with white muslin dresses and crimson sashes slanting from shoulders provided with bare arms, which sawed away without respite. Zangiacomo conducted. He wore a white mess-jacket, a black dress waistcoat, and white trousers. His longish, tousled hair and his great beard were purple-black. He was horrible. The heat was terrific. There were perhaps thirty people having drinks at several little tables. Heyst, quite overcome by the volume of noise, dropped into a chair. In the quick time of that music, in the varied, piercing clamour of the strings, in the movements of the bare arms, in the low dresses, the coarse faces, the stony eyes of the executants, there was a suggestion of brutality—something cruel, sensual and repulsive.

"This is awful!" Heyst murmured to himself.

But there is an unholy fascination in systematic noise. He did not flee from it incontinently, as one might have expected him to do. He remained, astonished at himself for remaining, since nothing could have been more repulsive to his tastes, more painful to his senses, and, so to speak, more contrary to his genius, than this rude exhibition of vigour. The Zangiacomo band was not making music; it was simply murdering silence with a vulgar, ferocious energy. One felt as if witnessing a deed of violence; and that impression was so strong that it seemed marvellous to see the people sitting so quietly on their chairs, drinking so calmly out of their glasses, and giving no signs of distress, anger or fear. Heyst averted his gaze from the unnatural spectacle of their indifference.

When the piece of music came to an end, the relief was so great that he felt slightly dizzy, as if a chasm of silence had yawned at his feet. When he raised his eyes, the audience, most perversely, was exhibiting signs of animation and interest in their faces, and the women in white muslin dresses were coming down in pairs from the platform into the body of Schomberg's "concert-hall." They dispersed themselves all over the place. The male creature with the hooked nose and purple-black beard disappeared somewhere. This was the interval during which, as the astute Schomberg had stipulated, the members of the orchestra were encouraged to favour the members of the audience with their company—that is, such members as seemed inclined to fraternize with the arts in a familiar and generous manner; the symbol of familiarity and generosity consisting in offers of refreshment.

The procedure struck Heyst as highly incorrect. However, the impropriety of Schomberg's ingenious scheme was defeated by the circumstances that most of the women were no longer young, and that none of them had ever been beautiful. Their more or less worn cheeks were slightly rouged; but apart from that fact, which might have been simply a matter of routine, they did not seem to take the success of the scheme unduly to heart. The impulse to fraternize with the arts being obviously weak in the audience, some of the musicians sat down listlessly at unoccupied tables, while others went on perambulating the central passage arm in arm, glad enough, no doubt, to stretch their legs while resting their arms. Their crimson sashes gave a factitious touch of gaiety to the smoky atmosphere of the concert-hall; and Heyst felt a sudden pity for these beings, exploited, hopeless, devoid of charm and grace, whose fate of cheerless dependence invested their coarse and joyless features with a touch of pathos.

Heyst was temperamentally sympathetic. To have them passing and repassing close to his little table was painful to him. He was preparing to rise and go out when he noticed that two white muslin dresses and crimson sashes had not yet left the platform. One of these dresses concealed the raw-boned frame of the woman with the bad-tempered curve to her nostrils. She was no less a personage than Mrs. Zangiacomo. She had left the piano, and, with her back to the hall, was preparing the parts for the second half of the concert, with a brusque, impatient action of her ugly elbows. This task done, she turned, and, perceiving the other white muslin dress motionless on a chair in the second row, she strode towards it between the music-stands with an ag-

gressive and masterful gait. On the lap of that dress there lay, unclasped and idle, a pair of small hands, not very white, attached to well-formed arms. The next detail Heyst was led to observe was the arrangement of the hair—two thick brown tresses rolled round an attractively shaped head.

"A girl, by Jove!" he exclaimed mentally.

It was evident that she was a girl. It was evident in the outline of the shoulders, in the slender white bust springing up, barred slantwise by the crimson sash, from the bell-shaped spread of muslin skirt hiding the chair on which she sat averted a little from the body of the hall. Her feet, in low white shoes, were crossed prettily.

She had captured Heyst's awakened faculty of observation; he had the sensation of a new experience. That was because his faculty of observation had never before been captured by any feminine creature in that marked and exclusive fashion. He looked at her anxiously, as no man ever looks at another man; and he positively forgot where he was. He had lost touch with his surroundings. The big woman, advancing, concealed the girl from his sight for a moment. She bent over the seated youthful figure, in passing it very close, as if to drop a word into its ear. Her lips did certainly move. But what sort of word could it have been to make the girl jump up so swiftly? Heyst, at his table, was surprised into a sympathetic start. He glanced quickly round. Nobody was looking towards the platform; and when his eyes swept back there again, the girl, with the big woman treading at her heels, was coming down the three steps from the platform to the floor of the hall. There she paused, stumbled one pace forward, and stood still again, while the other—the escort, the dragoon, the coarse big woman of the piano—passed her roughly, and, marching truculently down the centre aisle between the chairs and tables, went out to rejoin the hook-nosed Zangiacomo somewhere outside. During her extraordinary transit, as if everything in the hall were dirt under her feet, her scornful eyes met the upward glance of Heyst, who looked away at once towards the girl. She had not moved. Her arms hung down; her eyelids were lowered.

Heyst laid down his half-smoked cigar and compressed his lips. Then he got up. It was the same sort of impulse which years ago had made him cross the sandy street of the abominable town of Delli in the island of Timor and accost Morrison, practically a stranger to him then, a man in trouble, expressively harassed, dejected, lonely.

It was the same impulse. But he did not recognize it. He was not thinking of Morrison then. It may be said that, for the first time since the final abandonment of the Samburan coal mine, he had completely forgotten the late Morrison. It is true that to a certain extent he had forgotten also where he was. Thus, unchecked by any sort of self-consciousness, Heyst walked up the central passage.

Several of the women, by this time, had found anchorage here and there among the occupied tables. They talked to the men, leaning on their elbows, and suggesting funnily—if it hadn't been for the crimson sashes—in their white dresses an assembly of middle-aged brides with free and easy manners and hoarse voices. The murmuring noise of conversations carried on with some

spirit filled Schomberg's concert-room. Nobody remarked Heyst's movements; for indeed he was not the only man on his legs there. He had been confronting the girl for some time before she became aware of his presence. She was looking down, very still, without colour, without glances, without voice, without movement. It was only when Heyst addressed her in his courteous tone that she raised her eyes.

"Excuse me," he said in English, "but that horrible female has done something to you. She has pinched you, hasn't she? I am sure she pinched you just now, when she stood by your chair."

The girl received this overture with the wide, motionless stare of profound astonishment. Heyst, vexed with himself, suspected that she did not understand what he said. One could not tell what nationality these women were, except that they were of all sorts. But she was astonished almost more by the near presence of the man himself, by this largely bald head, by the white brow, the sunburnt cheeks, the long, horizontal moustaches of crinkly bronze hair, by the kindly expression of the man's blue eyes looking into her own. He saw the stony amazement in hers give way to a momentary alarm, which was succeeded by an expression of resignation.

"I am sure she pinched your arm most cruelly," he murmured, rather disconcerted now at what he had done.

It was a great comfort to hear her say:

"It wouldn't have been the first time. And suppose she did—what are you going to do about it?"

"I don't know," he said with a faint, remote playfulness in his tone which had not been heard in it lately, and which seemed to catch her ear pleasantly. "I am grieved to say that I don't know. But can I do anything? What would you wish me to do? Pray command me."

Again the greatest astonishment became visible in her face; for she now perceived how different he was from the other men in the room. He was as different from them as she was different from the other members of the ladies' orchestra.

"Command you?" she breathed, after a time, in a bewildered tone. "Who are you?" she asked a little louder.

"I am staying in this hotel for a few days. I just dropped in casually here. This outrage—"

"Don't you try to interfere," she said so earnestly that Heyst asked, in his faintly playful tone:

"Is it your wish that I should leave you?"

"I haven't said that," the girl answered. "She pinched me because I didn't get down here quick enough."

"I can't tell you how indignant I am," said Heyst. "But since you are down here now," he went on, with the ease of a man of the world speaking to a young lady in a drawing-room, "hadn't we better sit down?"

She obeyed his inviting gesture, and they sat down on the nearest chairs. They looked at each other across a little round table with a surprised, open gaze, self-consciousness growing on them so slowly that it was a long time before they averted their eyes; and very soon they met again, temporarily,

only to rebound, as it were. At last they steadied in contact, but by that time, say some fifteen minutes from the moment when they sat down, the "interval" came to an end.

So much for their eyes. As to the conversation, it had been perfectly insignificant, because naturally they had nothing to say to each other. Heyst had been interested by the girl's physiognomy. Its expression was neither simple nor yet very clear. It was not distinguished—that could not be expected—but the features had more fineness than those of any other feminine countenance he had ever had the opportunity to observe so closely. There was in it something indefinably audacious and infinitely miserable—because the temperament and the existence of that girl were reflected in it. But her voice! It seduced Heyst by its amazing quality. It was a voice fit to utter the most exquisite things, a voice which would have made silly chatter supportable and the roughest talk fascinating. Heyst drank in its charm as one listens to the tone of some instrument without heeding the tune.

"Do you sing as well as play?" he asked her abruptly.

"Never sang a note in my life," she said, obviously surprised by the irrelevant question; for they had not been discoursing of sweet sounds. She was clearly unaware of her voice. "I don't remember that I ever had much reason to sing since I was little," she added.

That inelegant phrase, by the mere vibrating, warm nobility of sound, found its way into Heyst's heart. His mind, cool, alert, watched it sink there with a sort of vague concern at the absurdity of the occupation, till it rested at the bottom, deep down, where our unexpressed longings lie.

"You are English, of course?" he said.

"What do you think?" she answered in the most charming accents. Then, as if thinking that it was her turn to place a question: "Why do you always smile when you speak?"

It was enough to make any one look grave; but her good faith was so evident that Heyst recovered himself at once.

"It's my unfortunate manner," he said with his delicate, polished playfulness. "Is it very objectionable to you?"

She was very serious.

"No. I only noticed it. I haven't come across so many pleasant people as all that, in my life."

"It's certain that this woman who plays the piano is infinitely more disagreeable than any cannibal I have ever had to do with."

"I believe you!" She shuddered. "How did you come to have anything to do with cannibals?"

"It would be too long a tale," said Heyst, with a faint smile. Heyst's smiles were rather melancholy, and accorded badly with his great moustaches, under which his mere playfulness lurked as comfortably as a shy bird in its native thicket. "Much too long. How did you get amongst this lot here?"

"Bad luck," she answered briefly.

"No doubt, no doubt," Heyst assented with slight nods. Then, still indignant at the pinch which he had divined rather than actually seen inflicted: "I say, couldn't you defend yourself somehow?"

She had risen already. The ladies of the orchestra were slowly regaining their places. Some were already seated, idle, stony-eyed, before the music-stands. Heyst was standing up, too.

"They are too many for me," she said.

These few words came out of the common experience of mankind; yet by virtue of her voice, they thrilled Heyst like a revelation. His feelings were in a state of confusion, but his mind was clear.

"That's bad. But it isn't actual ill-usage that this girl is complaining of," he thought lucidly after she left him.

II

That was how it began. How it was that it ended as we know it did end, is not so easy to state precisely. It is very clear that Heyst was not indifferent. I won't say to the girl, but to the girl's fate. He was the same man who had plunged after the submerged Morrison whom he hardly knew otherwise than by sight and through the usual gossip of the islands. But this was another sort of plunge altogether, and likely to lead to a very different kind of partnership.

Did he reflect at all? Probably. He was sufficiently reflective. But if he did, it was with insufficient knowledge. For there is no evidence that he paused at any time between the date of that evening and the morning of the flight. Truth to say, Heyst was not one of those men who pause much. Those dreamy spectators of the world's agitation are terrible once the desire to act gets hold of them. They lower their heads and charge a wall with an amazing serenity which nothing but an indisciplined imagination can give.

He was not a fool. I suppose he knew—or at least he felt—where this was leading him. But his complete inexperience gave him the necessary audacity. The girl's voice was charming when she spoke to him of her miserable past, in simple terms, with a sort of unconscious cynicism inherent in the truth of the ugly conditions of poverty. And whether because he was humane or because her voice included all the modulations of pathos, cheerfulness and courage in its compass, it was not disgust that the tale awakened in him, but the sense of an immense sadness.

On a later evening, during the interval between the two parts of the concert, the girl told Heyst about herself. She was almost a child of the streets. Her father was a musician in the orchestras of small theatres. Her mother ran away from him while she was little, and the landladies of various poor lodging-houses had attended casually to her abandoned childhood. It was never positive starvation and absolute rags, but it was the hopeless grip of poverty all the time. It was her father who taught her to play the violin. It seemed that he used to get drunk sometimes, but without pleasure, and only because he was unable to forget his fugitive wife. After he had a paralytic stroke, falling over with a crash in the well of a music-hall orchestra during the performance, she had joined the Zangiacomo company. He was now in a home for incurables.

"And I am here," she finished, "with no one to care if I make a hole in the water the next chance I get or not."

Heyst told her that he thought she could do a little better than that, if it

was only a question of getting out of the world. She looked at him with special attention, and with a puzzled expression which gave to her face an air of innocence.

This was during one of the "intervals" between the two parts of the concert. She had come down that time without being incited thereto by a pinch from the awful Zangiacomo woman. It is difficult to suppose that she was seduced by the uncovered intellectual forehead and the long reddish moustaches of her new friend. New is not the right word. She had never had a friend before; and the sensation of this friendliness going out to her was exciting by its novelty alone. Besides, any man who did not resemble Schomberg appeared for that very reason attractive. She was afraid of the hotel-keeper, who, in the daytime, taking advantage of the fact that she lived in the hotel itself, and not in the Pavilion with the other "artists," prowled round her, mute, hungry, portentous behind his great beard, or else assailed her in quiet corners and empty passages with deep, mysterious murmurs from behind, which, notwithstanding their clear import, sounded horribly insane somehow.

The contrast of Heyst's quiet, polished manner gave her special delight and filled her with admiration. She had never seen anything like that before. If she had, perhaps, known kindness in her life, she had never met the forms of simple courtesy. She was interested by it as by a very novel experience, not very intelligible, but distinctly pleasurable.

"I tell you they are too many for me," she repeated, sometimes recklessly, but more often shaking her head with ominous dejection.

She had, of course, no money at all. The quantities of "black men" all about frightened her. She really had no definite idea where she was on the surface of the globe. The orchestra was generally taken from the steamer to some hotel, and kept shut up there till it was time to go on board another steamer. She could not remember the names she heard.

"How do you call this place again?" she used to ask Heyst.

"Sourabaya," he would say distinctly, and would watch the discouragement at the outlandish sound coming into her eyes, which were fastened on his face.

He could not defend himself from compassion. He suggested that she might go to the consul, but it was his conscience that dictated this advice, not his conviction. She had never heard of the animal or of its uses. A consul! What was it? Who was he? What could he do? And when she learned that perhaps he could be induced to send her home, her head dropped on her breast.

"What am I to do when I get there?" she murmured with an intonation so just, with an accent so penetrating—the charm of her voice did not fail her even in whispering—that Heyst seemed to see the illusion of human fellowship on earth vanish before the naked truth of her existence, and leave them both face to face in a moral desert as arid as the sands of Sahara, without restful shade, without refreshing water.

She leaned slightly over the little table, the same little table at which they had sat when they first met each other; and with no other memories but of the stones in the streets her childhood had known, in the distress of the incoherent,

confused, rudimentary impressions of her travels inspiring her with a vague terror of the world, she said rapidly, as one speaks in desperation:

"*You* do something! You are a gentleman. It wasn't I who spoke to you first, was it? I didn't begin, did I? It was you who came along and spoke to me when I was standing over there. What did you want to speak to me for? I don't care what it is, but you must do something."

Her attitude was fierce and entreating at the same time—clamorous, in fact, though her voice had hardly risen above a breath. It was clamorous enough to be noticed. Heyst, on purpose, laughed aloud. She nearly choked with indignation at this brutal heartlessness.

"What did you mean, then, by saying 'command me'?" she almost hissed.

Something hard in his mirthless stare, and a quiet final "All right," steadied her.

"I am not rich enough to buy you out," he went on, speaking with an extraordinary detached grin, "even if it were to be done; but I can always steal you."

She looked at him profoundly, as though these words had a hidden and very complicated meaning.

"Get away now," he said rapidly, "and try to smile as you go."

She obeyed with unexpected readiness; and as she had a set of very good white teeth, the effect of the mechanical, ordered smile was joyous, radiant. It astonished Heyst. No wonder, it flashed through his mind, women can deceive men so completely. The faculty was inherent in them; they seemed to be created with a special aptitude. Here was a smile the origin of which was well known to him; and yet it had conveyed a sensation of warmth, had given him a sort of ardour to live which was very new to his experience.

By this time she was gone from the table, and had joined the other "ladies of the orchestra." They trooped towards the platform, driven in truculently by the haughty mate of Zangiacomo, who looked as though she were restraining herself with difficulty from punching their backs. Zangiacomo followed, with his great, pendulous dyed beard and short mess-jacket, with an aspect of hang-dog concentration imparted by his drooping head and the uneasiness of his eyes, which were set very close together. He climbed the steps last of all, turned about, displaying his purple beard to the hall, and tapped with his bow. Heyst winced in anticipation of the horrible racket. It burst out immediately unabashed and awful. At the end of the platform the woman at the piano, presenting her cruel profile, her head tilted back, banged the keys without looking at the music.

Heyst could not stand the uproar for more than a minute. He went out, his brain racked by the rhythm of some more or less Hungarian dance music. The forests inhabited by the New Guinea cannibals where he had encountered the most exciting of his earlier futile adventures were silent. And this adventure, not in its execution, perhaps, but in its nature, required even more nerve than anything he had faced before. Walking among the paper lanterns suspended to trees he remembered with regret the gloom and the dead stillness of the forests at the back of Geelvink Bay, perhaps the wildest, the unsafest, the most deadly spot on earth from which the sea can be seen. Oppressed by his thoughts, he sought the obscurity and peace of his bedroom; but they were

not complete. The distant sounds of the concert reached his ear, faint indeed but still disturbing. Neither did he feel very safe in there; for that sentiment depends not on extraneous circumstances but on our inward conviction. He did not attempt to go to sleep; he did not even unbutton the top button of his tunic. He sat in a chair and mused. Formerly, in solitude and in silence, he had been used to think clearly and sometimes even profoundly, seeing life outside the flattering optical delusion of everlasting hope, of conventional self-deceptions, of an ever-expected happiness. But now he was troubled; a light veil seemed to hang before his mental vision; the awakening of a tenderness, indistinct and confused as yet, towards an unknown woman.

Gradually silence, a real silence, had established itself round him. The concert was over; the audience had gone; the concert-hall was dark; and even the Pavilion, where the ladies' orchestra slept after its noisy labours, showed not a gleam of light. Heyst suddenly felt restless in all his limbs. As this reaction from the long immobility would not be denied, he humoured it by passing quietly along the back verandah and out into the grounds at the side of the house, into the black shadows under the trees, where the extinguished paper lanterns were gently swinging their globes like withered fruit.

He paced there to and fro for a long time, a calm, meditative ghost in his white drill suit, revolving in his head thoughts absolutely novel, disquieting, and seductive; accustoming his mind to the contemplation of his purpose, in order that by being faced steadily it should appear praiseworthy and wise. For the use of reason is to justify the obscure desires that move our conduct, impulses, passions, prejudices and follies, and also our fears.

He felt that he had engaged himself by a rash promise to an action big with incalculable consequences. And then he asked himself if the girl had understood what he meant. Who could tell? He was assailed by all sorts of doubts. Raising his head, he perceived something white flitting between the trees. It vanished almost at once; but there could be no mistake. He was vexed at being detected roaming like this in the middle of the night. Who could that be? It never occurred to him that perhaps the girl, too, would not be able to sleep. He advanced prudently. Then he saw the white, phantom-like apparition again; and next moment all his doubts as to the state of her mind were laid at rest, because he felt her clinging to him after the manner of supplicants all the world over. Her whispers were so incoherent that he could not understand anything; but this did not prevent him from being profoundly moved. He had no illusions about her; but his sceptical mind was dominated by the fulness of his heart.

"Calm yourself, calm yourself," he murmured in her ear, returning her clasp at first mechanically, and afterward with a growing appreciation of her distressed humanity. The heaving of her breast and the trembling of all her limbs, in the closeness of his embrace, seemed to enter his body, to infect his very heart. While she was growing quieter in his arms, he was becoming more agitated, as if there were only a fixed quantity of violent emotion on this earth. The very night seemed more dumb, more still, and the immobility of the vague, black shapes surrounding him more perfect.

"It will be all right," he tried to reassure her, with a tone of conviction,

speaking into her ear, and of necessity clasping her more closely than before.

Either the words or the action had a very good effect. He heard a light sigh of relief. She spoke with a calmed ardour.

"Oh, I knew it would be all right from the first time you spoke to me! Yes, indeed, I knew directly you came up to me that evening. I knew it would be all right, if you only cared to make it so; but of course I could not tell if you meant it. 'Command me,' you said. Funny thing for a man like you to say. Did you really mean it? You weren't making fun of me?"

He protested that he had been a serious person all his life.

"I believe you," she said ardently. He was touched by this declaration. "It's the way you have of speaking as if you were amused with people," she went on. "But I wasn't deceived. I could see you were angry with that beast of a woman. And you are clever. You spotted something at once. You saw it in my face, eh? It isn't a bad face—say? You'll never be sorry. Listen—I'm not twenty yet. It's the truth, and I can't be so bad looking, or else—I will tell you straight that I have been worried and pestered by fellows like this before. I don't know what comes to them—"

She was speaking hurriedly. She choked, and then exclaimed, with an accent of despair:

"What is it? What's the matter?"

Heyst had removed his arms from her suddenly, and had recoiled a little. "Is it my fault? I didn't even look at them, I tell you straight. Never! Have I looked at you? Tell me. It was you that began it."

In truth, Heyst had shrunk from the idea of competition with fellows unknown, with Schomberg the hotel-keeper. The vaporous white figure before him swayed pitifully in the darkness. He felt ashamed of his fastidiousness.

"I am afraid we have been detected," he murmured. "I think I saw somebody on the path between the house and the bushes behind you."

He had seen no one. It was a compassionate lie, if there ever was one. His compassion was as genuine as his shrinking had been, and in his judgment more honourable.

She didn't turn her head. She was obviously relieved. "Would it be that brute?" she breathed out, meaning Schomberg, of course. "He's getting too forward with me now. What can you expect? Only this evening, after supper, he—but I slipped away. You don't mind him, do you? Why, I could face him myself now that I know you care for me. A girl can always put up a fight. You believe me? Only it isn't easy to stand up for yourself when you feel there's nothing and nobody at your back. There's nothing so lonely in the world as a girl who has got to look after herself. When I left poor dad in that home—it was in the country, near a village—I came out of the gates with seven shillings and threepence in my old purse, and my railway ticket. I tramped a mile, and got into a train—"

She broke off, and was silent for a moment.

"Don't you throw me over now," she went on. "If you did, what should I do? I should have to live, to be sure, because I'd be afraid to kill myself; but you would have done a thousand times worse than killing a body. You told me you had been always alone, you had never had a dog, even. Well, then, I

won't be in anybody's way if I live with you—not even a dog's. And what else did you mean when you came up and looked at me so close?"

"Close? Did I?" he murmured unstirring before her in the profound darkness. "So close as that?"

She had an outbreak of anger and despair in subdued tones.

"Have you forgotten, then? What did you expect to find? I know what sort of girl I am; but all the same I am not the sort that men turn their backs on—and you ought to know it, unless you aren't made like the others. Oh, forgive me! You aren't like the others; you are like no one in the world I ever spoke to. Don't you care for me? Don't you see—?"

What he saw was that, white and spectral, she was putting out her arms to him out of the black shadows like an appealing ghost. He took her hands, and was affected, almost surprised, to find them so warm, so real, so firm, so living in his grasp. He drew her to him, and she dropped her head on his shoulder with a deep sigh.

"I am dead tired," she whispered plaintively.

He put his arms around her, and only by the convulsive movements of her body became aware that she was sobbing without a sound. Sustaining her, he lost himself in the profound silence of the night. After a while she became still, and cried quietly. Then, suddenly, as if waking up, she asked:

"You haven't seen any more of that somebody you thought was spying about?"

He started at her quick, sharp whisper, and answered that very likely he had been mistaken.

"If it was anybody at all," she reflected aloud, "it wouldn't have been any one but that hotel woman—the landlord's wife."

"Mrs. Schomberg?" Heyst said, surprised.

"Yes. Another one that can't sleep o' nights. Why? Don't you see why? Because, of course, she sees what's going on. That beast doesn't even try to keep it from her. If she had only the least bit of spirit! She knows how I feel, too, only she's too frightened even to look him in the face, let alone open her mouth. He would tell her to go hang herself."

For some time Heyst said nothing. A public, active contest with the hotelkeeper was not to be thought of. The idea was horrible. Whispering gently to the girl, he tried to explain to her that as things stood, an open withdrawal from the company would be probably opposed. She listened to his explanation anxiously, from time to time pressing the hand she had sought and got hold of in the dark.

"As I told you, I am not rich enough to buy you out; so I shall steal you as soon as I can arrange some means of getting away from here. Meantime it would be fatal to be seen together at night. We mustn't give ourselves away. We had better part at once. I think I was mistaken just now; but if, as you say, that poor Mrs. Schomberg can't sleep of nights, we must be more careful. She would tell the fellow."

The girl had disengaged herself from his loose hold while he talked, and now stood free of him, but still clasping his hand firmly.

"Oh, no," she said with perfect assurance. "I tell you she daren't open her

mouth to him. And she isn't as silly as she looks. She wouldn't give us away. She knows a trick worth two of that. She'll help—that's what she'll do, if she dares do anything at all."

"You seem to have a very clear view of the situation," said Heyst, and received a warm, lingering kiss for this commendation.

He discovered that to part from her was not such an easy matter as he had supposed it would be.

"Upon my word," he said before they separated, "I don't even know your name."

"Don't you? They call me Alma. I don't know why. Silly name! Magdalen too. It doesn't matter; you can call me by whatever name you choose. Yes, you give me a name. Think of one you would like the sound of—something quite new. How I should like to forget everything that has gone before, as one forgets a dream that's done with, fright and all! I would try."

"Would you really?" he asked in a murmur. "But that's not forbidden. I understand that women easily forget whatever in their past diminishes them in their eyes."

"It's your eyes that I was thinking of, for I'm sure I've never wished to forget anything till you came up to me that night and looked me through and through. I know I'm not much account; but I know how to stand by a man. I stood by father ever since I could understand. He wasn't a bad chap. Now that I can't be of any use to him, I would just as soon forget all that and make a fresh start. But these aren't things that I could talk to you about. What could I ever talk to you about?"

"Don't let it trouble you," Heyst said. "Your voice is enough. I am in love with it, whatever it says."

She remained silent for a while, as if rendered breathless by this quiet statement.

"Oh! I wanted to ask you—"

He remembered that she probably did not know his name, and expected the question to be put to him now; but after a moment of hesitation she went on:

"Why was it that you told me to smile this evening in the concert-room there—you remember?"

"I thought we were being observed. A smile is the best of masks. Schomberg was at a table next but one to us, drinking with some Dutch clerks from the town. No doubt he was watching us—watching you, at least. That's why I asked you to smile."

"Ah, that's why. It never came into my head."

"And you did it very well, too—very readily, as if you had understood my intention."

"Readily!" she repeated. "Oh, I was ready enough to smile then. That's the truth. It was the first time for years I may say that I felt disposed to smile. I've not had many chances to smile in my life, I can tell you; especially of late."

"But you do it most charmingly—in a perfectly fascinating way."

He paused. She stood still, waiting for more with the stillness of extreme delight, wishing to prolong the sensation.

"It astonished me," he added. "It went as straight to my heart as though you had smiled for the purpose of dazzling me. I felt as if I had never seen a smile before in my life. I thought of it after I left you. It made me restless."

"It did all that?" came her voice, unsteady, gentle, and incredulous.

"If you had not smiled as you did, perhaps I should not have come out here tonight," he said, with his playful earnestness of tone. "It was your triumph."

He felt her lips touch his lightly, and the next moment she was gone. Her white dress gleamed in the distance, and then the opaque darkness of the house seemed to swallow it. Heyst waited a little before he went the same way, round the corner, up the steps of the verandah, and into his room, where he lay down at last—not to sleep, but to go over in his mind all that had been said at their meeting.

"It's exactly true about that smile," he thought. There he had spoken the truth to her; and about her voice, too. For the rest—what must be must be.

A great wave of heat passed over him. He turned on his back, flung his arms crosswise on the broad, hard bed, and lay still, open-eyed under the mosquito net, till daylight entered his room, brightened swiftly, and turned to unfailing sunlight. He got up then, went to a small looking-glass hanging on the wall, and stared at himself steadily. It was not a new-born vanity which induced this long survey. He felt so strange that he could not resist the suspicion of his personal appearance having changed during the night. What he saw in the glass, however, was the man he knew before. It was almost a disappointment—a belittling of his recent experience. And then he smiled at his naiveness; for, being over five and thirty years of age, he ought to have known that in most cases the body is the unalterable mask of the soul, which even death itself changes but little, till it is put out of sight where no changes matter any more, either to our friends or to our enemies.

Heyst was not conscious of either friends or of enemies. It was the very essence of his life to be a solitary achievement, accomplished not by hermit-like withdrawal with its silence and immobility, but by a system of restless wandering, by the detachment of an impermanent dweller amongst changing scenes. In this scheme he had perceived the means of passing through life without suffering and almost without a single care in the world—invulnerable because elusive.

III

For fifteen years Heyst had wandered, invariably courteous and unapproachable, and in return was generally considered a "queer chap." He had started off on these travels of his after the death of his father, an expatriated Swede who died in London, dissatisfied with his country and angry with all the world, which had instinctively rejected his wisdom.

Thinker, stylist, and man of the world in his time, the elder Heyst had begun by coveting all the joys, those of the great and those of the humble, those of the fools and those of the sages. For more than sixty years he had dragged on this painful earth of ours the most weary, the most uneasy soul that civilisation had ever fashioned to its ends of disillusion and regret. One could not refuse him a measure of greatness, for he was unhappy in a way unknown to mediocre

souls. His mother Heyst had never known, but he kept his father's pale, distinguished face in affectionate memory. He remembered him mainly in an ample blue dressing-gown in a large house of a quiet London suburb. For three years, after leaving school at the age of eighteen, he had lived with the elder Heyst, who was then writing his last book. In this work, at the end of his life, he claimed for mankind that right to absolute moral and intellectual liberty of which he no longer believed them worthy.

Three years of such companionship at that plastic and impressionable age were bound to leave in the boy a profound mistrust of life. The young man learned to reflect, which is a destructive process, a reckoning of the cost. It is not the clear-sighted who lead the world. Great achievements are accomplished in a blessed, warm mental fog, which the pitiless cold blasts of the father's analysis had blown away from the son.

"I'll drift," Heyst had said to himself deliberately.

He did not mean intellectually or sentimentally or morally. He meant to drift altogether and literally, body and soul, like a detached leaf drifting in the wind-currents under the immovable trees of a forest glade; to drift without ever catching on to anything.

"This shall be my defence against life," he had said to himself with a sort of inward consciousness that for the son of his father there was no other worthy alternative.

He became a waif and stray, austerely, from conviction, as others do through drink, from vice, from some weakness of character—with deliberation, as others do in despair. This, stripped of its facts, had been Heyst's life up to that disturbing night. Next day, when he saw the girl called Alma, she managed to give him a glance of frank tenderness, quick as lightning, and leaving a profound impression, a secret touch on the heart. It was in the grounds of the hotel, about tiffin time, while the ladies of the orchestra were strolling back to their pavilion after rehearsal, or practice, or whatever they called their morning musical exercises in the hall. Heyst, returning from the town, where he had discovered that there would be difficulties in the way of getting away at once, was crossing the compound, disappointed and worried. He had walked almost unwittingly into the straggling group of Zangiacomo's performers. It was a shock to him, on coming out of his brown study, to find the girl so near him, as if one waking suddenly should see the figure of his dream turned into flesh and blood. She did not raise her shapely head, but her glance was no dream thing. It was real, the most real impression of his detached existence—so far.

Heyst had not acknowledged it in any way, though it seemed to him impossible that its effect on him should not be visible to any one who happened to be looking on. And there were several men on the verandah, steady customers of Schomberg's table d'hôte, gazing in his direction—at the ladies of the orchestra, in fact. Heyst's dread arose, not out of shame or timidity, but from his fastidiousness. On getting amongst them, however, he noticed no signs of interest or astonishment on their faces, any more than if they had been blind men. Even Schomberg himself, who had to make way for him at the top of the stairs, was completely unperturbed, and continued the conversation he was carrying on with a client.

Schomberg, indeed, had observed "that Swede" talking with the girl in the intervals. A crony of his had nudged him; and he had thought that it was so much the better; the silly fellow would keep everybody else off. He was rather pleased than otherwise and watched them out of the corner of his eye with a malicious enjoyment of the situation—a sort of Satanic glee. For he had little doubt of his personal fascination, and still less of his power to get hold of the girl, who seemed too ignorant to know how to help herself, and who was worse than friendless, since she had for some reason incurred the animosity of Mrs. Zangiacomo, a woman with no conscience. The aversion she showed him as far as she dared (for it is not always safe for the helpless to display the delicacy of their sentiments), Schomberg pardoned on the score of feminine conventional silliness. He had told Alma, as an argument, that she was a clever enough girl to see that she could do no better than to put her trust in a man of substance, in the prime of life, who knew his way about. But for the excited trembling of his voice, and the extraordinary way in which his eyes seemed to be starting out of his crimson, hirsute countenance, such speeches had every character of calm, unselfish advice—which, after the manner of lovers, passed easily into sanguine plans for the future.

"We'll soon get rid of the old woman," he whispered to her hurriedly, with panting ferocity. "Hang her! I've never cared for her. The climate don't suit her; I shall tell her to go to her people in Europe. She will have to go, too! I will see to it. *Eins, zwei,* march! And then we shall sell this hotel and start another somewhere else."

He assured her that he didn't care what he did for her sake; and it was true. Forty-five is the age of recklessness for many men, as if in defiance of the decay and death waiting with open arms in the sinister valley at the bottom of the inevitable hill. Her shrinking form, her downcast eyes, when she had to listen to him, cornered at the end of an empty corridor, he regarded as signs of submission to the overpowering force of his will, the recognition of his personal fascinations. For every age is fed on illusions, lest men should renounce life early and the human race come to an end.

It's easy to imagine Schomberg's humiliation, his shocked fury, when he discovered that the girl who had for weeks resisted his attacks, his prayers, and his fiercest protestations, had been snatched from under his nose by "that Swede," apparently without any trouble worth speaking of. He refused to believe the fact. He would have it, at first, that the Zangiacomos, for some unfathomable reason, had played him a scurvy trick; but when no further doubt was possible, he changed his view of Heyst. The despised Swede became for Schomberg the deepest, the most dangerous, the most hateful of scoundrels. He could not believe that the creature he had coveted with so much force and with so little effect, was in reality tender, docile to her impulses, and had almost offered herself to Heyst without a sense of guilt, in a desire of safety, and from a profound need of placing her trust where her woman's instinct guided her ignorance. Nothing would serve Schomberg but that she must have been circumvented by some occult exercise of force or craft, by the laying of some subtle trap. His wounded vanity wondered ceaselessly at the means "that

Swede" had employed to seduce her away from a man like him—Schomberg—as though those means were bound to have been extraordinary, unheard of, inconceivable. He slapped his forehead openly before his customers; he would sit brooding in silence or else would burst out unexpectedly declaiming against Heyst without measure, discretion or prudence, with swollen features and an affectation of outraged virtue which could not have deceived the most childlike of moralists for a moment—and greatly amused his audience.

It became a recognised entertainment to go and hear his abuse of Heyst, while sipping iced drinks on the verandah of the hotel. It was, in a manner, a more successful draw than the Zangiacomo concerts had ever been—intervals and all. There was never any difficulty in starting the performer off. Anybody could do it, by almost any distant allusion. As likely as not he would start his endless denunciations in the very billiard-room where Mrs. Schomberg sat enthroned as usual, swallowing her sobs, concealing her tortures of abject humiliation and terror under her stupid, set, everlasting grin, which, having been provided for her by nature, was an excellent mask, inasmuch as nothing—not even death itself, perhaps—could tear it away.

But nothing lasts in this world, at least without changing its physiognomy. So, after a few weeks, Schomberg regained his outward calm, as if his indignation had dried up within him. And it was time. He was becoming a bore with his inability to talk of anything else but Heyst's unfitness to be at large, Heyst's wickedness, his wiles, his astuteness, and his criminality. Schomberg no longer pretended to despise him. He could not have done it. After what had happened he could not pretend, even to himself. But his bottled-up indignation was fermenting venomously. At the time of his immoderate loquacity one of his customers, an elderly man, had remarked one evening:

"If that ass keeps on like this, he will end by going crazy."

And this belief was less than half wrong. Schomberg had Heyst on the brain. Even the unsatisfactory state of his affairs, which had never been so unpromising since he came out East directly after the Franco-Prussian War, he referred to some subtly noxious influence of Heyst. It seemed to him that he could never be himself again till he had got even with that artful Swede. He was ready to swear that Heyst had ruined his life. The girl so unfairly, craftily, basely decoyed away would have inspired him to success in a new start. Obviously Mrs. Schomberg, whom he terrified by savagely silent moods combined with underhand, poisoned glances, could give him no inspiration. He had grown generally neglectful, but with a partiality for reckless expedients, as if he did not care when and how his career as a hotel-keeper was to be brought to an end. This demoralized state accounted for what Davidson had observed on his last visit to the Schomberg establishment, some two months after Heyst's secret departure with the girl to the solitude of Samburan.

The Schomberg of a few years ago—the Schomberg of the Bangkok days, for instance, when he started the first of his famed table-d'hôte dinners—would never have risked anything of the sort. His genius ran to catering, "white man for white men," and to the inventing, elaborating, and retailing of scandalous gossip with asinine unction and impudent delight. But now his mind was per-

verted by the pangs of wounded vanity and of thwarted passion. In this state of moral weakness Schomberg allowed himself to be corrupted.

IV

The business was done by a guest who arrived one fine morning by mail-boat—immediately from Celebes, having boarded her in Macassar, but generally, Schomberg understood, from up China Sea way; a wanderer clearly, even as Heyst was, but not alone and of quite another kind.

Schomberg, looking up from the stern-sheets of his steam-launch, which he used for boarding passenger ships on arrival, discovered a dark, sunken stare plunging down on him over the rail of the first-class part of the deck. He was no great judge of physiognomy. Human beings, for him, were either the objects of scandalous gossip or else the recipients of narrow strips of paper, with proper bill-heads stating the name of his hotel.—"W. Schomberg, proprietor; accounts settled weekly."

So in the clean-shaven, extremely thin face hanging over the mail-boat's rail Schomberg saw only the face of a possible "account." The steam-launches of other hotels were also alongside, but he obtained the preference.

"You are Mr. Schomberg, aren't you?" the face asked quite unexpectedly.

"I am, at your service," he answered from below; for business is business, and its forms and formulas must be observed, even if one's manly bosom is tortured by that dull rage which succeeds the fury of baffled passion, like the glow of embers after a fierce blaze.

Presently the possessor of the handsome but emaciated face was seated beside Schomberg in the stern-sheets of the launch. His body was long and loose-jointed; his slender fingers, intertwined, clasped the leg resting on his knee, as he lolled back in a careless yet tense attitude. On the other side of Schomberg sat another passenger, who was introduced by the clean-shaven man as—

"My secretary. He must have the room next to mine."

"We can manage that easily for you."

Schomberg steered with dignity, staring straight ahead, but very much interested by these two promising "accounts." Their belongings, a couple of large leather trunks browned by age and a few smaller packages, were piled up in the bows. A third individual—a nondescript, hairy creature—had modestly made his way forward and had perched himself on the luggage. The lower part of his physiognomy was over-developed; his narrow and low forehead, unintelligently furrowed by horizontal wrinkles, surmounted wildly hirsute cheeks and a flat nose with wide, baboon-like nostrils. There was something equivocal in the appearance of his shaggy, hair-smothered humanity. He, too, seemed to be a follower of the clean-shaven man, and apparently had travelled on deck with native passengers, sleeping under the awnings. His broad, squat frame denoted great strength. Grasping the gunwales of the launch, he displayed a pair of remarkably long arms, terminating in thick, brown hairy paws of simian aspect.

"What shall we do with that fellow of mine?" the chief of the party asked Schomberg. "There must be a boarding-house somewhere near the port—some grog-shop where they could let him have a mat to sleep on?"

Schomberg said there was a place kept by a Portuguese half-caste.

"A servant of yours?" he asked.

"Well, he hangs on to me. He is an alligator-hunter. I picked him up in Colombia, you know. Ever been in Colombia?"

"No," said Schomberg, very much surprised. "An alligator-hunter? Funny trade! Are you coming from Colombia, then?"

"Yes, but I have been coming for a long time. I come from a good many places. I am travelling west, you see."

"For sport, perhaps?" suggested Schomberg.

"Yes. Sort of sport. What do you say to chasing the sun?"

"I see—a gentleman at large," said Schomberg, watching a sailing canoe about to cross his bow, and ready to clear it by a touch of the helm.

The other passenger made himself heard suddenly.

"Hang these native craft! They always get in the way."

He was a muscular, short man with eyes that gleamed and blinked, a harsh voice, and a round, toneless, pock-marked face ornamented by a thin, dishevelled moustache sticking out quaintly under the tip of a rigid nose. Schomberg made the reflection that there was nothing secretarial about him. Both he and his long, lank principal wore the usual white suit of the tropics, cork helmets, pipe-clayed white shoes—all correct. The hairy nondescript creature perched on their luggage in the bow had a check shirt and blue dungaree trousers. He gazed in their direction from forward in an expectant, trained-animal manner.

"You spoke to me first," said Schomberg in his manly tones. "You were acquainted with my name. Where did you hear of me, gentlemen, may I ask?"

"In Manila," answered the gentleman at large, readily. "From a man with whom I had a game of cards one evening in the Hotel Castille."

"What man? I've no friends in Manila that I know of," wondered Schomberg with a severe frown.

"I can't tell you his name. I've clean forgotten it; but don't you worry. He was anything but a friend of yours. He called you all the names he could think of. He said you set a lot of scandal going about him once, somewhere—in Bangkok, I think. Yes, that's it. You were running a table d'hôte in Bangkok at one time, weren't you?"

Schomberg, astounded by the turn of the information, could only throw out his chest more and exaggerate his austere Lieutenant-of-the-Reserve manner. A table d'hôte? Yes, certainly. He always—for the sake of white men. And here in this place, too? Yes, in this place, too.

"That's all right, then." The stranger turned his black, cavernous, mesmerising glance away from the bearded Schomberg, who sat gripping the brass tiller in a sweating palm. "Many people in the evening at your place?"

Schomberg had recovered somewhat.

"Twenty covers or so, take one day with another," he answered feelingly, as befitted a subject on which he was sensitive. "Ought to be more, if only people would see that it's for their own good. Precious little profit I get out of it. You are partial to tables d'hôte, gentlemen?"

The new guest made answer that he liked a hotel where one could find some local people in the evening. It was infernally dull otherwise. The secretary, in

sign of approval, emitted a grunt of astonishing ferocity, as if proposing to himself to eat the local people. All this sounded like a longish stay, thought Schomberg, satisfied under his grave air; till, remembering the girl snatched away from him by the last guest who had made a prolonged stay in his hotel, he ground his teeth so audibly that the other two looked at him in wonder. The momentary convulsion of his florid physiognomy seemed to strike them dumb. They exchanged a quick glance. Presently the clean-shaven man fired out another question in his curt, unceremonious manner:

"You have no women in your hotel, eh?"

"Women!" Schomberg exclaimed indignantly, but also as if a little frightened. "What on earth do you mean by women? What women? There's Mrs. Schomberg, of course," he added, suddenly appeased, with lofty indifference.

"If she knows how to keep her place, then it will do. I can't stand women near me. They give me the horrors," declared the other. "They are a perfect curse!"

During this outburst the secretary wore a savage grin. The chief guest closed his sunken eyes, as if exhausted, and leaned the back of his head against the stanchion of the awning. In this pose, his long feminine eyelashes were very noticeable, and his regular features, sharp line of the jaw, and well-cut chin were brought into prominence, giving him a used-up, weary, depraved distinction. He did not open his eyes till the steam-launch touched the quay. Then he and the other man got ashore quickly, entered a carriage, and drove away to the hotel, leaving Schomberg to look after their luggage and take care of their strange companion. The latter, looking more like a performing bear abandoned by his showmen than a human being, followed all Schomberg's movements step by step, close behind his back, muttering to himself in a language that sounded like some sort of uncouth Spanish. The hotel-keeper felt uncomfortable till at last he got rid of him at an obscure den where a very clean, portly Portuguese half-caste, standing serenely in the doorway, seemed to understand exactly how to deal with clients of every kind. He took from the creature the strapped bundle it had been hugging closely through all its peregrinations in that strange town, and cut short Schomberg's attempts at explanation by a most confident—

"I comprehend very well, sir."

"It's more than I do," thought Schomberg, going away thankful at being relieved of the alligator-hunter's company. He wondered what these fellows were, without being able to form a guess of sufficient probability. Their names he learned that very day by direct inquiry—"to enter in my books," he explained in his formal military manner, chest thrown out, beard very much in evidence.

The shaven man, sprawling in a long chair, with his air of withered youth, raised his eyes languidly.

"My name? Oh, plain Mr. Jones—put that down—a gentleman at large. And this is Ricardo." The pock-marked man, lying prostrate in another long chair, made a grimace, as if something had tickled the end of his nose, but did not come out of his supineness. "Martin Ricardo, secretary. You don't want any more of our history, do you? Eh, what? Occupation? Put down, well—tourists.

We've been called harder names before now; it won't hurt our feelings. And that fellow of mine—where did you tuck him away? Oh, he will be all right. When he wants anything he'll take it. He's Peter. Citizen of Colombia, Peter, Pedro—I don't know that he ever had any other name. Pedro, alligator-hunter. Oh, yes—I'll pay his board with the half-caste. Can't help myself. He's so confoundedly devoted to me that if I were to give him the sack he would fly at my throat. Shall I tell you how I killed his brother in the wilds of Colombia? Well, perhaps some other time—it's a rather long story. What I shall always regret is that I didn't kill him, too. I could have done it without any extra trouble then; now it's too late. Great nuisance; but he's useful sometimes. I hope you are not going to put all this in your book?"

The offhand, hard manner and the contemptuous tone of "plain Mr. Jones" disconcerted Schomberg utterly. He had never been spoken to like this in his life. He shook his head in silence and withdrew, not exactly scared—though he was in reality of a timid disposition under his manly exterior—but distinctly mystified and impressed.

V

Three weeks later, after putting his cash-box away in the safe which filled with its iron bulk a corner of their bedroom, Schomberg turned towards his wife, but without looking at her exactly, and said:

"I must get rid of these two. It won't do!"

Mrs. Schomberg had entertained that very opinion from the first; but she had been broken years ago into keeping her opinions to herself. Sitting in her night attire in the light of a single candle, she was careful not to make a sound, knowing from experience that her very assent would be resented. With her eyes she followed the figure of Schomberg, clad in his sleeping suit, and moving restlessly about the room.

He never glanced her way, for the reason that Mrs. Schomberg, in her night attire, looked the most unattractive object in existence—miserable, insignificant, faded, crushed, old. And the contrast with the feminine form he had ever in his mind's eye made his wife's appearance painful to his esthetic sense.

Schomberg walked about swearing and fuming for the purpose of screwing his courage up to the sticking point.

"Hang me if I ought not to go now, at once, this minute, into his bedroom, and tell him to be off—him and that secretary of his—early in the morning. I don't mind a round game of cards, but to make a decoy of my table d'hôte—my blood boils! He came here because some lying rascal in Manila told him I kept a table d'hôte."

He said these things, not for Mrs. Schomberg's information, but simply thinking aloud, and trying to work his fury up to a point where it would give him courage enough to face "plain Mr. Jones."

"Impudent, overbearing, swindling sharper," he went on. "I have a good mind to—"

He was beside himself in his lurid, heavy, Teutonic manner, so unlike the picturesque, lively rage of the Latin races; and though his eyes strayed about irresolutely, yet his swollen, angry features awakened in the miserable woman over whom he had been tyrannising for years a fear for his precious carcass,

since the poor creature had nothing else but that to hold on to in the world. She knew him well; but she did not know him altogether. The last thing a woman will consent to discover in a man whom she loves, or on whom she simply depends, is want of courage. And, timid in her corner, she ventured to say pressingly:

"Be careful, Wilhelm! Remember the knives and revolvers in their trunks."

In guise of thanks for that anxious reminder, he swore horribly in the direction of her shrinking person. In her scanty night-dress, and barefooted, she recalled a mediæval penitent being reproved for her sins in blasphemous terms. Those lethal weapons were always present to Schomberg's mind. Personally, he had never seen them. His part, ten days after his guests' arrival, had been to lounge in manly, careless attitudes on the verandah—keeping watch—while Mrs. Schomberg, provided with a bunch of assorted keys, her discoloured teeth chattering and her globular eyes absolutely idiotic with fright, was "going through" the luggage of these strange clients. Her terrible Wilhelm had insisted on it.

"I'll be on the look-out, I tell you," he said. "I shall give you a whistle when I see them coming back. You couldn't whistle. And if he were to catch you at it, and chuck you out by the scruff of the neck, it wouldn't hurt you much; but he won't touch a woman. Not he! He has told me so. Affected beast. I must find out something about their little game, and so there's an end of it. Go in! Go now! Quick march!"

It had been an awful job; but she did go in, because she was much more afraid of Schomberg than of any possible consequences of the act. Her greatest concern was lest no key of the bunch he had provided her with should fit the locks. It would have been such a disappointment for Wilhelm. However, the trunks, she found, had been left open; but her investigation did not last long. She was frightened of firearms, and generally of all weapons, not from personal cowardice, but as some women are, almost superstitiously, from an abstract horror of violence and murder. She was out again on the verandah long before Wilhelm had any occasion for a warning whistle. The instinctive, motiveless fear being the most difficult to overcome, nothing could induce her to return to her investigations, neither threatening growls nor ferocious hisses, nor yet a poke or two in the ribs.

"Stupid female!" muttered the hotel-keeper, perturbed by the notion of that armoury in one of his bedrooms. This was from no abstract sentiment; with him it was constitutional. "Get out of my sight!" he snarled. "Go and dress yourself for the table d'hôte."

Left to himself, Schomberg had meditated. What the devil did this mean? His thinking processes were sluggish and spasmodic; but suddenly the truth came to him.

"By heavens, they are desperadoes!" he thought.

Just then he beheld "plain Mr. Jones" and his secretary with the ambiguous name of Ricardo entering the grounds of the hotel. They had been down to the port on some business, and now were returning; Mr. Jones lank, spare, opening his long legs with angular regularity like a pair of compasses, the other stepping out briskly by his side. Conviction entered Schomberg's heart. They

were two desperadoes—no doubt about it. But as the funk which he experienced was merely a general sensation, he managed to put on his most severe Officer-of-the-Reserve manner, long before they had closed with him.

"Good morning, gentlemen."

Being answered with derisive civility, he became confirmed in his sudden conviction of their desperate character. The way Mr. Jones turned his hollow eyes on one, like an incurious spectre, and the way the other, when addressed, suddenly retracted his lips and exhibited his teeth without looking round—here was evidence enough to settle that point. Desperadoes. They passed through the billiard-room, inscrutably mysterious, to the back of the house, to join their violated trunks.

"Tiffin bell will ring in five minutes, gentlemen," Schomberg called after them, exaggerating the deep manliness of his tone.

He had managed to upset himself very much. He expected to see them come back infuriated and begin to bully him with an odious lack of restraint. Desperadoes! However they didn't; they had not noticed anything unusual about their trunks and Schomberg recovered his composure and said to himself that he must get rid of this deadly incubus as soon as practicable. They couldn't possibly want to stay very long; this was not the town—the colony—for desperate characters. He shrank from action. He dreaded any kind of disturbance—"fracas," he called it—in his hotel. Such things were not good for business. Of course, sometimes one had to have a "fracas"; but it had been a comparatively trifling task to seize the frail Zangiacomo—whose bones were no larger than a chicken's—round the ribs, lift him up bodily, dash him to the ground, and fall on him. It had been easy. The wretched, hook-nosed creature lay without movement, buried under its purple beard.

Suddenly, remembering the occasion of that "fracas," Schomberg groaned with the pain as of a hot coal under his breastbone, and gave himself up to desolation. Ah, if he only had that girl with him he would have been masterful and resolute and fearless—fight twenty desperadoes—care for nobody on earth! Whereas the possession of Mrs. Schomberg was no incitement to a display of manly virtues. Instead of caring for no one, he felt that he cared for nothing. Life was a hollow sham; he wasn't going to risk a shot through his lungs or his liver in order to preserve its integrity. It had no savour—damn it!

In his state of moral decomposition, Schomberg, master as he was of the art of hotel-keeping, and careful of giving no occasion for criticism to the powers regulating that branch of human activities, let things take their course; though he saw very well where that course was tending. It began first with a game or two after dinner—for the drinks, apparently—with some lingering customer, at one of the little tables ranged against the walls of the billiard-room. Schomberg detected the meaning of it at once. That's what it was! This was what they were! And, moving about restlessly (at that time his morose silent period had set in), he cast sidelong looks at the game; but he said nothing. It was not worth while having a row with men who were so overbearing. Even when money appeared in connection with these postprandial games, into which more and more people were being drawn, he still refrained from raising the question; he was reluctant to draw unduly the atten-

tion of "plain Mr. Jones" and of the equivocal Ricardo, to his person. One evening, however, after the public rooms of the hotel had become empty, Schomberg made an attempt to grapple with the problem in an indirect way.

In the distant corner the tired China boy dozed on his heels, his back against the wall. Mrs. Schomberg had disappeared, as usual, between ten and eleven. Schomberg walked about slowly, in and out of the room and the verandah, thoughtful, waiting for his two guests to go to bed. Then suddenly he approached them, militarily, his chest thrown out, his voice curt and soldierly.

"Hot night, gentlemen."

Mr. Jones, lolling back idly in a chair, looked up. Ricardo, as idle, but more upright, made no sign.

"Won't you have a drink with me before retiring?" went on Schomberg, sitting down by the little table.

"By all means," said Mr. Jones lazily.

Ricardo showed his teeth in a strange, quick grin. Schomberg felt painfully how difficult it was to get in touch with these men, both so quiet, so deliberate, so menacingly unceremonious. He ordered the Chinaman to bring in the drinks. His purpose was to discover how long these guests intended to stay. Ricardo displayed no conversational vein, but Mr. Jones appeared communicative enough. His voice somehow matched his sunken eyes. It was hollow without being in the last mournful; it sounded distant, uninterested, as though he were speaking from the bottom of a well. Schomberg learned that he would have the privilege of lodging and boarding these gentlemen for at least a month more. He could not conceal his discomfiture at this piece of news.

"What's the matter? Don't you like to have people in your house?" asked plain Mr. Jones languidly. "I should have thought the owner of a hotel would be pleased."

He lifted his delicate and beautifully pencilled eyebrows. Schomberg muttered something about the locality being dull and uninteresting to travellers—nothing going on—too quiet altogether; but he only provoked the declaration that quiet had its charms sometimes, and even dullness was welcome as a change.

"We haven't had time to be dull for the last three years," added plain Mr. Jones, his eyes fixed darkly on Schomberg, whom he furthermore invited to have another drink, this time with him, and not to worry himself about things he did not understand; and especially not to be inhospitable—which in a hotel-keeper was highly unprofessional.

"I don't understand," grumbled Schomberg. "Oh, yes, I understand perfectly well. I—"

"You are frightened," interrupted Mr. Jones. "What *is* the matter?"

"I don't want any scandal in my place. That's what's the matter."

Schomberg tried to face the situation bravely, but that steady, black stare affected him. And when he glanced aside uncomfortably, he met Ricardo's grin uncovering a lot of teeth, though the man seemed absorbed in his thoughts all the time.

"And, moreover," went on Mr. Jones in that distant tone of his, "you can't help yourself. Here we are and here we stay. Would you try to put us out?

I dare say you could do it; but you couldn't do it without getting badly hurt—very badly hurt. We can promise him that, can't we, Martin?"

The secretary retracted his lips and looked up sharply at Schomberg, as if only too anxious to leap upon him with teeth and claws.

Schomberg managed to produce a deep laugh.

"Ha! Ha! Ha!"

Mr. Jones closed his eyes wearily, as if the light hurt them, and looked remarkably like a corpse for a moment. This was bad enough; but when he opened them again, it was almost a worse trial for Schomberg's nerves. The spectral intensity of that glance, fixed on the hotel-keeper (and this was most frightful), without any definite expression, seemed to dissolve the last grain of resolution in his character.

"You don't think, by any chance, that you have to do with ordinary people, do you?" inquired Mr. Jones, in his lifeless manner, which seemed to imply some sort of menace from beyond the grave.

"He's a gentleman," testified Martin Ricardo with a sudden snap of the lips, after which his moustaches stirred by themselves in an odd, feline manner.

"Oh, I wasn't thinking of that," said plain Mr. Jones, while Schomberg, dumb and planted heavily in his chair, looked from one to the other, leaning forward a little. "Of course I am that; but Ricardo attaches too much importance to a social advantage. What I mean, for instance, is that he, quiet and inoffensive as you see him sitting here, would think nothing of setting fire to this house of entertainment of yours. It would blaze like a box of matches. Think of that! It wouldn't advance your affairs much, would it?—whatever happened to us."

"Come, come, gentlemen," remonstrated Schomberg in a murmur. "This is very wild talk!"

"And you have been used to deal with tame people, haven't you? But we aren't tame. We once kept a whole angry town at bay for two days, and then we got away with our plunder. It was in Venezuela. Ask Martin here—he can tell you."

Instinctively Schomberg looked at Ricardo, who only passed the tip of his tongue over his lips with an uncanny sort of gusto, but did not offer to begin.

"Well, perhaps it would be a rather long story," Mr. Jones conceded after a short silence.

"I have no desire to hear it, I am sure," said Schomberg. "This isn't Venezuela. You wouldn't get away from here like that. But all this is silly talk of the worst sort. Do you mean to say you would make deadly trouble for the sake of a few guilders that you and that other"—eyeing Ricardo suspiciously, as one would look at a strange animal—"gentleman can win of an evening? 'Tisn't as if my customers were a lot of rich men with pockets full of cash. I wonder you take so much trouble and risk for so little money."

Schomberg's argument was met by Mr. Jones's statement that one must do something to kill time. Killing time was not forbidden. For the rest, being in a communicative mood, Mr. Jones said languidly and in a voice indifferent, as if issuing from a tomb, that he depended on himself, as if the world were still

one great, wild jungle without law. Martin was something like that, too—for reasons of his own.

All these statements Ricardo confirmed by short, inhuman grins. Schomberg lowered his eyes, for the sight of these two men intimidated him; but he was losing patience.

"Of course, I could see at once that you were two desperate characters—something like what you say. But what would you think if I told you that I am pretty near as desperate as you two gentlemen? 'Here's that Schomberg has an easy time running his hotel,' people think; and yet it seems to me I would just as soon let you rip me open and burn the whole show as not. There!"

A low whistle was heard. It came from Ricardo, and was derisive. Schomberg, breathing heavily, looked on the floor. He was really desperate. Mr. Jones remained languidly sceptical.

"Tut, tut! You have a tolerable business. You are perfectly tame; you—" He paused, then added in a tone of disgust: "You have a wife."

Schomberg tapped the floor angrily with his foot and uttered an indistinct, laughing curse.

"What do you mean by flinging that damned trouble at my head?" he cried. "I wish you would carry her off with you somewhere to the devil! I wouldn't run after you."

The unexpected outburst affected Mr. Jones strangely. He had a horrified recoil, chair and all, as if Schomberg had thrust a wriggling viper in his face.

"What's this infernal nonsense?" he muttered thickly. "What do you mean? How dare you?"

Ricardo chuckled audibly.

'I tell you I am desperate," Schomberg repeated. "I am as desperate as any man ever was. I don't care a hang what happens to me!"

"Well, then"—Mr. Jones began to speak with a quietly threatening effect, as if the common words of daily use had some other deadly meaning to his mind—"well, then, why should you make yourself ridiculously disagreeable to us? If you don't care, as you say, you might just as well let us have the key of that music-shed of yours for a quiet game; a modest bank—a dozen candles or so. It would be greatly appreciated by your clients, as far as I can judge from the way they betted on a game of écarté I had with that fair, baby-faced man—what's his name? They just yearn for a modest bank. And I am afraid Martin here would take it badly if you objected; but of course you won't. Think of the calls for drinks!"

Schomberg, raising his eyes at last, met the gleams in two dark caverns under Mr. Jones's devilish eyebrows, directed upon him impenetrably. He shuddered as if horrors worse than murder had been lurking there, and said, nodding towards Ricardo:

"I dare say he wouldn't think twice about sticking me, if he had you at his back! I wish I had sunk my launch, and gone to the bottom myself in her, before I boarded the steamer you came by. Ah, well, I've been already living in hell for weeks, so you don't make much difference. I'll let you have the concert-room—and hang the consequences. But what about the boy on late

duty? If he sees cards and actual money passing, he will be sure to blab, and it will be all over the town in no time."

A ghastly smile stirred the lips of Mr. Jones.

"Ah, I see you want to make a success of it. Very good. That's the way to get on. Don't let it disturb you. You chase all the Chinamen to bed early, and we'll get Pedro here every evening. He isn't the conventional waiter's cut, but he will do to run to and fro with the tray, while you sit here from nine to eleven serving out drinks and gathering the money."

"There will be three of them now," thought the unlucky Schomberg.

But Pedro, at any rate, was just a simple, straightforward brute, if a murderous one. There was no mystery about him, nothing uncanny, no suggestion of a stealthy, deliberate wild-cat turned into a man, or of an insolent spectre on leave from Hades, endowed with skin and bones and a subtle power of terror. Pedro with his fangs, his tangled beard and queer stare of his little bear's eyes was, by comparison, delightfully natural. Besides, Schomberg could no longer help himself.

"That will do very well," he assented mournfully. "But mind, gentlemen, if you had turned up here only three months ago—ay, less than three months ago—you would have found somebody very different from what I am now to talk to you. It's true. What do you think of that?"

"I scarcely know what to think. I should think it was a lie. You were probably as tame three months ago as you are now. You were born tame, like most people in the world."

Mr. Jones got up spectrally, and Ricardo imitated him with a snarl and a stretch. Schomberg, in a brown study, went on, as if to himself:

"There has been an orchestra here—eighteen women."

Mr. Jones let out an exclamation of dismay, and looked about as if the walls around him and the whole house had been infected with plague. Then he became very angry, and swore violently at Schomberg for daring to bring up such subjects. The hotel-keeper was too much surprised to get up. He gazed from his chair at Mr. Jones's anger, which had nothing spectral in it, but was not the more comprehensible for that.

"What's the matter?" he stammered out. "What subject? Didn't you hear me say it was an orchestra? There's nothing wrong in that. Well, there was a girl amongst them—" Schomberg's eyes went stony; he clasped his hands in front of his breast with such force that his knuckles came out white. "Such a girl! Tame, am I? I would have kicked everything to pieces about me for her. And she, of course . . . I am in the prime of life. . . . Then a fellow bewitched her—a vagabond, a false, lying, swindling, underhand, stick-at-nothing brute. Ah!"

His entwined fingers cracked as he tore his hands apart, flung out his arms, and leaned his forehead on them in a passion of fury. The other two looked at his shaking back—the attenuated Mr. Jones with mingled scorn and a sort of fear, Ricardo with the expression of a cat which sees a piece of fish in the pantry out of reach. Schomberg flung himself backwards. He was dry-eyed, but he gulped as if swallowing sobs.

"No wonder you can do with me what you like. You have no idea—just let me tell you of my trouble—"

"I don't want to know anything of your beastly trouble," said Mr. Jones, in his most lifelessly positive voice.

He stretched forth an arresting hand, and, as Schomberg remained open-mouthed, he walked out of the billiard-room in all the uncanniness of his thin shanks. Ricardo followed at his leader's heels; but he showed his teeth to Schomberg over his shoulder.

VI

From that evening dated those mysterious but significant phenomena in Schomberg's establishment which attracted Captain Davidson's casual notice when he dropped in, placid yet astute, in order to return Mrs. Schomberg's Indian shawl. And, strangely enough, they lasted some considerable time. It argued either honesty and bad luck or extraordinary restraint on the part of "plain Mr. Jones and Co." in their discreet operations with cards.

It was a curious and impressive sight, the inside of Schomberg's concert-hall, encumbered at one end by a great stack of chairs piled up on and about the musicians' platform, and lighted at the other by two dozen candles disposed about a long trestle table covered with green cloth. In the middle, Mr. Jones, a starved spectre turned into a banker, faced Ricardo, a rather nasty, slow-moving cat turned into a croupier. By contrast, the other faces round that table, anything between twenty and thirty, must have looked like collected samples of intensely artless, helpless humanity—pathetic in their innocent watch for the small turns of luck which indeed might have been serious enough for them. They had no notice to spare for the hairy Pedro, carrying a tray with the clumsiness of a creature caught in the woods and taught to walk on its hind legs.

As to Schomberg, he kept out of the way. He remained in the billiard-room, serving out drinks to the unspeakable Pedro with an air of not seeing the growing monster, of not knowing where the drinks went, of ignoring that there was such a thing as a music-room over there under the trees within fifty yards of the hotel. He submitted himself to the situation with a low-spirited stoicism compounded of fear and resignation. Directly the party had broken up (he could see dark shapes of the men drifting singly and in knots through the gate of the compound), he would withdraw out of sight behind a door not quite closed, in order to avoid meeting his two extraordinary guests; but he would watch through the crack their contrasted forms pass through the billiard-room and disappear on their way to bed. Then he would hear doors being slammed upstairs; and a profound silence would fall upon the whole house, upon his hotel appropriated, haunted by those insolently outspoken men provided with a whole armoury of weapons in their trunks. A profound silence. Schomberg sometimes could not resist the notion that he must be dreaming. Shuddering, he would pull himself together, and creep out, with movements strangely inappropriate to the Lieutenant-of-the-Reserve bearing by which he tried to keep up his self-respect before the world.

A great loneliness oppressed him. One after another he would extinguish the lamps, and move softly towards his bedroom, where Mrs. Schomberg

waited for him—no fit companion for a man of his ability and "in the prime of life." But that life, alas, was blighted. He felt it; and never with such force as when on opening the door he perceived that woman sitting patiently in a chair, her toes peeping out under the edge of her night-dress, an amazingly small amount of hair on her head drooping on the long stalk of scraggy neck, with that everlasting scared grin showing a blue tooth and meaning nothing—not even real fear. For she was used to him.

Sometimes he was tempted to screw the head off the stalk. He imagined himself doing it—with one hand, a twisting movement. Not seriously, of course. Just a simple indulgence for his exasperated feelings. He wasn't capable of murder. He was certain of that. And, remembering suddenly the plain speeches of Mr. Jones, he would think: "I suppose I *am* too tame for that"—quite unaware that he had murdered the poor woman morally years ago. He was too unintelligent to have the notion of such a crime. Her bodily presence was bitterly offensive, because of its contrast with a very different feminine image. And it was no use getting rid of her. She was a habit of years, and there would be nothing to put in her place. At any rate, he could talk to that idiot half the night if he chose.

That night he had been vapouring before her as to his intention to face his two guests and, instead of that inspiration he needed, had merely received the usual warning: "Be careful, Wilhelm." He did not want to be told to be careful by an imbecile female. What he needed was a pair of woman's arms which, flung round his neck, would brace him up for the encounter. Inspire him, he called it to himself.

He lay awake a long time; and his slumbers, when they came, were unsatisfactory and short. The morning light had no joy for his eyes. He listened dismally to the movements in the house. The Chinamen were unlocking and flinging wide the doors of the public rooms which opened on the verandah. Horrors! Another poisoned day to get through somehow! The recollection of his resolve made him feel actually sick for a moment. First of all the lordly, abandoned attitudes of Mr. Jones disconcerted him. Then there was his contemptuous silence. Mr. Jones never addressed himself to Schomberg with any general remarks, never opened his lips to him unless to say "Good morning"—two simple words which, uttered by that man, seemed a mockery of a threatening character. And, lastly, it was not a frank physical fear he inspired—for, as to that, even a cornered rat will fight—but a superstitious shrinking awe, something like an invincible repugnance to seek speech with a wicked ghost. That it was a daylight ghost, surprisingly angular in his attitudes, and for the most part spread out on three chairs, did not make it any easier. Daylight only made him a more weird, a more disturbing and unlawful apparition. Strangely enough in the evening, when he came out of his mute supineness, this unearthly side of him was less obtrusive. At the gaming-table, when actually handling the cards, it was probably sunk quite out of sight; but Schomberg, having made up his mind in ostrich-like fashion to ignore what was going on, never entered the desecrated music-room. He had never seen Mr. Jones in the exercise of his vocation—or perhaps it was only his trade.

"I will speak to him tonight," Schomberg said to himself, while he drank his

morning tea, in pyjamas, on the verandah, before the rising run had topped the trees of the compound, and while the undried dew still lay silvery on the grass, sparkled on the blossoms of the central flower-bed, and darkened the yellow gravel of the drive. "That's what I'll do. I won't keep out of sight tonight. I shall come out and catch him as he goes to bed carrying the cash-box."

After all, what was the fellow but a common desperado? Murderous? Oh, yes; murderous enough, perhaps—and the muscles of Schomberg's stomach had a quivering contraction under his airy attire. But even a common desperado would think twice or, more likely, a hundred times, before openly murdering an inoffensive citizen in a civilised, European-ruled town. He jerked his shoulders. Of course! He shuddered again, and paddled back to his room to dress himself. His mind was made up, and he would think no more about it; but still he had his doubts. They grew and unfolded themselves with the progress of the day, as some plants do. At times they made him perspire more than usual, and they did away with the possibility of his afternoon siesta. After turning over on his couch more than a dozen times, he gave up this mockery of repose, got up, and went downstairs.

It was between three and four o'clock, the hour of profound peace. The very flowers seemed to doze on their stalks set with sleepy leaves. Not even the air stirred, for the sea-breeze was not due till later. The servants were out of sight, catching naps in the shade somewhere behind the house. Mrs. Schomberg, in a dim upstairs room with closed jalousies, was elaborating those two long pendent ringlets which were such a feature of her hair-dressing for her afternoon duties. At that time no customers ever troubled the repose of the establishment. Wandering about his premises in profound solitude, Schomberg recoiled at the door of the billiard-room, as if he had seen a snake in his path. All alone with the billiards, the bare little tables, and a lot of untenanted chairs, Mr. Secretary Ricardo sat near the wall, performing with lightning rapidity something that looked like tricks with his own personal pack of cards, which he always carried about in his pocket. Schomberg would have backed out quietly if Ricardo had not turned his head. Having been seen, the hotel-keeper elected to walk in as the lesser risk of the two. The consciousness of his inwardly abject attitude towards these men caused him always to throw his chest out and assume a severe expression. Ricardo watched his approach, clasping the pack of cards in both hands.

"You want something, perhaps?" suggested Schomberg in his Lieutenant-of-the-Reserve voice.

Ricardo shook his head in silence and looked expectant. With him Schomberg exchanged at least twenty words every day. He was infinitely more communicative than his patron. At times he looked very much like an ordinary human being of his class; and he seemed to be in an amiable mood at that moment. Suddenly spreading some ten cards face downward in the form of a fan, he thrust them towards Schomberg.

"Come, man, take one quick!"

Schomberg was so surprised that he took one hurriedly, after a very per-

ceptible start. The eyes of Martin Ricardo gleamed phosphorescent in the half-light of the room screened from the heat and glare of the tropics.

"That's a king of hearts you've got," he chuckled, showing his teeth in a quick flash.

Schomberg, after looking at the card, admitted that it was, and laid it down on the table.

"I can make you take any card I like nine times out of ten," exulted the secretary, with a strange curl of his lips and a green flicker in his raised eyes.

Schomberg looked down at him dumbly. For a few seconds neither of them stirred; then Ricardo lowered his glance, and, opening his fingers, let the whole pack fall on the table. Schomberg sat down. He sat down because of the faintness in his legs, and for no other reason. His mouth was dry. Having sat down, he felt that he must speak. He squared his shoulders in parade style.

"You are pretty good at that sort of thing," he said.

"Practice makes perfect," replied the secretary.

His precarious amiability made it impossible for Schomberg to get away. Thus, from his very timidity, the hotel-keeper found himself engaged in a conversation the thought of which had filled him with apprehension. It must be said, in justice to Schomberg, that he concealed his funk very creditably. The habit of throwing out his chest and speaking in a severe voice stood him in good stead. With him, too, practice made perfect; and he would probably have kept it up to the end, to the very last moment, to the ultimate instant of breaking strain which would leave him grovelling on the floor. To add to his secret trouble, he was at a loss what to say. He found nothing else but the remark:

"I suppose you are fond of cards."

"What would you expect?" asked Ricardo in a simple, philosophical tone. "Is it likely I should not be?" Then, with sudden fire: "Fond of cards? Ay, passionately!"

The effect of this outburst was augmented by the quiet lowering of the eyelids, by a reserved pause as though this had been a confession of another kind of love. Schomberg cudgelled his brains for a new topic, but he could not find one. His usual scandalous gossip would not serve this turn. That desperado did not know any one anywhere within a thousand miles. Schomberg was almost compelled to keep to the subject.

"I suppose you've always been so—from your early youth."

Ricardo's eyes remained cast down. His fingers toyed absently with the pack on the table.

"I don't know that it was so early. I first got in the way of it playing for tobacco—in forecastles of ships, you know—common sailor games. We used to spend whole watches below at it, round a chest, under a slush lamp. We would hardly spare the time to get a bite of salt horse—neither eat nor sleep. We could hardly stand when the watches were mustered on deck. Talk of gambling!" He dropped the reminiscent tone to add the information, "I was bred to the sea from a boy, you know."

Schomberg had fallen into a reverie, but without losing the sense of impending calamity. The next words he heard were:

"I got on all right at sea, too. Worked up to be mate. I was mate of a schooner—a yacht, you might call her—a special good berth too, in the Gulf of Mexico, a soft job that you don't run across more than once in a lifetime. Yes, I was mate of her when I left the sea to follow him."

Ricardo tossed up his chin to indicate the room above; from which Schomberg, his wits painfully aroused by this reminder of Mr. Jones's existence, concluded that the latter had withdrawn into his bedroom. Ricardo, observing him from under lowered eyelids, went on:

"It so happened that we were shipmates."

"Mr. Jones, you mean? Is he a sailor too?"

Ricardo raised his eyelids at that.

"He's no more Mr. Jones than you are," he said with obvious pride. "He a sailor! That just shows your ignorance. But there! A foreigner can't be expected to know any better. I am an Englishman, and I know a gentleman at sight. I should know one drunk, in the gutter, in jail, under the gallows. There's a something—it isn't exactly the appearance, it's a—no use me trying to tell you. You ain't an Englishman; and if you were, you wouldn't need to be told."

An unsuspected stream of loquacity had broken its dam somewhere deep within the man, had diluted his fiery blood and softened his pitiless fibre. Schomberg experienced mingled relief and apprehension, as if suddenly an enormous savage cat had begun to wind itself about his legs in inexplicable friendliness. No prudent man under such circumstances would dare to stir. Schomberg didn't stir. Ricardo assumed an easy attitude, with an elbow on the table. Schomberg squared his shoulders afresh.

"I was employed, in that there yacht—schooner, whatever you call it—by ten gentlemen at once. That surprises you, eh? Yes, yes, ten. Leastwise there were nine of them gents good enough in their way, and one downright gentleman, and that was . . ."

Ricardo gave another upward jerk of his chin as much as to say: He! The only one.

"And no mistake," he went on. "I spotted him from the first day. How? Why? Ay, you may ask. Hadn't seen that many gentlemen in my life. Well, somehow I did. If you were an Englishman, you would—"

"What was your yacht?" Schomberg interrupted as impatiently as he dared; for this harping on nationality jarred on his already tried nerves. "What was the game?"

"You have a headpiece on you! Game! 'Xactly. That's what it was—the sort of silliness gentlemen will get up among themselves to play at adventure. A treasure-hunting expedition. Each of them put down so much money, you understand, to buy the schooner. Their agent in the city engaged me and the skipper. The greatest secrecy and all that. I reckon he had a twinkle in his eye all the time—and no mistake. But that wasn't our business. Let them bust their money as they like. The pity of it was that so little of it came our way. Just fair pay and no more. And damn any pay, much or little, anyhow—that's what I say!"

He blinked his eyes greenishly in the dim light. The heat seemed to have stilled everything in the world but his voice. He swore at large, abundantly, in snarling undertones, it was impossible to say why; then calmed down as inexplicably and went on, as a sailor yarns.

"At first there were only nine of them adventurous sparks; then, just a day or two before the sailing date, *he* turned up. Heard of it somehow, somewhere —I would say from some woman, if I didn't know him as I do. He would give any woman a ten-mile berth. He can't stand them. Or maybe in a flash bar. Or maybe in one of them grand clubs in Pall Mall. Anyway the agent netted him in all right—cash down, and only about four and twenty hours for him to get ready; but he didn't miss his ship. Not he! You might have called it a pier-head jump—for a gentleman. I saw him come along. Know the West India Docks, eh?"

Schomberg did not know the West India Docks. Ricardo looked at him pensively for a while, and then continued, as if such ignorance had to be disregarded.

"Our tug was already alongside. Two loafers were carrying his dunnage behind him. I told the dockmen at our moorings to keep all fast for a minute. The gangway was down already; but he made nothing of it. Up he jumps, one leap, swings his long legs over the rail, and there he is on board. They pass up his swell dunnage, and he puts his hand in his trousers pocket and throws all his small change on the wharf for them chaps to pick up. They were still promenading that wharf on all fours when we cast off. It was only then that he looked at me—quietly, you know; in a slow way. He wasn't so thin then as he is now; but I noticed he wasn't so young as he looked—not by a long chalk. He seemed to touch me inside somewhere. I went away pretty quick from there; I was wanted forward anyhow. I wasn't frightened. What should I be frightened for? I only felt touched—on the very spot. But Jee-miny, if anybody had told me we should be partners before the year was out—well, I would have—"

He swore a variety of strange oaths, some common, others quaintly horrible to Schomberg's ears, and all mere innocent exclamations of wonder at the shifts and changes of human fortune. Schomberg moved slightly in his chair. But the admirer and partner of "plain Mr. Jones" seemed to have forgotten Schomberg's existence for the moment. The stream of ingenuous blasphemy—some of it in bad Spanish—had run dry, and Martin Ricardo, connoisseur in gentlemen, sat dumb with a stony gaze as if still marvelling inwardly at the amazing elections, conjunctions and associations of events which influence man's pilgrimage on this earth.

At last Schomberg spoke tentatively:

"And so the—the gentleman, up there, talked you over into leaving a good berth?"

Ricardo started.

"Talked me over! Didn't need to talk me over. He just beckoned to me, and that was enough. By that time we were in the Gulf of Mexico. One night we were lying at anchor, close to a dry sandbank—to this day I am not sure where it was—off the Colombian coast or thereabouts. We were to start digging the

next morning, and all hands had turned in early, expecting a hard day with the shovels. Up he comes, and in his quiet, tired way of speaking—you can tell a gentleman by that as much as by anything else almost—up he comes behind me and says, just like that into my ear, in a manner: 'Well, and what do you think of our treasure hunt now?'

"I didn't even turn my head; 'xactly as I stood, I remained, and I spoke no louder than himself:

" 'If you want to know, sir, it's nothing but just damned tomfoolery.'

"We had, of course, been having short talks together at one time or another during the passage. I dare say he had read me like a book. There ain't much to me, except that I have never been tame, even when walking the pavement and cracking jokes and standing drinks to chums—ay, and to strangers, too. I would watch them lifting their elbows at my expense, or splitting their sides at my fun—I *can* be funny when I like, you bet!"

A pause for self-complacent contemplation of his own fun and generosity checked the flow of Ricardo's speech. Schomberg was concerned to keep within bounds the enlargement of his eyes, which he seemed to feel growing bigger in his head.

"Yes, yes," he whispered hastily.

"I would watch them and think: 'You boys don't know who I am. If you did—!' With girls, too. Once I was courting a girl. I used to kiss her behind the ear and say to myself: 'If you only knew who's kissing you, my dear, you would scream and bolt!' Ha! ha! Not that I wanted to do them any harm: but I felt the power in myself. Now, here we sit, friendly like, and that's all right. You aren't in my way. But I am not friendly to you. I just don't care. Some men do say that; but I really don't. You are no more to me one way or another than that fly there. Just so. I'd squash you or leave you alone. I don't care what I do."

If real force of character consists in overcoming our sudden weaknesses, Schomberg displayed plenty of that quality. At the mention of the fly, he reinforced the severe dignity of his attitude as one inflates a collapsing toy balloon with a great effort of breath. The easy-going, relaxed attitude of Ricardo was really appalling.

"That's so," he went on. "I am that sort of fellow. You wouldn't think it, would you? No. You have to be told. So I am telling you, and I dare say you only half believe it. But you can't say to yourself that I am drunk, stare at me as you may. I haven't had anything stronger than a glass of iced water all day. Takes a real gentleman to see through a fellow. Oh, yes—he spotted me. I told you we had a few talks at sea about one thing or another. And I used to watch him down the skylight, playing cards in the cuddy with the others. They had to pass the time away somehow. By the same token he caught me at it once, and it was then that I told him I was fond of cards—and generally lucky in gambling, too. Yes, he had sized me up. Why not? A gentleman's just like any other man—and something more."

It flashed through Schomberg's mind that these two were indeed well matched in their enormous dissimilarity, identical souls in different disguises.

"Says he to me"—Ricardo started again in a gossiping manner—"'I'm packed up. It's about time to go, Martin.'

"It was the first time he called me Martin. Says I:

"'Is that it, sir?'

"'You didn't think I was after that sort of treasure, did you? I wanted to clear out from home quietly. It's a pretty expensive way of getting a passage across, but it has served my turn.'

"I let him know very soon that I was game for anything, from pitch and toss to wilful murder, in his company.

"'Wilful murder?' says he in his quiet way. 'What the deuce is that? What are you talking about? People do get killed sometimes when they get in one's way, but that's self-defence—you understand?'

"I told him I did. And then I said I would run below for a minute, to ram a few of my things into a sailor's bag I had. I've never cared for a lot of dunnage; I believed in going about flying light when I was at sea. I came back and found him strolling up and down the deck, as if he were taking a breath of fresh air before turning in, like on any other evening.

"'Ready?'

"'Yes, sir.'

"He didn't even look at me. We had had a boat in the water astern ever since we came to anchor in the afternoon. He throws the stump of his cigar overboard.

"'Can you get the captain out on deck?' he asks.

"That was the last thing in the world I should have thought of doing. I lost my tongue for a moment.

"'I can try,' says I.

"'Well, then, I am going below. You get him up and keep him with you till I come back on deck. Mind! Don't let him go below till I return.'

"I could not help asking why he told me to rouse a sleeping man, when we wanted everybody on board to sleep sweetly till we got clear of the schooner. He laughs a little and says that I didn't see all the bearings of this business.

"'Mind,' he says, 'don't let him leave you till you see me come up again.' He puts his eyes close to mine. 'Keep him with you at all costs.'

"'And that means?' says I.

"'All costs to him—by every possible or impossible means. I don't want to be interrupted in my business down below. He would give me lots of trouble. I take you with me to save myself trouble in various circumstances; and you've got to enter on your work right away.'

"'Just so, sir,' says I; and he slips down the companion.

"With a gentleman you know at once where you are; but it was a ticklish job. The skipper was nothing to me one way or another, any more than you are at this moment, Mr. Schomberg. You may light your cigar or blow your brains out this minute, and I don't care a hang which you do, both or neither. To bring the skipper up was easy enough. I had only to stamp on the deck a few times over his head. I stamped hard. But how to keep him up when he got there?

"'Anything the matter, Mr. Ricardo?' I heard his voice behind me.

"There he was, and I hadn't thought of anything to say to him; so I didn't

turn around. The moonlight was brighter than many a day I could remember in the North Sea.

"'Why did you call me? What are you staring at out there, Mr. Ricardo?'

"He was deceived by my keeping my back to him. I wasn't staring at anything, but his mistake gave me a notion.

"'I am staring at something that looks like a canoe over there,' I said very slowly.

"The skipper got concerned at once. It wasn't any danger from the inhabitants, whoever they were.

"'Oh, hang it!' says he. 'That's very unfortunate.' He had hoped that the schooner being on the coast would not get known so very soon. 'Dashed awkward, with the business we've got in hand, to have a lot of niggers watching operations. But are you ceratin this is a canoe?'

"'It may be a drift-log,' I said; 'but I thought you had better have a look with your own eyes. You may make it out better than I can.'

"His eyes weren't anything as good as mine. But he says:

"'Certainly. Certainly. You did quite right.'

"And it's a fact I had seen some drift-logs at sunset. I saw what they were then and didn't trouble my head about them, forgot all about it till that very moment. Nothing strange in seeing drift-logs off a coast like that; and I'm hanged if the skipper didn't make one out in the wake of the moon. Strange what a little thing a man's life hangs on sometimes—a single word! Here you are, sitting unsuspicious before me, and you may let out something unbeknown to you that would settle your hash. Not that I have any ill-feeling. I have no feelings. If the skipper had said, 'Oh, bosh!' and had turned his back on me, he would not have gone three steps towards his bed; but he stood there and stared. And now the job was to get him off the deck when he was no longer wanted there.

"'We are just trying to make out if that object there is a canoe or a log,' says he to Mr. Jones.

"Mr. Jones had come up, lounging as carelessly as when he went below. While the skipper was jawing about boats and drifting logs, I asked by signs, from behind, if I hadn't better knock him on the head and drop him quietly overboard. The night was slipping by, and we had to go. It couldn't be put off till next night no more. No. No more. And do you know why?"

Schomberg made a slight negative sign with his head. This direct appeal annoyed him, jarred on the induced quietude of a great talker forced into the part of a listener and sunk in it as a man sinks into slumber. Mr. Ricardo struck a note of scorn.

"Don't know why? Can't you guess? No? Because the boss had got hold of the skipper's cash-box by then. See?"

VII

"A common thief!"

Schomberg bit his tongue just too late, and woke up completely as he saw Ricardo retract his lips in a cat-like grin; but the companion of "plain Mr. Jones" didn't alter his comfortable, gossiping attitude.

"Garn! What if he did want to see his money back, like any tame shopkeeper, hash-seller, gin-slinger, or ink-spewer does? Fancy a mud-turtle like you trying to pass an opinion on a gentleman! A gentleman isn't to be sized up so easily. Even I ain't up to it sometimes. For instance, that night, all he did was to waggle his finger at me. The skipper stops his silly chatter, surprised.

" 'Eh? What's the matter?' asks he.

"The matter! It was his reprieve—that's what was the matter.

" 'Oh, nothing, nothing,' says my gentleman. 'You are perfectly right. A log —nothing but a log.'

"Ha, ha! Reprieve, I call it, because if the skipper had gone on with his silly argument much longer he would have had to be knocked out of the way. I could hardly hold myself in on account of the precious minutes. However, his guardian angel put it into his head to shut up and go back to his bed. I was ramping mad about the lost time.

" 'Why didn't you let me give him one on his silly coconut, sir?' I asks.

" 'No ferocity, no ferocity,' he says, raising his finger at me as calm as you please.

"You can't tell how a gentleman takes that sort of thing. They don't lose their temper. It's bad form. You'll never see him lose his temper—not for anybody to see, anyhow. Ferocity ain't good form, either—that much I've learned by this time, and more, too. I've had that schooling that you couldn't tell by my face if I meant to rip you up the next minute—as of course I could do in less than a jiffy. I have a knife up the leg of my trousers."

"You haven't!" exclaimed Schomberg incredulously.

Mr. Ricardo was as quick as lightning in changing his lounging, idle attitude for a stooping position, and exhibiting the weapon with one jerk at the left leg of his trousers. Schomberg had just a view of it, strapped to a very hairy limb, when Mr. Ricardo, jumping up, stamped his foot to get the trouser-leg down, and resumed his careless pose with one elbow on the table.

"It's a more handy way to carry a tool than you would think," he went on, gazing abstractedly into Schomberg's wide-open eyes. "Suppose some little difference comes up during a game. Well, you stoop to pick up a dropped card, and when you come up—there you are ready to strike, or with the thing up your sleeve ready to throw. Or you just dodge under the table when there's some shooting coming. You wouldn't believe the damage a fellow with a knife under the table can do to ill-conditioned skunks that want to raise trouble, before they begin to understand what the screaming's about, and make a bolt—those that can, that is."

The roses of Schomberg's cheek at the root of his chestnut beard faded perceptibly. Ricardo chuckled faintly.

"But no ferocity—no ferocity! A gentleman knows. What's the good of getting yourself into a state? And no shirking necessity, either. No gentleman ever shirks. What I learn I don't forget. Why! We gambled on the plains, with a damn lot of cattlemen in ranches; played fair, mind—and then had to fight for our winnings afterwards as often as not. We've gambled on the hills and in the valleys and on the sea-shore, and out of sight of land—mostly fair.

Generally it's good enough. We began in Nicaragua first, after we left that schooner and her fool errand. There were one hundred and twenty-seven sovereigns and some Mexican dollars in that skipper's cash-box. Hardly enough to knock a man on the head for from behind, I must confess; but that the skipper had a narrow escape, the governor himself could not deny afterwards."

"'Do you want me to understand, sir, that you mind there being one life more or less on this earth?' I asked him, a few hours after we got away.

"'Certainly not,' says he.

"'Well, then, why did you stop me?'

"'There's a proper way of doing things. You'll have to learn to be correct. There's also unnecessary exertion. That must be avoided, too—if only for the look of the thing.' A gentleman's way of putting things to you,—and no mistake!

"At sunrise we got into a creek, to lie hidden in case the treasure-hunt party had a mind to take a spell hunting for us. And dash me if they didn't! We saw the schooner away out, running to leeward, with ten pairs of binoculars sweeping the sea, no doubt, on all sides. I advised the governor to give her time to beat back again before we made a start. So we stayed up that creek something like ten days, as snug as can be. On the seventh day we had to kill a man, though—the brother of this Pedro here. They were alligator-hunters, right enough. We got our lodgings in their hut. Neither the boss nor I could *habla Español*—speak Spanish, you know—much then. Dry bank, nice shade, jolly hammocks, fresh fish, good game, everything lovely. The governor chucked them a few dollars to begin with; but it was like boarding with a pair of savage apes, anyhow. By and by we noticed them talking a lot together. They had twigged the cash-box, and the leather portmanteaus, and my bag—a jolly lot of plunder to look at. They must have been saying to each other:

"'No one's ever likely to come looking for these two fellows, who seem to have fallen from the moon. Let's cut their throats.'

"Why, of course! Clear as daylight. I didn't need to spy one of them sharpening a devilish long knife behind some bushes, while glancing right and left with his wild eyes, to know what was in the wind. Pedro was standing by, trying the edge of another long knife. They thought we were away on our look-out at the mouth of the river, as was usual with us during the day. Not that we expected to see much of the schooner, but it was just as well to make certain, if possible; and then it was cooler out of the woods, in the breeze. Well, the governor was there right enough, lying comfortable on a rug, where he could watch the offing, but I had gone back to the hut to get a chew of tobacco out of my bag. I had not broken myself of the habit then, and I couldn't be happy unless I had a lump as big as a baby's fist in my cheek."

At the cannibalistic comparison, Schomberg muttered a faint sickly "don't." Ricardo hitched himself up in his seat and glanced down his outstretched legs complacently.

"I am tolerably light on my feet, as a general thing," he went on. "Dash me if I don't think I could drop a pinch of salt on a sparrow's tail, if I tried. Anyhow, they didn't hear me. I watched them two brown, hairy brutes not ten yards off. All they had on was white linen drawers rolled up on their

thighs. Not a word they said to each other. Antonio was down on his thick hams, busy rubbing the knife on a flat stone; Pedro was leaning against a small tree and passing his thumb along the edge of his blade. I got away quieter than a mouse, you bet.

"I didn't say anything to the boss then. He was leaning on his elbow on his rug, and didn't seem to want to be spoken to. He's like that—sometimes that familiar you might think he would eat out of your hand, and at others he would snub you sharper than a devil—but always quiet. Perfect gentleman, I tell you. I didn't bother him then; but I wasn't likely to forget them two fellows, so business-like with their knives. At that time we had only one revolver between us two—the governor's six-shooter, but loaded only in five chambers; and we had no more cartridges. He had left the box behind in a drawer in his cabin. Awkward! I had nothing but an old clasp-knife—no good at all for anything serious.

"In the evening we four sat round a bit of fire outside the sleeping-shed, eating broiled fish off plantain leaves, with roast yams for bread—the usual thing. The governor and I were on one side, and these two beauties, cross-legged on the other, grunting a word or two to each other now and then, hardly human speech at all, and their eyes down, fast on the ground. For the last three days we couldn't get them to look us in the face. Presently I began to talk to the boss quietly, just as I am talking to you now, careless like, and I told him all I had observed. He goes on picking up pieces of fish and putting them into his mouth as calm as anything. It's a pleasure to have anything to do with a gentleman. Never looked across at them once.

"'And now,' says I, yawning on purpose, 'we've got to stand watch at night, turn about, and keep our eyes skinned all day, too, and mind we don't get jumped upon suddenly.'

"'It's perfectly intolerable,' says the governor. 'And you with no weapon of any sort!'

"'I mean to stick pretty close to you, sir, from this on, if you don't mind,' says I.

"He just nods the least bit, wipes his fingers on the plantain leaf, puts his hand behind his back, as if to help himself to rise from the ground, snatches his revolver from under his jacket, and plugs a bullet plumb centre into Mr. Antonio's chest. See what it is to have to do with a gentleman. No confounded fuss, and things done out of hand. But he might have tipped me a wink or something. I nearly jumped out of my skin. Scared ain't in it! I didn't even know who had fired. Everything had been so still just before that the bang of the shot seemed the loudest noise I had ever heard. The honourable Antonio pitches forward—they always do, towards the shot; you must have noticed that yourself—yes, he pitches forward on to the embers, and all that lot of hair on his face and head flashes up like a pinch of gunpowder. Greasy, I expect; always scraping the fat off them alligators' hides—"

"Look here," exclaimed Schomberg violently, as if trying to burst some invisible bonds, "do you mean to say that all this happened?"

"No," said Ricardo coolly. "I am making it all up as I go along, just to help you through the hottest part of the afternoon. So down he pitches, his

nose on the red embers, and up jumps our handsome Pedro and I at the same time, like two Jacks-in-the-box. He starts to bolt away, with his head over his shoulder, and I, hardly knowing what I was doing, spring on his back. I had the sense to get my hands round his neck at once, and it's about all I could do to lock my fingers tight under his jaw. You saw the beauty's neck, didn't you? Hard as iron, too. Down we both went. Seeing this the governor puts his revolver in his pocket.

"'Tie his legs together, sir,' I yell. 'I'm trying to strangle him.'

"There was a lot of their fibre-lines lying about. I gave him a last squeeze and then got up.

"'I might have shot you,' says the governor, quite concerned.

"'But you are glad to have saved a cartridge, sir,' I tell him.

"My jump did save it. It wouldn't have done to let him get away in the dark like that, and have the beauty dodging around in the bushes, perhaps, with the rusty flint-lock gun they had. The governor owned up that the jump was the correct thing.

"'But he isn't dead,' says he, bending over him.

"Might as well hope to strangle an ox. We made haste to tie his elbows back, and then, before he came to himself, we dragged him to a small tree, sat him up, and bound him to it, not by the waist but by the neck—some twenty turns of small line round his throat and the trunk, finished off with a reef-knot under his ear. Next thing we did was to attend to the honourable Antonio, who was making a great smell frizzling his face on the red coals. We pushed and rolled him into the creek, and left the rest to the alligators.

"I was tired. That little scrap took it out of me something awful. The governor hadn't turned a hair. That's where a gentleman has the pull of you. He don't get excited. No gentleman does—or hardly ever. I fell asleep all of a sudden and left him smoking by the fire I had made up, his railway rug round his legs, as calm as if he were sitting in a first-class carriage. We hardly spoke ten words to each other after it was over, and from that day to this we have never talked of the business. I wouldn't have known he remembered it if he hadn't alluded to it when talking with you the other day—you know, with regard to Pedro.

"It surprised you, didn't it? That's why I am giving you this yarn of how he came to be with us, like a sort of dog—dashed sight more useful, though. You know how he can trot around with trays? Well, he could bring down an ox with his fist, at a word from the boss, just as cleverly. And fond of the governor! Oh, my word! More than any dog is of any man."

Schomberg squared his chest.

"Oh, and that's one of the things I wanted to mention to Mr. Jones," he said. "It's unpleasant to have that fellow round the house so early. He sits on the stairs at the back for hours before he is needed here, and frightens people so that the service suffers. The Chinamen—"

Ricardo nodded and raised his hand.

"When I first saw him he was fit to frighten a grizzly bear, let alone a Chinaman. He's become civilised now to what he once was. Well, that morning, first thing on opening my eyes, I saw him sitting there, tied up by the neck to the

tree. He was blinking. We spent the day watching the sea, and we actually made out the schooner working to windward, which showed that she had given us up. Good! When the sun rose again, I took a squint at our Pedro. He wasn't blinking. He was rolling his eyes, all white one minute and black the next, and his tongue was hanging out a yard. Being tied up short by the neck like this would daunt the arch devil himself—in time—in time, mind! I don't know but that even a real gentleman would find it difficult to keep a stiff lip to the end. Presently we went to work getting our boat ready. I was busying myself setting up the mast, when the governor passes the remark:

"'I think he wants to say something.'

"I had heard a sort of croaking going on for some time, only I wouldn't take any notice; but then I got out of the boat and went up to him, with some water. His eyes were red—red and black and half out of his head. He drank all the water I gave him, but he hadn't much to say for himself. I walked back to the governor.

"'He asks for a bullet in his head before we go,' I said. I wasn't at all pleased.

"'Oh, that's out of the question altogether,' says the governor.

"He was right there. Only four shots left, and ninety miles of wild coast to put behind us before coming to the first place where you could expect to buy revolver cartridges.

"'Anyhow,' I tells him, 'he wants to be killed some way or other, as a favour.'

"And then I go on setting the boat's mast. I didn't care much for the notion of butchering a man bound hand and foot and fastened by the neck besides. I had a knife then—the honourable Antonio's knife; and that knife is this knife."

Antonio gave his leg a resounding slap.

"First spoil in my new life," he went on with harsh joviality. "The dodge of carrying it down there I learned later. I carried it stuck in my belt that day. No, I hadn't much stomach for the job; but when you work with a gentleman of the real right sort you may depend on your feelings being seen through your skin. Says the governor suddenly:

"'It may even be looked upon as his right'—you hear a gentleman speaking there?—'but what do you think of taking him with us in the boat?'

"And the governor starts arguing that the beggar would be useful in working our way along the coast. We could get rid of him before coming to the first place that was a little civilised. I didn't want much talking over. Out I scrambled from the boat.

"'Ay, but will he be manageable, sir?'

"'Oh, yes. He's daunted. Go on, cut him loose—I take the responsibility.'

"'Right you are, sir.'

"He sees me come along smartly with his brother's knife in my hand—I wasn't thinking how it looked from his side of the fence, you know—and jiminy, it nearly killed him! He stared like a crazed bullock and began to sweat and twitch all over, something amazing. I was so surprised that I stopped to look at him. The drops were pouring over his eyebrows, down his beard, off his nose—and he gurgled. Then it struck me that he couldn't see what was in my mind. By favour or by right he didn't like to die when it came to it;

not in that way, anyhow. When I stepped round to get at the lashing, he let out a sort of soft bellow. Thought I was going to stick him from behind, I guess. I cut all the turns with one slash, and he went over on his side, flop, and started kicking with his tied legs. Laugh! I don't know what there was so funny about it, but I fairly shouted. What between my laughing and his wriggling, I had a job in cutting him free. As soon as he could feel his limbs he makes for the bank, where the governor was standing, crawls up to him on his hands and knees, and embraces his legs. Gratitude, eh? You could see that being allowed to live suited that chap down to the ground. The governor gets his legs away from him gently and just mutters to me:

"'Let's be off. Get him into the boat.'

"It was not difficult," continued Ricardo, after eyeing Schomberg fixedly for a moment. "He was ready enough to get into the boat, and—here he is. He would let himself be chopped into small pieces—with a smile, mind; with a smile!—for the governor. I don't know about him doing that much for me; but pretty near, pretty near. I did the tying up and the untying, but he could see who was the boss. And then he knows a gentleman. A dog knows a gentleman—any dog. It's only some foreigners that don't know; and nothing can teach them, either."

"And you mean to say," asked Schomberg, disregarding what might have been annoying for himself in the emphasis of the final remark, "you mean to say that you left steady employment at good wages for a life like this?"

"There!" began Ricardo quietly. "That's just what a man like you would say. You are that tame! I follow a gentleman. That ain't the same thing as to serve an employer. They give you wages as they'd fling a bone to a dog, and they expect you to be grateful. It's worse than slavery. You don't expect a slave that's bought for money to be grateful. And if you sell your work—what is it but selling your own self? You've got so many days to live and you sell them one after another. Hey? Who can pay me enough for my life? Ay! But they throw at you your week's money and expect you to say, 'thank you' before you pick it up."

He mumbled some curses, directed at employers generally, as it seemed, then blazed out:

"Work be damned! I ain't a dog walking on its hind legs for a bone; I am a man who's following a gentleman. There's a difference which you will never understand, Mr. Tame Schomberg."

He yawned slightly. Schomberg, preserving a military stiffness reinforced by a slight frown, had allowed his thoughts to stray away. They were busy detailing the image of a young girl—absent—gone—stolen from him. He became enraged. There was that rascal looking at him insolently. If the girl had not been shamefully decoyed away from him, he would not have allowed any one to look at him insolently. He would have made nothing of hitting that rogue between the eyes. Afterwards he would have kicked the other without hesitation. He saw himself doing it; and in sympathy with this glorious vision Schomberg's right foot and right arm moved convulsively.

At this moment he came out of his sudden reverie to note with alarm the wide-awake curiosity of Mr. Ricardo's stare.

"And so you go like this about the world, gambling," he remarked inanely, to cover his confusion. But Ricardo's stare did not change its character, and he continued vaguely:

"Here and there and everywhere." He pulled himself together, squared his shoulders. "Isn't it very precarious?" he said firmly.

The word precarious seemed to be effective, because Ricardo's eyes lost their dangerously interested expression.

"No, not so bad," Ricardo said, with indifference. "It's my opinion that men will gamble as long as they have anything to put on a card. Gamble? That's nature. What's life itself? You never know what may turn up. The worst of it is that you never can tell exactly what sort of cards you are holding yourself. What's trumps?—that is the question. See? Any man will gamble if only he's given a chance, for anything or everything. You too—"

"I haven't touched a card now for twenty years," said Schomberg in an austere tone.

"Well, if you got your living that way you would be no worse than you are now, selling drinks to people—beastly beer and spirits, rotten stuff fit to make an old he-goat yell if you poured it down its throat. Pooh! I can't stand the confounded liquor. Never could. A whiff of neat brandy in a glass makes me feel sick. Always did. If everybody was like me, liquor would be going a-begging. You think it's funny in a man, don't you?"

Schomberg made a vague gesture of toleration. Ricardo hitched up in his chair and settled his elbow afresh on the table.

"French siros I must say I do like. Saigon's the place for them. I see you have siros in the bar. Hang me if I ain't getting dry, conversing like this with you. Come, Mr. Schomberg, be hospitable, as the governor says."

Schomberg rose and walked with dignity to the counter. His footsteps echoed loudly on the floor of polished boards. He took down a bottle labelled *Sirop de Groseille*. The little sounds he made, the clink of glass, the gurgling of the liquid, the pop of the soda-water cork had a preternatural sharpness. He came back carrying a pink and glistening tumbler. Mr. Ricardo had followed his movements with oblique, coyly expectant yellow eyes, like a cat watching the preparation of a saucer of milk; and the satisfied sound after he had drunk might have been a slightly modified form of purring, very soft and deep in his throat. It affected Schomberg unpleasantly as another example of something inhuman in those men wherein lay the difficulty of dealing with them. A spectre, a cat, an ape—there was a pretty association for a mere man to remonstrate with, he reflected with an inward shudder; for Schomberg had been overpowered, as it were, by his imagination, and his reason could not react against that fanciful view of his guests. And it was not only their appearance. The morals of Mr. Ricardo seemed to him to be pretty much the morals of a cat. Too much. What sort of argument could a mere man offer to a . . . or to a spectre, either! What the morals of a spectre could be, Schomberg had no idea. Something dreadful, no doubt. Compassion certainly had no place in them. As to the ape—well, everybody knew what an ape was. It had no morals. Nothing could be more hopeless.

Outwardly, however, having picked up the cigar which he had laid aside

to get the drink, with his thick fingers, one of them ornamented by a gold ring, Schomberg smoked with moody composure. Facing him, Ricardo blinked slowly for a time, then closed his eyes altogether, with the placidity of the domestic cat dozing on the hearth-rug. In another moment he opened them very wide, and seemed surprised to see Schomberg there.

"You're having a very slack time today, aren't you?" he observed. "But then this whole town is confoundedly slack, anyhow; and I've never faced such a slack party at a table before. Come eleven o'clock, they begin to talk of breaking up. What's the matter with them? Want to go to bed so early, or what?"

"I reckon you don't lose a fortune by their wanting to go to bed," said Schomberg, with sombre sarcasm.

"No," admitted Ricardo, with a grin that stretched his thin mouth from ear to ear, giving a sudden glimpse of his white teeth. "Only, you see, when I once start, I would play for nuts, for parched peas, for any rubbish. I would play them for their souls. But these Dutchmen aren't any good. They never seem to get warmed up properly, win or lose. I've tried them both ways, too. Hang them for a beggarly, bloodless lot of animated cucumbers!"

"And if anything out of the way was to happen, they would be just as cool in locking you and your gentleman up," Schomberg snarled unpleasantly.

"Indeed!" said Ricardo slowly, taking Schomberg's measure with his eyes. "And what about you?"

"You talk mighty big," burst out the hotel-keeper. "You talk of ranging all over the world and doing great things, and taking fortune by the scruff of the neck, but here you stick at this miserable business!"

"It isn't much of a lay—that's a fact," admitted Ricardo unexpectedly.

Schomberg was red in the face with audacity.

"I call it paltry," he spluttered.

"That's how it looks. Can't call it anything else." Ricardo seemed to be in an accommodating mood. "I should be ashamed of it myself, only you see the governor is subject to fits—"

"Fits!" Schomberg cried out, but in a low tone. "You don't say so!" He exulted inwardly, as if this disclosure had in some way diminished the difficulty of the situation. "Fits! That's a serious thing, isn't it? You ought to take him to the civil hospital—a lovely place."

Ricardo nodded slightly, with a faint grin.

"Serious enough. Regular fits of laziness, I call them. Now and then he lays down on me like this, and there's no moving him. If you think I like it, you're a long way out. Generally speaking, I can talk him over. I know how to deal with a gentleman. I am no daily-bread slave. But when he has said, 'Martin, I am bored,' then look out! There's nothing to do but to shut up, confound it!"

Schomberg, very much cast down, had listened open-mouthed.

"What's the cause of it?" he asked. "Why is he like this? I don't understand."

"I think I do," said Ricardo. "A gentleman, you know, is not such a simple

person as you or I; and not so easy to manage, either. If only I had something to lever him out with!"

"What do you mean, to lever him out with?" muttered Schomberg hopelessly.

Ricardo was impatient with this denseness.

"Don't you understand English? Look here! I couldn't make this billiard-table move an inch if I talked to it from now till the end of days—could I? Well, the governor is like that, too, when the fits are on him. He's bored. Nothing's worth while, nothing's good enough, that's mere sense. But if I saw a capstan bar lying about here, I would soon manage to shift that billiard-table of yours a good many inches. And that's all there is to it."

He rose noiselessly, stretched himself, supple and stealthy, with curious sideways movements of his head and unexpected elongations of his thick body, glanced out of the corners of his eyes in the direction of the door, and finally leaned back against the table, folding his arms on his breast comfortably, in a completely human attitude.

"That's another thing you can tell a gentleman by—his freakishness. A gentleman ain't accountable to nobody, any more than a tramp on the roads. He ain't got to keep time. The governor got like this once in a one-horse Mexican pueblo on the uplands, away from everywhere. He lay all day long in a dark room—"

"Drunk?" This word escaped Schomberg by inadvertence, at which he became frightened. But the devoted secretary seemed to find it natural.

"No, that never comes on together with this kind of fit. He just lay there full length on a mat, while a ragged, bare-legged boy that he had picked up in the street sat in the *patio,* between two oleanders near the open door of his room, strumming on a guitar and singing *tristes* to him from morning to night. You know *tristes*—twang, twang, twang, aouh, hoo! Chroo, yah!"

Schomberg uplifted his hands in distress. This tribute seemed to flatter Ricardo. His mouth twitched grimly.

"Like that—enough to give colic to an ostrich, eh? Awful. Well, there was a cook there who loved me—an old fat Negro woman with spectacles. I used to hide in the kitchen and turn her to, to make me *dulces*—sweet things, you know, mostly eggs and sugar—to pass the time away. I am like a kid for sweet things. And, by the way, why don't you ever have a pudding at your tablydott, Mr. Schomberg? Nothing but fruit, morning, noon, and night. Sickening! What do you think a fellow is—a wasp?"

Schomberg disregarded the injured tone.

"And how long did that fit, as you call it, last?" he asked anxiously.

"Weeks, months, years, centuries, it seemed to me," returned Mr. Ricardo with feeling. "Of an evening the governor would stroll out into the *sala* and fritter his life away playing cards with the *juez* of the place—a little Dago with a pair of black whiskers—ekarty, you know, a quick French game, for small change. And the *comandante,* a one-eyed, half-Indian, flat-nosed ruffian and I, we had to stand around and bet on their hands. It was awful!"

"Awful," echoed Schomberg, in a Teutonic throaty tone of despair. "Look here, I need your rooms."

"To be sure. I have been thinking that for some time past," said Ricardo indifferently.

"I was mad when I listened to you. This must end!"

"I think you are mad yet," said Ricardo, not even unfolding his arms or shifting his attitude an inch. He lowered his voice to add: "And if I thought you had been to the police, I would tell Pedro to catch you round the waist and break your fat neck by jerking your head backward—*snap!* I saw him do it to a big buck nigger who was flourishing a razor in front of the governor. It can be done. You hear a low crack, that's all—and the man drops down like a limp rag."

Not even Ricardo's head, slightly inclined on the left shoulder, had moved; but when he ceased the greenish irises which had been staring out of doors glided into the corners of his eyes nearest to Schomberg and stayed there with a coyly voluptuous expression.

VIII

Schomberg felt desperation, that lamentable substitute for courage, ooze out of him. It was not so much the threat of death as the weirdly circumstantial manner of its declaration which affected him. A mere "I'll murder you," however ferocious in tone and earnest in purpose, he could have faced; but before this novel mode of speech and procedure, his imagination being very sensitive to the unusual, he collapsed as if indeed his moral neck had been broken—snap!

"Go to the police? Of course not. Never dreamed of it. Too late now. I've let myself be mixed up in this. You got my consent while I wasn't myself. I explained it to you at the time."

Ricardo's eyes glided gently off Schomberg to stare far away.

"Ay! Some trouble with a girl. But that's nothing to us."

"Naturally. What I say is, what's the good of all that savage talk to me?" A bright argument occurred to him. "It's out of proportion; for even if I were fool enough to go to the police now, there's nothing serious to complain about. It would only mean deportation for you. They would put you on board the first westbound steamer to Singapore." He had become animated. "Out of this to the devil," he added between his teeth for his own private satisfaction.

Ricardo made no comment, and gave no sign of having heard a single word. This discouraged Schomberg, who had looked up hopefully.

"Why do you want to stick here?" he cried. "It can't pay you people to fool around like this. Didn't you worry just now about moving your governor? Well, the police would move him for you; and from Singapore you can go on to the east coast of Africa."

"I'll be hanged if the fellow isn't up to that silly trick!" was Ricardo's comment, spoken in an ominous tone which recalled Schomberg to the realities of his position.

"No! No!" he protested. "It's a manner of speaking. Of course I wouldn't."

"I think that trouble about the girl has really muddled your brains, Mr. Schomberg. Believe me, you had better part friends with us; for, deportation or no deportation, you'll be seeing one of us turning up before long to pay you off for any nasty dodge you may be hatching in that fat head of yours."

"Gott im Himmel!" groaned Schomberg. "Will nothing move him out? Will he stop here immer—I mean always? Suppose I were to make it worth your while, couldn't you—"

"No," Ricardo interrupted. "I couldn't, unless I had something to lever him out with. I've told you that before."

"An inducement?" muttered Schomberg.

"Ay. The east coast of Africa isn't good enough. He told me the other day that it will have to wait till he is ready for it; and he may not be ready for a long time, because the east coast can't run away, and no one is likely to run off with it."

These remarks, whether considered as truisms or as depicting Mr. Jones's mental state, were distinctly discouraging to the long-suffering Schomberg; but there is truth in the well-known saying that places the darkest hour before the dawn. The sound of words, apart from the context, has its power; and these two words, "run off," had a special affinity to the hotel-keeper's haunting idea. It was always present in his brain, and now it came forward evoked by a purely fortuitous expression. No, nobody could run off with a continent; but Heyst had run off with the girl!

Ricardo could have had no conception of the cause of Schomberg's changed expression. Yet it was noticeable enough to interest him so much that he stopped the careless swinging of his leg and said, looking at the hotel-keeper:

"There's not much use arguing against that sort of talk—is there?"

Schomberg was not listening.

"I could put you on another track," he said slowly, and stopped, as if suddenly choked by an unholy emotion of intense eagerness combined with fear of failure. Ricardo waited, attentive, yet not without a certain contempt.

"On the track of a man!" Schomberg uttered convulsively, and paused again, consulting his rage and his conscience.

"The man in the moon, eh?" suggested Ricardo, in a jeering murmur.

Schomberg shook his head.

"It would be nearly as safe to rook him as if he were the man in the moon. You go and try. It isn't so very far."

He reflected. These men were thieves and murderers as well as gamblers. Their fitness for purposes of vengeance was appallingly complete. But he preferred not to think of it in detail. He put it to himself summarily that he would be paying Heyst out and would, at the same time, relieve himself of these men's oppression. He had only to let loose his natural gift for talking scandalously about his fellow creatures. And in this case his great practice in it was assisted by hate, which, like love, has an eloquence of its own. With the utmost ease he portrayed for Ricardo, now seriously attentive, a Heyst fattened by years of private and public rapines, the murderer of Morrison, the swindler of many shareholders, a wonderful mixture of craft and impudence, of deep purposes and simple wiles, of mystery and futility. In this exercise of his natural function Schomberg revived, the colour coming back to his face, loquacious, florid, eager, his manliness set off by the military bearing.

"That's the exact story. He was seen hanging about this part of the world for years, spying into everybody's business; but I am the only one who has

seen through him from the first—contemptible, double-faced, stick-at-nothing, dangerous fellow."

"Dangerous, is he?"

Schomberg came to himself at the sound of Ricardo's voice.

"Well, you know what I mean," he said uneasily. "A lying, circumventing, soft-spoken, polite, stuck-up rascal. Nothing open about him."

Mr. Ricardo had slipped off the table, and was prowling about the room in an oblique, noiseless manner. He flashed a grin at Schomberg in passing, and a snarling:

"Ah! H'm!"

"Well, what more dangerous do you want?" argued Schomberg. "He's in no way a fighting man, I believe," he added negligently.

"And you say he has been living alone here?"

"Like the man in the moon," answered Schomberg readily. "There's no one that cares a rap what becomes of him. He has been lying low, you understand, after bagging all that plunder."

"Plunder, eh? Why didn't he go home with it?" inquired Ricardo.

The henchman of "plain Mr. Jones" was beginning to think that this was something worth looking into. And he was pursuing truth in the manner of men of sounder morality and purer intentions than his own; that is he pursued it in the light of his own experience and prejudices. For facts, whatever their origin (and God only knows where they come from), can be only tested by our own particular suspicions. Ricardo was suspicious all round. Schomberg, such is the tonic power of recovered self-esteem, Schomberg retorted fearlessly:

"Go home? Why don't *you* go home? To hear your talk, you must have made a pretty considerable pile going round winning people's money. You ought to be ready by this time."

Ricardo stopped to look at Schomberg with surprise.

"You think yourself very clever, don't you?" he said.

Schomberg just then was so conscious of being clever that the snarling irony left him unmoved. There was positively a smile in his noble Teutonic beard, the first smile for weeks. He was in a felicitous vein.

"How do you know that he wasn't thinking of going home? As a matter of fact, he was on his way home."

"And how do I know that you are not amusing yourself by spinning out a blamed fairy tale?" interrupted Ricardo roughly. "I wonder at myself listening to the silly rot!"

Schomberg received this turn of temper unmoved. He did not require to be very subtly observant to notice that he had managed to arouse some sort of feeling, perhaps of greed, in Ricardo's breast.

"You won't believe me? Well! You can ask anybody that comes here if that —that Swede hadn't got as far as this house on his way home. Why should he turn up here if not for that? You ask anybody."

"Ask, indeed!" returned the other. "Catch me asking at large about a man I mean to drop on! Such jobs must be done on the quiet—or not at all."

The peculiar intonation of the last phrase touched the nape of Schomberg's

neck with a chill. He cleared his throat slightly and looked away as though he had heard something indelicate. Then, with a jump as it were:

"Of course he didn't tell me. Is it likely? But haven't I got eyes? Haven't I got my common sense to tell me? I can see through people. By the same token, he called on the Tesmans. Why did he call on the Tesmans two days running, eh? You don't know? You can't tell?"

He waited complacently till Ricardo had finished swearing quite openly at him for a confounded chatterer, and then went on:

"A fellow doesn't go to a counting-house in business hours for a chat about the weather, two days running. Then why? To close his account with them one day, and to get his money out the next! Clear, what?"

Ricardo, with his trick of looking one way and moving another, approached Schomberg slowly.

"To get his money?" he purred.

"Gewiss," snapped Schomberg with impatient superiority. "What else? That is, only the money he had with the Tesmans. What he has buried or put away on the island, devil only knows. When you think of the lot of hard cash that passed through that man's hands, for wages and stores and all that—and he's just a cunning thief, I tell you." Ricardo's hard stare discomposed the hotel-keeper, and he added in an embarrassed tone: "I mean a common, sneaking thief—no account at all. And he calls himself a Swedish baron, too! Tfui!"

"He's a baron, is he? That foreign nobility ain't much," commented Mr. Ricardo seriously. "And then, what? He hung about here?"

"Yes, he hung about," said Schomberg, making a wry mouth. "He—hung about. That's it. Hung—"

His voice died out. Curiosity was depicted in Ricardo's countenance.

"Just like that; for nothing? And then turned about and went back to that island again?"

"And went back to that island again," Schomberg echoed lifelessly, fixing his gaze on the floor.

"What's the matter with you?" asked Ricardo with genuine surprise. "What is it?"

Schomberg, without looking up, made an impatient gesture. His face was crimson, and he kept it lowered. Ricardo went back to the point.

"Well, but how do you account for it? What was his reason? What did he go back to the island for?"

"Honeymoon!" spat out Schomberg viciously.

Perfectly still, his eyes downcast, he suddenly, with no preliminary stir, hit the table with his fist a blow which caused the utterly unprepared Ricardo to leap aside. And only then did Schomberg look up with a dull, resentful expression.

Ricardo stared hard for a moment, spun on his heel, walked to the end of the room, came back smartly and muttered a profound "Ay! Ay!" above Schomberg's rigid head. That the hotel-keeper was capable of a great moral effort was proved by a gradual return of his severe Lieutenant-of-the-Reserve manner.

"Ay, Ay!" repeated Ricardo more deliberately than before, and as if after a further survey of the circumstances. "I wish I hadn't asked you, or that you

had told me a lie. It don't suit me to know that there's a woman mixed up in this affair. What's she like? It's the girl you—"

"Leave off!" muttered Schomberg, utterly pitiful behind his stiff military front.

"Ay, ay!" Ricardo ejaculated for the third time, more and more enlightened and perplexed. "Can't bear to talk about it—so bad as that? And yet I would bet she isn't a miracle to look at."

Schomberg made a gesture as if he didn't know, as if he didn't care. Then he squared his shoulders and frowned at vacancy.

"Swedish baron—h'm!" Ricardo continued meditatively. "I believe the governor would think that business worth looking up, quite, if I put it to him properly. The governor likes a duel, if you will call it so; but I don't know a man that can stand up to him on the square. Have you ever seen a cat play with a mouse? It's a pretty sight."

Ricardo, with his voluptuously gleaming eyes and the coy expression, looked so much like a cat that Schomberg would have felt all the alarm of a mouse if other feelings had not had complete possession of his breast.

"There are no lies between you and me," he said, more steadily than he thought he could speak.

"What's the good now? He funks women. In that Mexican pueblo where we lay grounded on our beef-bones, so to speak. I used to go to dances of an evening. The girls there would ask me if the English *caballero* in the *posada* was a monk in disguise, or if he had taken a vow to the *sanctissima madre* not to speak to a woman or whether— You can imagine what fairly free-spoken girls will ask when they come to the point of not caring what they say; and it used to vex me. Yes, the governor funks facing women."

"One woman?" interjected Schomberg in guttural tones.

"One may be more awkward to deal with than two, or two hundred, for that matter. In a place that's full of women you needn't look at them unless you like; but if you go into a room where there is only one woman, young or old, pretty or ugly, you have got to face her. And, unless you are after her, then—the governor is right enough—she's in the way."

"Why notice them?" muttered Schomberg. "What can they do?"

"Make a noise, if nothing else," opined Mr. Ricardo curtly, with the distaste of a man whose path is a path of silence; for indeed, nothing is more odious than a noise when one is engaged in a weighty and absorbing card game. "Noise, noise, my friend," he went on forcibly; "confounded screeching about something or other, and I like it no more than the governor does. But with the governor there's something else besides. He can't stand them at all."

He paused to reflect on this psychological phenomenon, and as no philosopher was at hand to tell him that there is no strong sentiment without some terror, as there is no real religion without a little fetichism, he emitted his own conclusion, which surely could not go to the root of the matter.

"I'm hanged if I don't think they are to him what liquor is to me. Brandy—pah!"

He made a disgusted face, and produced a genuine shudder. Schomberg listened to him in wonder. It looked as if the very scoundrelism of that—that

Swede would protect him; the spoil of his iniquity standing between the thief and the retribution.

"That's so, old buck." Ricardo broke the silence after contemplating Schomberg's mute dejection with a sort of sympathy. "I don't think this trick will work."

"But that's silly," whispered the man deprived of the vengeance which he had seemed already to hold in his hand, by a mysterious and exasperating idiosyncrasy.

"Don't you set yourself to judge a gentleman." Ricardo without anger administered a moody rebuke. "Even I can't understand the governor thoroughly. And I am an Englishman and his follower. No; I don't think I care to put it before him, sick as I am of staying here."

Ricardo could not be more sick of staying than Schomberg was of seeing him stay. Schomberg believed so firmly in the reality of Heyst as created by his own power of false inferences, of his hate, of his love of scandal, that he could not contain a stifled cry of conviction as sincere as most of our convictions, the disguised servants of our passions, can appear at a supreme moment.

"It would have been like going to pick up a nugget of a thousand pounds, or two or three times as much, for all I know. No trouble, no—"

"The petticoat's the trouble," Ricardo struck in.

He had resumed his noiseless, feline, oblique prowling, in which an observer would have detected a new character of excitement, such as a wild animal of the cat species, anxious to make a spring, might betray. Schomberg saw nothing. It would probably have cheered his drooping spirits; but in a general way he preferred not to look at Ricardo. Ricardo, however, with one of his slanting, gliding, restless glances, observed the bitter smile on Schomberg's bearded lips —the unmistakable smile of ruined hopes.

"You are a pretty unforgiving sort of chap," he said, stopping for a moment with an air of interest. "Hang me if I ever saw anybody look so disappointed! I bet you would send black plague to that island if you only knew how—eh, what? Plague too good for them? Ha, ha, ha!"

He bent down to stare at Schomberg who sat unstirring with stony eyes and set features, and apparently deaf to the rasping derision of that laughter so close to his red fleshy ear.

"Black plague too good for them, ha, ha!" Ricardo pressed the point on the tormented hotel-keeper. Schomberg kept his eyes down obstinately.

"I don't wish any harm to the girl," he muttered.

"But she did bolt from you? A fair bilk? Come!"

"Devil only knows what that villainous Swede had done to her—what he promised her, how he frightened her. She couldn't have cared for him, I know." Schomberg's vanity clung to the belief in some atrocious, extraordinary means of seduction employed by Heyst. "Look how he bewitched that poor Morrison," he murmured.

"Ah, Morrison—got all his money, what?"

"Yes—and his life."

"Terrible fellow, that Swedish baron! How is one to get at him?"

Schomberg exploded.

"Three against one! Are you shy? Do you want me to give you a letter of introduction?"

"You ought to look at yourself in a glass," Ricardo said quietly. "Dash me if you don't get a stroke of some kind presently. And this is the fellow who says women can do nothing! That one will do for you, unless you manage to forget her."

"I wish I could," Schomberg admitted earnestly. "And it's all the doing of that Swede. I don't get enough sleep, Mr. Ricardo. And then, to finish me off, you gentlemen turn up . . . as if I hadn't enough worry."

"That's done you good," suggested the secretary with ironic seriousness. "Takes your mind off that silly trouble. At your age too."

He checked himself, as if in pity, and changing his tone:

"I would really like to oblige you while doing a stroke of business at the same time."

"A good stroke," insisted Schomberg, as if it were mechanically. In his simplicity he was not able to give up the idea which had entered his head. An idea must be driven out by another idea, and with Schomberg ideas were rare and therefore tenacious. "Minted gold," he murmured with a sort of anguish.

Such an expressive combination of words was not without effect on Ricardo. Both these men were amenable to the influence of verbal suggestions. The secretary of "plain Mr. Jones" sighed and murmured:

"Yes. But how is one to get at it?"

"Being three to one," said Schomberg, "I suppose you could get it for the asking."

"One would think the fellow lived next door," Ricardo growled impatiently. "Hang it all, can't you understand a plain question? I have asked you the way."

Schomberg seemed to revive.

"The way?"

The torpor of deceived hopes underlying his superficial changes of mood had been pricked by these words which seemed pointed with purpose.

"The way is over the water, of course," said the hotel-keeper. "For people like you, three days in a good, big boat is nothing. It's no more than a little outing, a bit of a change. At this season the Java Sea is a pond. I have an excellent, safe boat—a ship's life-boat—carry thirty, let alone three, and a child could handle her. You wouldn't get a wet face at this time of the year. You might call it a pleasure-trip."

"And yet, having this boat, you didn't go after her yourself—or after him? Well, you are a fine fellow for a disappointed lover."

Schomberg gave a start at the suggestion.

"I am not three men," he said sulkily, as the shortest answer of the several he could have given.

"Oh, I know your sort," Ricardo let fall negligently. "You are like most people—or perhaps just a little more peaceable than the rest of the buying and selling gang that bosses this rotten show. Well, well, you respectable citizen," he went on, "let us go thoroughly into the matter."

When Schomberg had been made to understand that Mr. Jones's henchman was ready to discuss, in his own words, "this boat of yours, with courses and distances," and such concrete matters of no good augury to that villainous Swede, he recovered his soldierly bearing, squared his shoulders, and asked in his military manner:

"You wish, then, to proceed with the business?"

Ricardo nodded. He had a great mind to, he said. A gentleman had to be humoured as much as possible; but he must be managed, too, on occasions, for his own good. And it was the business of the right sort of "follower" to know the proper time and the proper methods of that delicate part of his duty. Having exposed this theory Ricardo proceeded to the application.

"I've never actually lied to him," he said, "and I ain't going to now. I shall just say nothing about the girl. He will have to get over the shock the best he can. Hang it all! Too much humouring won't do here."

"Funny thing," Schomberg observed crisply.

"Is it? Ay, you wouldn't mind taking a woman by the throat in some dark corner and nobody by, I bet!"

Ricardo's dreadful, vicious, cat-like readiness to get his claws out at any moment startled Schomberg as usual. But it was provoking too.

"And you?" he defended himself. "Don't you want me to believe you are up to anything?"

"I, my boy?" Oh, yes. I am not that gentleman; neither are you. Take 'em by the throat or chuck 'em under the chin is all one to me—almost," affirmed Ricardo, with something obscurely ironical in his complacency. "Now, as to this business. A three days' jaunt in a good boat isn't a thing to frighten people like us. You are right, so far; but there are other details."

Schomberg was ready enough to enter into details. He explained that he had a small plantation, with a fairly habitable hut on it, on Madura. He proposed that his guest should start from town in his boat, as if going for an excursion to that rural spot. The custom-house people on the quay were used to see his boat go off on such trips.

From Madura, after some repose and on a convenient day, Mr. Jones and party would make the real start. It would all be plain sailing. Schomberg undertook to provision the boat. The greatest hardship the voyagers need apprehend would be a mild shower of rain. At that season of the year there were no serious thunderstorms.

Schomberg's heart began to thump as he saw himself nearing his vengeance. His speech was thick but persuasive.

"No risk at all—none whatever!"

Ricardo dismissed these assurances of safety with an impatient gesture. He was thinking of other risks.

"The getting away from here is all right; but we may be sighted at sea, and that may bring awkwardness later on. A ship's boat with three white men in her, knocking about out of sight of land, is bound to make talk. Are we likely to be seen on our way?"

"No, unless by native craft," said Schomberg.

Ricardo nodded, satisfied. Both these white men looked on native life as a mere play of shadows. A play of shadows the dominant race could walk through unaffected and disregarded in the pursuit of its incomprehensible aims and needs. No. Native craft did not count, of course. It was an empty, solitary part of the sea, Schomberg expounded further. Only the Ternate mail-boat crossed that region about the 8th of every month, regularly—nowhere near the island, though. Rigid, his voice hoarse, his heart thumping, his mind concentrated on the success of his plan, the hotel-keeper multiplied words, as if to keep as many of them as possible between himself and the murderous aspect of his purpose.

"So, if you gentlemen depart from my plantation quietly at sunset on the 8th —always best to make a start at night, with a land breeze—it's a hundred to one—what am I saying?—it's a thousand to one that no human eye will see you on the passage. All you've got to do is to keep her heading northeast for, say, fifty hours; perhaps not quite so long. There will always be draft enough to keep a boat moving; you may reckon on that; and then—"

The muscles about his waist quivered under his clothes with eagerness, with impatience, and with something like apprehension, the true nature of which was not clear to him. And he did not want to investigate it. Ricardo regarded him steadily, with those dry eyes of his shining more like polished stones than living tissue.

"And then what?" he asked.

"And then—why, you will astonish *der herr baron*—ha, ha!"

Schomberg seemed to force the words and the laugh out of himself in a hoarse bass.

"And you believe he has all that plunder by him?" asked Ricardo, rather perfunctorily, because the fact seemed to him extremely probable when looked at all round by his acute mind.

Schomberg raised his hands and lowered them slowly.

"How can it be otherwise? He was going home, he was on his way, in this hotel. Ask people. Was it likely he would leave it behind him?"

Ricardo was thoughtful. Then, suddenly raising his head, he remarked:

"Steer northeast for fifty hours, eh? That's not much of a sailing direction. I've heard of a port being missed before on better information. Can't you say what sort of landfall a fellow may expect? But I suppose you have never seen that island yourself."

Schomberg admitted that he had not seen it, in a tone in which a man congratulates himself on having escaped the contamination of an unsavoury experience. No, certainly not. He had never had any business to call him there. But what of that? He could give Mr. Ricardo as good a sea-mark as anybody need wish for. He laughed nervously. Miss it! He defied any one that came within forty miles of it to miss the retreat of that villainous Swede.

"What do you think of a pillar of smoke by day and a loom of fire at night? There's a volcano in full blast near that island—enough to guide almost a blind man. What more do you want? An active volcano to steer by!"

These last words he roared out exultingly, then jumped up and glared. The door to the left of the bar had swung open, and Mrs. Schomberg, dressed for

duty, stood facing him down the whole length of the room. She clung to the handle for a moment, then came in and glided to her place, where she sat down to stare straight before her, as usual.

PART III

I

TROPICAL nature had been kind to the failure of the commercial enterprise. The desolation of the headquarters of the Tropical Belt Coal Company had been screened from the side of the sea; from the side where prying eyes—if any were sufficiently interested, either in malice or in sorrow—could have noted the decaying bones of that once sanguine enterprise.

Heyst had been sitting among the bones buried so kindly in the grass of two wet seasons' growth. The silence of his surroundings, broken only by such sounds as a distant roll of thunder, the lash of rain through the foliage of some big trees, the noise of the wind tossing the leaves of the forest, and of the short seas breaking against the shore, favoured rather than hindered his solitary meditation.

A meditation is always—in a white man, at least—more or less an interrogative exercise. Heyst meditated in simple terms on the mystery of his actions; and he answered himself with the honest reflection:

"There must be a lot of the original Adam in me, after all."

He reflected, too, with the sense of making a discovery, that this primeval ancestor is not easily suppressed. The oldest voice in the world is just the one that never ceases to speak. If anybody could have silenced its imperative echoes, it should have been Heyst's father, with his contemptuous, inflexible negation of all effort; but apparently he could not. There was in the son a lot of that first ancestor who, as soon as he could uplift his muddy frame from the celestial mould, started inspecting and naming the animals of that paradise which he was so soon to lose.

Action—the first thought, or perhaps the first impulse, on earth! The barbed hook, baited with the illusion of progress, to bring out of the lightless void the shoals of unnumbered generations!

"And I, the son of my father, have been caught too, like the silliest fish of them all," Heyst said to himself.

He suffered. He was hurt by the sight of his own life, which ought to have been a masterpiece of aloofness. He remembered always his last evening with his father. He remembered the thin features, the great mass of white hair, and the ivory complexion. A five-branched candlestick stood on a little table by the side of the easy chair. They had been talking a long time. The noises of the street had died out one by one, till at last, in the moonlight, the London houses began to look like the tombs of an unvisited, unhonoured cemetery of hopes.

He had listened. Then, after a silence, he had asked—for he was really young then:

"Is there no guidance?"

His father was in an unexpectedly soft mood on that night, when the moon swam in a cloudless sky over the begrimed shadows of the town.

"You still believe in something, then?" he said in a clear voice, which had been growing feeble of late. "You believe in flesh and blood, perhaps? A full and equable contempt would soon do away with that, too. But since you have not attained to it, I advise you to cultivate that form of contempt which is called pity. It is perhaps the least difficult—always remembering that you, too, if you are anything, are as pitiful as the rest, yet never expecting any pity for yourself."

"What is one to do, then?" sighed the young man, regarding his father, rigid in the high-backed chair.

"Look on—make no sound," were the last words of the man who had spent his life in blowing blasts upon a terrible trumpet which had filled heaven and earth with ruins, while mankind went on its way unheeding.

That very night he died in his bed, so quietly that they found him in his usual attitude of sleep, lying on his side, one hand under his cheek, and his knees slightly bent. He had not even straightened his legs.

His son buried the silenced destroyer of systems, of hopes, of beliefs. He observed that the death of that bitter contemner of life did not trouble the flow of life's stream, where men and women go by thick as dust, revolving and jostling one another like figures cut out of cork and weighted with lead just sufficiently to keep them in their proudly upright posture.

After the funeral, Heyst sat alone, in the dusk, and his meditation took the form of a definite vision of the stream, of the fatuously jostling, nodding, spinning figures hurried irresistibly along, and giving no sign of being aware that the voice on the bank had been suddenly silenced. . . . Yes. A few obituary notices generally insignificant and some grossly abusive. The son had read them all with mournful detachment.

"This is the hate and rage of their fear," he thought to himself, "and also of wounded vanity. They shriek their little shriek as they fly past. I suppose I ought to hate him too. . . ."

He became aware of his eyes being wet. It was not that the man was his father. For him it was purely a matter of hearsay which could not in itself cause this emotion. No! It was because he had looked at him so long that he missed him so much. The dead man had kept him on the bank by his side. And now Heyst felt acutely that he was alone on the bank of the stream. In his pride he determined not to enter it.

A few slow tears rolled down his face. The rooms filling with shadows, seemed haunted by a melancholy, uneasy presence which could not express itself. The young man got up with a strange sense of making way for something impalpable that claimed possession, went out of the house, and locked the door. A fortnight later he started on his travels—to "look on and never make a sound."

The elder Heyst had left behind him a little money and a certain quantity of movable objects, such as books, tables, chairs, and pictures, which might have complained of heartless desertion after many years of faithful service; for there is a soul in things. Heyst, our Heyst, had often thought of them, reproachful and mute, shrouded and locked up in those rooms, far away in London with the sounds of the street reaching them faintly, and sometimes a little sunshine, when the blinds were pulled up and the windows opened from time to time in pursuance of his original instructions and later reminders. It seemed

as if in his conception of a world not worth touching, and perhaps not substantial enough to grasp, these objects familiar to his childhood and his youth and associated with the memory of an old man, were the only realities, something having an absolute existence. He would never have them sold, or even moved from the places they occupied when he looked upon them last. When he was advised from London that his lease had expired, and that the house, with some others as like it as two peas, was to be demolished, he was surprisingly distressed.

He had entered by then the broad, human path of inconsistencies. Already the Tropical Belt Coal Company was in existence. He sent instructions to have some of the things sent out to him at Samburan, just as any ordinary, credulous person would have done. They came, torn out from their long repose—a lot of books, some chairs and tables, his father's portrait in oils, which surprised Heyst by its air of youth, because he remembered his father as a much older man; a lot of small objects, such as candlesticks, inkstands, and statuettes from his father's study, which surprised him because they looked so old and so much worn.

The manager of the Tropical Belt Coal Company, unpacking them on the verandah in the shade besieged by a fierce sunshine, must have felt like a remorseful apostate before these relics. He handled them tenderly; and it was perhaps their presence there which attached him to the island when he woke up to the failure of his apostasy. Whatever the decisive reason, Heyst had remained where another would have been glad to be off. The excellent Davidson had discovered the fact without discovering the reason, and took a humane interest in Heyst's strange existence, while at the same time his native delicacy kept him from intruding on the other's whim of solitude. He could not possibly guess that Heyst, alone on the island, felt neither more nor less lonely than in any other place, desert or populous. Davidson's concern was, if one may express it so, the danger of spiritual starvation; but this was a spirit which had renounced all outside nourishment, and was sustaining itself proudly on its own contempt of the usual coarse aliments which life offers to the common appetites of men.

Neither was Heyst's body in danger of starvation, as Schomberg had so confidently asserted. At the beginning of the company's operations the island had been provisioned in a manner which had outlasted the need. Heyst did not need to fear hunger; and his very loneliness had not been without some alleviation. Of the crowd of imported Chinese labourers, one at least had remained in Samburan, solitary and strange, like a swallow left behind at the migrating season of his tribe.

Wang was not a common coolie. He had been a servant to white men before. The agreement between him and Heyst consisted in the exchange of a few words on the day when the last batch of the mine coolies was leaving Samburan. Heyst, leaning over the balustrade of the verandah, was looking on, as calm in appearance as though he had never departed from the doctrine that this world, for the wise, is nothing but an amusing spectacle. Wang came round the house, and standing below, raised up his yellow, thin face.

"All finish?" he asked.

Heyst nodded slightly from above, glancing towards the jetty. A crowd of blue-clad figures with yellow faces and calves was being hustled down into the boats of the chartered steamer lying well out, like a painted ship on a painted sea; painted in crude colours, without shadows, without feeling, with brutal precision.

"You had better hurry up if you don't want to be left behind."

But the Chinaman did not move.

"Me stop," he declared. Heyst looked down at him for the first time.

"You want to stop here?"

"Yes."

"What were you? What was your work here?"

"Mess-loom boy."

"Do you want to stay with me here as my boy?" inquired Heyst, surprised.

The Chinaman unexpectedly put on a deprecatory expression, and said, after a marked pause:

"Can do."

"You needn't," said Heyst, "unless you like. I propose to stay on here—it may be for a very long time. I have no power to make you go if you wish to remain, but I don't see why you should."

"Catchee one piecee wife," remarked Wang unemotionally, and marched off, turning his back on the wharf and the great world beyond, represented by the steamer waiting for her boats.

Heyst learned presently that Wang had persuaded one of the women of the Alfuro village, on the west shore of the island, beyond the central ridge, to come over to live with him in a remote part of the company's clearing. It was a curious case, inasmuch as the Alfuros, having been frightened by the sudden invasion of Chinamen, had blocked the path over the ridge by felling a few trees, and had kept strictly on their own side. The coolies, as a body, mistrusting the manifest mildness of these harmless fisher-folk, had kept to their lines, without attempting to cross the island. Wang was the brilliant exception. He must have been uncommonly fascinating, in a way that was not apparent to Heyst, or else uncommonly persuasive. The woman's services to Heyst were limited to the fact that she had anchored Wang to the spot by her charms, which remained unknown to the white man, because she never came near the houses. The couple lived at the edge of the forest, and she could sometimes be seen gazing towards the bungalow shading her eyes with her hand. Even from a distance she appeared to be a shy, wild creature, and Heyst, anxious not to try her primitive nerves unduly, scrupulously avoided that side of the clearing in his strolls.

The day—or rather the first night—after his hermit life began, he was aware of vague sounds of revelry in that direction. Emboldened by the departure of the invading strangers, some Alfuros, the woman's friends and relations, had ventured over the ridge to attend something in the nature of a wedding feast. Wang had invited them. But this was the only occasion when any sound louder than the buzzing of insects had troubled the profound silence of the clearing. The natives were never invited again. Wang not only knew how to live according to conventional proprieties, but had strong personal views as to the

manner of arranging his domestic existence. After a time Heyst perceived that Wang had annexed all the keys. Any key left lying about vanished after Wang had passed that way. Subsequently some of them—those that did not belong to the storerooms and the empty bungalows, and could not be regarded as the common property of this community of two—were returned to Heyst, tied in a bunch with a piece of string. He found them one morning lying by the side of his plate. He had not been inconvenienced by their absence, because he never locked up anything in the way of drawers and boxes. Heyst said nothing. Wang also said nothing. Perhaps he had always been a taciturn man; perhaps he was influenced by the genius of the locality, which was certainly that of silence. Till Heyst and Morrison had landed in Black Diamond Bay, and named it, that side of Samburan had hardly ever heard the sound of human speech. It was easy to be taciturn with Heyst, who had plunged himself into an abyss of meditation over books, and remained in it till the shadow of Wang falling across the page, and the sound of a rough, low voice uttering the Malay word *"makan,"* would force him to climb out to a meal.

Wang in his native province in China might have been an aggressively, sensitively genial person; but in Samburan he had clothed himself in a mysterious stolidity, and did not seem to resent not being spoken to except in single words, at a rate which did not average half a dozen per day. And he gave no more than he got. It is to be presumed that if he suffered constraint, he made up for it with the Alfuro woman. He always went back to her at the first fall of dusk, vanishing from the bungalow suddenly at this hour, like a sort of topsy-turvy, day-hunting Chinese ghost with a white jacket and a pigtail. Presently, giving way to a Chinaman's ruling passion, he could be observed breaking the ground near his hut, between the mighty stumps of felled trees, with a miner's pickaxe. After a time, he discovered a rusty but serviceable spade in one of the empty storerooms, and it is to be supposed that he got on famously; but nothing of it could be seen, because he went to the trouble of pulling to pieces one of the company's sheds in order to get materials for making a high and very close fence round his patch, as if the growing of vegetables were a patented process, or an awful and holy mystery entrusted to the keeping of his race.

Heyst, following from a distance the progress of Wang's gardening and of these precautions—there was nothing else to look at—was amused at the thought that he, in his own person, represented the market for its produce. The Chinaman had found several packets of seeds in the storerooms, and had surrendered to an irresistible impulse to put them into the ground. He would make his master pay for the vegetables which he was raising to satisfy his instinct. And, looking silently at the silent Wang going about his work in the bungalow in his unhasty, steady way, Heyst envied the Chinaman's obedience to his instincts, the powerful simplicity of purpose which made his existence appear almost automatic in the mysterious precision of its facts.

II

During his master's absence at Sourabaya, Wang had busied himself with the ground immediately in front of the principal bungalow. Emerging from the fringe of grass growing across the shore end of the coal-jetty, Heyst beheld a

broad, clear space, black and level, with only one or two clumps of charred twigs, where the flame had swept from the front of his house to the nearest trees of the forest.

"You took the risk of firing the grass?" Heyst asked.

Wang nodded. Hanging on the arm of the white man before whom he stood was the girl called Alma; but neither from the Chinaman's eyes nor from his expression could any one have guessed that he was in the slightest degree aware of the fact.

"He has been tidying the place in this labour-saving way," explained Heyst, without looking at the girl, whose hand rested on his forearm. "He's the whole establishment, you see. I told you I hadn't even a dog to keep me company here."

Wang had marched off towards the wharf.

"He's like those waiters in that place," she said. That place was Schomberg's hotel.

"One Chinaman looks very much like another," Heyst remarked. "We shall find it useful to have him here. This is the house."

They faced, at some distance, the six shallow steps leading up to the verandah. The girl had abandoned Heyst's arm.

"This is the house," he repeated.

She did not offer to budge away from his side, but stood staring fixedly at the steps, as if they had been something unique and impracticable. He waited a little, but she did not move.

"Don't you want to go in?" he said, without turning his head to look at her. "The sun's too heavy to stand about here." He tried to overcome a sort of fear, a sort of impatient faintness, and his voice sounded rough. "You had better go in," he concluded.

They both moved then, but at the foot of the stairs Heyst stopped, while the girl went on rapidly, as if nothing could stop her now. She crossed the verandah swiftly, and entered the twilight of the big central room opening upon it, and then the deeper twilight of the room beyond. She stood still in the dusk, in which her dazzled eyes could scarcely make out the forms of objects, and sighed a sigh of relief. The impression of the sunlight, of sea and sky, remained with her like a memory of a painful trial gone through—done with at last!

Meanwhile Heyst had walked back slowly towards the jetty; but he did not get so far as that. The practical and automatic Wang had got hold of one of the little trucks that had been used for running baskets of coal alongside ships. He appeared pushing it before him, loaded lightly with Heyst's bag and the bundle of the girl's belongings, wrapped in Mrs. Schomberg's shawl. Heyst turned about and walked by the side of the rusty rails on which the truck ran. Opposite the house Wang stopped, lifted the bag to his shoulder, balanced it carefully, and then took the bundle in his hand.

"Leave those things on the table in the big room—understand?"

"Me savee," grunted Wang, moving off.

Heyst watched the Chinaman disappear from the verandah. It was not till he had seen Wang come out that he himself entered the twilight of the big room. By that time Wang was out of sight at the back of the house, but by no means out of hearing. The Chinaman could hear the voice of him who, when

there were many people there, was generally referred to as "Number One." Wang was not able to understand the words, but the tone interested him.

"Where are you?" cried Number One.

Then Wang heard, much more faint, a voice he had never heard before—a novel impression which he acknowledged by cocking his head slightly to one side.

"I am here—out of the sun."

The new voice sounded remote and uncertain. Wang heard nothing more, though he waited for some time, very still, the top of his shaven poll exactly level with the floor of the back verandah. His face meanwhile preserved an inscrutable immobility. Suddenly he stooped to pick up the lid of a deal candle-box which was lying on the ground by his foot. Breaking it up with his fingers, he directed his steps towards the cook-shed, where, squatting on his heels, he proceeded to kindle a small fire under a very sooty kettle, possibly to make tea. Wang had some knowledge of the more superficial rites and ceremonies of white men's existence, otherwise so enigmatically remote to his mind, and containing unexpected possibilities of good and evil, which had to be watched for with prudence and care.

III

That morning, as on all the others of the full tale of mornings since his return with the girl to Samburan, Heyst came out on the verandah and spread his elbows on the railing, in an easy attitude of proprietorship. The bulk of the central ridge of the island cut off the bungalow from sunrises, whether glorious or cloudy, angry or serene. The dwellers therein were debarred from reading early the fortune of the new-born day. It sprang upon them in its fulness with a swift retreat of the great shadow when the sun, clearing the ridge, looked down, hot and dry, with a devouring glare like the eye of an enemy. But Heyst, once the Number One of this locality, while it was comparatively teeming with mankind, appreciated the prolongation of early coolness, the subdued, lingering half light, the faint ghost of the departed night, the fragrance of its dewy, dark soul captured for a moment longer between the great glow of the sky and the intense blaze of the uncovered sea.

It was naturally difficult for Heyst to keep his mind from dwelling on the nature and consequences of this, his latest departure from the part of an unconcerned spectator. Yet he had retained enough of his wrecked philosophy to prevent him from asking himself consciously how it would end. But at the same time he could not help being temperamentally, from long habit and from set purpose, a spectator still, perhaps a little less naive but (as he discovered with some surprise) not much more far-sighted than the common run of men. Like the rest of us who act, all he could say to himself, with a somewhat affected grimness, was:

"We shall see!"

This mood of grim doubt intruded on him only when he was alone. There were not many such moments in his day now; and he did not like them when they came. On this morning he had no time to grow uneasy. Alma came out to join him long before the sun, rising above the Samburan ridge, swept the cool shadow of the early morning and the remnant of the night's coolness clear

off the roof under which they had dwelt for more than three months already. She came out as on other mornings. He had heard her light footsteps in the big room—the room where he had unpacked the cases from London; the room now lined with the backs of books halfway up on its three sides. Above the cases the fine matting met the ceiling of tightly stretched white calico. In the dusk and coolness nothing gleamed except the gilt frame of the portrait of Heyst's father, signed by a famous painter, lonely in the middle of a wall.

Heyst did not turn round.

"Do you know what I was thinking of?" he asked.

"No," she said. Her tone betrayed always a shade of anxiety, as though she were never certain how a conversation with him would end. She leaned on the guard-rail by his side.

"No," she repeated. "What was it?" She waited. Then, rather with reluctance than shyness, she asked:

"Were you thinking of me?"

"I was wondering when you would come out," said Heyst still without looking at the girl—to whom, after several experimental essays in combining detached letters and loose syllables, he had given the name of Lena.

She remarked after a pause:

"I was not very far from you."

"Apparently you were not near enough for me."

"You could have called if you wanted me," she said. "And I wasn't so long doing my hair."

"Apparently it was too long for me."

"Well, you were thinking of me, anyhow. I am glad of it. Do you know, it seems to me, somehow, that if you were to stop thinking of me I shouldn't be in the world at all!"

He turned round and looked at her. She often said things which surprised him. A vague smile faded away on her lips before his scrutiny.

"What is it?" he asked. "Is it a reproach?"

"A reproach! Why, how could it be?" she defended herself.

"Well, what did it mean?" he insisted.

"What I said—just what I said. Why aren't you fair?"

"Ah, this at least is a reproach!"

She coloured to the roots of her hair.

"It looks as if you were trying to make out that I am disagreeable," she murmured. "Am I? You will make me afraid to open my mouth presently. I shall end by believing I am no good."

Her head drooped a little. He looked at her smooth, low brow, the faintly coloured cheeks, and the red lips parted slightly, with the gleam of her teeth within.

"And then I *won't* be any good," she added with conviction. "That I won't! I can only be what you think I am."

He made a slight movement. She put her hand on his arm, without raising her head, and went on, her voice animated in the stillness of her body:

"It is so. It couldn't be any other way with a girl like me and a man like you. Here we are, we two alone, and I can't even tell where we are."

"A very well-known spot of the globe," Heyst uttered gently. "There must have been at least fifty thousand circulars issued at the time—a hundred and fifty thousand, more likely. My friend was looking after that, and his ideas were large and his belief very strong. Of us two it was he who had the faith. A hundred and fifty thousand, certainly."

"What is it you mean?" she asked in a low tone.

"What should I find fault with you for?" Heyst went on. "For being amiable, good, gracious—and pretty?"

A silence fell. Then she said:

"It's all right that you should think that of me. There's no one here to think anything of us, good or bad."

The rare timbre of her voice gave a special value to what she uttered. The indefinable emotion which certain intonations gave him, he was aware, was more physical than moral. Every time she spoke to him she seemed to abandon to him something of herself—something excessively subtle and inexpressible, to which he was infinitely sensible, which he would have missed horribly if she were to go away. While he was looking into her eyes she raised her bare forearm, out of the short sleeve, and held it in the air till he noticed it and hastened to pose his great bronze moustaches on the whiteness of the skin. Then they went in.

Wang immediately appeared in front, and, squatting on his heels, began to potter mysteriously about some plants at the foot of the verandah. When Heyst and the girl came out again, the Chinaman had gone in his peculiar manner, which suggested vanishing out of existence rather than out of sight, a process of evaporation rather than of movement. They descended the steps, looking at each other, and started off smartly across the cleared ground; but they were not ten yards away when, without perceptible stir or sound, Wang materialized inside the empty room. The Chinaman stood still with roaming eyes, examining the walls as if for signs, for inscriptions; exploring the floor as if for pitfalls, for dropped coins. Then he cocked his head slightly at the profile of Heyst's father, pen in hand above a white sheet of paper on a crimson tablecloth; and, moving forward noiselessly, began to clear away the breakfast things.

Though he proceeded without haste, the unerring precision of his movements, the absolute soundlessness of the operation, gave it something of the quality of a conjuring trick. And, the trick having been performed, Wang vanished from the scene, to materialize presently in front of the house. He materialized walking away from it, with no visible or guessable intention; but at the end of some ten paces he stopped, made a half turn, and put his hand up to shade his eyes. The sun had topped the grey ridge of Samburan. The great morning shadow was gone; and far away in the devouring sunshine Wang was in time to see Number One and the woman, two remote white specks against the sombre line of the forest. In a moment they vanished. With the smallest display of action, Wang also vanished from the sunlight of the clearing.

Heyst and Lena entered the shade of the forest path which crossed the island, and which, near its highest point, had been blocked by felled trees. But their intention was not to go so far. After keeping to the path for some distance, they left it at a point where the forest was bare of undergrowth, and the trees,

festooned with creepers, stood clear of one another in the gloom of their own making. Here and there great splashes of light lay on the ground. They moved, silent in the great stillness, breathing the calmness, the infinite isolation, the repose of a slumber without dreams. They emerged at the upper limit of vegetation, among some rocks; and in a depression of the sharp slope, like a small platform, they turned about and looked from on high over the sea, lonely, its colour effaced by sunshine, its horizon a heat mist, a mere unsubstantial shimmer in the pale and blinding infinity overhung by the darker blaze of the sky.

"It makes my head swim," the girl murmured, shutting her eyes and putting her hand on his shoulder.

Heyst, gazing fixedly to the southward, exclaimed:

"Sail ho!"

A moment of silence ensued.

"It must be very far away," he went on. "I don't think you could see it. Some native craft making for the Moluccas, probably. Come, we mustn't stay here."

With his arm round her waist, he led her down a little distance, and they settled themselves in the shade; she, seated on the ground, he a little lower, reclining at her feet.

"You don't like to look at the sea from up there?" he said after a time.

She shook her head. That empty space was to her the abomination of desolation. But she only said again:

"It makes my head swim."

"Too big?" he inquired.

"Too lonely. It makes my heart sink, too," she added in a low voice, as if confessing a secret.

"I am afraid," said Heyst, "that you would be justified in reproaching me for these sensations. But what would you have?"

His tone was playful, but his eyes, directed at her face, were serious. She protested.

"I am not feeling lonely with you—not a bit. It is only when we come up to that place, and I look at all that water and all that light—"

"We will never come here again, then," he interrupted her.

She remained silent for a while, returning his gaze till he removed it.

"It seems as if everything that there is had gone under," she said.

"Reminds you of the story of the deluge," muttered the man, stretched at her feet and looking at them. "Are you frightened at it?"

"I should be rather frightened to be left behind alone. When I say *I*, of course I mean *we*."

"Do you?" . . . Heyst remained silent for a while. "The vision of a world destroyed," he mused aloud. "Would you be sorry for it?"

"I should be sorry for the happy people in it," she said simply.

His gaze travelled up her figure and reached her face, where he seemed to detect the veiled glow of intelligence, as one gets a glimpse of the sun through the clouds.

"I should have thought it's they specially who ought to have been congratulated. Don't you?"

"Oh, yes—I understand what you mean; but there were forty days before it was all over."

"You seem to be in possession of all the details."

Heyst spoke just to say something rather than to gaze at her in silence. She was not looking at him.

"Sunday school," she murmured. "I went regularly from the time I was eight till I was thirteen. We lodged in the north of London, off Kingsland Road. It wasn't a bad time. Father was earning good money then. The woman of the house used to pack me off in the afternoon with her own girls. She was a good woman. Her husband was in the post-office. Sorter or something. Such a quiet man. He used to go off after supper for night duty, sometimes. Then one day they had a row, and broke up the home. I remember I cried when we had to pack up all of a sudden and go into other lodgings. I never knew what it was, though—"

"The deluge," muttered Heyst absently.

He felt intensely aware of her personality, as if this were the first moment of leisure he had found to look at her since they had come together. The peculiar timbre of her voice, with its modulations of audacity and sadness, would have given interest to the most inane chatter. But she was no chatterer. She was rather silent, with a capacity for immobility, an upright stillness, as when resting on the concert platform between the musical numbers, her feet crossed, her hands reposing on her lap. But in the intimacy of their life her grey, unabashed gaze forced upon him the sensation of something inexplicable reposing within her; stupidity or inspiration, weakness or force—or simply an abysmal emptiness, reserving itself even in the moments of complete surrender.

During a long pause she did not look at him. Then suddenly, as if the word "deluge" had stuck in her mind, she asked, looking up at the cloudless sky:

"Does it ever rain here?"

"There is a season when it rains almost every day," said Heyst, surprised. "There are also thunderstorms. We had once a mud-shower."

"Mud-shower?"

"Our neighbour there was shooting up ashes. He sometimes clears his red-hot gullet like that; and a thunderstorm came along at the same time. It was very messy; but our neighbour is generally well behaved—just smokes quietly, as he did that day when I first showed you the smudge in the sky from the schooner's deck. He's a good-natured, lazy fellow of a volcano."

"I saw a mountain smoking like that before," she said, staring at the slender stem of a tree-fern some dozen feet in front of her. "It wasn't very long after we left England—some few days, though. I was so ill at first that I lost count of days. A smoking mountain—I can't think how they called it."

"Vesuvius, perhaps," suggested Heyst.

"That's the name."

"I saw it, too, years, ages ago," said Heyst.

"On your way here?"

"No, long before I ever thought of coming into this part of the world. I was yet a boy."

She turned and looked at him attentively, as if seeking to discover some trace

of that boyhood in the mature face of the man with the hair thin at the top and the long, thick moustaches. Heyst stood the frank examination with a playful smile, hiding the profound effect these veiled grey eyes produced—whether on his heart or on his nerves, whether sensuous or spiritual, tender or irritating, he was unable to say.

"Well, princess of Samburan," he said at last, "have I found favour in your sight?"

She seemed to wake up, and shook her head.

"I was thinking," she murmured very low.

"Thought, action—so many snares! If you begin to think you will be unhappy."

"I wasn't thinking of myself," she declared with a simplicity which took Heyst aback somewhat.

"On the lips of a moralist this would sound like a rebuke," he said, half seriously; "but I won't suspect you of being one. Moralists and I haven't been friends for many years."

She had listened with an air of attention.

"I understood you had no friends," she said. "I am pleased that there's nobody to find fault with you for what you have done. I like to think that I am in no one's way."

Heyst would have said something, but she did not give him time. Unconscious of the movement he made she went on:

"What I was thinking to myself was, why are you here?"

Heyst let himself sink on his elbow again.

"If by 'you' you mean 'we'—well, you know why we are here."

She bent her gaze down at him.

"No, it isn't that. I meant before—all that time before you came across me and guessed at once that I was in trouble, with no one to turn to. And you know it was desperate trouble too."

Her voice fell on the last words, as if she would end there; but there was something so expectant in Heyst's attitude as he sat at her feet, looking up at her steadily, that she continued, after drawing a short, quick breath:

"It was, really. I told you I had been worried before by bad fellows. It made me unhappy, disturbed—angry, too. But oh, how I hated, hated, *hated* that man!"

"That man" was the florid Schomberg with the military bearing, benefactor of white men ("decent food to eat in decent company")—mature victim of belated passion. The girl shuddered. The characteristic harmoniousness of her face became, as it were, decomposed for an instant. Heyst was startled.

"Why think of it now?" he cried.

"It's because I was cornered that time. It wasn't as before. It was worse, ever so much. I wished I could die of my fright;—and yet it's only now that I begin to understand what a horror it might have been. Yes, only now, since we—"

Heyst stirred a little.

"Came here," he finished.

Her tenseness relaxed, her flushed face went gradually back to its normal tint.

"Yes," she said indifferently, but at the same time she gave him a stealthy

glance of passionate appreciation; and then her face took on a melancholy cast, her whole figure drooped imperceptibly. "But you were coming back here anyhow?" she asked.

"Yes. I was only waiting for Davidson. Yes, I was coming back here, to these ruins—to Wang, who perhaps did not expect to see me again. It's impossible to guess at the way that Chinaman draws his conclusions, and how he looks upon one."

"Don't talk about him. He makes me feel uncomfortable. Talk about yourself."

"About myself? I see you are still busy with the mystery of my existence here; but it isn't at all mysterious. Primarily the man with the quill pen in his hand in that picture you so often look at is responsible for my existence. He is also responsible for what my existence is, or rather has been. He was a great man in his way. I don't know much of his history. I suppose he began like other people; took fine words for good, ringing coin and noble ideals for valuable banknotes. He was a great master of both, himself, by the way. Later he discovered—how am I to explain it to you? Suppose the world were a factory and all mankind workmen in it. Well, he discovered that the wages were not good enough. That they were paid in counterfeit money."

"I see!" the girl said slowly.

"Do you?"

Heyst, who had been speaking as if to himself, looked up curiously.

"It wasn't a new discovery, but he brought his capacity for scorn to bear on it. It was immense. It ought to have withered this globe. I don't know how many minds he convinced. But my mind was very young then, and youth I suppose can be easily seduced—even by a negation. He was very ruthless, and yet he was not without pity. He dominated me without difficulty. A heartless man could not have done so. Even to fools he was not utterly merciless. He could be indignant, but he was too great for flouts and jeers. What he said was not meant for the crowd; it could not be; and I was flattered to find myself among the elect. They read his books, but I have heard his living word. It was irresistible. It was as if that mind were taking me into its confidence, giving me a special insight into its mastery of despair. Mistake, no doubt. There is something of my father in every man who lives long enough. But they don't say anything. They can't. They wouldn't know how, or perhaps, they wouldn't speak if they could. Man on this earth is an unforeseen accident which does not stand close investigation. However, that particular man died as quietly as a child goes to sleep. But, after listening to him, I could not take my soul down into the street to fight there. I started off to wander about, an independent spectator—if that is possible."

For a long time the girl's grey eyes had been watching his face. She discovered that, addressing her, he was really talking to himself. Heyst looked up, caught sight of her as it were, and caught himself up, with a low laugh and a change of tone.

"All this does not tell you why I ever came here. Why, indeed? It's like prying into inscrutable mysteries which are not worth scrutinising. A man drifts. The most successful men have drifted into their successes. I don't want to tell

you that this is a success. You wouldn't believe me if I did. It isn't; neither is it the ruinous failure it looks. It proves nothing, unless perhaps some hidden weakness in my character—and even that is not certain."

He looked fixedly at her, and with such grave eyes that she felt obliged to smile faintly at him, since she did not understand what he meant. Her smile was reflected, still fainter, on his lips.

"This does not advance you much in your inquiry," he went on. "And in truth your question is unanswerable; but facts have a certain positive value, and I will tell you a fact. One day I met a cornered man. I use the word because it expresses the man's situation exactly, and because you just used it yourself. You know what that means?"

"What do you say?" she whispered, astounded. "A man!"

Heyst laughed at her wondering eyes.

"No! No! I mean in his own way."

"I knew very well it couldn't be anything like that," she observed under her breath.

"I won't bother you with the story. It was a custom-house affair, strange as it may sound to you. He would have preferred to be killed outright—that is, to have his soul despatched to another world, rather than to be robbed of his substance, his very insignificant substance, in this. I saw that he believed in another world because, being cornered, as I have told you, he went down on his knees and prayed. What do you think of that?"

Heyst paused. She looked at him earnestly.

"You didn't make fun of him for that?" she said.

Heyst made a brusque movement of protest.

"My dear girl, I am not a ruffian," he cried. Then, returning to his usual tone: "I didn't even have to conceal a smile. Somehow it didn't look a smiling matter. No, it was not funny; it was rather pathetic; he was so representative of all the past victims of the Great Joke. But it is by folly alone that the world moves, and so it is a respectable thing upon the whole. And besides, he was what one would call a good man. I don't mean especially because he had offered up a prayer. No! He was really a decent fellow, he was quite unfitted for this world, he was a failure, a good man cornered—a sight for the gods; for no decent mortal cares to look at that sort." A thought seemed to occur to him. He turned his face to the girl. "And you, who have been cornered too—did you think of offering a prayer?"

Neither her eyes nor a single one of her features moved the least bit. She only let fall the words:

"I am not what they call a good girl."

"That sounds evasive," said Heyst after a short silence. "Well, the good fellow did pray and after he had confessed to it I was struck by the comicality of the situation. No, don't misunderstand me—I am not alluding to his act, of course. And even the idea of Eternity, Infinity, Omnipotence, being called upon to defeat the conspiracy of two miserable Portuguese half-castes did not move my mirth. From the point of view of the supplicant, the danger to be conjured was something like the end of the world, or worse. No! What captivated my fancy was that I, Axel Heyst, the most detached of creatures in this earthly captivity,

the veriest tramp on this earth, an indifferent stroller going through the world's bustle—that I should have been there to step into the situation of an agent of Providence. *I*, a man of universal scorn and unbelief. . . ."

"You are putting it on," she interrupted in her seductive voice, with a coaxing intonation.

"No. I am like that, born or fashioned, or both. I am not for nothing the son of my father, of that man in the painting. I am he, all but the genius. And there is even less in me than I make out, because the very scorn is falling away from me year after year. I have never been so amused as by that episode in which I was suddenly called to act such an incredible part. For a moment I enjoyed it greatly. I got him out of his corner, you know."

"You saved a man for fun—is that what you mean? Just for fun?"

"Why this tone of suspicion?" remonstrated Heyst. "I suppose the sight of this particular distress was disagreeable to me. What you call fun came afterward, when it dawned on me that I was for him a walking, breathing, incarnate proof of the efficacy of prayer. I was a little fascinated by it—and then, could I have argued with him? You don't argue against such evidence, and besides it would have looked as if I had wanted to claim all the merit. Already his gratitude was simply frightful. Funny position, wasn't it? The boredom came later, when we lived together on board his ship. I had, in a moment of inadvertence, created for myself a tie. How to define it precisely I don't know. One gets attached in a way to people one has done something for. But is that friendship? I am not sure what it was. I only know that he who forms a tie is lost. The germ of corruption has entered into his soul."

Heyst's tone was light, with the flavour of playfulness which seasoned all his speeches and seemed to be of the very essence of his thoughts. The girl he had come across, of whom he had possessed himself, to whose presence he was not yet accustomed, with whom he did not yet know how to live; that human being so near and still so strange, gave him a greater sense of his own reality than he had ever known in all his life.

IV

With her knees drawn up, Lena rested her elbows on them and held her head in both her hands.

"Are you tired of sitting here?" Heyst asked.

An almost imperceptible negative movement of the head was all the answer she made.

"Why are you looking so serious?" he pursued, and immediately thought that habitual seriousness, in the long run, was much more bearable than constant gaiety. "However, this expression suits you exceedingly," he added, not diplomatically, but because, by the tendency of his taste, it was a true statement. "And as long as I can be certain that it is not boredom which gives you this severe air, I am willing to sit here and look at you till you are ready to go."

And this was true. He was still under the fresh sortilege of their common life, the surprise of novelty, the flattered vanity of his possession of this woman; for a man must feel that, unless he has ceased to be masculine. Her eyes moved in his direction, rested on him, then returned to their stare into the deeper

gloom at the foot of the straight tree-trunks, whose spreading crowns were slowly withdrawing their shade. The warm air stirred slightly about her motionless head. She would not look at him, from some obscure fear of betraying herself. She felt in her innermost depths an irresistible desire to give herself up to him more completely, by some act of absolute sacrifice. This was something of which he did not seem to have an idea. He was a strange being without needs. She felt his eyes fixed upon her; and as he kept silent, she said uneasily —for she didn't know what his silences might mean:

"And so you lived with that friend—that good man?"

"Excellent fellow," Heyst responded, with a readiness that she did not expect. "But it was a weakness on my part. I really didn't want to, only he wouldn't let me off, and I couldn't explain. He was the sort of man to whom you can't explain anything. He was extremely sensitive, and it would have been a tigerish thing to do to mangle his delicate feelings by the sort of plain speaking that would have been necessary. His mind was like a white-walled, pure chamber, furnished with, say, six straw-bottomed chairs, and he was always placing and displacing them in various combinations. But they were always the same chairs. He was extremely easy to live with; but then he got hold of this coal idea—or, rather, the idea got hold of him. It entered into that scantily furnished chamber of which I have just spoken, and sat on all the chairs. There was no dislodging it, you know! It was going to make his fortune, my fortune, everybody's fortune. In past years, in moments of doubt that will come to a man determined to remain free from absurdities of existence, I often asked myself, with a momentary dread, in what way would life try to get hold of me? And this was the way! He got it into his head that he could do nothing without me. And was I now, he asked me, to spurn and ruin him? Well, one morning—I wonder if he had gone down on his knees to pray that night!—one morning I gave in."

Heyst tugged violently at a tuft of dried grass, and cast it away from him with a nervous gesture.

"I gave in," he repeated.

Looking towards him with a movement of her eyes only, the girl noticed the strong feeling on his face with that intense interest which his person awakened in her mind and in her heart. But it soon passed away, leaving only a moody expression.

"It's difficult to resist where nothing matters," he observed. "And perhaps there is a grain of freakishness in my nature. It amused me to go about uttering silly, commonplace phrases. I was never so well thought of in the islands till I began to jabber commercial gibberish like the veriest idiot. Upon my word, I believe that I was actually respected for a time. I was as grave as an owl over it; I had to be loyal to the man. I have been from first to last, completely, utterly loyal to the best of my ability. I thought he understood something about coal. And if I had been aware that he knew nothing of it, as in fact he didn't, well—I don't know what I could have done to stop him. In one way or another I should have had to be loyal. Truth, work, ambition, love itself, may be only counters in the lamentable or despicable game of life, but when one takes a hand one must play the game. No, the shade of Morrison

needn't haunt me. What's the matter? I say, Lena, why are you staring like that? Do you feel ill?"

Heyst made as if to get on his feet. The girl extended her arm to arrest him, and he remained staring in a sitting posture, propped on one arm, observing her indefinable expression of anxiety, as if she were unable to draw breath.

"What has come to you?" he insisted, feeling strangely unwilling to move, to touch her.

"Nothing." She swallowed painfully. "Of course it can't be. What name did you say? I didn't hear it properly."

"Name?" repeated Heyst dazedly. "I only mentioned Morrison. It's the name of that man of whom I've been speaking. What of it?"

"And you mean to say that he was your friend?"

"You have heard enough to judge for yourself. You know as much of our connection as I know myself. The people in this part of the world went by appearances, and called us friends, as far as I can remember. Appearances—what more, what better can you ask for? In fact you can't have better. You can't have anything else."

"You are trying to confuse me with your talk," she cried. "You can't make fun of this."

"Can't? Well, no, I can't. It's a pity. Perhaps it would have been the best way," said Heyst, in a tone which for him could be called gloomy. "Unless one could forget the silly business altogether." His faint playfulness of manner and speech returned, like a habit one has schooled oneself into, even before his forehead had cleared completely. "But why are you looking so hard at me? Oh, I don't object, and I shall try not to flinch. Your eyes—"

He was looking straight into them, and as a matter of fact had forgotten all about the late Morrison at that moment.

"No," he exclaimed suddenly. "What an impenetrable girl you are, Lena, with those grey eyes of yours! Windows of the soul, as some poet has said. The fellow must have been a glazier by vocation. Well, nature has provided excellently for the shyness of your soul."

When he ceased speaking, the girl came to herself with a catch of her breath. He heard her voice, the varied charm of which he thought he knew so well, saying with an unfamiliar intonation:

"And that partner of yours is dead?"

"Morrison? Oh, yes, as I've told you, he—"

"You never told me."

"Didn't I? I thought I did; or, rather, I thought you must know. It seems impossible that anybody with whom I speak should not know that Morrison is dead."

She lowered her eyelids, and Heyst was startled by something like an expression of horror on her face.

"Morrison!" she whispered in an appalled tone. "Morrison!" Her head drooped. Unable to see her features, Heyst could tell from her voice that for some reason or other she was profoundly moved by the syllables of that unromantic name. A thought flashed through his head—could she have known Morrison? But the mere difference of their origins made it wildly improbable.

"This is very extraordinary!" he said. "Have you ever heard the name before?"

Her head moved quickly several times in tiny affirmative nods, as if she could not trust herself to speak, or even to look at him. She was biting her lower lip.

"Did you ever know anybody of that name?" he asked.

The girl answered by a negative sign: and then at last she spoke, jerkily, as if forcing herself against some doubt or fear. She had heard of that very man, she told Heyst.

"Impossible!" he said positively. "You are mistaken. You couldn't have heard of him. It's—"

He stopped short, with the thought that to talk like this was perfectly useless; that one doesn't argue against thin air.

"But I did hear of him; only I didn't know then, I couldn't guess, that it was your partner they were talking about."

"Talking about my partner?" repeated Heyst slowly.

"No." Her mind seemed almost as bewildered, as full of incredulity, as his. "No. They were talking of you, really; only I didn't know it."

"Who were they?" Heyst raised his voice. "Who was talking of me? Talking where?"

With the first question he had lifted himself from his reclining position; at the last he was on his knees before her, their heads on a level.

"Why, in that town, in that hotel. Where else could it have been?" she said.

The idea of being talked about was always novel to Heyst's simplified conception of himself. For a moment he was as much surprised as if he had believed himself to be a mere gliding shadow among men. Besides, he had in him a half-unconscious notion that he was above the level of island gossip.

"But you said first that it was of Morrison they talked," he remarked to the girl, sinking on his heels, and no longer much interested. "Strange that you should have the opportunity to hear any talk at all! I was rather under the impression that you never saw anybody belonging to the town except from the platform."

"You forget that I was not living with the other girls," she said. "After meals they used to go back to the Pavilion, but I had to stay in the hotel and do my sewing, or what not, in the room where they talked."

"I didn't think of that. By the by, you never told me who *they* were."

"Why, that horrible red-faced beast," she said, with all the energy of disgust which the mere thought of the hotel-keeper provoked in her.

"Oh, Schomberg!" Heyst murmured carelessly.

"He talked to the boss—to Zangiacomo, I mean. I had to sit there. That devil-woman sometimes wouldn't let me go away. I mean Mrs. Zangiacomo."

"I guessed," murmured Heyst. "She liked to torment you in a variety of ways. But it is really strange that the hotel-keeper should talk of Morrison to Zangiacomo. As far as I can remember he saw very little of Morrison professionally. He knew many others much better."

The girl shuddered slightly.

"That was the only name I ever overheard. I would get as far away from

them as I could, to the other end of the room; but when that beast started shouting, I could not help hearing. I wish I had never heard anything. If I had got up and gone out of the room I don't suppose the woman would have killed me for it; but she would have rowed me in a nasty way. She would have threatened me and called me names. That sort, when they know you are helpless, there's nothing to stop them. I don't know how it is, but bad people, real bad people that you can see are bad, they get over me somehow. It's the way they set about downing one. I am afraid of wickedness."

Heyst watched the changing expressions of her face. He encouraged her, profoundly sympathetic, a little amused.

"I quite understand. You needn't apologize for your great delicacy in the perception of inhuman evil. I am a little like you."

"I am not very plucky," she said.

"Well! I don't know myself what I would do, what countenance I would have before a creature which would strike me as being the evil incarnate. Don't you be ashamed."

She sighed, looked up with her pale, candid gaze and a timid expression of her face, and murmured:

"You don't seem to want to know what he was saying."

"About poor Morrison? It couldn't have been anything bad, for the poor fellow was innocence itself. And then, you know, he is dead, and nothing can possibly matter to him now."

"But I tell you that it was of *you* he was talking!" she cried. "He was saying that Morrison's partner first got all there was to get out of him, and then, and then—well, as good as murdered him—sent him out to die somewhere!"

"You believe that of me?" said Heyst, after a moment of perfect silence.

"I didn't know it had anything to do with you. Schomberg was talking of some Swede. How was I to know? It was only when you began telling me about how you came here—"

"And now you have my version." Heyst forced himself to speak quietly. "So that's how the business looked from outside!" he muttered.

"I remember him saying that everybody in these parts knew the story," the girl added breathlessly.

"Strange that it should hurt me!" mused Heyst to himself; "yet it does. I seem to be as much of a fool as those everybodies who know the story—and no doubt believe it. Can you remember any more?" he addressed the girl in a grimly polite tone. "I've often heard of the moral advantages of seeing oneself as others see one. Let us investigate further. Can't you recall something else that everybody knows?"

"Oh! Don't laugh!" she cried.

"Did I laugh? I assure you I was not aware of it. I won't ask you whether you believe the hotel-keeper's version. Surely you must know the value of human judgment."

She unclasped her hands, moved them slightly, and twined her fingers as before. Protest? Assent? Was there to be nothing more? He was relieved when she spoke in that warm and wonderful voice which in itself comforted and fascinated one's heart, which made her lovable.

"I heard this before you and I ever spoke to each other. It went out of my memory afterwards. Everything went out of my memory then; and I was glad of it. It was a fresh start for me, with you—and you know it. I wish I had forgotten who I was—that would have been best; and I very nearly did forget."

He was moved by the vibrating quality of the last words. She seemed to be talking low of some wonderful enchantment, in mysterious terms of special significance. He thought that if she only could talk to him in some unknown tongue, she would enslave him altogether by the sheer beauty of the sound, suggesting infinite depths of wisdom and feeling.

"But," she went on, "the name stuck in my head, it seems; and when you mentioned it—"

"It broke the spell," muttered Heyst in angry disappointment, as if he had been deceived in some hope.

The girl, from her position a little above him, surveyed with still eyes the abstracted silence of the man on whom she now depended with a completeness of which she had not been vividly conscious before, because, till then, she had never felt herself swinging between the abysses of earth and heaven in the hollow of his arm. What if he should grow weary of the burden!

"And, moreover, nobody had ever believed that tale!"

Heyst came out with an abrupt burst of sound which made her open her steady eyes wider, with an effect of immense surprise. It was a purely mechanical effect, because she was neither surprised nor puzzled. In fact, she could understand him better then than at any moment since she first set eyes on him.

He laughed scornfully.

"What am I thinking of?" he cried. "As if it could matter to me what anybody had ever said or believed, from the beginning of the world till the crack of doom!"

"I never heard you laugh till today," she observed. "This is the second time."

He scrambled to his feet and towerd above her.

"That's because, when one's heart has been broken into in the way you have broken into mine, all sorts of weaknesses are free to enter—shame, anger, stupid indignations, stupid fears—stupid laughter, too. I wonder what interpretation you are putting on it?"

"It wasn't gay, certainly," she said. "But why are you angry with me? Are you sorry you took me away from those beasts? I told you who I was. You could see it."

"Heavens!" he muttered. He had regained his command of himself. "I assure you I could see much more than you could tell me. I could see quite a lot that you don't even suspect yet; but you can't be seen quite through."

He sank to the ground by her side and took her hand. She asked gently:

'What more do you want from me?"

He made no sound for a time.

"The impossible, I suppose," he said very low, as one makes a confidence, and pressing the hand he grasped.

It did not return the pressure. He shook his head as if to drive away the thought of this, and added in a louder, light tone:

"Nothing less. And it isn't because I think little of what I've got already. Oh, no! It is because I think so much of this possession of mine that I can't have it complete enough. I know it's unreasonable. You can't hold back anything—now."

"Indeed I couldn't," she whispered, letting her hand lie passive in his tight grasp. "I only wish I could give you something more, or better, or whatever it is you want."

He was touched by the sincere accent of these simple words.

"I tell you what you can do—you can tell me whether you would have gone with me like this if you had known of whom that abominable idiot of a hotel-keeper was speaking. A murderer—no less!"

"But I didn't know you at all then," she cried. "And I had the sense to understand what he was saying. It wasn't murder, really. I never thought it was."

"What made him invent such an atrocity?" Heyst exclaimed. "He seems a stupid animal. He *is* stupid. How did he manage to hatch that pretty tale? Have I a particularly vile countenance? Is black selfishness written all over my face? Or is that sort of thing so universally human that it might be said of anybody?"

"It wasn't murder," she insisted earnestly.

"I know. I understand. It was worse. As to killing a man, which would be a comparatively decent thing to do, well—I have never done that."

"Why should you do it?" she asked in a frightened voice.

"My dear girl, you don't know the sort of life I have been leading in unexplored countries, in the wilds; it's difficult to give you an idea. There are men who haven't been in such tight places as I have found myself in who have had to—to shed blood, as the saying is. Even the wilds hold prizes which tempt some people; but I had no schemes, no plans—and not even great firmness of mind to make me unduly obstinate. I was simply moving on, while the others, perhaps, were going somewhere. An indifference as to roads and purposes makes one meeker, as it were. And I may say truly, too, that I never did care, I won't say for life—I had scorned what people call by that name from the first—but for being alive. I don't know if that is what men call courage, but I doubt it very much."

"You! You have no courage?" she protested.

"I really don't know. Not the sort that always itches for a weapon, for I have never been anxious to use one in the quarrels that a man gets into in the most innocent way, sometimes. The differences for which men murder each other are, like everything else they do, the most contemptible, the most pitiful things to look back upon. No, I've never killed a man or loved a woman—not even in my thoughts, not even in my dreams."

He raised her hand to his lips, and let them rest on it for a space, during which she moved a little closer to him. After the lingering kiss he did not relinquish his hold.

"To slay, to love—the greatest enterprises of life upon a man! And I have no experience of either. You must forgive me anything that may have appeared to you awkward in my behaviour, inexpressive in my speeches, untimely in my silences."

He moved uneasily, a little disappointed by her attitude, but indulgent to it, and feeling, in this moment of perfect quietness, that in holding her surrendered hand he had found a closer communion than they had ever achieved before. But even then there still lingered in him a sense of incompleteness not altogether overcome—which, it seemed, nothing ever would overcome—the fatal imperfection of all the gifts of life, which makes of them a delusion and a snare.

All of a sudden he squeezed her hand angrily. His delicately playful equanimity, the product of kindness and scorn, had perished with the loss of his bitter liberty.

"Not murder, you say! I should think not. But when you led me to talk just now, when the name turned up, when you understood that it was of me that these things had been said, you showed a strange emotion. I could see it."

"I was a bit startled," she said.

"At the baseness of my conduct?" he asked.

"I wouldn't judge you; not for anything."

"Really?"

"It would be as if I dared to judge everything that there is." With her other hand she made a gesture that seemed to embrace in one movement the earth and the heaven. "I wouldn't do such a thing."

Then came a silence, broken at last by Heyst:

"I! I! do a deadly wrong to my poor Morrison!" he cried. "I, who could not bear to hurt his feelings. I, who respected his very madness! Yes, this madness, the wreck of which you can see lying about the jetty of Diamond Bay. What else could I do? He insisted on regarding me as his saviour; he was always restraining the eternal obligation on the tip of his tongue, till I was burning with shame at his gratitude. What could I do? He was going to repay me with this infernal coal, and I had to join him as one joins a child's game in a nursery. One would no more have thought of humiliating him than one would think of humiliating a child. What's the use of talking of all this! Of course, the people here could not understand the truth of our relation to each other. But what business of theirs was it? Kill old Morrison! Well, it is less criminal, less base—I am not saying it is less difficult—to kill a man than to cheat him in that way. You understand that?"

She nodded slightly, but more than once and with evident conviction. His eyes rested on her, inquisitive, ready for tenderness.

"But it was neither one nor the other," he went on. "Then, why your emotion? All you confess is that you wouldn't judge me."

She turned upon him her veiled, unseeing grey eyes in which nothing of her wonder could be read.

"I said I couldn't," she whispered.

"But you thought that there was no smoke without fire!" The playfulness of tone hardly concealed his irritation. "What power there must be in words, only imperfectly heard—for you did not listen with particular care, did you? What were they? What evil effort of invention drove them into that idiot's mouth out of his lying throat? If you were to try to remember, they would perhaps convince me, too."

"I didn't listen," she protested. "What was it to me what they said of anybody? He was saying that there never were such loving friends to look at as you two; then, when you got all you wanted out of him and got thoroughly tired of him, too, you kicked him out to go home and die."

Indignation, with an undercurrent of some other feeling, rang in these quoted words, uttered in her pure and enchanting voice. She ceased abruptly and lowered her long, dark lashes, as if mortally weary, sick at heart.

"Of course, why shouldn't you get tired of that or any other—company? You aren't like any one else and—and the thought of it made me unhappy suddenly; but indeed, I did not believe anything bad of you. I—"

A brusque movement of his arm, flinging her hand away, stopped her short. Heyst had again lost control of himself. He would have shouted, if shouting had been in his character.

"No, this earth must be the appointed hatching planet of calumny enough to furnish the whole universe! I feel a disgust at my own person, as if I had tumbled into some filthy hole. Pah! And you—all you can say is that you won't judge me; that you—"

She raised her head at this attack, though indeed he had not turned to her.

"I don't believe anything bad of you," she repeated. "I couldn't."

He made a gesture as if to say:

"That's sufficient."

In his soul and in his body he experienced a nervous reaction from tenderness. All at once, without a transition, he detested her. But only for a moment. He remembered that she was pretty, and, more, that she had a special grace in the intimacy of life. She had the secret of individuality which excites—and escapes.

He jumped up and began to walk to and fro. Presently his hidden fury fell into dust within him, like a crazy structure, leaving behind emptiness, desolation, regret. His resentment was not against the girl, but against life itself—that commonest of snares, in which he felt himself caught, seeing clearly the plot of plots and unconsoled by the lucidity of his mind.

He swerved and, stepping up to her, sank to the ground by her side. Before she could make a movement, or even turn her head his way, he took her in his arms and kissed her lips. He tasted on them the bitterness of a tear fallen there. He had never seen her cry. It was like another appeal to his tenderness—a new seduction. The girl glanced round, moved suddenly away, and averted her face. With her hand she signed imperiously to him to leave her alone—a command which Heyst did not obey.

V

When she opened her eyes at last and sat up, Heyst scrambled quickly to his feet and went to pick up her cork helmet, which had rolled a little way off. Meanwhile she busied herself in doing up her hair, plaited on the top of her head in two heavy, dark tresses, which had come loose. He tendered her the helmet in silence, and waited as if unwilling to hear the sound of his own voice.

"We had better go down now," he suggested in a low tone.

He extended his hand to help her up. He had the intention to smile, but abandoned it at the nearer sight of her still face, in which was depicted the infinite lassitude of her soul. On their way to regain the forest path they had to pass through the spot from which the view of the sea could be obtained. The flaming abyss of emptiness, the liquid, undulating glare, the tragic brutality of the light, made her long for the friendly night, with its stars stilled by an austere spell; for the velvety dark sky and the mysterious great shadow of the sea, conveying peace to the day-weary heart. She put her hand to her eyes. Behind her back Heyst spoke gently.

"Let us get on, Lena."

She walked ahead in silence. Heyst remarked that they had never been out before during the hottest hours. It would do her no good, he feared. This solicitude pleased and soothed her. She felt more and more like herself—a poor London girl playing in an orchestra, and snatched out from the humiliations, the squalid dangers of a miserable existence, by a man like whom there was not, there could not be, another in this world. She felt this with elation, with uneasiness, with an intimate pride—and with a peculiar sinking of the heart.

"I am not easily knocked out by any such thing as heat," she said decisively.

"Yes, but I don't forget that you're not a tropical bird."

"You weren't born in these parts, either," she returned.

"No, and perhaps I haven't even your physique. I am a transplanted being. Transplanted! I ought to call myself uprooted—an unnatural state of existence; but a man is supposed to stand anything."

She looked back at him and received a smile. He told her to keep in the shelter of the forest path, which was very still and close, full of heat if free from glare. Now and then they had glimpses of the company's old clearing blazing with light, in which the black stumps of trees stood charred, without shadows, miserable and sinister. They crossed the open in a direct line for the bungalow. On the verandah they fancied they had a glimpse of a vanishing Wang, though the girl was not at all sure that she had seen anything move. Heyst had no doubts.

"Wang has been looking out for us. We are late."

"Was he? I thought I saw something white for a moment, and then I did not see it any more."

"That's it—he vanishes. It's a very remarkable gift in that Chinaman."

"Are they all like that?" she asked with naïve curiosity and uneasiness.

"Not in such perfection," said Heyst, amused.

He noticed with approval that she was not heated by the walk. The drops of perspiration on her forehead were like dew on the cool, white petal of a flower. He looked at her figure of grace and strength, solid and supple, with an ever-growing appreciation.

"Go in and rest yourself for a quarter of an hour; and then Mr. Wang will give us something to eat," he said.

They had found the table laid. When they came together again and sat down to it, Wang materialised without a sound, unheard, uncalled, and did his office. Which being accomplished, at a given moment he was not.

A great silence brooded over Samburan—the silence of the great heat that

seems pregnant with fatal issues, like the silence of ardent thought. Heyst remained alone in the big room. The girl seeing him take up a book, had retreated to her chamber. Heyst sat down under his father's portrait; and the abominable calumny crept back into his recollection. The taste of it came on his lips, nauseating and corrosive like some kinds of poison. He was tempted to spit on the floor, naïvely, in sheer unsophisticated disgust of the physical sensation. He shook his head, surprised at himself. He was not used to receive his intellectual impressions in that way—reflected in movements of carnal emotion. He stirred impatiently in his chair, and raised the book to his eyes with both hands. It was one of his father's. He opened it haphazard, and his eyes fell on the middle of the page. The elder Heyst had written of everything in many books—of space and of time, of animals and of stars; analysing ideas and actions, the laughter and the frowns of men, and the grimaces of their agony. The son read, shrinking into himself, composing his face as if under the author's eye, with a vivid consciousness of the portrait on his right hand, a little above his head; a wonderful presence in its heavy frame on the flimsy wall of mats, looking exiled and at home, out of place and masterful, in the painted immobility of profile.

And Heyst, the son, read:

Of the stratagems of life the most cruel is the consolation of love—the most subtle, too; for the desire is the bed of dreams.

He turned the pages of the little volume, "Storm and Dust," glancing here and there at the broken text of reflections, maxims, short phrases, enigmatical sometimes and sometimes eloquent. It seemed to him that he was hearing his father's voice, speaking and ceasing to speak again. Startled at first, he ended by finding a charm in the illusion. He abandoned himself to the half-belief that something of his father dwelt yet on earth—a ghostly voice, audible to the ear of his own flesh and blood. With what strange serenity, mingled with terrors, had that man considered the universal nothingness! He had plunged into it headlong, perhaps to render death, the answer that faced one at every inquiry, more supportable.

Heyst stirred, and the ghostly voice ceased; but his eyes followed the words on the last page of the book:

Men of tormented conscience, or of a criminal imaginaton, are aware of much that minds of a peaceful, resigned cast do not even suspect. It is not poets alone who dare descend into the abyss of infernal regions, or even who dream of such a descent. The most inexpressive of human beings must have said to himself, at one time or another: "Anything but this!" . . .

We all have our instants of clairvoyance. They are not very helpful. The character of the scheme does not permit that or anything else to be helpful. Properly speaking its character, judged by the standards established by its victims, is infamous. It excuses every violence of protest and at the same time never fails to crush it, just as it crushes the blindest assent. The so-called wickedness must be, like the so-called virtue, its own reward—to be anything at all. . . .

Clairvoyance or no clairvoyance, men love their captivity. To the unknown force of negation they prefer the miserably tumbled bed of their servitude. Man alone can

give one the disgust of pity; yet I find it easier to believe in the misfortune of mankind than in its wickedness.

These were the last words. Heyst lowered the book to his knees. Lena's voice spoke above his drooping head:

"You sit there as if you were unhappy."

"I thought you were asleep," he said.

"I was lying down, right enough, but I never closed my eyes."

"The rest would have done you good after our walk. Didn't you try?"

"I was lying down, I tell you, but sleep I couldn't."

"And you made no sound! What want of sincerity! Or did you want to be alone for a time?"

"I—alone!" she murmured.

He noticed her eyeing the book, and got up to put it back in the bookcase. When he turned round, he saw that she had dropped into the chair—it was the one she always used—and looked as if her strength had suddenly gone from her, leaving her only her youth, which seemed very pathetic, very much at his mercy. He moved quickly towards the chair.

"Tired, are you? It's my fault, taking you up so high and keeping you out so long. Such a windless day, too!"

She watched his concern, her pose languid, her eyes raised to him, but as unreadable as ever. He avoided looking into them for that very reason. He forgot himself in the contemplation of those passive arms, of those defenceless lips, and—yes, one had to go back to them—of those wide-open eyes. Something wild in their grey stare made him think of sea-birds in the cold murkiness of high latitudes. He started when she spoke, all the charm of physical intimacy revealed suddenly in that voice.

"You should try to love me!" she said.

He made a movement of astonishment.

"Try!" he muttered. "But it seems to me—" He broke off, saying to himself that if he loved her, he had never told her so in so many words. Simple words! They died on his lips. "What makes you say that?" he asked.

She lowered her eyelids and turned her head a little.

"I have done nothing," she said in a low voice. "It's you who have been good, helpful and tender to me. Perhaps you love me for that—just for that; or perhaps you love me for company, and because—well! But sometimes it seems to me that you can never love me for myself, only for myself, as people do love each other when it is to be for ever." Her head drooped. "For ever," she breathed out again; then, still more faintly, she added an entreating: "Do try!"

These last words went straight to his heart—the sound of them more than the sense. He did not know what to say, either from want of practice in dealing with women or simply from his innate honesty of thought. All his defences were broken now. Life had him fairly by the throat. But he managed a smile, though she was not looking at him; yes, he did manage it—the well-known Heyst smile of playful courtesy, so familiar to all sorts and conditions of men in the islands.

"My dear Lena," he said, "it looks as if you were trying to pick a very unnecessary quarrel with me—of all people!"

She made no movement. With his elbows spread out he was twisting the ends of his long moustaches, very masculine and perplexed, enveloped in the atmosphere of femininity as in a cloud, suspecting pitfalls, and as if afraid to move.

"I must admit, though," he added, "that there is no one else; and I suppose a certain amount of quarrelling is necessary for existence in this world."

That girl, seated in her chair in graceful quietude, was to him like a script in an unknown language, or even more simply mysterious: like any writing to the illiterate. As far as women went he was altogether uninstructed and he had not the gift of intuition which is fostered in the days of youth by dreams and visions, exercises of the heart fitting it for the encounters of a world in which love itself rests as much on antagonism as on attraction. His mental attitude was that of a man looking this way and that on a piece of writing which he is unable to decipher, but which may be big with some revelation. He didn't know what to say. All he found to add was:

"I don't even understand what I have done or left undone to distress you like this."

He stopped, struck afresh by the physical and moral sense of the imperfection of their relations—a sense which made him desire her constant nearness, before his eyes, under his hand, and which, when she was out of his sight, made her so vague, so elusive and illusory, a promise that could not be embraced and held.

"No! I don't see clearly what you mean. Is your mind turned towards the future?" he interpellated her with marked playfulness, because he was ashamed to let such a word pass his lips. But all his cherished negations were falling off him one by one.

"Because if it is so there is nothing easier than to dismiss it. In our future, as in what people call the other life, there is nothing to be frightened of."

She raised her eyes to him; and if nature had formed them to express anything else but blank candour he would have learned how terrified she was by his talk and the fact that her sinking heart loved him more desperately than ever. He smiled at her.

"Dismiss all thought of it," he insisted. "Surely you don't suspect after what I have heard from you, that I am anxious to return to mankind. I! I! murder my poor Morrison! It's possible that I may be really capable of that which they say I have done. The point is that I haven't done it. But it is an unpleasant subject to me. I ought to be ashamed to confess it—but it is! Let us forget it. There's that in you, Lena, which can console me for worse things, for uglier passages. And if we forget, there are no voices here to remind us."

She had raised her head before he paused.

"Nothing can break in on us here," he went on and as if there had been an appeal or a provocation in her upward glance, he bent down and took her under the arms, raising her straight out of the chair into a sudden and close embrace. Her alacrity to respond, which made her seem as light as a feather, warmed his heart at that moment more than closer caresses had done before.

He had not expected that ready impulse towards himself which had been dormant in her passive attitude. He had just felt the clasp of her arms round his neck, when, with a slight exclamation—"He's here!"—she disengaged herself and bolted away into her room.

VI

Heyst was astounded. Looking all round, as if to take the whole room to witness of this outrage, he became aware of Wang materialised in the doorway. The intrusion was as surprising as anything could be, in view of the strict regularity with which Wang made himself visible. Heyst was tempted to laugh at first. This practical comment on his affirmation that nothing could break in on them relieved the strain of his feelings. He was a little vexed, too. The Chinaman preserved a profound silence.

"What do you want?" asked Heyst sternly.

"Boat out there," said the Chinaman sternly.

"Where? What do you mean? Boat adrift in the straits?"

Some subtle change in Wang's bearing suggested his being out of breath; but he did not pant, and his voice was steady.

"No—row."

It was Heyst now who was startled and raised his voice.

"Malay man, eh?"

Wang made a slight negative movement with his head.

"Do you hear, Lena?" Heyst called out. "Wang says there is a boat in sight—somewhere near, apparently. Where's that boat, Wang?"

"Round the point," said Wang, leaping into Malay unexpectedly, and in a loud voice. "White men—three."

"So close as that?" exclaimed Heyst, moving out on the verandah followed by Wang. "White men? Impossible!"

Over the clearing the shadows were already lengthening. The sun hung low; a ruddy glare lay on the burnt black patch in front of the bungalow, and slanted on the ground between the straight, tall, mast-like trees soaring a hundred feet or more without a branch. The growth of bushes cut off all view of the jetty from the verandah. Far away to the right Wang's hut, or rather its dark roof of mats, could be seen above the bamboo fence which insured the privacy of the Alfuro woman. The Chinaman looked that way swiftly. Heyst paused, and then stepped back a pace into the room.

"White men, Lena, apparently. What are you doing?"

"I am just bathing my eyes a little," the girl's voice said from the inner room.

"Oh, yes; all right!"

"Do you want me?"

"No. You had better—I am going down to the jetty. Yes, you had better stay in. What an extraordinary thing!"

It was so extraordinary that nobody could possibly appreciate how extraordinary it was but himself. His mind was full of mere exclamations, while his feet were carrying him in the direction of the jetty. He followed the line of the rails, escorted by Wang.

"Where were you when you first saw the boat?" he asked over his shoulder.

Wang explained in Malay that he had gone to the shore end of the wharf, to get a few lumps of coal from the big heap, when, happening to raise his eyes from the ground, he saw the boat—a white man's boat, not a canoe. He had good eyes. He had seen the boat, with the men at the oars; and here Wang made a particular gesture over his eyes, as if his vision had received a blow. He had turned at once and run to the house to report.

"No mistake, eh?" said Heyst, moving on. At the very outer edge of the belt he stopped short. Wang halted behind him on the path, till the voice of Number One called him sharply forward into the open. He obeyed.

"Where's that boat?" asked Heyst forcibly. "I say—where is it?"

Nothing whatever was to be seen between the point and the jetty. The stretch of Diamond Bay was like a piece of purple shadow, lustrous and empty, while beyond the land, the open sea lay blue and opaque under the sun. Heyst's eyes swept all over the offing till they met, far off, the dark cone of the volcano, with its faint plume of smoke broadening and vanishing everlastingly at the top, without altering its shape in the glowing transparency of the evening.

"The fellow has been dreaming," he muttered to himself.

He looked hard at the Chinaman. Wang seemed turned into stone. Suddenly, as if he had received a shock, he started, flung his arm out with a pointing forefinger, and made guttural noises to the effect that there, there, there, he had seen a boat.

It was very uncanny. Heyst thought of some strange hallucination. Unlikely enough; but that a boat with three men in it should have sunk between the point and the jetty, suddenly, like a stone, without leaving as much on the surface as a floating oar, was still more unlikely. The theory of a phantom boat would have been more credible than that.

"Confound it!" he muttered to himself.

He was unpleasantly affected by this mystery; but now a simple explanation occurred to him. He stepped hastily out on the wharf. The boat, if it had existed and had retreated, could perhaps be seen from the far end of the long jetty.

Nothing was to be seen. Heyst let his eyes roam idly over the sea. He was so absorbed in his perplexity that a hollow sound, as of somebody tumbling about in a boat, with a clatter of oars and spars, failed to make him move for a moment. When his mind seized its meaning, he had no difficulty in locating the sound. It had come from below—from under the jetty!

He ran back for a dozen yards or so, and then looked over. His sight plunged straight into the stern-sheets of a big boat, the greater part of which was hidden from him by the planking of the jetty. His eyes fell on the thin back of a man doubled up over the tiller in a queer, uncomfortable attitude of drooping sorrow. Another man, more directly below Heyst, sprawled on his back from gunwale to gunwale, half off the after thwart, his head lower than his feet. This second man glared wildly upward, and struggled to raise himself, but to all appearance was much too drunk to succeed. The visible part of the boat contained also a flat, leather trunk, on which the first man's long

legs were tucked up nervelessly. A large earthenware jar, with its wide mouth uncorked, rolled out on the bottom-boards from under the sprawling man.

Heyst had never been so much astonished in his life. He stared dumbly at the strange boat's crew. From the first he was positive that these men were not sailors. They wore the white drill suit of tropical civilisation; but their apparition in a boat Heyst could not connect with anything plausible. The civilisation of the tropics could have had nothing to do with it. It was more like those myths, current in Polynesia, of amazing strangers, who arrive at an island, gods or demons, bringing good or evil to the innocence of the inhabitants—gifts of unknown things, words never heard before.

Heyst noticed a cork helmet floating alongside the boat, evidently fallen from the head of the man doubled over the tiller, who displayed a dark, bony poll. An oar, too, had been knocked overboard, probably by the sprawling man, who was still struggling between the thwarts. By this time Heyst regarded the visitation no longer with surprise, but with the sustained attention demanded by a difficult problem. With one foot posed on the string-piece, and leaning on his raised knee, he was taking in everything. The sprawling man rolled off the thwart, collapsed, and, most unexpectedly, got on his feet. He swayed dizzily, spreading his arms out, and uttered faintly a hoarse, dreamy "Hallo!" His upturned face was swollen, red, peeling all over the nose and cheeks. His stare was irrational. Heyst perceived stains of dried blood all over the front of his dirty white coat, and also on one sleeve.

"What's the matter? Are you wounded?"

The other glanced down, reeled—one of his feet was inside a large pith hat—and, recovering himself, let out a dismal, grating sound in the manner of a grim laugh.

"Blood—not mine. Thirst's the matter. Exhausted's the matter. Done up. Drink, man! Give us water!"

Thirst was in the very tone of his words, alternating a broken croak and a faint, throaty rustle which just reached Heyst's ears. The man in the boat raised his hands to be helped up on the jetty, whispering:

"I tried. I am too weak. I tumbled down."

Wang was coming along the jetty slowly, with intent, straining eyes.

"Run back and bring a crowbar here. There's one lying by the coal-heap," Heyst shouted to him.

The man standing in the boat sat down on the thwart behind him. A horrible coughing laugh came through his swollen lips.

"Crowbar? What's that for?" he mumbled, and his head dropped on his chest mournfully.

Meantime Heyst, as if he had forgotten the boat, started kicking hard at a large brass tap projecting above the planks. To accommodate ships that came for coal and happened to need water as well, a stream had been tapped in the interior and an iron pipe led along the jetty. It terminated with a curved end almost exactly where the strangers' boat had been driven between the piles; but the tap was set fast.

"Hurry up!" Heyst yelled to the Chinaman, who was running with the crowbar in his hand.

Heyst snatched it from him and, obtaining a leverage against the string-piece, wrung the stiff tap round with a mighty jerk.

"I hope that pipe hasn't got choked!" he muttered to himself anxiously.

It hadn't; but it did not yield a strong gush. The sound of a thin stream, partly breaking on the gunwale of the boat and partly splashing alongside, became at once audible. It was greeted by a cry of inarticulate and savage joy. Heyst knelt on the string-piece and peered down. The man who had spoken was already holding his open mouth under the bright trickle. Water ran over his eyelids and over his nose, gurgled down his throat, flowed over his chin. Then some obstruction in the pipe gave way, and a sudden thick jet broke on his face. In a moment his shoulders were soaked, the front of his coat inundated; he streamed and dripped; water ran into his pockets, down his legs, into his shoes; but he had clutched the end of the pipe, and, hanging on with both hands, swallowed, spluttered, choked, snorted with the noises of a swimmer. Suddenly a curious dull roar reached Heyst's ears. Something hairy and black flew from under the jetty. A dishevelled head, coming on like a cannon-ball, took the man at the pipe in flank, with enough force to tear his grip loose and fling him headlong into the stern-sheets. He fell upon the folded legs of the man at the tiller, who, roused by the commotion in the boat, was sitting up, silent, rigid, and very much like a corpse. His eyes were but two black patches, and his teeth glistened with a death's head grin between his retracted lips, no thicker than blackish parchment glued over the gums.

From him Heyst's eyes wandered to the creature who had replaced the first man at the end of the water-pipe. Enormous brown paws clutched it savagely; the wild, big head hung back, and in a face covered with a wet mass of hair there gaped crookedly a wide mouth full of fangs. The water filled it, welled up in hoarse coughs, ran down on each side of the jaws and down the hairy throat, soaked the black pelt of the enormous chest, naked under a torn check shirt, heaving convulsively with a play of massive muscles carved in red mahogany.

As soon as the first man had recovered the breath knocked out of him by the irresistible charge, a scream of mad cursing issued from the stern-sheets. With a rigid, angular crooking of the elbow, the man at the tiller put his hand back to his hip.

"Don't shoot him, sir!" yelled the first man. "Wait! Let me have that tiller. I will teach him to shove himself in front of a *caballero!*"

Martin Ricardo flourished the heavy piece of wood, leaped forward with astonishing vigour, and brought it down on Pedro's head with a crash that resounded all over the quiet sweep of Black Diamond Bay. A crimson patch appeared on the matted hair; red veins appeared in the water flowing all over his face, and it dripped in rosy drops off his head. But the man hung on. Not till a second furious blow descended did the hairy paws let go their grip and the squirming body sink limply. Before it could touch the bottom-boards, a tremendous kick in the ribs from Ricardo's foot shifted it forward out of sight, whence came the noise of a heavy thud, a clatter of spars, and a pitiful grunt. Ricardo stooped to look under the jetty.

"Aha, dog! This will teach you to keep back where you belong, you murdering brute, you slaughtering savage, you! You infidel, you robber of churches! Next time I will rip you open from neck to heel, you carrion-eater! *Esclavo!*"

He backed a little and straightened himself up.

"I don't mean it really," he remarked to Heyst, whose steady eyes met his from above. He ran aft briskly.

"Come along, sir. It's your turn. I oughtn't to have drunk first. 'S truth, I forgot myself! A gentleman like you will overlook that, I know." As he made these apologies, Ricardo extended his hand. "Let me steady you, sir."

Slowly Mr. Jones unfolded himself in all his slenderness, rocked, staggered, and caught Ricardo's shoulder. His henchman assisted him to the pipe, which went on gushing a clear stream of water, sparkling exceedingly against the black piles and the gloom under the jetty.

"Catch hold, sir," Ricardo advised solicitously. "All right?"

He stepped back, and, while Mr. Jones revelled in the abundance of water, he addressed himself to Heyst with a sort of justificatory speech, the tone of which, reflecting his feelings, partook of purring and spitting. They had been thirty hours tugging at the oars, he explained, and they had been more than forty hours without water, except that the night before they had licked the dew off the gunwales.

Ricardo did not explain to Heyst how it happened. At that precise moment he had no explanation ready for the man on the wharf, who, he guessed, must be wondering much more at the presence of his visitors than at their plight.

VII

The explanation lay in the two simple facts that the light winds and strong currents of the Java Sea had drifted the boat about until they partly lost their bearings; and that by some extraordinary mistake one of the two jars put into the boat by Schomberg's man contained salt water. Ricardo tried to put some pathos into his tones. Pulling for thirty hours with eighteen-foot oars! And the sun! Ricardo relieved his feelings by cursing the sun. They had felt their hearts and lungs shrivel within them. And then, as if all that hadn't been trouble enough, he complained bitterly, he had had to waste his fainting strength in beating their servant about the head with a stretcher. The fool had wanted to drink sea water, and wouldn't listen to reason. There was no stopping him otherwise. It was better to beat him into insensibility than to have him go crazy in the boat, and to be obliged to shoot him. The preventive, administered with enough force to brain an elephant, boasted Ricardo, had to be applied on two occasions—the second time all but in sight of the jetty.

"You have seen the beauty," Ricardo went on expansively, hiding his lack of some sort of probable story under this loquacity. "I had to hammer him away from the spout. Opened afresh all the old broken spots on his head. You saw how hard I had to hit. He has no restraint, no restraint at all. If it wasn't that he can be made useful in one way or another, I would just as soon have let the governor shoot him."

He smiled up at Heyst in his peculiar lip-retracting manner, and added by way of afterthought:

"That's what will happen to him in the end, if he doesn't learn to restrain himself. But I've taught him to mind his manners for a while, anyhow!"

And again he addressed his quick grin up to the man on the wharf. His round eyes had never left Heyst's face ever since he began to deliver his account of the voyage.

"So that's how he looks!" Ricardo was saying to himself.

He had not expected Heyst to be like this. He had formed for himself a conception containing the helpful suggestion of a vulnerable point. These solitary men were often tipplers. But no!—this was not a drinking man's face; nor could he detect the weakness of alarm, or even the weakness of surprise, on these features, in these steady eyes.

"We were too far gone to climb out," Ricardo went on. "I heard you walking along, though. I thought I shouted; I tried to. You didn't hear me shout?"

Heyst made an almost imperceptible negative sign, which the greedy eyes of Ricardo—greedy for all signs—did not miss.

"Throat too parched. We didn't even care to whisper to each other lately. Thirst chokes one. We might have died there under this wharf before you found us."

"I couldn't think where you had gone to." Heyst was heard at last, addressing directly the newcomers from the sea. "You were seen as soon as you cleared that point."

"We were seen, eh?" grunted Mr. Ricardo. "We pulled like machines—daren't stop. The governor sat at the tiller, but he couldn't speak to us. She drove in between the piles till she hit something, and we all tumbled off the thwarts as if we had been drunk. Drunk—ha, ha! Too dry, by George! We fetched in here with the very last of our strength, and no mistake. Another mile would have done for us. When I heard your footsteps above, I tried to get up, and I fell down."

"That was the first sound I heard," said Heyst.

Mr. Jones, the front of his soiled white tunic soaked and plastered against his breast-bone, staggered away from the water-pipe. Steadying himself on Ricardo's shoulder, he drew a long breath, raised his dripping head, and produced a smile of ghastly amiability, which was lost upon the thoughtful Heyst. Behind his back the sun, touching the water, was like a disk of iron cooled to a dull red glow, ready to start rolling round the circular steel plate of the sea, which, under the darkening sky, looked more solid than the high ridge of Samburan; more solid than the point, whose long outlined slope melted into its own unfathomable shadow blurring the dim sheen on the bay. The forceful stream from the pipe broke like shattered glass on the boat's gunwale. Its loud, fitful, and persistent splashing revealed the depth of the world's silence.

"Great notion, to lead the water out here," pronounced Ricardo appreciatively.

Water was life. He felt now as if he could run a mile, scale a ten-foot wall, sing a song. Only a few minutes ago he was next door to a corpse, done up, unable to stand, to lift a hand; unable to groan. A drop of water had done that miracle.

"Didn't you feel life itself running and soaking into you, sir?" he asked his principal, with deferential but forced vivacity.

Without a word, Mr. Jones stepped off the thwart and sat down in the stern-sheets.

"Isn't that man of yours bleeding to death in the bows under there?" inquired Heyst.

Ricardo ceased his ecstasies over the life-giving water and answered in a tone of innocence:

"He? You may call him a man, but his hide is a jolly sight tougher than the toughest alligator he ever skinned in the good old days. You don't know how much he can stand: I do. We have tried him long time ago. *Olà,* there! Pedro! Pedro!" he yelled, with a force of lung testifying to the regenerative virtues of water.

A weak *"Señor?"* came from under the wharf.

"What did I tell you?" said Ricardo triumphantly. "Nothing can hurt him. He's all right. But, I say, the boat's getting swamped. Can't you turn this water off before you sink her under us? She's half full already."

At a sign from Heyst, Wang hammered at the brass tap on the wharf, then stood behind Number One, crowbar in hand, motionless as before. Ricardo was perhaps not so certain of Pedro's toughness as he affirmed; for he stooped, peering under the wharf, then moved forward out of sight. The gush of water, ceasing suddenly, made a silence which became complete when the after-trickle stopped. Afar, the sun was reduced to a red spark, glowing very low in the breathless immensity of twilight. Purple gleams lingered on the water all round the boat. The spectral figure in the stern-sheets spoke in a languid tone:

"That—er—companion—er—secretary of mine is a queer chap. I am afraid we aren't presenting ourselves in a very favourable light."

Heyst listened. It was the conventional voice of an educated man, only strangely lifeless. But more strange yet was this concern for appearances, expressed, he did not know, whether in jest or in earnest. Earnestness was hardly to be supposed under the circumstances, and no one had ever jested in such dead tones. It was something which could not be answered, and Heyst said nothing. The other went on:

"Travelling as I do, I find a man of his sort extremely useful. He has his little weaknesses, no doubt."

"Indeed!" Heyst was provoked into speaking. "Weakness of the arm is not one of them; neither is an exaggerated humanity, as far as I can judge."

"Defects of temper," explained Mr. Jones from the stern-sheets.

The subject of this dialogue, coming out just then from under the wharf into the visible part of the boat, made himself heard in his own defence, in a voice full of life, and with nothing languid in his manner. On the contrary, it was brisk, almost jocose. He begged pardon for contradicting. He was never out of temper with "our Pedro." The fellow was a Dago of immense strength and of no sense whatever. This combination made him dangerous, and he had to be treated accordingly, in a manner which he could understand. Reasoning was beyond him.

"And so"—Ricardo addressed Heyst with animation—"you mustn't be surprised if—"

"I assure you," Heyst interrupted, "that my wonder at your arrival in your boat here is so great that it leaves no room for minor astonishments. But hadn't your better land?"

"That's the talk, sir!" Ricardo began to bustle about the boat, talking all the time. Finding himself unable to "size up" this man, he was inclined to credit him with extraordinary powers of penetration, which, it seemed to him, would be favoured by silence. Also, he feared some point-blank question. He had no ready-made story to tell. He and his patron had put off considering that rather important detail too long. For the last two days, the horrors of thirst, coming on them unexpectedly, had prevented consultation. They had had to pull for dear life. But the man on the wharf, were he in league with the devil himself, would pay for all their sufferings, thought Ricardo with an unholy joy.

Meantime, splashing in the water which covered the bottom-boards, Ricardo congratulated himself aloud on the luggage being out of the way of the wet. He had piled it up forward. He had roughly tied up Pedro's head. Pedro had nothing to grumble about. On the contrary, he ought to be mighty thankful to him, Ricardo, for being alive at all.

"Well, now, let me give you a leg up, sir," he said cheerily to his motionless principal in the stern-sheets. "All our troubles are over—for a time, anyhow. Ain't it luck to find a white man on this island? I would have just as soon expected to meet an angel from heaven—eh, Mr. Jones? Now then—ready, sir? One, two, three, up you go!"

Helped from below by Ricardo, and from above by the man more unexpected than an angel, Mr. Jones scrambled up and stood on the wharf by the side of Heyst. He swayed like a reed. The night descending on Samburan turned into dense shadow the point of land and the wharf itself, and gave a dark solidity to the unshimmering water extending to the last faint trace of light away to the west. Heyst stared at the guests whom the renounced world had sent him thus at the end of the day. The only other vestige of light left on earth lurked in the hollows of the thin man's eyes. They gleamed, mobile and languidly evasive. The eyelids fluttered.

"You are feeling weak," said Heyst.

"For the moment, a little," confessed the other.

With loud panting, Ricardo scrambled on his hands and knees upon the wharf, energetic and unaided. He rose up at Heyst's elbow and stamped his foot on the planks, with a sharp, provocative, double beat, such as is heard sometimes in fencing-schools before the adversaries engage their foils. Not that the renegade seaman Ricardo knew anything of fencing. What he called "shooting-irons" were his weapons, or the still less aristocratic knife, such as was even then ingeniously strapped to his leg. He thought of it, at that moment. A swift stooping motion, then, on the recovery, a ripping blow, a shove off the wharf, and no noise except a splash in the water that would scarcely disturb the silence. Heyst would have no time for a cry. It would be quick and neat, and immensely in accord with Ricardo's humour. But he repressed this gust of savagery. The job was not such a simple one. This piece

had to be played to another tune, and in much slower time. He returned to his note of talkative simplicity.

"Ay, and I too don't feel as strong as I thought I was when the first drink set me up. Great wonder-worker water is! And to get it right here on the spot! It was heaven—hey, sir?"

Mr. Jones, being directly addressed, took up his part in the concerted piece:

"Really, when I saw a wharf on what might have been an uninhabited island, I couldn't believe my eyes. I doubted its existence. I thought it was a delusion, till the boat actually drove between the piles, as you see her lying now."

While he was speaking faintly, in a voice which did not seem to belong to the earth, his henchman, in extremely loud and terrestrial accents, was fussing about their belongings in the boat, addressing himself to Pedro:

"Come, now—pass up the dunnage there! Move yourself, *hombre,* or I'll have to get down again and give you a tap on those bandages of your's, you growling bear, you!"

"Ah! You didn't believe in the reality of the wharf?" Heyst was saying to Mr. Jones.

"You ought to kiss my hands!"

Ricardo caught hold of an ancient Gladstone bag and swung it on the wharf with a thump.

"Yes! You ought to burn a candle before me as they do before the saints in your country. No saint has ever done so much for you as I have, you ungrateful vagabond. Now then! Up you get."

Helped by the talkative Ricardo, Pedro scrambled up on the wharf, where he remained for some time on all fours, swinging to and fro his shaggy head tied up in white rags. Then he got up clumsily, like a bulky animal in the dusk, balancing itself on its hind legs.

Mr. Jones began to explain languidly to Heyst that they were in a pretty bad state that morning, when they caught sight of the smoke of the volcano. It nerved them to make an effort for their lives. Soon afterwards they made out the island.

"I had just wits enough left in my baked brain to alter the direction of the boat," the ghostly voice went on. "As to finding assistance, a wharf, a white man—nobody would have dreamed of it. Simply preposterous!"

"That's what I thought when my Chinaman came and told me he had seen a boat with white men pulling up," said Heyst.

"Most extraordinary luck," interjected Ricardo, standing by anxiously attentive to every word. "Seems a dream," he added. "A lovely dream!"

A silence fell on that group of three, as if every one had become afraid to speak, in an obscure sense of an impending crisis. Pedro on one side of them and Wang on the other had the air of watchful spectators. A few stars had come out pursuing the ebbing twilight. A light draught of air, tepid enough in the thickening twilight after the scorching day, struck a chill into Mr. Jones in his soaked clothes.

"I may infer, then, that there is a settlement of white people here?" he murmured, shivering visibly.

Heyst roused himself.

"Oh, abandoned, abandoned. I am alone here—practically alone; but several empty houses are still standing. No lack of accommodation. We may just as well—here, Wang, go back to the shore and run the trolley out here."

The last words having been spoken in Malay, he explained courteously that he had given directions for the transport of the luggage. Wang had melted into the night in his soundless manner.

"My word! Rails laid down and all," exclaimed Ricardo softly, in a tone of admiration. "Well, I never!"

"We were working a coal-mine here," said the late manager of the Tropical Belt Coal Company. "These are only the ghosts of things that have been."

Mr. Jones's teeth were suddenly started chattering by another faint puff of wind, a mere sigh from the west, where Venus cast her rays on the dark edge of the horizon, like a bright lamp hung above the grave of the sun.

"We might be moving on," proposed Heyst. "The Chinaman and that—ah—ungrateful servant of yours, with the broken head, can load the things and come along after us."

The suggestion was accepted without words. Moving towards the shore, the three men met the trolley, a mere metallic rustle which whisked past them, the shadowy Wang running noiselessly behind. Only the sound of their footsteps accompanied them. It was a long time since so many footsteps had rung together on that jetty. Before they stepped on to the path trodden through the grass, Heyst said:

"I am prevented from offering you a share of my own quarters." The distant courtliness of this beginning arrested the other two suddenly, as if amazed by some manifest incongruity. "I should regret it more," he went on, "if I were not in a position to give you the choice of those empty bungalows for a temporary home."

He turned round and plunged into the narrow tracks, the two others following in single file.

"Queer start!" Ricardo took the opportunity for whispering, as he fell behind Mr. Jones, who swayed in the gloom, enclosed by the stalks of tropical grass, almost as slender as a stalk of grass himself.

In this order they emerged into the open space kept clear of vegetation by Wang's judicious system of periodical firing. The shapes of buildings, unlighted, high-roofed, looked mysteriously extensive and featureless against the increasing glitter of the stars. Heyst was pleased at the absence of lights in his bungalow. It looked as uninhabited as the others. He continued to lead the way, inclining to the right. His equable voice was heard.

"This one would be the best. It was our counting-house. There is some furniture in it yet. I am pretty certain that you'll find a couple of camp bedsteads in one of the rooms."

The high-pitched roof of the bungalow towered up very close, eclipsing the sky.

"Here we are. Three steps. As you see, there's a wide verandah. Sorry to keep you waiting for a moment; the door is locked, I think."

He was heard trying it. Then he leaned against the rail, saying:

"Wang will get the keys."

The others waited, two vague shapes nearly mingled together in the darkness of the verandah, from which issued a sudden chattering of Mr. Jones's teeth, directly suppressed, and a slight shuffle of Ricardo's feet. Their guide and host, his back against the rail, seemed to have forgotten their existence. Suddenly he moved, and murmured:

"Ah, here's the trolley."

Then he raised his voice in Malay, and was answered, "*Ya tuan,*" from an indistinct group that could be made out in the direction of the track.

"I have sent Wang for the key and a light," he said, in a voice that came out without any particular direction—a peculiarity which disconcerted Ricardo.

Wang did not tarry long on his mission. Very soon from the distant recesses of obscurity appeared the swinging lantern he carried. It cast a fugitive ray on the arrested trolley with the uncouth figure of the wild Pedro drooping over the load; then it moved towards the bungalow and ascended the stairs. After working at the stiff lock, Wang applied his shoulder to the door. It came open with explosive suddenness, as if in a passion at being thus disturbed after two years' repose. From the dark slope of a tall stand-up writing-desk a forgotten, solitary sheet of paper flew up and settled gracefully on the floor.

Wang and Pedro came and went through the offended door, bringing the things off the trolley, one flitting swiftly in and out, the other staggering heavily. Later, directed by a few quiet words from Number One, Wang made several journeys with the lantern to the storerooms, bringing in blankets, provisions in tins, coffee, sugar, and a packet of candles. He lighted one, and stuck it on the ledge of the stand-up desk. Meantime Pedro, being introduced to some kindling-wood and a bundle of dry sticks, had busied himself outside in lighting a fire, on which he placed a ready-filled kettle handed to him by Wang impassively, at arm's length, as if across a chasm. Having received the thanks of his guests, Heyst wished them good-night and withdrew, leaving them to their repose.

VIII

Heyst walked away slowly. There was still no light in his bungalow, and he thought that perhaps it was just as well. By this time he was much less perturbed. Wang had preceded him with the lantern, as if in a hurry to get away from the two white men and their hairy attendant. The light was not dancing along any more; it was standing perfectly still by the steps of the verandah.

Heyst, glancing back casually, saw behind him still another light,—the light of the strangers' open fire. A black, uncouth form, stooping over it monstrously, staggered away into the outlying shadows. The kettle had boiled, probably.

With that weird vision of something questionably human impressed upon his senses, Heyst moved on a pace or two. What could the people be who had such a creature for their familiar attendant? He stopped. The vague apprehension of a distant future, in which he saw Lena unavoidably separated from him by profound and subtle differences; the sceptical carelessness which had

accompanied every one of his attempts at action, like a secret reserve of his soul, fell away from him. He no longer belonged to himself. There was a call far more imperious and august. He came up to the bungalow, and, at the very limit of the lantern's light, on the top step, he saw her feet and the bottom part of her dress. The rest of her person was suggested dimly as high as her waist. She sat on a chair, and the gloom of the low eaves descended upon her head and shoulders. She didn't stir.

"You haven't gone to sleep here?" he asked.

"Oh, no! I was waiting for you—in the dark."

Heyst, on the top step, leaned against a wooden pillar, after moving the lantern to one side.

"I have been thinking that it is just as well you had no light. But wasn't it dull for you to sit in the dark?"

"I don't need a light to think of you." Her charming voice gave a value to this banal answer, which had also the merit of truth. Heyst laughed a little, and said that he had had a curious experience. She made no remark. He tried to figure to himself the outlines of her easy pose. A spot of dim light here and there hinted at the unfailing grace of attitude which was one of her natural possessions.

She had thought of him, but not in connection with the strangers. She had admired him from the first; she had been attracted by his warm voice, his gentle eye, but she had felt him too wonderfully difficult to know. He had given to life a savour, a movement, a promise mingled with menaces, which she had not suspected were to be found in it—or, at any rate, not by a girl wedded to misery as she was. She said to herself that she must not be irritated because he seemed too self-contained, and as if shut up in a world of his own. When he took her in his arms, she felt that his embrace had a great and compelling force, that he was moved deeply, and that perhaps he would not get tired of her so very soon. She thought that he had opened to her the feelings of delicate joy, that the very uneasiness he caused her was delicious in its sadness, and that she would try to hold him as long as she could—till her fainting arms, her sinking soul, could cling to him no more.

"Wang's not here, of course?" Heyst said suddenly. She answered as if in her sleep.

"He put this light down here without stopping, and ran."

"Ran, did he? H'm! Well, it's considerably later than his usual time to go home to his Alfuro wife; but to be seen running is a sort of degradation for Wang, who has mastered the art of vanishing. Do you think he was startled out of his perfection by something?"

"Why should he be startled?"

Her voice remained dreamy, a little uncertain.

"I have been startled," Heyst said.

She was not listening. The lantern at their feet threw the shadows of her face upward. Her eyes glistened, as if frightened and attentive, above a lighted chin and a very white throat.

"Upon my word," mused Heyst, "now that I don't see them, I can hardly believe that those fellows exist!"

"And what about me?" she asked, so swiftly that he made a movement like somebody pounced upon from an ambush. "When you don't see me, do you believe that I exist?"

"Exist? Most charmingly! My dear Lena, you don't know your own advantages. Why, your voice alone would be enough to make you unforgettable!"

"Oh, I didn't mean forgetting in that way. I dare say if I were to die you would remember me right enough. And what good would that be to anybody? It's while I am alive that I want—"

Heyst stood by her chair, a stalwart figure imperfectly lighted. The broad shoulders, the martial face that was like a disguise of his disarmed soul, were lost in the gloom above the plane of light in which his feet were planted. He suffered from a trouble with which she had nothing to do. She had no general conception of the conditions of the existence he had offered to her. Drawn into its peculiar stagnation she remained unrelated to it because of her ignorance.

For instance, she could never perceive the prodigious improbability of the arrival of that boat. She did not seem to be thinking of it. Perhaps she had already forgotten the fact herself. And Heyst resolved suddenly to say nothing more of it. It was not that he shrank from alarming her. Not feeling anything definite himself he could not imagine a precise effect being produced on her by any amount of explanation. There is a quality in events which is apprehended differently by different minds or even by the same mind at different times. Any man living at all consciously knows that embarrassing truth. Heyst was aware that this visit could bode nothing pleasant. In his present soured temper towards all mankind he looked upon it as a visitation of a particularly offensive kind.

He glanced along the verandah in the direction of the other bungalow. The fire of sticks in front of it had gone out. No faint glow of embers, not the slightest thread of light in that direction, hinted at the presence of strangers. The darker shapes in the obscurity, the dead silence, betrayed nothing of that strange intrusion. The peace of Samburan asserted itself as on any other night. Everything was as before, except—Heyst became aware of it suddenly—that for a whole minute, perhaps, with his hand on the back of the girl's chair and within a foot of her person, he had lost the sense of her existence, for the first time since he had brought her over to share this invincible, this undefiled peace. He picked up the lantern, and the act made a silent stir all along the verandah. A spoke of shadow swung swiftly across her face, and the strong light rested on the immobility of her features, as of a woman looking at a vision. Her eyes were still, her lips serious. Her dress, open at the neck, stirred slightly to her even breathing.

"We had better go in, Lena," suggested Heyst, very low, as if breaking a spell cautiously.

She rose without a word. Heyst followed her indoors. As they passed through the living-room, he left the lantern burning on the centre table.

IX

That night the girl woke up, for the first time in her new experience, with the sensation of having been abandoned to her own devices. She woke up from

a painful dream of separation brought about in a way which she could not understand, and missed the relief of the waking instant. The desolate feeling of being alone persisted. She was really alone. A night-light made it plain enough in the dim, mysterious manner of a dream; but this was reality. It startled her exceedingly.

In a moment she was at the curtain that hung in the doorway, and raised it with a steady hand. The conditions of their life in Samburan would have made peeping absurd; nor was such a thing in her character. This was not a movement of curiosity, but of downright alarm—the continued distress and fear of the dream. The night could not have been very far advanced. The light in the lantern was burning strongly, striping the floor and walls of the room with thick black bands. She hardly knew whether she expected to see Heyst or not; but she saw him at once, standing by the table in his sleeping-suit, his back to the doorway. She stepped in noiselessly with her bare feet, and let the curtain fall behind her. Something characteristic in Heyst's attitude made her say, almost in a whisper:

"You are looking for something."

He could not have heard her before; but he didn't start at the unexpected whisper. He only pushed the drawer of the table in and, without even looking over his shoulder, asked quietly, accepting her presence as if he had been aware of all her movements:

"I say, are you certain that Wang didn't go through this room this evening?"

"Wang? When?"

"After leaving the lantern, I mean."

"Oh, no. He ran on. I watched him."

"Or before, perhaps—while I was with these boat people? Do you know? Can you tell?"

"I hardly think so. I came out as the sun went down, and sat outside till you came back to me."

"He could have popped in for an instant through the back verandah."

"I heard nothing in here," she said. "What is the matter?"

"Naturally you wouldn't hear. He can be as quiet as a shadow, when he likes. I believe he could steal the pillows from under our heads. He might have been here ten minutes ago."

"What woke you up? Was it a noise?"

"Can't say that. Generally one can't tell; but is it likely, Lena? You are, I believe, the lighter sleeper of us two. A noise loud enough to wake me up would have awakened you, too. I tried to be as quiet as I could. What roused you?"

"I don't know—a dream, perhaps. I woke up crying."

"What was the dream?"

Heyst, with one hand resting on the table, had turned in her direction, his round, uncovered head set on a fighter's muscular neck. She left his question unanswered, as if she had not heard it.

"What is it you have missed?" she asked in her turn, very grave.

Her dark hair, drawn smoothly back, was done in two thick tresses for the night. Heyst noticed the good form of her brow, the dignity of its width, its

unshining whiteness. It was a sculptural forehead. He had a moment of acute appreciation intruding upon another order of thoughts. It was as if there could be no end of his discoveries about that girl, at the most incongruous moments.

She had on nothing but a hand-woven cotton sarong—one of Heyst's few purchases, years ago, in Celebes, where they are made. He had forgotten all about it till she came, and then had found it at the bottom of an old sandalwood trunk dating back to pre-Morrison days. She had quickly learned to wind it up under her armpits with a safe twist, as Malay village girls do when going down to bathe in a river. Her shoulders and arms were bare; one of her tresses, hanging forward, looked almost black against the white skin. As she was taller than the average Malay woman, the sarong ended a good way above her ankles. She stood poised firmly, halfway between the table and the curtained doorway, the insteps of her bare feet gleaming like marble on the over-shadowed matting of the floor. The fall of her lighted shoulders, the strong and fine modelling of her arms hanging down her sides, her immobility, too, had something statuesque, the charm of art tense with life. She was not very big—Heyst used to think of her, at first, as "that poor little girl"—but revealed free from the shabby banality of a white platform dress, in the simple drapery of the sarong, there was that in her form and in the proportions of her body which suggested a reduction from an heroic size.

She moved forward a step.

"What is it you have missed?" she asked again.

Heyst turned his back altogether on the table. The black spokes of darkness over the floor and the walls, joining up on the ceiling in a patch of shadow, were like the bars of a cage about them. It was his turn to ignore a question.

"You woke up in a fright, you say?" he said.

She walked up to him, exotic yet familiar, with her white woman's face and shoulders above the Malay sarong, as if it were an airy disguise; but her expression was serious.

"No!" she replied. "It was distress, rather. You see, you weren't there, and I couldn't tell why you had gone away from me. A nasty dream—the first I've had, too, since—"

"You don't believe in dreams, do you?" asked Heyst.

"I once knew a woman who did. Leastwise, she used to tell people what dreams meant, for a shilling."

"Would you go now and ask her what this dream means?" inquired Heyst jocularly.

"She lived in Camberwell. She was a nasty old thing!"

Heyst laughed a little uneasily.

"Dreams are madness, my dear. It's things that happen in the waking world, while one is asleep, that one would be glad to know the meaning of."

"You have missed something out of this drawer," she said positively.

"This or some other. I have looked into every single one of them and come back to this again, as people do. It's difficult to believe the evidence of my own senses; but it isn't there. Now, Lena, are you sure that you didn't—"

"I have touched nothing in the house but what you have given me."

"Lena!" he cried.

He was painfully affected by this disclaimer of a charge which he had not made. It was what a servant might have said—an inferior open to suspicion—or, at any rate, a stranger. He was angry at being so wretchedly misunderstood; disenchanted at her not being instinctively aware of the place he had secretly given her in his thoughts.

"After all," he said to himself, "we are strangers to each other."

And then he felt sorry for her. He spoke calmly:

"I was about to say, are you sure you have no reason to think that the Chinaman has been in this room tonight?"

"You suspect him?" she asked, knitting her eyebrows.

"There is no one else to suspect. You may call it a certitude."

"You don't want to tell me what it is?" she inquired, in the equable tone in which one takes a fact into account.

Heyst only smiled faintly.

"Nothing very precious, as far as value goes," he replied.

"I thought it might have been money," she said.

"Money!" exclaimed Heyst, as if the suggestion had been altogether preposterous. She was so visibly surprised that he hastened to add: "Of course, there is some money in the house—there, in that writing-desk, the drawer on the left. It's not locked. You can pull it right out. There is a recess, and the board at the back pivots; a very simple hiding-place, when you know the way to it. I discovered it by accident, and I keep our store of sovereigns in there. The treasure, my dear, is not big enough to require a cavern."

He paused, laughed very low, and returned her steady stare.

"The loose silver, some guilders and dollars, I have always kept in that unlocked left drawer. I have no doubt Wang knows what there is in it; but he isn't a thief, and that's why I—no, Lena, what I've missed is not gold or jewels; and that's what makes the fact interesting—which the theft of money cannot be."

She took a long breath, relieved to hear that it was not money. A great curiosity was depicted on her face, but she refrained from pressing him with questions. She only gave him one of her deep-gleaming smiles.

"It isn't me, so it must be Wang. You ought to make him give it back to you."

Heyst said nothing to that naïve and practical suggestion, for the object that he missed from the drawer was his revolver.

It was a heavy weapon which he had owned for many years and had never used in his life. Ever since the London furniture had arrived in Samburan, it had been reposing in the drawer of the table. The real dangers of life, for him, were not those which could be repelled by swords or bullets. On the other hand, neither his manner nor his appearance looked sufficiently inoffensive to expose him to light-minded aggression.

He could not have explained what had induced him to go to the drawer in the middle of the night. He had started up suddenly—which was very unusual with him. He had found himself sitting up and extremely wide awake all at

once, with the girl reposing by his side, lying with her face away from him, a vague, characteristically feminine form in the dim light. She was perfectly still.

At that season of the year there were no mosquitoes in Samburan, and the sides of the mosquito net were looped up. Heyst swung his feet to the floor, and found himself standing there, almost before he had become aware of his intention to get up. Why he did this he did not know. He didn't wish to wake her up, and the slight creak of the board bedstead had sounded very loud to him. He turned round apprehensively and waited for her to move; but she did not stir. While he looked at her, he had a vision of himself lying there too, also fast asleep, and—it occurred to him for the first time in his life —very defenceless. This quite novel impression of the dangers of slumber made him think suddenly of his revolver. He left the bedroom with noiseless footsteps. The lightness of the curtain he had to lift as he passed out, and the outer door, wide open on the blackness of the verandah—for the roof eaves came down low, shutting out the starlight—gave him a sense of having been dangerously exposed, he could not have said to what. He pulled the drawer open. Its emptiness cut his train of self-communion short. He murmured to the assertive fact:

"Impossible! Somewhere else!"

He tried to remember where he had put the thing; but those provoked whispers of memory were not encouraging. Foraging in every receptacle and nook big enough to contain a revolver, he came slowly to the conclusion that it was not in that room. Neither was it in the other. The whole bungalow consisted of the two rooms and a profuse allowance of verandah all round. Heyst stepped out on the verandah.

"It's Wang, beyond a doubt," he thought, staring into the night. "He has got hold of it for some reason."

There was nothing to prevent that ghostly Chinaman from materialising suddenly at the foot of the stairs, or anywhere, at any moment, and toppling him over with a dead sure shot. The danger was so irremediable that it was not worth worrying about, any more than the general precariousness of human life. Heyst speculated on this added risk. How long had he been at the mercy of a slender yellow finger on the trigger? That is, if that was the fellow's reason for purloining the revolver.

"Shoot and inherit," thought Heyst. "Very simple!" Yet there was in his mind a marked reluctance to regard the domesticated grower of vegetables in the light of a murderer.

"No, it wasn't that. For Wang could have done it any time this last twelve months or more."

Heyst's mind had worked on the assumption that Wang had possessed himself of the revolver during his own absence from Samburan; but at that period of his speculation his point of view changed. It struck him with the force of manifest certitude that the revolver had been taken only late in the day, or on that very night. Wang, of course— But why? So there had been no danger in the past. It was all ahead.

"He has me at his mercy now," thought Heyst, without particular excitement.

The sentiment he experienced was curiosity. He forgot himself in it; it was as if he were considering somebody else's strange predicament. But even that sort of interest was dying out when, looking to his left, he saw the accustomed shapes of the other bungalows looming in the night, and remembered the arrival of the thirsty company in the boat. Wang would hardly risk such a crime in the presence of other white men. It was a peculiar instance of the "safety in numbers" principle, which somehow was not much to Heyst's taste.

He went in gloomily, and stood over the empty drawer in deep and unsatisfactory thought. He had just made up his mind that he must breathe nothing of this to the girl, when he heard her voice behind him. She had taken him by surprise, but he resisted the impulse to turn round at once under the impression that she might read his trouble in his face. Yes, she had taken him by surprise; and for that reason the conversation which began was not exactly as he would have conducted it if he had been prepared for her pointblank question. He ought to have said at once: "I've missed nothing." It was a deplorable thing that he should have let it come so far as to have her ask what it was he missed. He closed the conversation by saying lightly:

"It's an object of very small value. Don't worry about it—it isn't worth while. The best you can do is to go and lie down again, Lena."

Reluctant she turned away, and only in the doorway asked:

"And you?"

"I think I shall smoke a cheroot on the verandah. I don't feel sleepy for the moment."

"Well, don't be long."

He made no answer. She saw him standing there, very still, with a frown on his brow, and slowly dropped the curtain.

Heyst did really light a cheroot before going out again on the verandah. He glanced up from under the low eaves, to see by the stars how the night went on. It was going very slowly. Why it should have irked him he did not know; for he had nothing to expect from the dawn; but everything round him had become unreasonable, unsettled, and vaguely urgent, laying him under an obligation, but giving him no line of action. He felt contemptuously irritated with the situation. The outer world had broken upon him; and he did not know what wrong he had done to bring this on himself, any more than he knew what he had done to provoke the horrible calumny about his treatment of poor Morrison. For he could not forget this. It had reached the ears of one who needed to have the most perfect confidence in the rectitude of his conduct.

"And she only half disbelieves it," he thought, with hopeless humiliation.

This moral stab in the back seemed to have taken some of his strength from him, as a physical wound would have done. He had no desire to do anything—neither to bring Wang to terms in the matter of the revolver nor to find out from the strangers who they were, and how their predicament had come about. He flung his glowing cigar away into the night. But Samburan was no longer a solitude wherein he could indulge in all his moods. The fiery parabolic trail the cast-out stump traced in the air was seen from another

verandah at a distance of some twenty yards. It was noted as a symptom of importance by an observer with his faculties greedy for signs, and in a state of alertness tense enough almost to hear the grass grow.

X

The observer was Martin Ricardo. To him life was not a matter of passive renunciation, but of a particularly active warfare. He was not mistrustful of it, he was not disgusted with it, still less was he inclined to be suspicious of its disenchantments; but he was vividly aware that it held many possibilities of failure. Though very far from being a pessimist, he was not a man of foolish illusions. He did not like failure; not only because of its unpleasant and dangerous consequences, but also because of its damaging effect upon his own appreciation of Martin Ricardo. And this was a special job, of his own contriving, and of considerable novelty. It was not, so to speak, in his usual line of business—except, perhaps, from a moral standpoint, about which he was not likely to trouble his head. For these reasons Martin Ricardo was unable to sleep.

Mr. Jones, after repeated shivering fits, and after drinking much hot tea, had apparently fallen into deep slumber. He had very peremptorily discouraged attempts at conversation on the part of his faithful follower. Ricardo listened to his regular breathing. It was all very well for the governor. He looked upon it as a sort of sport. A gentleman naturally would. But this ticklish and important job had to be pulled off at all costs, both for honour and for safety. Ricardo rose quietly, and made his way on the verandah. He could not lie still. He wanted to go out for air; and he had a feeling that by the force of his eagerness even the darkness and the silence could be made to yield something to his eyes and ears.

He noted the stars, and stepped back again into the dense darkness. He resisted the growing impulse to go out and steal toward the other bungalow. It would have been madness to start prowling in the dark on unknown ground. And for what end? Unless to relieve the oppression. Immobility lay on his limbs like a leaden garment. And yet he was unwilling to give up. He persisted in his objectless vigil. The man of the island was keeping quiet.

It was at that moment that Ricardo's eyes caught the vanishing red trail of light made by the cigar—a startling revelation of the man's wakefulness. He could not suppress a low "Hallo!" and began to sidle along towards the door, with his shoulders rubbing the wall. For all he knew, the man might have been out in front by this time, observing the verandah. As a matter of fact, after flinging away the cheroot, Heyst had gone indoors with the feeling of a man who gives up an unprofitable occupation. But Ricardo fancied he could hear faint footfalls on the open ground, and dodged quickly into the room. There he drew breath, and meditated for a while. His next step was to feel for the matches on the tall desk, and to light the candle. He had to communicate to his governor views and reflections of such importance that it was absolutely necessary for him to watch their effect on the very countenance of the hearer. At first he had thought that these matters could have waited till day-

light, but Heyst's wakefulness, disclosed in that startling way, made him feel suddenly certain that there could be no sleep for him that night.

He said as much to his governor. When the little dagger-like flame had done its best to dispel the darkness, Mr. Jones was to be seen reposing on a camp bedstead, in a distant part of the room. A railway rug concealed his spare form up to his very head, which rested on the other railway rug rolled up for a pillow. Ricardo plumped himself down cross-legged on the floor, very close to the low bedstead; so that Mr. Jones—who perhaps had not been so very profoundly asleep—on opening his eyes found them conveniently levelled at the face of his secretary.

"Eh? What is it you say? No sleep for you tonight? But why can't you let *me* sleep? Confound your fussiness!"

"Because that there fellow can't sleep—that's why. Dash me if he hasn't been doing a think just now! What business has he to think in the middle of the night?"

"How do you know?"

"He was out, sir—up in the middle of the night. My own eyes saw it."

"But how do you know that he was up to think?" inquired Mr. Jones. "It might have been anything—toothache, for instance. And you may have dreamed it for all I know. Didn't you try to sleep?"

"No, sir. I didn't even try to go to sleep."

Ricardo informed his patron of his vigil on the verandah, and of the revelation which put an end to it. He concluded that a man up with a cigar in the middle of the night must be doing a think.

Mr. Jones raised himself on his elbow. This sign of interest comforted his faithful henchman.

"Seems to me it's time we did a little think ourselves," added Ricardo, with more assurance. Long as they had been together the moods of his governor were still a source of anxiety to his simple soul.

"You are always making a fuss," remarked Mr. Jones, in a tolerant tone.

"Ay, but not for nothing, am I? You can't say that, sir. Mine may not be a gentleman's way of looking round a thing, but it isn't a fool's way, either. You've admitted that much yourself at odd times."

Ricardo was growing warmly argumentative. Mr. Jones interrupted him without heat.

"You haven't roused me to talk about yourself, I presume."

"No, sir." Ricardo remained silent for a minute, with the tip of his tongue caught between his teeth. "I don't think I could tell you anything about myself that you don't know," he continued. There was a sort of amused satisfaction in his tone which changed completely as he went on. "It's that man, over there, that's got to be talked over. I don't like him!"

He failed to observe the flicker of a ghastly smile on his governor's lips.

"Don't you?" murmured Mr. Jones, whose face, as he reclined on his elbow, was on a level with the top of his follower's head.

"No, sir," said Ricardo emphatically. The candle from the other side of the room threw his monstrous black shadow on the wall. "He—I don't know how to say it—he isn't hearty-like."

Mr. Jones agreed languidly in his own manner:

"He seems to be a very self-possessed man."

"Ay, that's it. Self—" Ricardo choked with indignation. "I would soon let out some of his self-possession through a hole between his ribs, if this weren't a special job!"

Mr. Jomes had been making his own reflections, for he asked:

"Do you think he is suspicious?"

"I don't see very well what he can be suspicious of," pondered Ricardo. "Yet there he was, doing a think. And what could be the object of it? What made him get out of his bed in the middle of the night? 'Tain't fleas, surely."

"Bad conscience, perhaps," suggested Mr. Jones jocularly.

His faithful secretary suffered from irritation, and did not see the joke. In a fretful tone he declared that there was no such thing as conscience. There was such a thing as funk; but there was nothing to make that fellow funky in any special way. He admitted, however, that the man might have been uneasy at the arrival of strangers, because of all that plunder of his put away somewhere.

Ricardo glanced here and there, as if he were afraid of being overheard by the heavy shadows cast by the dim light all over the room. His patron, very quiet, spoke in a calm whisper:

"And perhaps that hotel-keeper has been lying to you about him. He may be a very poor devil indeed."

Ricardo shook his head slightly. The Schombergian theory of Heyst had become in him a profound conviction, which he had absorbed as naturally as a sponge takes up water. His patron's doubts were a wanton denying of what was self-evident; but Ricardo's voice remained as before, a soft purring with a snarling undertone.

"I am sup-prised at you, sir! It's the very way them tame ones—the common 'yporcrits of the world—get on. When it comes to plunder drifting under one's very nose, there's not one of them that would keep his hands off. And I don't blame them. It's the way they do it that sets my back up. Just look at the story of how he got rid of that pal of his! Send a man home to croak of a cold on the chest—that's one of your tame tricks. And d'you mean to say, sir, that a man that's up to it wouldn't bag whatever he could lay his hands on in his 'yporcritical way? What was all that coal business? Tame citizen dodge; 'yporcrisy—nothing else. No, no, sir! The thing is to 'xtract it from him as neatly as possible. That's the job; and it isn't so simple as it looks. I reckon you have looked at it all round, sir, before you took up the notion of this trip."

"No." Mr. Jones was hardly audible, staring far away from his couch. "I didn't think about it much. I was bored."

"Ay, that you were—bad. I was feeling pretty desperate that afternoon when that bearded softy of a landlord got talking to me about this fellow here. Quite accidentally, it was. Well, sir, here we are after a mighty narrow squeak. I feel all limp yet; but never mind—his swag will pay for the lot!"

"He's all alone here," remarked Mr. Jones in a hollow murmur.

"Ye-es, in a way. Yes, alone enough. Yes, you may say he is."

"There's that Chinaman, though."

"Ay, there's the Chink," assented Ricardo rather absent-mindedly.

He was debating in his mind the advisability of making a clean breast of his knowledge of the girl's existence. Finally he concluded he wouldn't. The enterprise was difficult enough without complicating it with an upset to the sensibilities of the gentleman with whom he had the honour of being associated. Let the discovery come of itself, he thought, and then he could swear that he had known nothing of that offensive presence.

He did not need to lie. He had only to hold his tongue.

"Yes," he muttered reflectively, "there's that Chink, certainly."

At bottom, he felt a certain ambiguous respect for his governor's exaggerated dislike of women, as if that horror of feminine presence were a sort of depraved morality; but still morality, since he counted it as an advantage. It prevented many undesirable complications. He did not pretend to understand it. He did not even try to investigate this idiosyncrasy of his chief. All he knew was that he himself was differently inclined, and that it did not make him any happier or safer. He did not know how it would have acted if he had been knocking about the world on his own. Luckily he was a subordinate, not a wage-slave but a follower—which was a restraint. Yes! The other sort of disposition simplified matters in general; it wasn't to be gainsaid. But it was clear that it could also complicate them—as in this most important and, in Ricardo's view, already sufficiently delicate case. And the worst of it was that one could not tell exactly in what precise manner it would act.

It was unnatural, he thought somewhat peevishly. How was one to reckon up the unnatural? There were no rules for that. The faithful henchman of plain Mr. Jones, foreseeing many difficulties of a material order, decided to keep the girl out of the governor's knowledge; out of his sight, too, for as long a time as it could be managed. That, alas, seemed to be at most a matter of a few hours; whereas Ricardo feared that to get the affair properly going would take some days. Once well started, he was not afraid of his gentleman failing him. As is often the case with lawless natures, Ricardo's faith in any given individual was of a simple, unquestioning character. For man must have some support in life.

Cross-legged, his head drooping a little and perfectly still, he might have been meditating in a bronze-like attitude upon the sacred syllable "Om." It was a striking illustration of the untruth of appearances, for his contempt for the world was of a severely practical kind. There was nothing oriental about Ricardo but the amazing quietness of his pose. Mr. Jones was also very quiet. He had let his head sink on the rolled-up rug, and lay stretched out on his side with his back to the light. In that position the shadows gathered in the cavities of his eyes made them look perfectly empty. When he spoke, his ghostly voice had only to travel a few inches straight into Ricardo's left ear.

"Why don't you say something, now that you've got me awake?"

"I wonder if you were sleeping as sound as you are trying to make out, sir," said the unmoved Ricardo.

"I wonder," repeated Mr. Jones. "At any rate, I was resting quietly."

"Come, sir!" Ricardo's whisper was alarmed. "You don't mean to say you're going to be bored?"

"No."

"Quite right!" The secretary was very much relieved. "There's no occasion to be, I can tell you, sir," he whispered earnestly. "Anything but that! If I didn't say anything for a bit, it ain't because there isn't plenty to talk about. Ay, more than enough."

"What's the matter with you?" breathed out his patron. "Are you going to turn pessimist?"

"Me turn? No, sir! I ain't of those that turn. You may call me hard names, if you like, but you know very well that I ain't a croaker." Ricardo changed his tone. "If I said nothing for a while, it was because I was meditating over the Chink, sir."

"You were? Waste of time, my Martin. A Chinaman is unfathomable."

Ricardo admitted that this might be so. Anyhow, a Chink was neither here nor there, as a general thing, unfathomable as he might be; but a Swedish baron wasn't—couldn't be! The woods were full of such barons.

"I don't know that he is so tame," was Mr. Jones's remark, in a sepulchral undertone.

"How do you mean, sir? He ain't a rabbit, of course. You couldn't hypnotise him, as I saw you do to more than one Dago, and other kinds of tame citizens, when it came to the point of holding them down to a game."

"Don't you reckon on that," murmured plain Mr. Jones seriously.

"No, sir, I don't; though you have a wonderful power of the eye. It's a fact."

"I have a wonderful patience," remarked Mr. Jones drily.

A dim smile flitted over the lips of the faithful Ricardo who never raised his head.

"I don't want to try you too much, sir; but this is like no other job we ever turned our minds to."

"Perhaps not. At any rate let us think so."

A weariness with the monotony of life was reflected in the tone of this qualified assent. It jarred on the nerves of the sanguine Ricardo.

"Let us think of the way to go to work," he retorted a little impatiently. "He's a deep one. Just look at the way he treated that chum of his. Did you ever hear of anything so low? And the artfulness of the beast—the dirty, tame artfulness!"

"Don't you start moralising, Martin," said Mr. Jones warningly. "As far as I can make out the story that German hotel-keeper told you, it seems to show a certain amount of character; and independence from common feelings which is not usual. It's very remarkable, if true."

"Ay, ay! Very remarkable. It's mighty low down, all the same," muttered Ricardo obstinately. "I must say I am glad to think he will be paid off for it in a way that'll surprise him!"

The tip of his tongue appeared lively for an instant, as if trying for the taste of that ferocious retribution on his compressed lips. For Ricardo was sincere in his indignation before the elementary principle of loyalty to a chum violated in cold blood, slowly, in a patient duplicity of years. There are stand-

ards in villainy as in virtue, and the act as he pictured it to himself acquired an additional horror from the slow pace of that treachery so atrocious and so tame. But he understood too the educated judgment of his governor, a gentleman looking on all this with the privileged detachment of a cultivated mind, of an elevated personality.

"Ay, he's deep—he's artful," he mumbled between his sharp teeth.

"Confound you!" Mr. Jones's calm whisper crept into his ear. "Come to the point."

Obedient, the secretary shook off his thoughtfulness. There was a similarity of mind between these two—one the outcast of his vices, the other inspired by a spirit of scornful defiance, the aggressiveness of a beast of prey looking upon all the tame creatures of the earth as its natural victims. Both were astute enough, however, and both were aware that they had plunged into this adventure without a sufficient scrutiny of detail. The figure of a lonely man far from all assistance had loomed up largely, fascinating and defenceless in the middle of the sea, filling the whole field of their vision. There had not seemed to be any need for thinking. As Schomberg had been saying: "Three to one."

But it did not look so simple now in the face of that solitude which was like an armour for this man. The feeling voiced by the henchman in his own way—"We don't seem much forwarder now we are here"—was acknowledged by the silence of the patron. It was easy enough to rip a fellow up or drill a hole in him, whether he was alone or not, Ricardo reflected in low, confidential tones but—

"He isn't alone," Mr. Jones said faintly, in his attitude of a man composed for sleep. "Don't forget that Chinaman." Ricardo started slightly.

"Oh, ay—the Chink!"

Ricardo had been on the point of confessing about the girl; but no! He wanted his governor to be unperturbed and steady. Vague thoughts, which he hardly dared to look in the face, were stirring in his brain in connection with that girl. She couldn't be much account, he thought. She could be frightened. And there were also other possibilities. The Chink, however, could be considered openly.

"What I was thinking about it, sir," he went on earnestly, "is this—here we've got a man. He's nothing. If he won't be good, he can be made quiet. That's easy. But then there's his plunder. He doesn't carry it in his pocket."

"I hope not," breathed Mr. Jones.

"Same here. It's too big, we know; but if he were alone, he would not feel worried about it overmuch—I mean the safety of the pieces. He would just put the lot into any box or drawer that was handy."

"Would he?"

"Yes, sir. He would keep it under his eye, as it were. Why not? It is natural. A fellow doesn't put his swag underground, unless there's a very good reason for it."

"A very good reason, eh?"

"Yes, sir. What do you think a fellow is—a mole?"

From his experience, Ricardo declared that man was not a burrowing beast.

Even the misers very seldom buried their hoard, unless for exceptional reasons. In the given situation of a man alone on an island, the company of a Chink was a very good reason. Drawers would not be safe, nor boxes, either, from a prying, slant-eyed Chink. No, sir; unless a safe—a proper office safe. But the safe was there in the room.

"Is there a safe in this room? I didn't notice it," whispered Mr. Jones.

That was because the thing was painted white, like the walls of the room; and besides, it was tucked away in the shadows of a corner. Mr. Jones had been too tired to observe anything on his first coming ashore; but Ricardo had very soon spotted the characteristic form. He only wished he could believe that the plunder of treachery, duplicity, and all the moral abominations of Heyst had been there. But no; the blamed thing was open.

"It might have been there at one time or another," he commented gloomily, "but it isn't there now."

"The man did not elect to live in this house," remarked Mr. Jones. "And by the by, what could he have meant by speaking of circumstances which prevented him lodging us in the other bungalow? You remember what he said, Martin? Sounded cryptic."

Martin, who remembered and understood the phrase as directly motived by the existence of the girl, waited a little before saying:

"Some of his artfulness, sir; and not the worst of it either. That manner of his to us, this asking no questions, is some more of his artfulness. A man's bound to be curious, and he is; yet he goes on as if he didn't care. He does care—or else what was he doing up with a cigar in the middle of the night, doing a think? I don't like it!"

"He may be outside, observing the light here, and saying the very same thing to himself of our own wakefulness," gravely suggested Ricardo's governor.

"He may be, sir; but this is too important to be talked over in the dark. And the light is all right. It can be accounted for. There's a light in this bungalow in the middle of the night because—why, because you are not well. Not well, sir—that's what's the matter; and you will have to act up to it."

This consideration had suddenly occurred to the faithful henchman, in the light of a felicitous expedient to keep his governor and the girl apart as long as possible. Mr. Jones received the suggestion without the slightest stir, even in the deep sockets of his eyes, where a steady, faint gleam was the only thing telling of life and attention in his attenuated body. But Ricardo, as soon as he had enunciated his happy thought, perceived in it other possibilities more to the point and of greater practical advantage.

"With your looks, sir, it will be easy enough," he went on evenly, as if no silence had intervened, always respectful, but frank, with perfect simplicity of purpose. "All you've got to do is just to lie down quietly. I noticed him looking sort of surprised at you on the wharf, sir."

At these words, a naïve tribute to the aspect of his physique, even more suggestive of the grave than of the sick-bed, a fold appeared on that side of the governor's face which was exposed to the dim light—a deep, shadowy, semi-circular fold from the side of the nose to bottom of the chin—a silent smile.

By a side glance Ricardo had noted this play of feature. He smiled, too, appreciative, encouraged.

"And you as hard as nails all the time," he went on. "Hang me if anybody would believe you aren't sick, if I were to swear myself black in the face! Give us a day or two to look into matters and size up that 'yporcrit."

Ricardo's eyes remained fixed on his crossed shins. The chief, in his lifeless accents, approved.

"Perhaps it would be a good idea."

"The Chink, he's nothing. He can be made quiet any time."

One of Ricardo's hands, reposing palm upwards on his folded legs, made a swift thrusting gesture, repeated by the enormous darting shadow of an arm very low on the wall. It broke the spell of perfect stillness in the room. The secretary eyed moodily the wall from which the shadow had gone. Anybody could be made quiet, he pointed out. It was not anything that the Chink could do; no, it was the effect that his company must have produced on the conduct of the doomed man. A man! What was a man? A Swedish baron could be ripped up, or else holed by a shot, as easily as any other creature; but that was exactly what was to be avoided, till one knew where he had hidden his plunder.

"I shouldn't think it would be some sort of hole in his bungalow," argued Ricardo with real anxiety.

No. A house can be burnt—set on fire accidentally, or on purpose, while a man's asleep. Under the house—or in some crack, cranny, or crevice? Something told him it wasn't that. The anguish of mental effort contracted Ricardo's brow. The skin of his head seemed to move in this travail of vain and tormenting suppositions.

"What did you think a fellow is, sir—a baby?" he said, in answer to Mr. Jones's objections. "I am trying to find out what I would do myself. He wouldn't be likely to be cleverer than I am."

"And what do you know about yourself?"

Mr. Jones seemed to watch his follower's perplexities with amusement concealed in a death-like composure.

Ricardo disregarded the question. The material vision of the spoil absorbed all his faculties. A great vision! He seemed to see it. A few small canvas bags tied up with thin cord, their distended rotundity showing the inside pressure of the disk-like forms of coins—gold, solid, heavy, eminently portable. Perhaps steel cash-boxes with a chased design on the covers; or perhaps a black and brass box with a handle on the top, and full of goodness knows what. Bank notes? Why not? The fellow had been going home; so it was surely something worth going home with.

"And he may have put it anywhere outside—anywhere!" cried Ricardo in a deadened voice. "In the forest—"

That was it! A temporary darkness replaced the dim light of the room. The darkness of the forest at night, and in it the gleam of a lantern, by which a figure is digging at the foot of a tree-trunk. As likely as not, another figure holding that lantern—ha, feminine! The girl!

The prudent Ricardo stifled a picturesque and profane exclamation, partly

joy, partly dismay. Had the girl been trusted or mistrusted by that man? Whatever it was, it was bound to be wholly! With women there could be no half-measures. He could not imagine a fellow half-trusting a woman in that intimate relation to himself, and in those particular circumstances of conquest and loneliness where no confidences could appear dangerous since, apparently, there could be no one she could give him away to. Moreover in nine cases out of ten, the woman would be trusted. But, trusted or mistrusted, was her presence a favourable or unfavourable condition of the problem? That was the question!

The temptation to consult his chief, to talk over the weighty fact and get his opinion on it, was great indeed. Ricardo resisted it; but the agony of his solitary mental conflict was extremely sharp. A woman in a problem is an incalculable quantity, even if you have something to go upon in forming your guess. How much more so when you haven't even once caught sight of her.

Swift as were his mental processes, he felt that a longer silence was inadvisable. He hastened to speak:

"And do you see us, sir, you and I, with a couple of spades having to tackle this whole confounded island?"

He allowed himself a slight movement of the arm. The shadow enlarged it into a sweeping gesture.

"This seems rather discouraging, Martin," murmured the unmoved governor.

"We mustn't be discouraged—that's all," retorted his henchman. "And after what we had to go through in that boat too! Why it would be—"

He couldn't find the qualifying words. Very calm, faithful, and yet astute, he expressed his new-born hopes darkly.

"Something's sure to turn up to give us a hint; only this job can't be rushed. You may depend on me to pick up the least little bit of a hint; but you, sir—you've got to play him very gently. For the rest you can trust me."

"Yes; but I ask myself what *you* are trusting to."

"Our luck," said the faithful Ricardo. "Don't say a word against that. It might spoil the run of it."

"You are a superstitious beggar. No, I won't say anything against it."

"That's right, sir. Don't you even think lightly of it. Luck's not to be played with."

"Yes, luck's a delicate thing," assented Mr. Jones in a dreamy whisper.

A short silence ensued, which Ricardo ended in a discreet and tentative voice.

"Talking of luck, I suppose he could be made to take a hand with you, sir—two-handed picket or ekarty, you being seedy and keeping indoors—just to pass the time. For all we know, he may be one of them hot ones once they start—"

"Is it likely?" came coldly from the principal. "Considering what we know of his history—say with his partner."

"True, sir. He's a cold-blooted beast; a cold-blooded, inhuman—"

"And I'll tell you another thing that isn't likely. He would not be likely to let himself be stripped bare. We haven't to do with a young fool that can be led on by chaff or flattery, and in the end simply over-awed. This is a calculating man."

Ricardo recognised that clearly. What he had in his mind was something on a small scale, just to keep the enemy busy while he, Ricardo, had time to nose around a bit.

"You could even lose a little money to him, sir," he suggested.

"I could."

Ricardo was thoughtful for a moment.

"He strikes me, too, as the sort of man to start prancing when one didn't expect it. What do you think, sir? Is he a man that would prance? That is, if something startled him. More likely to prance than to run—what?"

The answer came at once, because Mr. Jones understood the peculiar idiom of his faithful follower.

"Oh, without doubt! Without doubt!"

"It does me good to hear that you think so. He's a prancing beast, and so we mustn't startle him—not till I have located the stuff. Afterwards—"

Ricardo paused, sinister in the stillness of his pose. Suddenly he got up with a swift movement and gazed down at his chief in moody abstraction. Mr. Jones did not stir.

"There's one thing that's worrying me," began Ricardo in a subdued voice.

"Only one?" was the faint comment from the motionless body on the bedstead.

"I mean more than all the others put together."

"That's grave news."

"Ay, grave enough. It's this—how do you feel in yourself, sir? Are you likely to get bored? I know them fits come on you suddenly; but surely you can tell—"

"Martin, you are an ass."

The moody face of the secretary brightened up.

"Really, sir? Well, I am quite content to be on these terms—I mean as long as you don't get bored. It wouldn't do, sir."

For coolness, Ricardo had thrown open his shirt and rolled up his sleeves. He moved stealthily across the room, bare-footed, towards the candle, the shadow of his head and shoulders growing bigger behind him on the opposite wall, to which the face of plain Mr. Jones was turned. With a feline movement, Ricardo glanced over his shoulder at the thin back of the spectre reposing on the bed, and then blew out the candle.

"In fact, I am rather amused, Martin," Mr. Jones said in the dark.

He heard the sound of a slapped thigh and the jubilant exclamation of his henchman:

"Good! That's the way to talk, sir!"

PART IV

I

RICARDO advanced prudently by short darts from one tree-trunk to another, more in the manner of a squirrel than a cat. The sun had risen some time before. Already the sparkle of open sea was encroaching rapidly on the

dark, cool, early-morning blue of Diamond Bay; but the deep dusk lingered yet under the mighty pillars of the forest, between which the secretary dodged.

He was watching Number One's bungalow with an animal-like patience, if with a very human complexity of purpose. This was the second morning of such watching. The first one had not been rewarded by success. Well, strictly speaking, there was no hurry.

The sun, swinging above the ridge all at once, inundated with light the space of burnt grass in front of Ricardo and the face of the bungalow, on which his eyes were fixed, leaving only the one dark spot of the doorway. To his right, to his left, and behind him, splashes of gold appeared in the deep shade of the forest, thinning the gloom under the ragged roof of leaves.

This was not a very favourable circumstance for Ricardo's purpose. He did not wish to be detected in his patient occupation. For what he was watching for was a sight of the girl—that girl! Just a glimpse across the burnt patch to see what she was like. He had excellent eyes, and the distance was not so great. He would be able to distinguish her face quite easily if she only came out on the verandah; and she was bound to do that sooner or later. He was confident that he could form some opinion about her—which, he felt, was very necessary, before venturing on some steps to get in touch with her behind that Swedish baron's back. His theoretical view of the girl was such that he was quite prepared, on the strength of that distant examination, to show himself discreetly—perhaps even make a sign. It all depended on his reading of the face. She couldn't be much. He knew that sort!

By protruding his head a little he commanded, through the foliage of a festooning creeper, a view of the three bungalows, irregularly disposed along a flat curve. Over the verandah rail of the farthermost one hung a dark rug of a tartan pattern, amazingly conspicuous. Ricardo could see the very checks. A brisk fire of stick was burning on the ground in front of the steps, and in the sunlight the thin, fluttering flame had paled almost to invisibility—a mere rosy stir under a faint wreath of smoke. He could see the white bandage on the head of Pedro bending over it, and the wisps of black hair sticking up weirdly. He had wound that bandage himself, after breaking that shaggy and enormous head. The creature balanced it like a load, staggering towards the steps. Ricardo could see a small, long-handled saucepan at the end of a great hairy paw.

Yes, he could see all that there was to be seen, far and near. Excellent eyes! The only thing they could not penetrate was the dark oblong of the doorway on the verandah under the low eaves of the bungalow's roof. And that was vexing. It was an outrage. Ricardo was easily outraged. Surely she would come out presently! Why didn't she? Surely the fellow did not tie her up to the bed-post before leaving the house!

Nothing appeared. Ricardo was as still as the leafy cables of creepers depending in a convenient curtain from the mighty limb sixty feet above his head. His very eyelids were still, and this unblinking watchfulness gave him the dreamy air of a cat posed on a hearth-rug contemplating the fire. Was he dreaming? There, in plain sight, he had before him a white, blouse-like jacket, short blue trousers, a pair of bare yellow calves, a pigtail, long and slender—

"The confounded Chink!" he muttered, astounded.

He was not conscious of having looked away; and yet right there, in the middle of the picture, without having come round the right-hand corner or the left-hand corner of the house, without falling from the sky or surging up from the ground, Wang had become visible, as large as life, and engaged in the young-ladyish occupation of picking flowers. Step by step, stooping repeatedly over the flower-beds at the foot of the verandah, the startlingly materialised Chinaman passed off the scene in a very commonplace manner, by going up the steps and disappearing in the darkness of the doorway.

Only then the yellow eyes of Martin Ricardo lost their intent fixity. He understood that it was time for him to be moving. That bunch of flowers going into the house in the hand of a Chinaman was for the breakfast-table. What else could it be for?

"I'll give you flowers!" he muttered threateningly. "You wait!"

Another moment, just for a glance towards the Jones bungalow, whence he expected Heyst to issue on his way to that breakfast so offensively decorated, and Ricardo began his retreat. His impulse, his desire, was for a rush into the open, face to face with the appointed victim, for what he called a "ripping up," visualised greedily, and always with the swift preliminary stooping movement on his part—the forerunner of certain death to his adversary. This was his impulse; and it was, so to speak, constitutional, it was extremely difficult to resist when his blood was up. What could be more trying than to have to skulk and dodge and restrain oneself, mentally and physically, when one's blood was up? Mr. Secretary Ricardo began his retreat from his post of observation behind a tree opposite Heyst's bungalow, using great care to remain unseen. His proceedings were made easier by the declivity of the ground, which sloped sharply down to the water's edge. There, his feet feeling the warmth of the island's rocky foundation already heated by the sun, through the thin soles of his straw slippers he was, as it were, sunk out of sight of the houses. A short scramble of some twenty feet brought him up again to the upper level, at the place where the jetty had its root in the shore. He leaned his back against one of the lofty uprights which still held up the company's sign-board above the mound of derelict coal. Nobody could have guessed how much his blood was up. To contain himself he folded his arms tightly on his breast.

Ricardo was not used to a prolonged effort of self-control. His craft, his artfulness, felt themselves always at the mercy of his nature, which was truly feral and only held in subjection by the influence of the "governor," the prestige of a gentleman. It had its cunning too, but it was being almost too severely tried since the feral solution of a growl and a spring was forbidden by the problem. Ricardo dared not venture out on the cleared ground. He dared not.

"If I meet the beggar," he thought, "I don't know what I mayn't do. I daren't trust myself."

What exasperated him just now was his inability to understand Heyst. Ricardo was human enough to suffer from the discovery of his limitations. No, he couldn't size Heyst up. He could kill him with extreme ease—a growl and

a spring—but that was forbidden! However, he could not remain indefinitely under the funereal blackboard.

"I must make a move," he thought.

He moved on, his head swimming a little with the repressed desire of violence, and came out openly in front of the bungalows, as if he had just been down to the jetty to look at the boat. The sunshine enveloped him, very brilliant, very still, very hot. The three buildings faced him. The one with the rug on the balustrade was the most distant; next to it was the empty bungalow; the nearest, with the flower-beds at the foot of its verandah, contained that bothersome girl, who had managed so provokingly to keep herself invisible. That was why Ricardo's eyes lingered on that building. The girl would surely be easier to "size up" than Heyst. A sight of her, a mere glimpse, would have been something to go by, a step nearer to the goal—the first real move, in fact. Ricardo saw no other move. And any time she might appear on that verandah!

She did not appear; but, like a concealed magnet, she exercised her attraction. As he went on, he deviated towards the bungalow. Though his movements were deliberate, his feral instincts had such sway that if he had met Heyst walking towards him, he would have had to satisfy his need of violence. But he saw nobody. Wang was at the back of the house, keeping the coffee hot against Number One's return for breakfast. Even the simian Pedro was out of sight, no doubt crouching on the doorstep, his red little eyes fastened with animal-like devotion on Mr. Jones, who was in discourse with Heyst in the other bungalow—the conversation of an evil spectre with a disarmed man, watched by an ape.

His will having very little to do with it, Ricardo, darting swift glances in all directions, found himself at the steps of the Heyst bungalow. Once there, falling under an uncontrollable force of attraction, he mounted them with a savage and stealthy action of his limbs, and paused for a moment under the eaves to listen to the silence. Presently he advanced over the threshold one leg—it seemed to stretch itself, like a limb of india-rubber—planted his foot within, brought up the other swiftly, and stood inside the room, turning his head from side to side. To his eyes, brought in there from the dazzling sunshine, all was gloom for a moment. His pupils, like a cat's, dilating swiftly, he distinguished an enormous quantity of books. He was amazed; and he was put off, too. He was vexed in his astonishment. He had meant to note the aspect and nature of things, and hoped to draw some useful inference, some hint as to the man. But what guess could one make out of a multitude of books? He didn't know what to think; and he formulated his bewilderment in the mental exclamation:

"What the devil has this fellow been trying to set up here—a school?"

He gave a prolonged stare to the portrait of Heyst's father, that severe profile ignoring the vanities of this earth. His eyes gleamed sideways at the heavy silver candlesticks—signs of opulence. He prowled as a stray cat entering a strange place might have done; for if Ricardo had not Wang's miraculous gift of materialising and vanishing, rather than coming and going, he could be nearly as noiseless in his less elusive movements. He noted the back door standing just ajar; and all the time his slightly pointed ears, at the utmost

stretch of watchfulness, kept in touch with the profound silence outside, enveloping the absolute stillness of the house.

He had not been in the room two minutes when it occurred to him that he must be alone in the bungalow. The woman, most likely, had sneaked out, and was walking about somewhere in the grounds at the back. She had been probably ordered to keep out of sight. Why? Because the fellow mistrusted his guests; or was it because he mistrusted *her?*

Ricardo reflected that from a certain point of view it amounted nearly to the same thing. He remembered Schomberg's story. He felt that running away with somebody only to get clear of that beastly, tame, hotel-keeper's attentions, was no proof of hopeless infatuation. She could be got in touch with.

His moustaches stirred. For some time he had been looking at a closed door. He would peep into that other room, and perhaps see something more informing than a confounded lot of books. As he crossed over, he thought recklessly:

"If the beggar comes in suddenly, and starts to prance, I'll rip him up and be done with it!"

He laid his hand on the handle, and felt the door come unlatched. Before he pulled it open, he listened again to the silence. He felt it all about him, complete, without a flaw.

The necessity of prudence had exasperated his self-restraint. A mood of ferocity woke up in him, and, as always at such times, he became physically aware of the sheeted knife strapped to his leg. He pulled at the door with fierce curiosity. It came open without a squeak of hinge, without a rustle, with no sound at all; and he found himself glaring at the opaque surface of some rough blue stuff, like serge. A curtain was fitted inside, heavy enough and long enough not to stir.

A curtain! This unforeseen veil, baffling his curiosity, checked his brusqueness. He did not fling it aside with an impatient movement; he only looked at it closely, as if its texture had to be examined before his hand could touch such stuff. In this interval of hesitation he seemed to detect a flaw in the perfection of the silence, the faintest possible rustle, which his ears caught and instantly, in the effort of conscious listening, lost again. No! Everything was still inside and outside the house, only he had no longer the sense of being alone there.

When he put out his hand towards the motionless folds it was with extreme caution, and merely to push the stuff aside a little, advancing his head at the same time to peep within. A moment of complete immobility ensued. Then, without anything else of him stirring, Ricardo's head shrank back on his shoulders, his arm descended slowly to his side. There was a woman in there. The very woman! Lighted dimly by the reflection of the outer glare, she loomed up strangely big and shadowy at the other end of the long, narrow room. With her back to the door, she was doing her hair with her bare arms uplifted. One of them gleamed pearly white; the other detached its perfect form in black against the unshuttered, uncurtained square window-hole. She was there, her fingers busy with her dark hair, utterly unconscious, exposed and defenceless—and tempting.

Ricardo drew back one foot and pressed his elbows close to his sides; his

chest started heaving convulsively, as if he were wrestling or running a race; his body began to sway gently back and forth. The self-restraint was at an end: his psychology must have its way. The instinct for the feral spring could no longer be denied. Ravish or kill—it was all one to him, as long as by the act he liberated the suffering soul of savagery repressed for so long. After a quick glance over his shoulder, which hunters of big game tell us no lion or tiger omits to give before charging home, Ricardo charged, head down, straight at the curtain. The stuff, tossed up violently by his rush, settled itself with a slow, floating descent into vertical folds, motionless, without a shudder even, in the still, warm air.

II

The clock—which once upon a time had measured the hours of philosophic meditation—could not have ticked away more than five seconds when Wang materialised within the living-room. His concern primarily was with the delayed breakfast, but at once his slanting eyes became immovably fixed upon the unstirring curtain. For it was behind it that he had located the strange, deadened scuffling sounds which filled the empty room. The slanting eyes of his race could not achieve a round, amazed stare; but they remained still, dead still, and his impassive yellow face grew all at once careworn and lean with the sudden strain of intense, doubtful, frightened watchfulness. Contrary impulses swayed his body, rooted to the floor-mats. He even went so far as to extend his hand towards the curtain. He could not reach it, and he didn't make the necessary step forward.

The mysterious struggle was going on with confused thuds of bare feet, in a mute wrestling match, no human sound, hiss, groan, murmur, or exclamation coming through the curtain. A chair fell over, not with a crash but lightly, as if just grazed, and a faint metallic ring of the tin bath succeeded. Finally the tense silence, as of two adversaries locked in a deadly grip, was ended by the heavy, dull thump of a soft body flung against the inner partition of planks. It seemed to shake the whole bungalow. By that time, walking backward, his eyes, his very throat, strained with fearful excitement, his extended arm still pointing at the curtain, Wang had disappeared through the back door. Once out in the compound, he bolted round the end of the house. Emerging innocently between the two bungalows he lingered and lounged in the open, where anybody issuing from any of the dwellings was bound to see him—a self-possessed Chinaman idling there, with nothing but perhaps an unserved breakfast on his mind.

It was at this time that Wang made up his mind to give up all connection with Number One, a man not only disarmed but already half vanquished. Till that morning he had had doubts as to his course of action, but this overheard scuffle decided the question. Number One was a doomed man—one of those beings whom it is unlucky to help. Even as he walked in the open with a fine air of unconcern, Wang wondered that no sound of any sort was to be heard inside the house. For all he knew, the white woman might have been scuffling in there with an evil spirit, which had of course killed her. For nothing visible came out of the house he watched out of the slanting corner of his eye. The sunshine and the silence outside the bungalow reigned undisturbed.

But in the house the silence of the big room would not have struck an acute ear as perfect. It was troubled by a stir so faint that it could hardly be called a ghost of whispering from behind the curtain.

Ricardo, feeling his throat with tender care, breathed out admiringly:

"You have fingers like steel. Jimminy! You have muscles like a giant!"

Luckily for Lena, Ricardo's onset had been so sudden—she was winding her two heavy tresses round her head—that she had no time to lower her arms. This, which saved them from being pinned to her sides, gave her a better chance to resist. His spring had nearly thrown her down. Luckily, again, she was standing so near the wall that, though she was driven against it headlong, yet the shock was not heavy enough to knock all the breath out of her body. On the contrary, it helped her first instinctive attempt to drive her assailant backward.

After the first gasp of a surprise that was really too overpowering for a cry, she was never in doubt of the nature of the danger. She defended herself in the full, clear knowledge of it, from the force of instinct which is the true source of every great display of energy, and with a determination which could hardly have been expected from a girl who, cornered in a dim corridor by the red-faced, stammering Schomberg, had trembled with shame, disgust, and fear; had drooped, terrified, before mere words spluttered out odiously by a man who had never in his life laid his big paw on her.

This new enemy's attack was simple, straightforward violence. It was not the slimy, underhand plotting to deliver her up like a slave, which had sickened her heart and made her feel in her loneliness that her oppressors were too many for her. She was no longer alone in the world now. She resisted without a moment of faltering, because she was no longer deprived of moral support; because she was a human being who counted; because she was no longer defending herself for herself alone; because of the faith that had been born in her—the faith in the man of her destiny, and perhaps in the Heaven which had sent him so wonderfully to cross her path.

She had defended herself principally by maintaining a desperate, murderous clutch on Ricardo's windpipe, till she felt a sudden relaxation of the terrific hug in which he stupidly and ineffectually persisted to hold her. Then with a supreme effort of her arms and of her suddenly raised knee, she sent him flying against the partition. The cedar-wood chest stood in the way, and Ricardo, with a thump which boomed hollow through the whole bungalow, fell on it in a sitting posture, half strangled, and exhausted not so much by the efforts as by the emotions of the struggle.

With the recoil of her exerted strength, she too reeled, staggered back, and sat on the edge of the bed. Out of breath, but calm and unabashed, she busied herself in readjusting under her arms the brown and yellow figured Celebes sarong, the tuck of which had come undone during the fight. Then, folding her bare arms tightly on her breast, she leaned forward on her crossed legs, determined and without fear.

Ricardo, leaning forward too, his nervous force gone, crestfallen like a beast of prey that has missed its spring, met her big grey eyes looking at him—wide open, observing, mysterious—from under the dark arches of her courageous

eyebrows. Their faces were not a foot apart. He ceased feeling about his aching throat and dropped the palms of his hands heavily on his knees. He was not looking at her bare shoulders, at her strong arms; he was looking down at the floor. He had lost one of his straw slippers. A chair with a white dress on it had been overturned. These, with splashes of water on the floor out of a brusquely misplaced sponge-bath, were the only traces of the struggle.

Ricardo swallowed twice consciously, as if to make sure of his throat, before he spoke again:

"All right. I never meant to hurt you—though I am no joker when it comes to it."

He pulled up the leg of his pyjamas to exhibit the strapped knife. She glanced at it without moving her head, and murmured, with scornful bitterness:

"Ah, yes—with that thing stuck in my side. In no other way."

He shook his head with a shamefaced smile.

"Listen! I am quiet now. Straight—I am. I don't need to explain why—you know how it is. And I can see, now, this wasn't the way with you."

She made no sound. Her still, upward gaze had a patient mournfulness which troubled him like a suggestion of an inconceivable depth. He added doubtfully:

"You are not going to make a noise about this silly try of mine?"

She moved her head the least bit.

"Jee-miny! You are a wonder," he murmured earnestly, relieved more than she could have guessed.

Of course, if she had attempted to run out, he would have stuck the knife between her shoulders, to stop her screaming; but all the fat would have been in the fire, the business utterly spoiled, and the rage of the governor—especially when he learned the cause—boundless. A woman who does not make a noise after an attempt of that kind has tacitly condoned the offence. Ricardo had no small vanities. But clearly, if she would pass it over like this, then he could not be so utterly repugnant to her. He felt flattered. And she didn't seem afraid of him either. He already felt almost tender towards the girl—that plucky, fine girl who had not tried to run screaming from him.

"We shall be friends yet. I don't give you up. Don't think it. Friends as friends can be!" he whispered confidently. "Jee-miny! You aren't a tame one. Neither am I. You will find that out before long."

He could not know that if she had not run out, it was because that morning, under the stress of growing uneasiness at the presence of the incomprehensible visitors, Heyst had confessed to her that it was his revolver he had been looking for in the night; that it was gone; that he was a disarmed, defenceless man. She had hardly comprehended the meaning of his confession. Now she understood better what it meant. The effort of her self-control, her stillness, impressed Ricardo. Suddenly she spoke:

"What are you after?"

He did not raise his eyes. His hands reposing on his knees, his drooping head, something reflective in his pose, suggested the weariness of a simple soul, the fatigue of a mental rather than physical contest. He answered the direct question by a direct statement, as if he were too tired to dissemble:

"After the swag."

The word was strange to her. The veiled ardour of her grey gaze from under the dark eyebrows never left Ricardo's face.

"A swag?" she murmured quietly. "What's that?"

"Why, swag, plunder—what your gentleman has been pinching right and left for years—the pieces. Don't you know? This!"

Without looking up, he made the motion of counting money into the palm of his hand. She lowered her eyes slightly to observe this bit of pantomime, but returned them to his face at once. Then, in a mere breath:

"How do you know anything about him?" she asked, concealing her puzzled alarm. "What has it got to do with you?"

"Everything," was Ricardo's concise answer, in a low, emphatic whisper. He reflected that this girl was really his best hope. Out of the unfaded impression of past violence there was growing the sort of sentiment which prevents a man from being indifferent to a woman he has once held in his arms—if even against her will—and still more so if she has pardoned the outrage. It becomes then a sort of bond. He felt positively the need to confide in her—a subtle trait of masculinity, this, almost physical, need of trust which can exist side by side with the most brutal readiness of suspicion.

"It's a game of grab—see?" he went on, with a new inflection of intimacy in his murmur. He was looking straight at her now. "That fat, tame slug of a gin-slinger, Schomberg, put us up to it."

So strong is the impression of helpless and persecuted misery, that the girl who had fought down a savage assault without faltering could not completely repress a shudder at the mere sound of the abhorred name.

Ricardo became more rapid and confidential:

"He wants to pay him off—pay both of you, at that; so he told me. He was hot after you. He would have given all he had into those hands of yours that have nearly strangled me. But you couldn't, eh? Nohow—what?" He paused. "So, rather than—you followed a gentleman?"

He noticed a slight movement of her head and spoke quickly.

"Same here—rather than be a wage-slave. Only these foreigners aren't to be trusted. You're too good for him. A man that will rob his best chum!" She raised her head. He went on, well pleased with his progress, whispering hurriedly: "Yes. I know all about him. So you may guess how he's likely to treat a woman after a bit!"

He did not know that he was striking terror into her breast now. Still the grey eyes remained fixed on him unmovably watchful, as if sleepy, under the white forehead. She was beginning to understand. His words conveyed a definite, dreadful meaning to her mind, which he proceeded to enlighten further in a convinced murmur.

"You and I are made to understand each other. Born alike, bred alike, I guess. You are not tame. Same here! You have been chucked out into this rotten world of 'yporcrits. Same here!"

Her stillness, her appalled stillness, wore to him an air of fascinated attention. He asked abruptly:

"Where is it?"

She made an effort to breathe out:

"Where's what?"

His tone expressed excited secrecy.

"The swag—plunder—pieces. It's a game of grab. We must have it; but it isn't easy, and so you will have to lend a hand. Come! Is it kept in the house?"

As often with women, her wits were sharpened by the very terror of the glimpsed menace. She shook her head negatively.

"No."

"Sure?"

"Sure," she said.

"Ay! Thought so. Does your gentleman trust you?"

Again she shook her head.

"Blamed 'yporcrit," he said feelingly, and then he reflected: "He's one of the tame ones, ain't he?"

"You had better find out for yourself," she said.

"You trust me. I don't want to die before you and I have made friends." This was said with a strange air of feline gallantry. Then, tentatively: "But he could be brought to trust you, couldn't he?"

"Trust me?" she said, in a tone which bordered on despair, but which he mistook for derision.

"Stand in with us," he urged. "Give the chuck to all this blamed 'yporcrisy. Perhaps, without being trusted, you have managed to find out something already, eh?"

"Perhaps I have," she uttered with lips that seemed to her to be freezing fast.

Ricardo now looked at her calm face with something like respect. He was even a little awed by her stillness, by her economy of words. Womanlike, she felt the effect she had produced, the effect of knowing much and of keeping all her knowledge in reserve. So far, somehow, this had come about of itself. Thus encouraged, directed in the way of duplicity, the refuge of the weak, she made a heroically conscious effort and forced her stiff, cold lips into a smile.

Duplicity—the refuge of the weak and the cowardly, but of the disarmed, too! Nothing stood between the enchanted dream of her existence and a cruel catastrophe but her duplicity. It seemed to her that the man sitting there before her was an unavoidable presence, which had attended all her life. He was the embodied evil of the world. She was not ashamed of her duplicity. With a woman's frank courage, as soon as she saw that opening she threw herself into it without reserve, with only one doubt—that of her own strength. She was appalled by the situation; but already all her aroused femininity, understanding that whether Heyst loved her or not she loved him, and feeling that she had brought this on his head, faced the danger with a passionate desire to defend her own.

III

To Ricardo the girl had been so unforeseen that he was unable to bring upon her the light of his critical faculties. Her smile appeared to him full of promise. He had not expected her to be what she was. Who, from the talk he had heard, could expect to meet a girl like this? She was a blooming miracle, he said to himself, familiarly, yet with a tinge of respect. She was no meat for the likes

of that tame, respectable gin-slinger. Ricardo grew hot with indignation. Her courage, her physical strength, demonstrated at the cost of his discomfiture, commanded his sympathy. He felt himself drawn to her by the proofs of her amazing spirit. Such a girl! She had a strong soul; and her reflective disposition to throw over her connection proved that she was no hypocrite.

"Is your gentleman a good shot?" he said, looking down on the floor again, as if indifferent.

She hardly understood the phrase; but in its form it suggested some accomplishment. It was safe to whisper an affirmative.

"Yes."

"Mine, too—and better than good," Ricardo murmured, and then, in a confidential burst: "I am not so good at it, but I carry a pretty deadly thing about me, all the same!"

He tapped his leg. She was past the stage of shudders now. Stiff all over, unable even to move her eyes, she felt an awful mental tension which was like blank forgetfulness. Ricardo tried to influence her in his own way.

"And my gentleman is not the sort that would drop me. He ain't no foreigner; whereas you, with your baron, you don't know what's before you—or, rather, being a woman, you know only too well. Much better not to wait for the chuck. Pile in with us and get your share—of the plunder, I mean. You have some notion about it already."

She felt that if she as much as hinted by word or sign that there was no such thing on the island, Heyst's life wouldn't be worth half an hour's purchase; but all power of combining words had vanished in the tension of her mind. Words themselves were too difficult to think of—all except the word "yes." The saving word! She whispered it with not a feature of her face moving. To Ricardo the faint and concise sound proved a cool, reserved assent, more worth having from that amazing mistress of herself than a thousand words from any other woman. He thought with exultation that he had come upon one in a million—in ten millions! His whisper became frankly entreating.

"That's good! Now all you've got to do is to make sure where he keeps his swag. Only do be quick about it! I can't stand much longer this crawling-on-the-stomach business so as not to scare your gentleman. What do you think a fellow is—a reptile?"

She stared without seeing any one, as a person in the night sits staring and listening to deadly sounds, to evil incantations. And always in her head there was that tension of the mind trying to get hold of something, of a saving idea which seemed to be so near and could not be captured. Suddenly she seized it. Yes—she had to get that man out of the house. At that very moment, raised outside, not very near, but heard distinctly, Heyst's voice uttered the words:

"Have you been looking out for me, Wang?"

It was for her like a flash of lightning framed in the darkness which had beset her on all sides, showing a deadly precipice right under her feet. With a convulsive movement she sat up straight, but had no power to rise. Ricardo, on the contrary, was on his feet on the instant, as noiseless as a cat. His yellow eyes gleamed, gliding here and there; but he, too, seemed unable to make

another movement. Only his moustaches stirred visibly, like the feelers of some animal.

Wang's answer, *"Ya, Tuan,"* was heard by the two in the room, but more faintly. Then Heyst again:

"All right! You may bring the coffee in. Mem Putih out in the room yet?"

To this question Wang made no answer.

Ricardo's and the girl's eyes met, utterly without expression, all their faculties being absorbed in listening for the first sound of Heyst's footsteps, for any sound outside which would mean that Ricardo's retreat was cut off. Both understood perfectly well that Wang must have gone round the house, and that he was now at the back, making it impossible for Ricardo to slip out unseen that way before Heyst came in at the front.

A darkling shade settled on the face of the devoted secretary. Here was the business utterly spoiled! It was the gloom of anger, and even of apprehension. He would perhaps have made a dash for it through the back door, if Heyst had not been heard ascending the front steps. He climbed them slowly, very slowly, like a man who is discouraged or weary—or simply thoughtful; and Ricardo had a mental vision of his face, with its martial moustaches, the lofty forehead, the impassive features, and the quiet, meditative eyes. Trapped! Confound it! After all, perhaps the governor was right. Women had to be shunned. Fooling with this one had apparently ruined the whole business. For, trapped as he was, he might just as well kill, since, anyhow, to be seen was to be unmasked. But he was too fair-minded to be angry with the girl.

Heyst had paused on the verandah, or in the very doorway.

"I shall be shot down like a dog if I ain't quick," Ricardo muttered excitedly to the girl.

He stooped to get hold of his knife; and the next moment would have hurled himself out through the curtain, nearly as prompt and fully as deadly to Heyst as an unexpected thunderbolt. The feel more than the strength of the girl's hand, clutching at his shoulder, checked him. He swung round, crouching with a yellow upward glare. Ah! Was she turning against him?

He would have stuck his knife into the hollow of her bare throat if he had not seen her other hand pointing to the window. It was a long opening, high up, close under the ceiling almost, with a single pivoting shutter.

While he was still looking at it, she moved noiselessly away, picked up the overturned chair, and placed it under the wall. Then she looked round; but he didn't need to be beckoned to. In two long, tiptoeing strides he was at her side.

"Be quick!" she gasped.

He seized her hand and wrung it with all the force of his dumb gratitude, as a man does to a chum when there is no time for words. Then he mounted the chair. Ricardo was short—too short to get over without a noisy scramble. He hesitated an instant; she, watchful, bore rigidly on the seat with her beautiful bare arms, while, light and sure, he used the back of the chair as a ladder. The masses of her brown hair fell all about her face.

Footsteps resounded in the next room, and Heyst's voice, not very loud, called her by name.

"Lena!"

"Yes! In a minute," she answered with a particular intonation which she knew would prevent Heyst from coming in at once.

When she looked up, Ricardo had vanished, letting himself down outside so lightly that she had not heard the slightest noise. She stood up then, bewildered, frightened, as if awakened from a drugged sleep, with heavy, downcast, unseeing eyes, her fortitude tired out, her imagination as if dead within her and unable to keep her fear alive.

Heyst moved about aimlessly in the other room. This sound roused her exhausted wits. At once she began to think, hear, see; and what she saw—or rather recognized, for her eyes had been resting on it all the time—was Ricardo's straw slipper, lost in the scuffle, lying near the bath. She had just time to step forward and plant her foot on it when the curtain shook, and, pushed aside, disclosed Heyst in the doorway.

Out of the appeased enchantment of the senses she had found with him, like a sort of bewitched state, his danger brought a sensation of warmth to her breast. She felt something stir in there, something profound, like a new sort of life.

The room was in partial darkness, Ricardo having accidentally swung the pivoted shutter as he went out of the window. Heyst peered from the doorway.

"Why, you haven't done your hair yet," he said.

"I won't stop to do it now. I sha'n't be long," she replied steadily, and remained still, feeling Ricardo's slipper under the sole of her foot.

Heyst, with a movement of retreat, let the curtain drop slowly. On the instant she stooped for the slipper, and, with it in her hand, spun round wildly, looking for some hiding-place; but there was no such spot in the bare room. The chest, the leather trunk, a dress or two of hers hanging on pegs—there was no place where the merest hazard might not guide Heyst's hand at any moment. Her wildly roaming eyes were caught by the half-closed window. She ran to it, and by raising herself on her toes was able to reach the shutter with her fingertips. She pushed it square, stole back to the middle of the room, and, turning about, swung her arm, regulating the force of the throw so as not to let the slipper fly too far out and hit the edge of the overhanging eaves. It was a task of the nicest judgment for the muscles of those round arms, still quivering from the deadly wrestle with a man, for that brain, tense with the excitement of the situation and for the unstrung nerves flickering darkness before her eyes. At last the slipper left her hand. As soon as it passed the opening, it was out of her sight. She listened. She did not hear it strike anything; it just vanished, as if it had wings to fly on through the air. Not a sound! It had gone clear.

Her valiant arms hanging close against her side, she stood as if turned into stone. A faint whistle reached her ears. The forgetful Ricardo, becoming very much aware of his loss, had been hanging about in great anxiety, which was relieved by the appearance of the slipper flying from under the eaves; and now, thoughtfully, he had ventured a whistle to put her mind at ease.

Suddenly the girl reeled forward. She saved herself from a fall only by embracing with both arms one of the tall, roughly carved posts holding the mos-

quito net above the bed. For a long time she clung to it, with her forehead leaning against the wood. One side of her loosened sarong had slipped down as low as her hip. The long brown tresses of her hair fell in lank wisps, as if wet, almost black against her white body. Her uncovered flank, damp with the sweat of anguish and fatigue, gleamed coldly with the immobility of polished marble in the hot, diffused light falling through the window above her head—a dim reflection of the consuming, passionate blaze of sunshine outside, all aquiver with the effort to set the earth on fire, to burn it to ashes.

IV

Heyst, seated at the table with his chin on his breast, raised his head at the faint rustle of Lena's dress. He was startled by the dead pallor of her cheeks, by something lifeless in her eyes, which looked at him strangely, without recognition. But to his anxious inquiries she answered reassuringly that there was nothing the matter with her, really. She had felt giddy on rising. She had even had a moment of faintness, after her bath. She had to sit down to wait for it to pass. This had made her late dressing.

"I didn't try to do my hair. I didn't want to keep you waiting any longer," she said.

He was unwilling to press her with questions about her health, since she seemed to make light of this indisposition. She had not done her hair, but she had brushed it, and had tied it with a ribbon behind. With her forehead uncovered, she looked very young, almost a child, a careworn child; a child with something on its mind.

What surprised Heyst was the non-appearance of Wang. The Chinaman had always materialised at the precise moment of his service, neither too soon nor too late. This time the usual miracle failed. What was the meaning of this?

Heyst raised his voice—a thing he disliked doing. It was promptly answered from the compound:

"Ada, Tuan!"

Lena, leaning on her elbow, with her eyes on her plate, did not seem to hear anything. When Wang entered with a tray, his narrow eyes, tilted inward by the prominence of salient cheekbones, kept her under stealthy observation all the time. Neither the one nor the other of that white couple paid the slightest attention to him and he withdrew without having heard them exchange a single word. He squatted on his heels on the back verandah. His Chinaman's mind, very clear but not far-reaching, was made up according to the plain reason of things, such as it appeared to him in the light of his simple feeling for self-preservation, untrammelled by any notions of romantic honour or tender conscience. His yellow hands, lightly clasped, hung idly between his knees. The graves of Wang's ancestors were far away, his parents were dead, his elder brother was a soldier in the yamen of some Mandarin away in Formosa. No one near by had a claim on his veneration or his obedience. He had been for years a labouring, restless vagabond. His only tie in the world was the Alfuro woman, in exchange for whom he had given away some considerable part of his hard-earned substance; and his duty, in reason, could be to no one but himself.

The scuffle behind the curtain was a thing of bad augury for that Number One for whom the Chinaman had neither love nor dislike. He had been awed enough by that development to hang back with the coffee-pot till at last the white man was induced to call him in. Wang went in with curiosity. Certainly, the white woman looked as if she had been wrestling with a spirit which had managed to tear half her blood out of her before letting her go. As to the man, Wang had long looked upon him as being in some sort bewitched; and now he was doomed. He heard their voices in the room. Heyst was urging the girl to go and lie down again. He was extremely concerned. She had eaten nothing.

"The best thing for you. You really must!"

She sat listless, shaking her head from time to time negatively, as if nothing could be any good. But he insisted; she saw the beginning of wonder in his eyes, and suddenly gave way.

"Perhaps I had better."

She did not want to arouse his wonder, which would lead him straight to suspicion. He must not suspect!

Already, with the consciousness of her love for this man, of that something rapturous and profound going beyond the mere embrace, there was born in her a woman's innate mistrust of masculinity, of that seductive strength allied to an absurd, delicate shrinking from the recognition of the naked necessity of facts, which never yet frightened a woman worthy of the name. She had no plan; but her mind, quieted down somewhat by the very effort to preserve outward composure for his sake, perceived that her behaviour had secured, at any rate, a short period of safety. Perhaps because of the similarity of their miserable origin in the dregs of mankind, she had understood Ricardo perfectly. He would keep quiet for a time now. In this momentarily soothing certitude her bodily fatigue asserted itself, the more overpoweringly since its cause was not so much the demand of her strength as the awful suddenness of the stress she had had to meet. She would have tried to overcome it from the mere instinct of resistance, if it had not been for Heyst's alternate pleadings and commands. Before this eminently masculine fussing she felt the woman's need to give way, the sweetness of surrender.

"I will do anything you like," she said.

Getting up, she was surprised by a wave of languid weakness that came over her, embracing and enveloping her like warm water, with a noise in her ears as of a breaking sea.

"You must help me along," she added quickly.

While he put his arm round her waist—not by any means an uncommon thing for him to do—she found a special satisfaction in the feeling of being thus sustained. She abandoned all her weight to that encircling and protecting pressure, while a thrill went through her at the sudden thought that it was she who would have to protect him, to be the defender of a man who was strong enough to lift her bodily, as he was doing even then in his two arms. For Heyst had done this as soon as they had crept through the doorway of the room. He thought it was quicker and simpler to carry her the last step or two. He had grown really too anxious to be aware of the effort. He lifted her high

and deposited her on the bed, as one lays a child on its side in a cot. Then he sat down on the edge, masking his concern with a smile which obtained no response from the dreamy immobility of her eyes. But she sought his hand, seized it eagerly; and while she was pressing it with all the force of which she was capable, the sleep she needed overtook her suddenly, overwhelmingly, as it overtakes a child in a cot, with her lips parted for a safe, endearing word which she had thought of but had no time to utter.

The usual flaming silence brooded over Samburan.

"What in the world is this new mystery?" murmured Heyst to himself, contemplating her deep slumber.

It was so deep, this enchanted sleep, that when some time afterward he gently tried to open her fingers and free his hand, he succeeded without provoking the slightest stir.

"There is some very simple explanation, no doubt," he thought, as he stole out into the living-room.

Absent-mindedly he pulled a book out of the top shelf, and sat down with it; but even after he had opened it on his knee, and had been staring at the pages for a time, he had not the slightest idea of what it was about. He stared and stared at the crowded, parallel lines. It was only when, raising his eyes for no particular reason, he saw Wang standing motionless on the other side of the table, that he regained complete control of his faculties.

"Oh, yes," he said, as if suddenly reminded of a forgotten appointment of a not particularly welcome sort.

He waited a little, and then, with reluctant curiosity, forced himself to ask the silent Wang what he had to say. He had some idea that the matter of the vanished revolver would come up at last; but the guttural sounds which proceeded from the Chinaman did not refer to that delicate subject. His speech was concerned with cups, saucers, plates, forks, and knives. All these things had been put away in the cupboards on the back verandah, where they belonged, perfectly clean, "all plopel." Heyst wondered at the scrupulosity of a man who was about to abandon him; for he was not surprised to hear Wang conclude the account of his stewardship with the words:

"Me go now."

"Oh! You go now?" said Heyst, leaning back, his book on his knees.

"Yes. Me no likee. One man, two man, thlee man—no can do! Me go now."

"What's frightening you away like this?" asked Heyst, while through his mind flashed the hope that something enlightening might come from that being so unlike himself, taking contact with the world with a simplicity and directness of which his own mind was not capable. "Why?" he went on. "You are used to white men. You know them well."

"Yes. Me savee them," assented Wang inscrutably. "Me savee plenty."

All that he really knew was his own mind. He had made it up to withdraw himself and the Alfuro woman from the uncertainties of the relations which were going to establish themselves between those white men. It was Pedro who had been the first cause of Wang's suspicion and fear. The Chinaman had seen wild men. He had penetrated, in the train of a Chinese pedlar, up one or two of the Bornean rivers into the country of the Dyaks. He had also been in the

interior of Mindanao, where there are people who live in trees—savages, no better than animals; but a hairy brute like Pedro, with his great fangs and ferocious growls, was altogether beyond his conception of anything that could be looked upon as human. The strong impression made on him by Pedro was the prime inducement which had led Wang to purloin the revolver. Reflection on the general situation, and on the insecurity of Number One, came later, after he had obtained possession of the revolver and of the box of cartridges out of the table drawer in the living-room.

"Oh, you savee plenty about white men," Heyst went on in a slightly bantering tone, after a moment of silent reflection in which he had confessed to himself that the recovery of the revolver was not to be thought of, either by persuasion or by some more forcible means. "You speak in that fashion, but you are frightened of those white men over there!"

"Me no flightened," protested Wang raucously, throwing up his head—which gave to his throat a more strained, anxious appearance than ever. "Me no likee," he added in a quieter tone. "Me velly sick."

He put his hand over the region under the breastbone.

"That," said Heyst, serenely positive, "belong one piecee lie. That isn't proper man-talk at all. And after stealing my revolver, too!"

He had suddenly decided to speak about it, because this frankness could not make the situation much worse than it was. He did not suppose for a moment that Wang had the revolver anywhere about his person; and after having thought the matter over, he had arrived at the conclusion that the Chinaman never meant to use the weapon against him. After a slight start, because the direct charge had taken him unawares, Wang tore open the front of his jacket with a convulsive show of indignation.

"No hab got. Look see!" he mouthed in pretended anger.

He slapped his bare chest violently; he uncovered his very ribs, all astir with the panting of outraged virtue; his smooth stomach heaved with indignation. He started his wide blue breeches flapping about his yellow calves. Heyst watched him quietly.

"I never said you had it on you," he observed, without raising his voice, "but the revolver is gone from where I kept it."

"Me no savee levolvel," Wang said obstinately.

The book lying open on Heyst's knee slipped suddenly and he made a sharp movement to catch it up. Wang was unable to see the reason of this because of the table, and leaped away from what seemed to him a threatening symptom. When Heyst looked up, the Chinaman was already at the door facing the room, not frightened, but alert.

"What's the matter?" asked Heyst.

Wang nodded his shaven head significantly at the curtain closing the doorway of the bedroom.

"Me no likee," he repeated.

"What the devil do you mean?" Heyst was genuinely amazed. "Don't like what?"

Wang pointed a long, lemon-coloured finger at the motionless folds.

"Two," he said.

"Two what? I don't understand."

"Suppose you savee, you no like that fashion. Me savee plenty. Me go now."

Heyst had risen from his chair, but Wang kept his ground in the doorway for a little while longer. His almond-shaped eyes imparted to his face an expression of soft and sentimental melancholy. The muscles of his throat moved visibly while he uttered a distinct and guttural "Good-bye," and vanished from Number One's sight.

The Chinaman's departure altered the situation. Heyst reflected on what would be best to do in view of that fact. For a long time he hesitated; then, shrugging his shoulders wearily, he walked out on the verandah, down the steps, and continued at a steady gait, with a thoughtful mien, in the direction of his guests' bungalow. He wanted to make an important communication to them, and he had no other object—least of all to give them the shock of a surprise call. Nevertheless, their brutish henchman not being on watch, it was Heyst's fate to startle Mr. Jones and his secretary by his sudden appearance in the doorway. Their conversation must have been very interesting to prevent them from hearing the visitor's approach. In the dim room—the shutters were kept constantly closed against the heat—Heyst saw them start apart. It was Mr. Jones who spoke.

"Ah, here you are again! Come in, come in!"

Heyst, taking his hat off in the doorway, entered the room.

V

Waking up suddenly, Lena looked, without raising her head from the pillow, at the room in which she was alone. She got up quickly, as if to counteract the awful sinking of her heart by the vigorous use of her limbs. But this sinking was only momentary. Mistress of herself from pride, from love, from necessity, and also because of a woman's vanity in self-sacrifice, she met Heyst, returning from the strangers' bungalow, with a clear glance and a smile.

The smile he managed to answer; but, noticing that he avoided her eyes, she composed her lips and lowered her gaze. For the same reason she hastened to speak to him in a tone of indifference, which she put on without effort, as if she had grown adept in duplicity since sunrise.

"You have been over there again?"

"I have. I thought—but you had better know first that we have lost Wang for good."

She repeated "For good?" as if she had not understood.

"For good or evil—I shouldn't know which if you were to ask me. He has dismissed himself. He's gone."

"You expected him to go, though, didn't you?"

Heyst sat down on the other side of the table.

"Yes. I expected it as soon as I discovered that he had annexed my revolver. He says he hasn't taken it. That's of course. A Chinaman would not see the sense of confessing under any circumstances. To deny any charge is a principle of right conduct; but he hardly expected to be believed. He was a little enigmatic at the last, Lena. He startled me."

Heyst paused. The girl seemed absorbed in her own thoughts.

"He startled me," repeated Heyst. She noted the anxiety in his tone, and turned her head slightly to look at him across the table.

"It must have been something—to startle *you*," she said. In the depth of her parted lips, like a ripe pomegranate, there was a gleam of white teeth.

"It was only a single word—and some of his gestures. He had been making a good deal of noise. I wonder we didn't wake you up. How soundly you can sleep! I say, do you feel all right now?"

"As fresh as can be," she said, treating him to another deep gleam of a smile. "I heard no noise, and I'm glad of it. The way he talks in his harsh voice frightens me. I don't like all these foreign people."

"It was just before he went away—bolted out, I should say. He nodded and pointed at the curtain of our room. He knew you were there, of course. He seemed to think—he seemed to try to give me to understand that you were in special—well, danger. You know how he talks."

She said nothing; she made no sound, only the faint tinge of colour ebbed out of her cheek.

"Yes," Heyst went on. "He seemed to try to warn me. That must have been it. Did he imagine I had forgotten your existence? The only word he said was 'two.' It sounded so, at least. Yes, 'two'—and that he didn't like it."

"What does that mean?" she whispered.

"We know what the word two means, don't we, Lena? We are two. Never were such a lonely two out of the world, my dear! He might have tried to remind me that he himself has a woman to look after. Why are you so pale, Lena?"

"Am I pale?" she asked negligently.

"You are." Heyst was really anxious.

"Well, it isn't from fright," she protested truthfully.

Indeed, what she felt was a sort of horror which left her absolutely in the full possession of all her faculties; more difficult to bear, perhaps, for that reason, but not paralysing to her fortitude.

Heyst in his turn smiled at her.

"I really don't know that there is any reason to be frightened."

"I mean I am not frightened for myself."

"I believe you are very plucky," he said. The colour had returned to her face. "I," continued Heyst, "am so rebellious to outward impressions that I can't say that much about myself. I don't react with sufficient distinctness." He changed his tone. "You know I went to see those men first thing this morning."

"I know. Be careful!" she murmured.

"I wonder how one can be careful! I had a long talk with—but I don't believe you have seen them. One of them is a fantastically thin, long person, apparently ailing; I shouldn't wonder if he were really so. He makes rather a point of it in a mysterious manner. I imagine he must have suffered from tropical fevers, but not so much as he tries to make out. He's what people would call a gentleman. He seemed on the point of volunteering a tale of his adventures—for which I didn't ask him—but remarked that it was a long story; some other time, perhaps.

"'I suppose you would like to know who I am?' he asked me.

"I told him I would leave it to him, in a tone which, between gentlemen, could have left no doubt in his mind. He raised himself on his elbow—he was lying down on the camp-bed—and said:

"'I am he who is—'"

Lena seemed not to be listening; but when Heyst paused, she turned her head quickly to him. He took it for a movement of inquiry, but in this he was wrong. A great vagueness enveloped her impressions, but all her energy was concentrated on the struggle that she wanted to take upon herself, in a great exaltation of love and self-sacrifice, which is woman's sublime faculty; altogether on herself, every bit of it, leaving him nothing, not even the knowledge of what she did, if that were possible. She would have liked to lock him up by some stratagem. Had she known of some means to put him to sleep for days she would have used incantations or philtres without misgivings. He seemed to her too good for such contacts, and not sufficiently equipped. This last feeling had nothing to do with the material fact of the revolver being stolen. She could hardly appreciate that fact at its full value.

Observing her eyes fixed and as if sightless—for the concentration on her purpose took all expression out of them—Heyst imagined it to be the effect of a great mental effort.

"No use asking me what he meant, Lena; I don't know, and I did not ask him. The gentleman, as I have told you before, seems devoted to mystification. I said nothing, and he laid down his head again on the bundle of rugs he uses for a pillow. He affects a state of great weakness, but I suspect that he's perfectly capable of leaping to his feet if he likes. Having been ejected, he said, from his proper social sphere because he had refused to conform to certain usual conventions, he was a rebel now, and was coming and going up and down the earth. As I really did not want to listen to all this nonsense, I told him that I had heard that sort of story about somebody else before. His grin is really ghastly. He confessed that I was very far from the sort of man he expected to meet. Then he said:

"'As to me, I am no blacker than the gentleman you are thinking of, and I have neither more nor less determination.'"

Heyst looked across the table at Lena. Propped on her elbows, and holding her head in both hands, she moved it a little with an air of understanding.

"Nothing could be plainer, eh?" said Heyst grimly. "Unless, indeed, this is his idea of a pleasant joke; for, when he finished speaking, he burst into a long, loud laugh. I didn't join him!"

"I wish you had," she breathed out.

"I didn't join him. It did not occur to me. I am not much of a diplomatist. It would probably have been wise; for, indeed, I believe he had said more than he meant to say, and was trying to take it back by this affected jocularity. Yet, when one thinks of it, diplomacy without force in the background is but a rotten reed to lean upon. And I don't know whether I could have done it if I had thought of it. I don't know. It would have been against the grain. Could I have done it? I have lived too long within myself, watching the mere shadows and shades of life. To deceive a man on some issue which could be decided quicker by his destruction while one is disarmed, helpless, without even the

power to run away—no! *That* seems to me too degrading. And yet I have you here! I have your very existence in my keeping. What do you say, Lena? Would I be capable of throwing you to the lions to save my dignity?"

She got up, walked quickly round the table, posed herself on his knees lightly, throwing one arm round his neck, and whispered in his ear:

"You may, if you like. And maybe that's the only way I would consent to leave you. For something like that. If it were something no bigger than your little finger."

She gave him a light kiss on the lips and was gone before he could detain her. She regained her seat and propped her elbows again on the table. It was hard to believe that she had moved from the spot at all. The fleeting weight of her body on his knees, the hug round his neck, the whisper in his ear, the kiss on his lips, might have been the unsubstantial sensations of a dream invading the reality of waking life; a sort of charming mirage in the barren aridity of his thoughts. He hesitated to speak till she said, business-like:

"Well. And what then?"

Heyst gave a start.

"Oh, yes. I didn't join him. I let him have his laugh out by himself. He was shaking all over, like a merry skeleton, under a cotton sheet he was covered with—I believe in order to conceal the revolver that he had in his right hand. I didn't see it, but I have a distinct impression it was there in his fist. As he had not been looking at me for some time, but staring into a certain part of the room, I turned my head and saw a hairy, wild sort of creature which they take about with them, squatting on its heels in the angle of the walls behind me. He wasn't there when I came in. I didn't like the notion of that watchful monster behind my back. If I had been less at their mercy, I should certainly have changed my position. As things are now, to move would have been a mere weakness. So I remained where I was. The gentleman on the bed said he could assure me of one thing; and that was that his presence here was no more morally reprehensible than mine.

" 'We pursue the same ends,' he said, 'only perhaps I pursue them with more openness than you—with more simplicity.'

"That's what he said," Heyst went on, after looking at Lena in a sort of inquiring silence. "I asked him if he knew beforehand that I was living here; but he only gave me a ghastly grin. I didn't press him for an answer, Lena. I thought I had better not."

On her smooth forehead a ray of light always seemed to rest. Her loose hair, parted in the middle, covered the hands sustaining her head. She seemed spellbound by the interest of the narrative. Heyst did not pause long. He managed to continue his relation smoothly enough, beginning afresh with a piece of comment.

"He would have lied impudently—and I detest being told a lie. It makes me uncomfortable. It's pretty clear that I am not fitted for the affairs of the wide world. But I did not want him to think that I accepted his presence too meekly; so I said that his comings or goings on the earth were none of my business, of course, except that I had a natural curiosity to know when he would find it convenient to resume them.

"He asked me to look at the state he was in. Had I been all alone here, as they think I am, I should have laughed at him. But not being alone—I say, Lena, you are sure you haven't shown yourself where you could be seen?"

"Certain," she said promptly.

He looked relieved.

"You understand, Lena, that when I ask you to keep so strictly out of sight, it is because you are not for them to look at—to talk about. My poor Lena! I can't help that feeling. Do you understand it?"

She moved her head slightly in a manner that was neither affirmative nor negative.

"People will have to see me some day," she said.

"I wonder how long it will be possible for you to keep out of sight!" murmured Heyst thoughtfully. He bent over the table. "Let me finish telling you. I asked him pointblank what it was he wanted with me; he appeared extremely unwilling to come to the point. It was not really so pressing as all that, he said. His secretary, who was in fact his partner, was not present, having gone down to the wharf to look at their boat. Finally the fellow proposed that he should put off a certain communication he had to make till the day after tomorrow. I agreed; but I also told him that I was not at all anxious to hear it. I had no conception in what way his affairs could concern me.

" 'Ah, Mr. Heyst,' he said, 'you and I have much more in common than you think.' "

Heyst struck the table with his fist unexpectedly.

"It was a jeer; I am sure it was!"

He seemed ashamed of this outburst and smiled faintly into the motionless eyes of the girl.

"What could I have done—even if I had had my pockets full of revolvers?"

She made an appreciative sign.

"Killing's a sin, sure enough," she murmured.

"I went away," Heyst continued. "I left him there, lying on his side with his eyes shut. When I got back here, I found you looking ill. What was it, Lena? You did give me a scare! Then I had the interview with Wang while you rested. You were sleeping quietly. I sat here to consider all these things calmly, to try to penetrate their inner meaning and their outward bearing. It struck me that the two days we have before us have the character of a sort of truce. The more I thought of it, the more I felt that this was tacitly understood between Jones and myself. It was to our advantage, if anything can be of advantage to people caught so completely unawares as we are. Wang was gone. He, at any rate, had declared himself, but as I did not know what he might take it into his head to do, I thought I had better warn these people that I was no longer responsible for the Chinaman. I did not want Mr. Wang making some move which would precipitate the action against us. Do you see my point of view?"

She made a sign that she did. All her soul was wrapped in her passionate determination, in an exalted belief in herself—in the contemplation of her amazing opportunity to win the certitude, the eternity, of that man's love.

"I never saw two men," Heyst was saying, "more affected by a piece of in-

formation than Jones and his secretary, who was back in the bungalow by then. They had not heard me come up. I told them I was sorry to intrude.

"'Not at all! Not at all,' said Jones.

"The secretary backed away into a corner and watched me like a wary cat. In fact, they both were visibly on their guard.

"'I am come,' I told them, 'to let you know that my servant has deserted—gone off.'

"At first they looked at each other as if they had not understood what I was saying; but very soon they seemed quite concerned.

"'You mean to say your Chink's cleared out?' said Ricardo, coming forward from his corner. 'Like this—all at once? What did he do it for?'

"I said that a Chinaman had always a simple and precise reason for what he did, but that to get such a reason out of him was not so easy. All he had told me, I said, was that he 'didn't like.'

"They looked extremely disturbed at this. Didn't like what, they wanted to know.

"'The looks of you and your party,' I told Jones.

"'Nonsense!' he cried out; and immediately Ricardo, the short man, struck in.

"'Told you *that?* What did he take you for, sir—an infant? Or do you take us for kids?—meaning no offence. Come, I bet you will tell us next that you've missed something.'

"'I didn't mean to tell you anything of the sort,' I said, 'but as a matter of fact it is so.'

"He slapped his thigh.

"'Thought so. What do you think of this trick, governor?'

"Jones made some sort of sign to him, and then that extraordinary cat-faced associate proposed that he and their servant should come out and help me to catch or kill the Chink.

"My object, I said, was not to get assistance. I did not intend to chase the Chinaman. I had come only to warn them that he was armed, and that he really objected to their presence on the island. I wanted them to understand that I was not responsible for anything that might happen.

"'Do you mean to tell us,' asked Ricardo, 'that there is a crazy Chink with a six-shooter broke loose on this island, and that you don't care?'

"Strangely enough, they did not seem to believe my story. They were exchanging significant looks all the time. Ricardo stole up close to his principal; they had a confabulation together, and then something happened which I did not expect. It's rather awkward, too.

"Since I would not have their assistance to get hold of the Chink and recover my property, the least they could do was to send me their servant. It was Jones who said that, and Ricardo backed up the idea.

"'Yes, yes—let our Pedro cook for all hands in your compound. He isn't so bad as he looks. That's what we will do!'

"He bustled out of the room to the verandah, and let out an air-splitting whistle for their Pedro. Having heard the brute's answering howl, Ricardo ran back into the room.

"'Yes, Mr. Heyst. This will do capitally, Mr. Heyst. You just direct him to

do whatever you are accustomed to have done for you in the way of attendance. See?'

"Lena, I confess to you that I was taken completely by surprise. I had not expected anything of the sort. I don't know what I expected. I am so anxious about you that I can't keep away from these infernal scoundrels. And only three months ago I would not have cared. I would have defied their scoundrelism as much as I have scorned all the other intrusions of life. But now I have you! You stole into my life, and—"

Heyst drew a deep breath. The girl gave him a quick, wide-eyed glance.

"Ah! That's what you are thinking of—that you have me!"

It was impossible to read the thoughts veiled by her steady grey eyes, to penetrate the meaning of her silences, her words, and even her embraces. He used to come out of her very arms with the feeling of a baffled man.

"If I haven't you, if you are not here, then where are you?" cried Heyst. "You understand me very well!"

She shook her head a little. Her red lips, at which he looked now, her lips as fascinating as the voice that came out of them, uttered the words:

"I hear what you say; but what does it mean?"

"It means that I could lie and perhaps cringe for your sake."

"No! No! Don't you ever do that," she said in haste, while her eyes glistened suddenly. "You would hate me for it afterwards!"

"Hate you?" repeated Heyst, who had recalled his polite manner. "No! You needn't consider the extremity of the improbable—as yet. But I will confess to you that I—how shall I call it?—that I dissembled. First I dissembled my dismay at the unforeseen result of my idiotic diplomacy. Do you understand, my dear girl?"

It was evident that she did not understand the word. Heyst produced his playful smile, which contrasted oddly with the worried character of his whole expression. His temples seemed to have sunk in, his face looked a little leaner.

"A diplomatic statement, Lena, is a statement of which everything is true but the sentiment which seems to prompt it. I have never been diplomatic in my relation with mankind—not from regard for its feelings, but from a certain regard for my own. Diplomacy doesn't go well with consistent contempt. I cared little for life and still less for death."

"Don't talk like that!"

"I dissembled my extreme longing to take these wandering scoundrels by their throats," he went on. "I have only two hands—I wish I had a hundred to defend you—and there were three throats. By that time their Pedro was in the room too. Had he seen me engaged with their two throats, he would have been at mine like a fierce dog, or any other savage and faithful brute. I had no difficulty in dissembling my longing for the vulgar, stupid, and hopeless argument of fight. I remarked that I really did not want a servant. I couldn't think of depriving them of their man's services; but they would not hear me. They had made up their minds.

"'We shall send him over at once,' Ricardo said, 'to start cooking dinner for everybody. I hope you won't mind me coming to eat in with you in your bungalow; and we will send the governor's dinner over to him here.'

"I could do nothing but hold my tongue or bring on a quarrel—some manifestation of their dark purpose, which we have no means to resist. Of course, you may remain invisible this evening; but with that atrocious brute prowling all the time at the back of the house, how long can your presence be concealed from these men?"

Heyst's distress could be felt in his silence. The girl's head, sustained by her hands buried in the thick masses of her hair, had a perfect immobility.

"You are certain you have not been seen so far?" he asked suddenly.

The motionless head spoke.

"How can I be certain? You told me you wanted me to keep out of the way. I kept out of the way. I didn't ask your reason. I thought you didn't want people to know that you had a girl like me about you."

"What? Ashamed?" cried Heyst.

"It isn't what's right, perhaps—I mean for you—is it?"

Heyst lifted his hands, reproachfully courteous.

"I look upon it as so very much right that I couldn't bear the idea of any other than sympathetic, respectful eyes resting on you. I disliked and mistrusted these fellows from the first. Didn't you understand?"

"Yes; I did keep out of sight," she said.

A silence fell. At last Heyst stirred slightly.

"All this is of very little importance now," he said with a sigh. "This is a question of something infinitely worse than mere looks and thoughts, however base and contemptible. As I have told you, I met Ricardo's suggestions by silence. As I was turning away he said:

"'If you happen to have the key of that storeroom of yours on you, Mr. Heyst, you may just as well let me have it; I will give it to our Pedro.'

"I had it on me, and I tendered it to him without speaking. The hairy creature was at the door by then, and caught the key, which Ricardo threw to him, better than any trained ape could have done. I came away. All the time I had been thinking anxiously of you, whom I had left asleep, alone here, and apparently ill."

Heyst interrupted himself, with a listening turn of his head. He had heard the faint sound of sticks being snapped in the compound. He rose and crossed the room to look out of the back door.

"And here the creature is," he said, returning to the table. "Here he is, already attending to the fire. Oh, my dear Lena!"

She had followed him with her eyes. She watched him go out on the front verandah cautiously. He lowered stealthily a couple of screens that hung between the columns, and remained outside very still, as if interested by something on the open ground. Meantime she had risen in her turn, to take a peep into the compound. Heyst, glancing over his shoulder, saw her returning to her seat. He beckoned to her, and she continued to move, crossing the shady room, pure and bright in her white dress, her hair loose, with something of a sleep-walker in her unhurried motion, in her extended hand, in the sightless effect of her grey eyes luminous in the half light. He had never seen such an expression in her face before. It had dreaminess in it, intense attention, and something like sternness. Arrested in the doorway by Heyst's extended arm,

she seemed to wake up, flushed faintly—and this flush, passing off, carried away with it the strange transfiguring mood. With a courageous gesture she pushed back the heavy masses of her hair. The light clung to her forehead. Her delicate nostrils quivered. Heyst seized her arm and whispered excitedly:

"Slip out here, quickly! The screens will conceal you. Only you must mind the stair-space. They are actually out—I mean the other two. You had better see them before you—"

She made a barely perceptible movement of recoil, checked at once, and stood still. Heyst released her arm.

"Yes, perhaps I had better," she said with unnatural deliberation, and stepped out on the verandah to stand close by his side.

Together, one on each side of the screen, they peeped between the edge of the canvas and the verandah-post entwined with creepers. A great heat ascended from the sun-smitten ground, in an ever-rising wave, as if from some secret store of earth's fiery heart; for the sky was growing cooler already, and the sun had declined sufficiently for the shadows of Mr. Jones and his henchman to be projected towards the bungalow side by side—one infinitely slender, the other short and broad.

The two visitors stood still and gazed. To keep up the fiction of his invalidism, Mr. Jones, the gentleman, leaned on the arm of Ricardo, the secretary, the top of whose hat just came up to his governor's shoulder.

"Do you see them?" Heyst whispered into the girl's ear. "Here they are, the envoys of the outer world. Here they are before you—evil intelligence, instinctive savagery, arm in arm. The brute force is at the back. A trio of fitting envoys perhaps—but what about the welcome? Suppose I were armed, could I shoot those two down where they stand? Could I?"

Without moving her head, the girl felt for Heyst's hand, pressed it, and thereafter did not let it go. He continued, bitterly playful:

"I don't know. I don't think so. There is a strain in me which lays me under an insensate obligation to avoid even the appearance of murder. I have never pulled a trigger or lifted my hand on a man, even in self-defence."

The suddenly tightened grip of her hand checked him.

"They are making a move," she murmured.

"Can they be thinking of coming here?" Heyst wondered anxiously.

"No, they aren't coming this way," she said; and there was another pause. "They are going back to their house," she reported finally.

After watching them a little longer, she let go Heyst's hand and moved away from the screen. He followed her into the room.

"You have seen them now," he began. "Think what it was to me to see them land in the dusk, fantasms from the sea—apparitions, chimæras! And they persist. That's the worst of it—they persist. They have no right to be—but they are. They ought to have aroused my fury. But I have refined everything away by this time—anger, indignation, scorn itself. Nothing's left but disgust. Since you have told me of that abominable calumny, it has become immense—it extends even to myself." He looked up at her.

"But luckily I have you. And if only Wang had not carried off that miserable revolver—yes, Lena, here we are, we two!"

She put both her hands on his shoulders and looked straight into his eyes. He returned her penetrating gaze. It baffled him. He could not pierce the grey veil of her eyes; but the sadness of her voice thrilled him profoundly.

"You are not reproaching me?" she asked slowly.

"Reproach? What a word between us! It could only be myself—but the mention of Wang has given me an idea. I have been, not exactly cringing, not exactly lying, but still dissembling. You have been hiding yourself, to please me, but still you have been hiding. All this is very dignified. Why shouldn't we try begging now? A noble art! Yes, Lena, we must go out together. I couldn't think of leaving you alone, and I must—yes, I must speak to Wang. We shall go and seek that man, who knows what he wants and how to secure what he wants. We will go at once!"

"Wait till I put my hair up," she agreed instantly, and vanished behind the curtain.

When the curtain had fallen behind her, she turned her head back with an expression of infinite and tender concern for him—for him whom she could never hope to understand, and whom she was afraid she could never satisfy; as if her passion were of a hopelessly lower quality, unable to appease some exalted and delicate desire of his superior soul. In a couple of minutes she reappeared. They left the house by the door of the compound, and passed within three feet of the thunderstruck Pedro, without even looking in his direction. He rose from stooping over a fire of sticks, and, balancing himself clumsily, uncovered his enormous fangs in gaping astonishment. Then suddenly he set off rolling on his bandy legs to impart to his masters the astonishing discovery of a woman.

VI

As luck would have it, Ricardo was lounging alone on the verandah of the former counting-house. He scented some new development at once, and ran down to meet the trotting, bear-like figure. The deep, growling noises it made, though they had only a very remote resemblance to the Spanish language, or indeed to any sort of human speech, were from long practice quite intelligible to Mr. Jones's secretary. Ricardo was rather surprised. He had imagined that the girl would continue to keep out of sight. That line apparently was given up. He did not mistrust her. How could he? Indeed, he could not think of her existence calmly.

He tried to keep her image out of his mind so that he should be able to use its powers with some approach to that coolness which the complex nature of the situation demanded from him, both for his own sake and as the faithful follower of plain Mr. Jones, gentleman.

He collected his wits and thought. This was a change of policy, probably on the part of Heyst. If so, what could it mean? A deep fellow! Unless it was her doing; in which case—h'm—all right! Must be. She would know what she was doing. Before him Pedro, lifting his feet alternately, swayed to and fro sideways—his usual attitude of expectation. His little red eyes, lost in the mass of hair, were motionless. Ricardo stared into them with calculated contempt and said in a rough, angry voice:

"Woman! Of course there is. We know that without you!" He gave the tame

monster a push. "Git! *Vamos!* Waddle! Get back and cook the dinner! Which way did they go, then?"

Pedro extended a huge, hairy forearm to show the direction, and went off on his bandy legs. Advancing a few steps, Ricardo was just in time to see, above some bushes, two white helmets moving side by side in the clearing. They disappeared. Now that he had managed to keep Pedro from informing the governor that there was a woman on the island, he could indulge in speculation as to the movements of these people. His attitude towards Mr. Jones had undergone a spiritual change, of which he himself was not yet fully aware.

That morning, before tiffin, after his escape from the Heyst bungalow, completed in such an inspiring way by the recovery of the slipper, Ricardo had made his way to their allotted house, reeling as he ran, his head in a whirl. He was wildly excited by visions of inconceivable promise. He waited to compose himself before he dared to meet the governor. On entering the room, he found Mr. Jones sitting on the camp bedstead like a tailor on his board, cross-legged, his long back against the wall.

"I say, sir! You aren't going to tell me you are bored?"

"Bored? No! Where the devil have you been all this time?"

"Observing—watching—nosing around. What else? I knew you had company. Have you talked freely, sir?"

"Yes, I have," muttered Mr. Jones.

"Not downright plain, sir?"

"No. I wished you had been here. You loaf all the morning, and now you come in out of breath. What's the matter?"

"I haven't been wasting my time out there," said Ricardo. "Nothing's the matter. I—I—might have hurried a bit." He was in truth still panting; only it was not with running, but with the tumult of thoughts and sensations long repressed, which had been set free by the adventure of the morning. He was almost distracted by them now. He forgot himself in the maze of possibilities threatening and inspiring. "And so you had a long talk?" he said, to gain time.

"Confound you! The sun hasn't affected your head, has it? Why are you staring at me like a basilisk?"

"Beg pardon, sir. Wasn't aware I stared," Ricardo apologized good-humouredly. "The sun might well affect a thicker skull than mine. It blazes. Phew! What do you think a fellow is, sir—a salamander?"

"You ought to have been here," observed Mr. Jones.

"Did the beast give any signs of wanting to prance?" asked Ricardo quickly, with absolutely genuine anxiety. "It wouldn't do, sir. You must play him easy for at least a couple of days, sir. I have a plan. I have a notion that I can find out a lot in a couple of days."

"You have? In what way?"

"Why, by watching," Ricardo answered slowly.

Mr. Jones grunted.

"Nothing new, that. Watch, eh? Why not pray a little, too?"

"Ha, ha, ha! That's a good one," burst out the secretary, fixing Mr. Jones with mirthless eyes.

The latter dropped the subject indolently.

"Oh, you may be certain of at least two days," he said.

Ricardo recovered himself. His eyes gleamed voluptuously.

"We'll pull this off yet—clean—whole—right through, if you will only trust me, sir."

"I am trusting you right enough," said Mr. Jones. "It's your interest, too."

And, indeed, Ricardo was truthful enough in his statement. He did absolutely believe in success now. But he couldn't tell his governor that he had intelligences in the enemy's camp. It wouldn't do to tell him of the girl. Devil only knew what he would do if he learned there was a woman about. And how could he begin to tell of it? He couldn't confess his sudden escapade.

"We'll pull it off, sir," he said, with perfectly acted cheerfulness. He experienced gusts of awful joy expanding in his heart and hot like a fanned flame.

"We must," pronounced Mr. Jones. "This thing, Martin, is not like our other tries. I have a peculiar feeling about this. It's a different thing. It's a sort of test."

Ricardo was impressed by the governor's manner; for the first time a hint of passion could be detected in him. But also a word he used, the word "test," had struck him as particularly significant somehow. It was the last word uttered during that morning's conversation. Immediately afterwards Ricardo went out of the room. It was impossible for him to keep still. An elation in which an extraordinary softness mingled with savage triumph would not allow it. It prevented his thinking, also. He walked up and down the verandah far into the afternoon, eyeing the other bungalow at every turn. It gave no sign of being inhabited. Once or twice he stopped dead short and looked down at his left slipper. Each time he chuckled audibly. His restlessness kept on increasing till at last it frightened him. He caught hold of the balustrade of the verandah and stood still, smiling not at his thoughts, but at the strong sense of life within him. He abandoned himself to it carelessly, even recklessly. He cared for no one, friend or enemy. At that moment Mr. Jones called him by name from within. A shadow fell on the secretary's face.

"Here, sir," he answered; but it was a moment before he could make up his mind to go in.

He found his governor on his feet. Mr. Jones was tired of lying down when there was no necessity for it. His slender form, gliding about the room, came to a standstill.

"I've been thinking, Martin, of something you suggested. At the time it did not strike me as practical; but on reflection it seems to me that to propose a game is as good a way as any to let him understand that the time has come to disgorge. It's less—how should I say?—vulgar. He will know what it means. It's not a bad form to give to the business—which in itself is crude, Martin, crude."

"Want to spare his feelings?" jeered the secretary in such a bitter tone that Mr. Jones was really surprised.

"Why, it was your own notion, confound you!"

"Who says it wasn't?" retorted Ricardo sulkily. "But I am fairly sick of this crawling. No! No! Get the exact bearings of his swag and then a rip up. That's plenty good enough for him."

His passions being thoroughly aroused, a thirst for blood was allied in him with a thirst for tenderness—yes, tenderness. A sort of anxious, melting sensation pervaded and softened his heart when he thought of that girl—one of his own sort. And at the same time jealousy started gnawing at his breast as the image of Heyst intruded itself on his fierce anticipation of bliss.

"The crudeness of your ferocity is positively gross, Martin," Mr. Jones said disdainfully. "You don't even understand my purpose. I mean to have some sport out of him. Just try to imagine the atmosphere of the game—the fellow handling the cards—the agonising mockery of it! Oh, I shall appreciate this greatly. Yes, let him lose his money instead of being forced to hand it over. You, of course, would shoot him at once, but I shall enjoy the refinement and the jest of it. He's a man of the best society. I've been hounded out of my sphere by people very much like that fellow. How enraged and humiliated he will be! I promise myself some exquisite moments while watching his play."

"Ay, and suppose he suddenly starts prancing! He may not appreciate the fun."

"I mean you to be present," Mr. Jones remarked calmly.

"Well, as long as I am free to plug him or rip him up whenever I think the time has come, you are welcome to your bit of sport, sir. I sha'n't spoil it."

VII

It was at this precise moment of their conversation that Heyst had intruded on Mr. Jones and his secretary with his warning about Wang, as he had related to Lena. When he left them, the two looked at each other in wondering silence. Mr. Jones was the first to break it.

"I say, Martin!"

"Yes, sir."

"What does this mean?"

"It's some move. Blame me if I can understand!"

"Too deep for you?" Mr. Jones inquired drily.

"It's nothing but some of his infernal impudence," growled the secretary. "You don't believe all that about the Chink, do you, sir? 'Tain't true."

"It isn't necessary for it to be true to have a meaning for us. It's the why of his coming to tell us this tale that's important."

"Do you think he made it up to frighten us?" asked Ricardo.

Mr. Jones scowled at him thoughtfully.

"The man looked worried," he muttered, as if to himself. "Suppose that Chinaman has really stolen his money! The man looked very worried."

"Nothing but his artfulness, sir," protested Ricardo earnestly, for the idea was too disconcerting to entertain. "Is it likely that he would have trusted a Chink with enough knowledge to make it possible?" he argued warmly. "Why, it's the very thing that he would keep close about. There's something else there. Ay, but what?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Mr. Jones let out a ghostly, squeaky laugh. "I've never been placed in such a ridiculous position before," he went on, with a sepulchral equanimity of tone. "It's you, Martin, who dragged me into it. However, it's

my fault too. I ought to—but I was really too bored to use my brain, and yours is not to be trusted. You are a hothead!"

A blasphemous exclamation of grief escaped from Ricardo. Not to be trusted! Hothead! He was almost tearful.

"Haven't I heard you, sir, saying more than twenty times since we got fired out from Manila that we should want a lot of capital to work the East Coast with? You were always telling me that to prime properly all them officials and Portuguese scallawags we should have to lose heavily at first. Weren't you always worrying about some means of getting hold of a good lot of cash? It wasn't to be got hold of by allowing yourself to become bored in that rotten Dutch town and playing a twopenny game with confounded beggarly bank-clerks and such like. Well, I've brought you here, where there is cash to be got —and a big lot, to a moral," he added through his set teeth.

Silence fell. Each of them was staring into a different corner of the room. Suddenly, with a slight stamp of his foot, Mr. Jones made for the door. Ricardo caught him up outside.

"Put your arm through mine, sir," he begged him gently but firmly. "No use giving the game away. An invalid may well come out for a breath of fresh air after the sun's gone down a bit. That's it, sir. But where do you want to go? Why did you come out, sir?"

Mr. Jones stopped short.

"I hardly know myself," he confessed in a hollow mutter, staring intently at the Number One bungalow. "It's quite irrational," he declared in a still lower tone.

"Better go in, sir," suggested Ricardo. "What's that? Those screens weren't down before. He's spying from behind them now, I bet—the dodging, artful, plotting beast!"

"Why not go over there and see if we can't get to the bottom of this game?" was the unexpected proposal uttered by Mr. Jones. "He will have to talk to us."

Ricardo repressed a start of dismay, but for a moment could not speak. He only pressed the governor's hand to his side instinctively.

"No, sir. What could you say? Do you expect to get to the bottom of his lies? How could you make him talk? It isn't time yet to come to grips with that gent. You don't think I would hang back, do you? His Chink, of course, I'll shoot like a dog the moment I catch sight of him; but as to that Mr. Blasted Heyst, the time isn't yet. My head's cooler just now than yours. Let's go in again. Why, we are exposed here. Suppose he took it into his head to let off a gun on us! He's an unaccountable, 'yporcritical skunk."

Allowing himself to be persuaded, Mr. Jones returned to his seclusion. The secretary, however, remained on the verandah—for the purpose, he said, of seeing whether that Chink wasn't sneaking around; in which case he proposed to take a long shot at the galoot and chance the consequences. His real reason was that he wanted to be alone, away from the governor's deep-sunk eyes. He felt a sentimental desire to indulge his fancies in solitude. A great change had come over Mr. Ricardo since that morning. A whole side of him which from prudence, from necessity, from loyalty, had been kept dormant, was aroused

now, colouring his thoughts and disturbing his mental poise by the vision of such staggering consequences as, for instance, the possibility of an active conflict with his governor. The appearance of the monstrous Pedro with his news drew Ricardo out of a feeling of dreaminess wrapped up in a sense of impending trouble. A woman? Yes, there was one; and it made all the difference. After driving away Pedro, and watching the white helmets of Heyst and Lena vanish among the bushes he stood lost in meditation.

"Where could they be off to like this?" he mentally asked himself.

The answer found by his speculative faculties on their utmost stretch was—to meet that Chink. For in the desertion of Wang Ricardo did not believe. It was a lying yarn, the organic part of a dangerous plot. Heyst had gone to combine some fresh move. But then Ricardo felt sure that the girl was with him—the girl full of pluck, full of sense, full of understanding; an ally of his own kind!

He went indoors briskly. Mr. Jones had resumed his cross-legged pose at the head of the bed, with his back against the wall.

"Anything new?"

"No, sir."

Ricardo walked about the room as if he had no care in the world. He hummed snatches of song. Mr. Jones raised his waspish eyebrows at the sound. The secretary got down on his knees before an old leather trunk, and rummaging in there, brought out a small looking-glass. He fell to examining his physiognomy in it with silent absorption.

"I think I'll shave," he decided, getting up.

He gave a sidelong glance to the governor, and repeated it several times during the operation, which did not take long, and even afterwards, when, after putting away the implements, he resumed his walking, humming more snatches of unknown songs. Mr. Jones preserved a complete immobility, his thin lips compressed, his eyes veiled. His face was like a carving.

"So you would like to try your hand at cards with that skunk, sir?" said Ricardo, stopping suddenly and rubbing his hands.

Mr. Jones gave no sign of having heard anything.

"Well, why not? Why shouldn't he have the experience? You remember in that Mexican town—what's its name?—the robber fellow they caught in the mountains and condemned to be shot? He played cards half the night with the jailer and the sheriff. Well, this fellow is condemned, too. He must give you your game. Hang it all, a gentleman ought to have some little relaxation! And you have been uncommonly patient, sir."

"You are uncommonly volatile all of a sudden," Mr. Jones remarked in a bored voice. "What's come to you?"

The secretary hummed for a while, and then said:

"I'll try to get him over here for you tonight, after dinner. If I ain't here myself, don't you worry, sir. I shall be doing a bit of nosing round—see?"

"I see," sneered Mr. Jones languidly. "But what do *you* expect to see in the dark?"

Ricardo made no answer, and after another turn or two slipped out of the room. He no longer felt comfortable alone with the governor.

VIII

Meantime Heyst and Lena, walking rather fast, approached Wang's hut. Asking the girl to wait, Heyst ascended the little ladder of bamboos giving access to the door. It was as he had expected. The smoky interior was empty, except for a big chest of sandalwood too heavy for hurried removal. Its lid was thrown up, but whatever it might have contained was no longer there. All Wang's possessions were gone. Without tarrying in the hut, Heyst came back to the girl, who asked no questions, with her strange air of knowing or understanding everything.

"Let us push on," he said.

He went ahead, the rustle of her white skirt following him into the shades of the forest, along the path of their usual walk. Though the air lay heavy between straight denuded trunks, the sunlit patches moved on the ground, and raising her eyes Lena saw far above her head the flutter of the leaves, the surface shudder on the mighty limbs extended horizontally in the perfect immobility of patience. Twice Heyst looked over his shoulder at her. Behind the readiness of her answering smile there was a fund of devoted, concentrated passion, burning with the hope of a more perfect satisfaction. They passed the spot where it was their practice to turn towards the barren summit of the central hill. Heyst held steadily on his way towards the upper limit of the forest. The moment they left its shelter, a breeze enveloped them, and a great cloud, racing over the sun, threw a peculiar sombre tint over everything. Heyst pointed up a precipitous, rugged path clinging to the side of the hill. It ended in a barricade of felled trees, a primitively conceived obstacle which must have cost much labour to erect at just that spot.

"This," Heyst explained in his urbane tone, "is a barrier against the march of civilisation. The poor folk over there did not like it, as it appeared to them in the shape of my company—a great step forward, as some people used to call it with mistaken confidence. The advanced foot has been drawn back, but the barricade remains."

They went on climbing slowly. The cloud had driven over, leaving an added brightness on the face of the world.

"It's a very ridiculous thing," Heyst went on; "but then it is the product of honest fear—fear of the unknown, of the incomprehensible. It's pathetic, too, in a way. And I heartily wish, Lena, that we were on the other side of it."

"Oh, stop, stop!" she cried, seizing his arm.

The face of the barricade they were approaching had been piled up with a lot of fresh-cut branches. The leaves were still green. A gentle breeze, sweeping over the top, stirred them a little; but what had startled the girl was the discovery of several spear-blades protruding from the mass of foliage. She had made them out suddenly. They did not gleam, but she saw them with extreme distinctness, very still, very vicious to look at.

"You had better let me go forward alone, Lena," said Heyst.

She tugged persistently at his arm, but after a time, during which he never ceased to look smilingly into her terrified eyes, he ended by disengaging himself.

"It's a sign rather than a demonstration," he argued persuasively. "Just wait here a moment. I promise not to approach near enough to be stabbed."

As in a nightmare she watched Heyst go up the few yards of the path as if he never meant to stop; and she heard his voice, like voices heard in dreams, shouting unknown words in an unearthly tone. Heyst was only demanding to see Wang. He was not kept waiting very long. Recovering from the first flurry of her fright, Lena noticed a commotion in the green top-dressing of the barricade. She exhaled a sigh of relief when the spear-blades retreated out of sight, sliding inward—the horrible things! In a spot facing Heyst a pair of yellow hands parted the leaves, and a face filled the small opening—a face with very noticeable eyes. It was Wang's face, of course, with no suggestion of a body belonging to it, like those cardboard faces at which she remembered gazing as a child in the window of a certain dim shop kept by a mysterious little man in Kingsland Road. Only this face, instead of mere holes, had eyes which blinked. She could see the beating of the eyelids. The hands on each side of the face, keeping the boughs apart, also did not look as if they belonged to any real body. One of them was holding a revolver—a weapon which she recognised merely by intuition, never having seen such an object before.

She leaned her shoulders against the rock of the perpendicular hillside and kept her eyes on Heyst, with comparative composure, since the spears were not menacing him any longer. Beyond the rigid and motionless back he presented to her, she saw Wang's unreal cardboard face moving its thin lips and grimacing artificially. She was too far down the path to hear the dialogue, carried on in an ordinary voice. She waited patiently for its end. Her shoulders felt the warmth of the rock; now and then a whiff of cooler air seemed to slip down upon her head from above; the ravine at her feet, choked full of vegetation, emitted the faint, drowsy hum of insect life. Everything was very quiet. She failed to notice the exact moment when Wang's head vanished from the foliage, taking the unreal hands away with it. To her horror, the spear-blades came gliding slowly out. The very hair on her head stirred; but before she had time to cry out, Heyst, who seemed rooted to the ground, turned round abruptly and began to move towards her. His great moustaches did not quite hide an ugly but irresolute smile; and when he had come down near enough to touch her, he burst out into a harsh laugh:

"Ha, ha, ha!"

She looked at him, uncomprehending. He cut short his laugh and said curtly:

"We had better go down as we came."

She followed him into the forest. The advance of the afternoon had filled it with gloom. Far away a slant of light between the trees closed the view. All was dark beyond. Heyst stopped.

"No reason to hurry, Lena," he said in his ordinary, serenely polite tones. "We return unsuccessful. I suppose you know, or at least can guess, what was my object in coming up there?"

"No, I can't guess, dear," she said, and smiled, noticing with emotion that his breast was heaving as if he had been out of breath. Nevertheless, he tried to command his speech, pausing only a little between the words.

"No? I went up to find Wang. I went up"—he gasped again here, but this

was for the last time—"I made you come with me because I didn't like to leave you unprotected in the proximity of those fellows." Suddenly he snatched his cork helmet off his head and dashed it on the ground. "No!" he cried roughly. "All this is too unreal altogether. It isn't to be borne! I can't protect you! I haven't the power."

He glared at her for a moment, then hastened after his hat, which had bounded away to some distance. He came back looking at her face, which was very white.

"I ought to beg your pardon for these antics," he said, adjusting his hat. "A movement of childish petulance! Indeed, I feel very much like a child in my ignorance, in my powerlessness, in my want of resource, in everything except in the dreadful consciousness of some evil hanging over your head—yours!"

"It's you they are after," she murmured.

"No doubt, but unfortunately—"

"Unfortunately—what?"

"Unfortunately, I have not succeeded with Wang," he said. "I failed to move his Celestial heart—that is, if there is such a thing. He told me with horrible Chinese reasonableness that he could not let us pass the barrier, because we should be pursued. He doesn't like fights. He gave me to understand that he would shoot me with my own revolver without any sort of compunction, rather than risk a rude and distasteful contest with the strange barbarians for my sake. He has preached to the villagers. They respect him. He is the most remarkable man they have ever seen, and their kinsman by marriage. They understand his policy. And anyway only women and children and a few old fellows are left in the village. This is the season when the men are away in trading vessels. But it would have been all the same. None of them have a taste for fighting—and with white men too! They are peaceable, kindly folk and would have seen me shot with extreme satisfaction. Wang seemed to think my insistence—for I insisted, you know—very stupid and tactless. But a drowning man clutches at straws. We were talking in such Malay as we are both equal to.

"'Your fears are foolish,' I said to him.

"'Foolish? Of course I am foolish,' he replied. 'If I were a wise man, I would be a merchant with a big hong in Singapore, instead of being a mine coolie turned houseboy. But if you don't go away in time, I will shoot you before it grows too dark to take aim. Not till then, Number One, but I will do it then. Now—finish!'

"'All right,' I said. 'Finish as far as I am concerned; but you can have no objections to the *mem putih* coming over to stay with the Orang Kaya's women for a few days. I will make a present in silver for it.' Orang Kaya is the head man of the village, Lena," added Heyst.

She looked at him in astonishment.

"You wanted me to go to that village of savages?" she gasped. "You wanted me to leave you?"

"It would have given me a freer hand."

Heyst stretched out his hands and looked at them for a moment, then let them fall by his side. Indignation was expressed more in the curve of her lips than in her clear eyes, which never wavered.

"I believe Wang laughed," he went on. "He made a noise like a turkey-cock."

" 'That would be worse than anything,' he told me.

"I was taken aback. I pointed out to him that he was talking nonsense. It could not make any difference to his security where you were, because the evil men, as he calls them, did not know of your existence. I did not lie exactly, Lena, though I did stretch the truth till it cracked; but the fellow seems to have an uncanny insight. He shook his head. He assured me they knew all about you. He made a horrible grimace at me."

"It doesn't matter," said the girl. "I didn't want—I would not have gone."

Heyst raised his eyes.

"Wonderful intuition! As I continued to press him, Wang made that very remark about you. When he smiles, his face looks like a conceited death's head. It was his very last remark—that you wouldn't want to. I went away then."

She leaned back against a tree. Heyst faced her in the same attitude of leisure, as if they had done with time and all the other concerns of the earth. Suddenly, high above their heads, the roof of leaves whispered at them tumultuously and then ceased.

"That was a strange notion of yours, to send me away," she said. "Send me away? What for? Yes, what for?"

"You seem indignant," he remarked listlessly.

"To these savages, too!" she pursued. "And you think I would have gone? You can do what you like with me—but not that, not that!"

Heyst looked into the dim aisles of the forest. Everything was so still now that the very ground on which they stood seemed to exhale silence into the shade.

"Why be indignant?" he remonstrated. "It has not happened. I gave up pleading with Wang. Here we are, repulsed! Not only without power to resist the evil, but unable to make terms for ourselves with the worthy envoys, the envoys extraordinary of the world we thought we had done with for years and years. And that's bad, Lena, very bad."

"It's funny," she said thoughtfully. "Bad? I suppose it is. I don't know that it is. But do you? Do you? You talk as if you didn't believe in it."

She gazed at him earnestly.

"Do I? Ah! That's it. I don't know how to talk. I have managed to refine everything away. I've said to the Earth that bore me: 'I am I and you are a shadow.' And, by Jove, it is so! But it appears that such words cannot be uttered with impunity. Here I am on a Shadow inhabited by Shades. How helpless a man is against the Shades! How is one to intimidate, persuade, resist, assert oneself against them? I have lost all belief in realities. . . . Lena, give me your hand."

She looked at him surprised, uncomprehending.

"Your hand," he cried.

She obeyed; he seized it with avidity as if eager to raise it to his lips, but halfway up released his grasp. They looked at each other for a time.

"What's the matter, dear?" she whispered timidly.

"Neither force nor conviction," Heyst muttered wearily to himself. "How am I to meet this charmingly simple problem?"

"I am sorry," she murmured.

"And so am I," he confessed quickly. "And the bitterest of this humiliation is its complete uselessness—which I feel, I feel!"

She had never before seen him give such signs of feeling. Across his ghastly face the long moustaches flamed in the shade. He spoke suddenly:

"I wonder if I could find enough courage to creep among them in the night, with a knife, and cut their throats one after another, as they slept! I wonder—"

She was frightened by his unwonted appearance more than by the words in his mouth, and said earnestly:

"Don't you try to do such a thing! Don't you think of it!"

"I don't possess anything bigger than a penknife. As to thinking of it, Lena, there's no saying what one may think of. I don't think. Something in me thinks—something foreign to my nature. What is the matter?"

He noticed her parted lips, and the peculiar stare in her eyes, which had wandered from his face.

"There's somebody after us. I saw something white moving," she cried.

Heyst did not turn his head; he only glanced at her outstretched arm.

"No doubt we are followed; we are watched."

"I don't see anything now," she said.

"And it does not matter," Heyst went on in his ordinary voice. "Here we are in the forest. I have neither strength nor persuasion. Indeed, it's extremely difficult to be eloquent before a Chinaman's head stuck at one out of a lot of brushwood. But can we wander among these big trees indefinitely? Is this a refuge? No! What else is left to us? I did think for a moment of the mine; but even there we could not remain very long. And then that gallery is not safe. The props were too weak to begin with. Ants have been at work there—ants after the men. A death-trap, at best. One can die but once, but there are many manners of death."

The girl glanced about fearfully, in search of the watcher or follower whom she had glimpsed once among the trees; but if he existed, he had concealed himself. Nothing met her eyes but the deepening shadows of the short vistas between the living columns of the still roof of leaves. She looked at the man beside her expectantly, tenderly, with suppressed affright and a sort of awed wonder.

"I have also thought of these people's boat," Heyst went on. "We could get into that, and—only they have taken everything out of her. I have seen her oars and mast in a corner of their room. To shove off in an empty boat would be nothing but a desperate expedient, supposing even that she would drift out a good distance between the islands before the morning. It would only be a complicated manner of committing suicide—to be found dead in a boat, dead from sun and thirst. A sea mystery. I wonder who would find us! Davidson, perhaps; but Davidson passed westward ten days ago. I watched him steaming past one early morning, from the jetty."

"He must have been looking at me through his big binoculars. Perhaps, if I had raised my arm—but what did we want with Davidson then, you and I? He won't be back this way for three weeks or more, Lena. I wish I had raised my arm that morning."

"What would have been the good of it?" she sighed out.

"What good? No good, of course. We had no forebodings. This seemed to be an inexpugnable refuge, where we could live untroubled and learn to know each other."

"It's perhaps in trouble that people get to know each other," she suggested.

"Perhaps," he said indifferently. "At any rate, we would not have gone away from here with him; though I believe he would have come in eagerly enough, and ready for any service he could render. It's that fat man's nature—a delightful fellow. You would not come on the wharf that time I sent the shawl back to Mrs. Schomberg through him. He has never seen you."

"I didn't know that you wanted anybody ever to see me," she said.

He had folded his arms on his breast and hung his head.

"And I did not know that you cared to be seen as yet. A misunderstanding evidently. An honourable misunderstanding. But it does not matter now."

He raised his head after a silence.

"How gloomy this forest has grown! Yet surely the sun cannot have set already."

She looked round; and as if her eyes had just been opened, she perceived the shades of the forest surrounding her, not so much with gloom, but with a sullen, dumb, menacing hostility. Her heart sank in the engulfing stillness; at that moment she felt the nearness of death breathing on her and on the man with her. If there had been a sudden stir of leaves, the crack of a dry branch, the faintest rustle, she would have screamed aloud. But she shook off the unworthy weakness. Such as she was, a fiddle-scraping girl picked up on the very threshold of infamy, she would try to rise above herself, triumphant and humble; and then happiness would burst on her like a torrent, flinging at her feet the man whom she loved.

Heyst stirred slightly.

"We had better be getting back, Lena, since we can't stay all night in the woods—or anywhere else, for that matter. We are the slaves of this infernal surprise which has been sprung on us by—shall I say fate?—your fate, or mine."

It was the man who had broken the silence, but it was the woman who led the way. At the very edge of the forest she stopped, concealed by a tree. He joined her cautiously.

"What is it? What do you see, Lena?" he whispered.

She said that it was only a thought that had come into her head. She hesitated for a moment, giving him over her shoulder a shining gleam of her grey eyes. She wanted to know whether this trouble, this danger, this evil, whatever it was, finding them out in their retreat, was not a sort of punishment.

"Punishment?" repeated Heyst. He could not understand what she meant. When she explained, he was still more surprised. "A sort of retribution from an angry Heaven?" he said in wonder. "On us? What on earth for?"

He saw her pale face darken in the dusk. She had blushed. Her whispering flowed very fast. It was the way they lived together—that wasn't right, was it? It was a guilty life. For she had not been forced into it, driven, scared into it. No, no—she had come to him of her own free will, with her whole soul yearning unlawfully.

He was so profoundly touched that he could not speak for a moment. To conceal his trouble, he assumed his best Heystian manner.

"What? Are our visitors then messengers of morality, avengers of righteousness, agents of Providence? That's certainly an original view. How flattered they would be if they could hear you!"

"Now you are making fun of me," she said in a subdued voice which broke suddenly.

"Are you conscious of sin?" Heyst asked gravely. She made no answer. "For I am not," he added; "before Heaven, I am not!"

"You! You are different. Woman is the tempter. You took me up from pity. I threw myself at you."

"Oh, you exaggerate, you exaggerate. It was not so bad as that," he said playfully, keeping his voice steady with an effort.

He considered himself a dead man already, yet forced to pretend that he was alive for her sake, for her defence. He regretted that he had no Heaven to which he could recommend this fair, palpitating handful of ashes and dust—warm, living, sentient, his own—and exposed helplessly to insult, outrage, degradation, and infinite misery of the body.

She had averted her face from him and was still. He suddenly seized her passive hand.

"You will have it so?" he said. "Yes? Well, let us then hope for mercy together."

She shook her head without looking at him, like an abashed child.

"Remember," he went on, incorrigible with his delicate raillery, "that hope is a Christian virtue, and surely you can't want all the mercy for yourself."

Before their eyes the bungalow across the cleared ground stood bathed in a sinister light. An unexpected chill gust of wind made a noise in the tree-tops. She snatched her hand away and stepped out into the open; but before she had advanced more than three yards, she stood still and pointed to the west.

"Oh, look there!" she exclaimed.

Beyond the headland of Diamond Bay, lying black on a purple sea, great masses of cloud stood piled up and bathed in a mist of blood. A crimson crack like an open wound zigzagged between them, with a piece of dark red sun showing at the bottom. Heyst cast an indifferent glance at the ill-omened chaos of the sky.

"Thunderstorm making up. We shall hear it all night, but it won't visit us, probably. The clouds generally gather round the volcano."

She was not listening to him. Her eyes reflected the sombre and violent hues of the sunset.

"That does not look much like a sign of mercy," she said slowly, as if to herself, and hurried on, followed by Heyst. Suddenly she stopped. "I don't care. I would do more yet! And some day you'll forgive me. You'll have to forgive me!"

IX

Stumbling up the steps, as if suddenly exhausted, Lena entered the room and let herself fall on the nearest chair. Before following her, Heyst took a survey of the surroundings from the verandah. It was a complete solitude. There was

nothing in the aspect of this familiar scene to tell him that he and the girl were not as completely alone as they had been in the early days of their common life on this abandoned spot, with only Wang discreetly materialising from time to time and the uncomplaining memory of Morrison to keep them company.

After the cold gust of wind there was an absolute stillness of the air. The thunder-charged mass hung unbroken beyond the low, ink-black headland, darkening the twilight. By contrast, the sky at the zenith displayed pellucid clearness, the sheen of a delicate glass bubble which the merest movement of air might shatter. A little to the left, between the black masses of the headland and of the forest, the volcano, a feather of smoke by day and a cigar-glow at night, took its first fiery expanding breath of the evening. Above it a reddish star came out like an expelled spark from the fiery bosom of the earth, enchanted into permanency by the mysterious spell of frozen spaces.

In front of Heyst the forest, already full of the deepest shades, stood like a wall. But he lingered, watching its edge, especially where it ended at the line of bushes, masking the land end of the jetty. Since the girl had spoken of catching a glimpse of something white among the trees, he believed pretty firmly that they had been followed in their excursion up the mountain by Mr. Jones's secretary. No doubt the fellow had watched them out of the forest, and now, unless he took the trouble to go back some distance and fetch a considerable circuit inland over the clearing, he was bound to walk out into the open space before the bungalows. Heyst did, indeed, imagine at one time some movement between the trees, lost as soon as perceived. He stared patiently, but nothing more happened. After all, why should he trouble about these people's actions? Why this stupid concern for the preliminaries, since, when the issue was joined, it would find him disarmed and shrinking from the ugliness and degradation of it?

He turned and entered the room. Deep dusk reigned in there already, Lena, near the door, did not move or speak. The sheen of the white tablecloth was very obtrusive. The brute these two vagabonds had tamed had entered on its service while Heyst and Lena were away. The table was laid. Heyst walked up and down the room several times. The girl remained without sound or movement on the chair. But when Heyst, placing the two silver candelabra on the table, struck a match to light the candles, she got up suddenly and went into the bedroom. She came out again almost immediately, having taken off her hat. Heyst looked at her over his shoulder.

"What's the good of shirking the evil hour? I've lighted these candles for a sign of our return. After all, we might not have been watched—while returning, I mean. Of course we were seen leaving the house."

The girl sat down again. The great wealth of her hair looked very dark above her colourless face. She raised her eyes, glistening softly in the light with a sort of unreadable appeal, with a strange effect of unseeing innocence.

"Yes," said Heyst across the table, the fingertips of one hand resting on the immaculate cloth. "A creature with an antediluvian lower jaw, hairy like a mastodon, and formed like a prehistoric ape, has laid this table. Are you awake, Lena? Am I? I would pinch myself, only I know that nothing would do away with this dream. Three covers. You know it is the shorter of the two

who's coming—the gentleman who, in the play of his shoulders as he walks, and in his facial structure, recalls a jaguar. Ah, you don't know what a jaguar is? But you have had a good look at these two. It's the short one, you know, who's to be our guest."

She made a sign with her head that she knew. Heyst's insistence brought Ricardo vividly before her mental vision. A sudden languor, like the physical echo of her struggle with the man, paralysed all her limbs. She lay still in the chair, feeling very frightened at this phenomenon—ready to pray aloud for strength.

Heyst had started to pace the room.

"Our guest! There is a proverb—in Russia, I believe—that when a guest enters the house, God enters the house. The sacred virtue of hospitality! But it leads one into trouble as well as any other."

The girl unexpectedly got up from the chair, swaying her supple figure and stretching her arms above her head. He stopped to look at her curiously, paused, and then went on:

"I venture to think that God has nothing to do with such a hospitality and with such a guest!"

She had jumped to her feet to react against the numbness, to discover whether her body would obey her will. It did. She could stand up, and she could move her arms freely. Though no physiologist, she concluded that all that sudden numbness was in her head, not in her limbs. Her fears assuaged, she thanked God for it mentally, and to Heyst murmured a protest:

"Oh, yes! He's got to do with everything—every little thing. Nothing can happen—"

"Yes," he said hastily, "one of the two sparrows can't be struck to the ground —you are thinking of that." The habitual playful smile faded on the kindly lips under the martial moustache. "Ah, you remember what you have been told —as a child—on Sundays."

"Yes, I do remember." She sank into the chair again. "It was the only decent bit of time I ever had when I was a kid, with our landlady's two girls, you know."

"I wonder, Lena," Heyst said, with a return of his urbane playfulness, "whether you are just a little child, or whether you represent something as old as the world."

She surprised Heyst by saying dreamily:

"Well—and what about you?"

"I? I date later—much later. I can't call myself a child, but I am so recent that I may call myself a man of the last hour—or is it the hour before last? I have been out of it so long that I am not certain how far the hands of the clock have moved since—since—"

He glanced at the portrait of his father, exactly above the head of the girl, and as it were ignoring her in its painted austerity of feeling. He did not finish the sentence; but he did not remain silent for long.

"Only what must be avoided are fallacious inferences, my dear Lena—especially at this hour."

"Now you are making fun of me again," she said without looking up.

"Am I?" he cried. "Making fun? No, giving warning. Hang it all, whatever truth people told you in the old days, there is also this one—that sparrows do fall to the ground, that they are brought down to the ground. This is no vain assertion, but a fact. That's why"—again his tone changed, while he picked up a table knife and let it fall disdainfully—"that's why I wish these wretched round knives had some edge on them. Absolute rubbish—neither edge, point, nor substance. I believe one of these forks would make a better weapon at a pinch. But can I go about with a fork in my pocket?" He gnashed his teeth with a rage very real, and yet comic.

"There used to be a carver here, but it was broken and thrown away a long time ago. Nothing much to carve here. It would have made a noble weapon, no doubt; but—"

He stopped. The girl sat very quiet, with downcast eyes. As he kept silent for some time, she looked up and said thoughtfully:

"Yes, a knife—it's a knife that you would want, wouldn't you, in case, in case—"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"There must be a crowbar or two in the sheds; but I have given up all the keys together. And then, do you see me walking about with a crowbar in my hand? Ha, ha! And besides, that edifying sight alone might start the trouble for all I know. In truth, why has it not started yet?"

"Perhaps they are afraid of you," she whispered, looking down again.

"By Jove, it looks like it," he assented meditatively. "They do seem to hang back for some reason. Is that reason prudence, or downright fear, or perhaps the leisurely method of certitude?"

Out in the black night, not very far from the bungalow, resounded a loud and prolonged whistle. Lena's hands grasped the sides of the chair, but she made no movement. Heyst started, and turned his face away from the door.

The startling sound had died away.

"Whistles, yells, omens, signals, portents—what do they matter?" he said. "But what about that crowbar? Suppose I had it! Could I stand in ambush at the side of the door—this door—and smash the first protruding head, scatter blood and brains over the floor, over these walls, and then run stealthily to the other door to do the same thing—and repeat the performance for a third time, perhaps? Could I? On suspicion, without compunction, with a calm and determined purpose? No, it is not in me. I date too late. Would you like to see me attempt this thing while that mysterious prestige of mine lasts—or their not less mysterious hesitation?"

"No, no!" she whispered ardently, as if compelled to speak by his eyes fixed on her face. "No, it's a knife you want to defend yourself with—to defend—there will be time—"

"And who knows if it isn't really my duty?" he began again, as if he had not heard her disjointed words at all. "It may be—my duty to you, to myself. For why should I put up with the humiliation of their secret menaces? Do you know what the world would say?"

He emitted a low laugh, which struck her with terror. She would have got

up, but he stooped so low over her that she could not move without first pushing him away.

"It would say, Lena, that I—that Swede—after luring my friend and partner to his death from mere greed of money, have murdered these unoffending shipwrecked strangers from sheer funk. That would be the story whispered—perhaps shouted—certainly spread out, and believed—and *believed,* my dear Lena!"

"Who would believe such awful things?"

"Perhaps you wouldn't—not at first, at any rate; but the power of calumny grows with time. It's insidious and penetrating. It can even destroy one's faith in oneself—dry-rot the soul."

All at once her eyes leaped to the door and remained fixed, stony, a little enlarged. Turning his head, Heyst beheld the figure of Ricardo framed in the doorway. For a moment none of the three moved; then, looking from the newcomer to the girl in the chair, Heyst formulated a sardonic introduction.

"Mr. Ricardo, my dear."

Her head drooped a little. Ricardo's hand went up to his moustache. His voice exploded in the room.

"At your service, ma'am!"

He stepped in, taking his hat off with a flourish, and dropping it carelessly on a chair near the door.

"At your service," he repeated, in quite another tone. "I was made aware there was a lady about, by that Pedro of ours; only I didn't know I should have the privilege of seeing you tonight, ma'am."

Lena and Heyst looked at him covertly, but he, with a vague gaze avoiding them both, looked at nothing, seeming to pursue some point in space.

"Had a pleasant walk?" he asked suddenly.

"Yes. And you?" returned Heyst, who had managed to catch his glance.

"I? I haven't been a yard away from the governor this afternoon till I started for here." The genuineness of the accent surprised Heyst, without convincing him of the truth of the words. "Why do you ask?" pursued Ricardo with every inflexion of perfect candour.

"You might have wished to explore the island a little," said Heyst, studying the man, who, to render him justice, did not try to free his captured gaze. "I may remind you that it wouldn't be a perfectly safe proceeding."

Ricardo presented a picture of innocence.

"Oh, yes!—meaning that Chink that has run away from you. He ain't much!"

"He has a revolver," observed Heyst meaningly.

"Well, and you have a revolver, too," Mr. Ricardo argued unexpectedly. "I don't worry myself about that."

"I? That's different. I am not afraid of you," Heyst made answer after a short pause.

"Of me?"

"Of all of you."

"You have a queer way of putting things," began Ricardo.

At that moment the door on the compound side of the house came open

with some noise, and Pedro entered, pressing the edge of a loaded tray to his breast. His big, hairy head rolled a little, his feet fell in front of each other with a short, hard thump on the floor. The arrival changed the current of Ricardo's thought, perhaps, but certainly of his speech.

"You heard me whistling a little while ago outside? That was to give him a hint, as I came along, that it was time to bring in the dinner; and here it is."

Lena rose and passed to the right of Ricardo, who lowered his glance for a moment. They sat down at the table. The enormous gorilla back of Pedro swayed out through the door.

"Extraordinary strong brute, ma'am," said Ricardo. He had a propensity to talk about "his Pedro," as some men will talk of their dog. "He ain't pretty, though. No, he ain't pretty. And he has got to be kept under. I am his keeper, as it might be. The governor don't trouble his head much about dee-tails. All that's left to Martin. Martin, that's me, ma'am."

Heyst saw the girl's eyes turn towards Mr. Jones's secretary and rest blankly on his face. Ricardo, however, looked vaguely into space, and, with faint flickers of a smile about his lips, made conversation indefatigably against the silence of his entertainers. He boasted largely of his long association with Mr. Jones—over four years now, he said. Then, glancing rapidly at Heyst:

"You can see at once he's a gentleman, can't you?"

"You people," Heyst said, his habitual playful intonation tinged with gloom, "are divorced from all reality in my eyes."

Ricardo received this speech as if he had been expecting to hear those very words, or else did not mind at all what Heyst might say. He muttered an absent-minded "Ay, ay," played with a bit of biscuit, sighed, and said, with a peculiar stare which did not seem to carry any distance, but to stop short at a point in the air very near his face:

"Anybody can see at once *you* are one. You and the governor ought to understand each other. He expects to see you tonight. The governor isn't well, and we've got to think of getting away from here."

While saying these words he turned himself full towards Lena, but without any marked expression. Leaning back with folded arms, the girl stared before her as if she had been alone in the room. But under that aspect of almost vacant unconcern the perils and emotion that had entered into her life warmed her heart, exalted her mind with a sense of an inconceivable intensity of existence.

"Really? Thinking of going away from here?" Heyst murmured.

"The best of friends must part," Ricardo pronounced slowly. "And, as long as they part friends, there's no harm done. We two are used to be on the move. You, I understand, prefer to stick in one place."

It was obvious that all this was being said merely for the sake of talking, and that Ricardo's mind was concentrated on some purpose unconnected with the words that were coming out of his mouth.

"I should like to know," Heyst asked with incisive politeness, "how you have come to understand this or anything else about me? As far as I can remember, I've made you no confidences."

Ricardo, gazing comfortably into space out of the back of his chair—for some time all three had given up any pretence of eating—answered abstractedly:

"Any fellow might have guessed it." He sat up suddenly, and uncovered all his teeth in a grin of extraordinary ferocity, which was belied by the persistent amiability of his tone. "The governor will be the man to tell you something about that. I wish you would say you would see my governor. He's the one who does all our talking. Let me take you to him this evening. He ain't at all well; and he can't make up his mind to go away without having a talk with you."

Heyst, looking up, met Lena's eyes. Their expression of candour seemed to hide some struggling intention. Her head, he fancied, had made an imperceptible affirmative movement. Why? What reason could she have? Was it the prompting of some obscure instinct? Or was it simply a delusion of his own senses? But in this strange complication invading the quietude of his life, in his state of doubt and disdain and almost of despair with which he looked at himself, he would let a delusive appearance guide him through a darkness so dense that it made for indifference.

"Well, suppose I *do* say so?"

Ricardo did not conceal his satisfaction, which for a moment interested Heyst.

"It can't be my life they are after," he said to himself. "What good could it be to them?"

He looked across the table at the girl. What did it matter whether she had nodded or not? As always when looking into her unconscious eyes, he tasted something like the dregs of tender pity. He had decided to go. Her nod, imaginary or not imaginary, advice or illusion, had tipped the scale. He reflected that Ricardo's invitation could scarcely be anything in the nature of a trap. It would have been too absurd. Why carry subtly into a trap someone already bound hand and foot, as it were?

All this time he had been looking fixedly at the girl he called Lena. In the submissive quietness of her being, which had been her attitude ever since they had begun their life on the island, she remained as secret as ever. Heyst got up abruptly, with a smile of such enigmatic and despairing character that Mr. Secretary Ricardo, whose abstract gaze had an all-round efficiency, made a slight crouching start, as if to dive under the table for his leg-knife—a start that was repressed as soon as begun. He had expected Heyst to spring on him or draw a revolver, because he created for himself a vision of him in his own image. Instead of doing either of these obvious things, Heyst walked across the room, opened the door, and put his head through it to look out into the compound.

As soon as his back was turned, Ricardo's hand sought the girl's arm under the table. He was not looking at her, but she felt the groping, nervous touch of his search, felt suddenly the grip of his fingers above her wrist. He leaned forward a little; still he dared not look at her. His hard stare remained fastened on Heyst's back. In an extremely low hiss, his fixed idea of argument found expression scathingly:

"See! He's no good. He's not the man for you!"

He glanced at her at last. Her lips moved a little, and he was awed by that movement without a sound. Next instant the hard grasp of his fingers vanished from her arm. Heyst had shut the door. On his way back to the table, he crossed the path of the girl they had called Alma—she didn't know why—also Magdalen, whose mind had remained so long in doubt as to the reason of her own existence. She no longer wondered at that bitter riddle, since her heart found its solution in a blinding, hot glow of passionate purpose.

X

She passed by Heyst as if she had indeed been blinded by some secret, lurid, and consuming glare into which she was about to enter. The curtain of the bedroom door fell behind her into rigid folds. Ricardo's vacant gaze seemed to be watching the dancing flight of a fly in mid air.

"Extra dark outside, ain't it?" he muttered.

"Not so dark but that I could see that man of yours prowling about there," said Heyst in measured tones.

"What—Pedro? He's scarcely a man, you know; or else I wouldn't be so fond of him as I am."

"Very well. Let's call him your worthy associate."

"Ay! Worthy enough for what we want of him. A great stand-by is Peter in a scrimmage. A growl and a bite—oh, my! And you don't want him about?"

"I don't."

"You want him out of the way?" insisted Ricardo with an affectation of incredulity which Heyst accepted calmly, though the air in the room seemed to grow more oppressive with every word spoken.

"That's it. I do want him out of the way." He forced himself to speak equably.

"Lor'! That's no great matter. Pedro's not much use here. The business my governor's after can be settled by ten minutes' rational talk with—with another gentleman. Quiet talk!"

He looked up suddenly with hard, phosphorescent eyes. Heyst didn't move a muscle. Ricardo congratulated himself on having left his revolver behind. He was so exasperated that he didn't know what he might have done. He said at last:

"You want poor, harmless Peter out of the way before you let me take you to see the governor—is that it?"

"Yes, that is it."

"H'm! One can see," Ricardo said with hidden venom, "that you are a gentleman; but all that gentlemanly fancifulness is apt to turn sour on a plain man's stomach. However—you'll have to pardon me."

He put his fingers into his mouth and let out a whistle which seemed to drive a thin, sharp shaft of air solidly against one's nearest ear-drum. Though he greatly enjoyed Heyst's involuntary grimace, he sat perfectly stolid waiting for the effect of the call.

It brought Pedro in with an extraordinary, uncouth, primeval impetuosity. The door flew open with a clatter, and the wild figure it disclosed seemed anxious to devastate the room in leaps and bounds; but Ricardo raised his open

palm, and the creature came in quietly. His enormous half-closed paws swung to and fro a little in front of his bowed trunk as he walked. Ricardo looked on truculently.

"You go to the boat—understand? Go now!"

The little red eyes of the tame monster blinked with painful attention in the mass of hair.

"Well? Why don't you get? Forgot human speech, eh? Don't you know any longer what a boat is?"

"*Si*—boat," the creature stammered out doubtfully.

"Well, go there—the boat at the jetty. March off to it and sit there, lie down there, do anything but go to sleep there—till you hear my call, and then fly here. Them's your orders. March! Get, *vamos!* No, not that way—out through the front door. No sulks!"

Pedro obeyed with uncouth alacrity. When he had gone, the gleam of pitiless savagery went out of Ricardo's yellow eyes, and his physiognomy took on, for the first time that evening, the expression of a domestic cat which is being noticed.

"You can watch him right into the bushes, if you like. Too dark, eh? Why not go with him to the very spot, then?"

Heyst made a gesture of vague protest.

"There's nothing to assure me that he will stay there. I have no doubt of his going; but it's an act without a guarantee."

"There you are!" Ricardo shrugged his shoulders philosophically. "Can't be helped. Short of shooting our Pedro, nobody can make absolutely sure of his staying in the same place longer than he has a mind to; but I tell you, he lives in holy terror of my temper. That's why I put on my sudden-death air when I talk to him. And yet I wouldn't shoot him—not I, unless in such a fit of rage as would make a man shoot his favourite dog. Look here, sir! This deal is on the square. I didn't tip him a wink to do anything else. He won't budge from the jetty. Are you coming along now, sir?"

A short silence ensued. Ricardo's jaws were working ominously under his skin. His eyes glided voluptuously here and there, cruel and dreamy. Heyst checked a sudden movement, reflected for a while, then said:

"You must wait a little."

"Wait a little! Wait a little! What does he think a fellow is—a graven image?" grumbled Ricardo half audibly.

Heyst went into the bedroom, and shut the door after him with a bang. Coming from the light, he could not see a thing in there at first; yet he received the impression of the girl getting up from the floor. On the less opaque darkness of the shutter-hole, her head detached itself suddenly, very faint, a mere hint of a round, dark shape without a face.

"I am going, Lena. I am going to confront these scoundrels." He was surprised to feel two arms falling on his shoulders. "I thought that you—" he began.

"Yes, yes!" the girl whispered hastily.

She neither clung to him, nor yet did she try to draw him to her. Her hands grasped his shoulders, and she seemed to him to be staring into his

face in the dark. And now he could see something of her face, too—an oval without features—and faintly distinguish her person, in the blackness, a form without definite lines.

"You have a black dress here, haven't you, Lena?" he asked, speaking rapidly, and so low that she could just hear him.

"Yes—an old thing."

"Very good. Put it on at once."

"But why?"

"Not for mourning!" There was something peremptory in the slightly ironic murmur. "Can you find it and get into it in the dark?"

She could. She would try. He waited, very still. He could imagine her movements over there at the far end of the room; but his eyes, accustomed now to the darkness, had lost her completely. When she spoke, her voice surprised him by its nearness. She had done what he had told her to do, and had approached him, invisible.

"Good! Where's that piece of purple veil I've seen lying about?" he asked.

There was no answer, only a slight rustle.

"Where is it?" he repeated impatiently.

Her unexpected breath was on his cheek.

"In my hands."

"Capital! Listen, Lena. As soon as I leave the bungalow with that horrible scoundrel, you slip out at the back—instantly, lose no time!—and run round into the forest. That will be your time, while we are walking away, and I am sure he won't give me the slip. Run into the forest behind the fringe of bushes between the big trees. You will know, surely, how to find a place in full view of the front door. I fear for you; but in this black dress, with most of your face muffled up in that dark veil, I defy anybody to find you there before daylight. Wait in the forest till the table is pushed into full view of the doorway, and you see three candles out of four blown out and one relighted—or, should the lights be put out here while you watch them, wait till three candles are lighted and then two put out. At either of these signals run back as hard as you can, for it will mean that I am waiting for you here."

While he was speaking, the girl had sought and seized one of his hands. She did not press it; she held it loosely, as it were timidly, caressingly. It was no grasp; it was a mere contact, as if only to make sure that he was there, that he was real and no mere darker shadow in the obscurity. The warmth of her hand gave Heyst a strange, intimate sensation of all her person. He had to fight down a new sort of emotion, which almost unmanned him. He went on, whispering sternly:

"But if you see no such signals, don't let anything—fear, curiosity, despair, or hope—entice you back to this house; and with the first sign of the dawn steal away along the edge of the clearing till you strike the path. Wait no longer, because I shall probably be dead."

The murmur of the word "Never!" floated into his ear as if it had formed itself in the air.

"You know the path," he continued. "Make your way to the barricade. Go to Wang—yes, to Wang. Let nothing stop you!" It seemed to him that the

girl's hand trembled a little. "The worst he can do to you is to shoot you; but he won't. I really think he won't, if I am not there. Stay with the villagers, with the wild people, and fear nothing. They will be more awed by you than you can be frightened of them. Davidson's bound to turn up before very long. Keep a look-out for a passing steamer. Think of some sort of signal to call him."

She made no answer. The sense of the heavy, brooding silence in the outside world seemed to enter and fill the room—the oppressive infinity of it, without breath, without light. It was as if the heart of hearts had ceased to beat and the end of all things had come.

"Have you understood? You are to run out of the house at once," Heyst whispered urgently.

She lifted his hand to her lips and let it go. He was startled.

"Lena!" he cried out under his breath.

She was gone from his side. He dared not trust himself—no, not even to the extent of a tender word.

Turning to go out, he heard a thud somewhere in the house. To open the door, he had first to lift the curtain; he did so with his face over his shoulder. The merest trickle of light, coming through the keyhole and one or two cracks, was enough for his eyes to see her plainly, all black, down on her knees, with her head and arms flung on the foot of the bed—all black in the desolation of a mourning sinner. What was this? A suspicion that there were everywhere more things than he could understand crossed Heyst's mind. Her arm, detached from the bed, motioned him away. He obeyed, and went out, full of disquiet.

The curtain behind him had not ceased to tremble when she was up on her feet, close against it, listening for sounds, for words, in a stooping, tragic attitude of stealthy attention, one hand clutching at her breast as if to compress, to make less loud the beating of her heart. Heyst had caught Mr. Jones's secretary in the contemplation of his closed writing-desk. Ricardo might have been meditating how to break into it; but when he turned about suddenly, he showed so distorted a face that it made Heyst pause in wonder at the upturned whites of the eyes, which were blinking horribly, as if the man were inwardly convulsed.

"I thought you were never coming," Ricardo mumbled.

"I didn't know you were pressed for time. Even if your going away depends on this conversation, as you say, I doubt if you are the men to put to sea on such a night as this," said Heyst, motioning Ricardo to precede him out of the house.

With feline undulations of hip and shoulder, the secretary left the room at once. There was something cruel in the absolute dumbness of the night. The great cloud covering half the sky hung right against one, like an enormous curtain hiding menacing preparations of violence. As the feet of the two men touched the ground, a rumble came from behind it, preceded by a swift, mysterious gleam of light on the waters of the bay.

"Ha!" said Ricardo. "It begins."

"It may be nothing in the end," observed Heyst, stepping along steadily.

"No! Let it come!" Ricardo said viciously. "I am in the humour for it!"

By the time the two men had reached the other bungalow, the far-off modulated rumble growled incessantly, while pale lightning in waves of cold fire flooded and ran off the island in rapid succession. Ricardo, unexpectedly, dashed ahead up the steps and put his head through the doorway.

"Here he is, governor! Keep him with you as long as you can—till you hear me whistle. I am on the track."

He flung these words into the room with inconceivable speed, and stood aside to let the visitor pass through the doorway; but he had to wait an appreciable moment, because Heyst, seeing his purpose, had scornfully slowed his pace. When Heyst entered the room it was with a smile, the Heyst smile, lurking under his martial moustache.

XI

Two candles were burning on the stand-up desk. Mr. Jones, tightly enfolded in an old but gorgeous blue silk dressing-gown, kept his elbows close against his sides and his hands deeply plunged into the extraordinarily deep pockets of the garment. The costume accentuated his emaciation. He resembled a painted pole leaning against the edge of the desk, with a dried head of dubious distinction stuck on the top of it. Ricardo lounged in the doorway. Indifferent, in appearance, to what was going on, he was biding his time. At a given moment, between two flickers of lightning, he melted out of his frame into the outer air. His disappearance was observed on the instant by Mr. Jones, who abandoned his nonchalant immobility against the desk, and made a few steps calculated to put him between Heyst and the doorway.

"It's awfully close," he remarked.

Heyst, in the middle of the room, had made up his mind to speak plainly.

"We haven't met to talk about the weather. You favoured me earlier in the day with a rather cryptic phrase about yourself. 'I am he that is,' you said. What does that mean?"

Mr. Jones, without looking at Heyst, continued his absent-minded movements till, attaining the desired position, he brought his shoulders with a thump against the wall near the door, and raised his head. In the emotion of the decisive moment his haggard face glistened with perspiration. Drops ran down his hollow cheeks and almost blinded the spectral eyes in their bony caverns.

"It means that I am a person to be reckoned with. No—stop! Don't put your hand into your pocket—don't."

His voice had a wild, unexpected shrillness. Heyst started, and there ensued a moment of suspended animation, during which the thunder's deep bass muttered distantly and the doorway to the right of Mr. Jones flickered with bluish light. At last Heyst shrugged his shoulders; he even looked at his hand. He didn't put it in his pocket, however. Mr. Jones, glued against the wall, watched him raise both his hands to the ends of his horizontal moustaches, and answered the note of interrogation in his steady eyes.

"A matter of prudence," said Mr. Jones in his natural hollow tones, and with a face of deathlike composure. "A man of your free life has surely perceived that. You are a much-talked-about man, Mr. Heyst—and though as far as I

understand, you are accustomed to employ the subtler weapons of intelligence, still I can't afford to take any risks of the—er—grosser methods. I am not unscrupulous enough to be a match for you in the use of intelligence; but I assure you, Mr. Heyst, that in the other way you are no match for me. I have you covered at this very moment. You have been covered ever since you entered this room. Yes—from my pocket."

During this harangue Heyst looked deliberately over his shoulder, stepped back a pace, and sat down on the end of the camp bedstead. Leaning his elbow on one knee, he laid his cheek in the palm of his hand and seemed to meditate on what he should say next. Mr. Jones, planted against the wall, was obviously waiting for some sort of overture. As nothing came, he resolved to speak himself; but he hesitated. For, though he considered that the most difficult step had been taken, he said to himself that every stage of progress required great caution, lest the man, in Ricardo's phraseology, should "start to prance"—which would be most inconvenient. He fell back on a previous statement:

"And I am a person to be reckoned with."

The other man went on looking at the floor, as if he were alone in the room. There was a pause.

"You have heard of me, then?" Heyst said at length, looking up.

"I should think so! We have been staying at Schomberg's hotel."

"Schom—" Heyst choked on the word.

"What's the matter, Mr. Heyst?"

"Nothing. Nausea," Heyst said resignedly. He resumed his former attitude of meditative indifference. "What is this reckoning you are talking about?" he asked after a time, in the quietest possible tone. "I don't know you."

"It's obvious that we belong to the same—social sphere," began Mr. Jones with languid irony. Inwardly he was as watchful as he could be. "Something has driven you out—the originality of your ideas, perhaps. Or your tastes."

Mr. Jones indulged in one of his ghastly smiles. In repose his features had a curious character of evil, exhausted austerity; but when he smiled, the whole mask took on an unpleasantly infantile expression. A recrudescence of the rolling thunder invaded the room loudly, and passed into silence.

"You are not taking this very well," observed Mr. Jones. This was what he said, but as a matter of fact he thought that the business was shaping quite satisfactorily. The man, he said to himself, had no stomach for a fight. Aloud he continued: "Come! You can't expect to have it always your own way. You are a man of the world."

"And you?" Heyst interrupted him unexpectedly. "How do you define yourself?"

"I, my dear sir? In one way I am—yes, I am the world itself, come to pay you a visit. In another sense I am an outcast—almost an outlaw. If you prefer a less materialistic view, I am a sort of fate—the retribution that waits its time."

"I wish to goodness you were the commonest sort of ruffian!" said Heyst, raising his equable gaze to Mr. Jones. "One would be able to talk to you straight, then, and hope for some humanity. As it is—"

"I dislike violence and ferocity of every sort as much as you do," Mr. Jones

declared, looking very languid as he leaned against the wall, but speaking fairly loud. "You can ask my Martin if it is not so. This, Mr. Heyst, is a soft age. It is also an age without prejudices. I've heard that you are free from them yourself. You mustn't be shocked if I tell you plainly that we are after your money—or I am, if you prefer to make me alone responsible. Pedro, of course, knows no more of it than any other animal would. Ricardo is of the faithful retainer class—absolutely identified with all my ideas, wishes, and even whims."

Mr. Jones pulled his left hand out of his pocket, got a handkerchief out of another, and began to wipe the perspiration from his forehead, neck and chin. The excitement from which he suffered made his breathing visible. In his long dressing-gown he had the air of a convalescent invalid who had imprudently overtaxed his strength. Heyst, broad-shouldered, robust, watched the operation from the end of the camp bedstead, very calm, his hands on his knees.

"And by the by," he asked, "where is he now, that henchman of yours? Breaking into my desk?"

"That would be crude. Still, crudeness is one of life's conditions." There was the slightest flavour of banter in the tone of Ricardo's governor. "Conceivable, but unlikely. Martin is a little crude; but you are not, Mr. Heyst. To tell you the truth, I don't know precisely where he is. He has been a little mysterious of late; but he has my confidence. No, don't get up, Mr. Heyst!"

The viciousness of his spectral face was indescribable. Heyst, who had moved a little, was surprised by the disclosure.

"It was not my intention," he said.

"Pray remain seated," Mr. Jones insisted in a languid voice, but with a very determined glitter in his black eye-caverns.

"If you were more observant," said Heyst with dispassionate contempt, "you would have known before I had been five minutes in the room that I had no weapon of any sort on me."

"Possibly; but pray keep your hands still. They are very well where they are. This is too big an affair for me to take any risks."

"Big? Too big?" Heyst repeated with genuine surprise. "Good Heavens! Whatever you are looking for, there's very little of it here—very little of anything."

"You would naturally say so, but that's not what we have heard," retorted Mr. Jones quickly, with a grin so ghastly that it was impossible to think it voluntary.

Heyst's face had grown very gloomy. He knitted his brows.

"What have you heard?" he asked.

"A lot, Mr. Heyst—a lot," affirmed Mr. Jones. He was trying to recover his manner of languid superiority. "We have heard, for instance, of a certain Mr. Morrison, once your partner."

Heyst could not repress a slight movement.

"Aha!" said Mr. Jones, with a sort of ghostly glee on his face.

The muffled thunder resembled the echo of a distant cannonade below the horizon, and the two men seemed to be listening to it in sullen silence.

"This diabolical calumny will end in actually and literally taking my life from me," thought Heyst.

Then, suddenly, he laughed. Portentously spectral, Mr. Jones frowned at the sound.

"Laugh as much as you please," he said. "I, who have been hounded out from society by a lot of highly moral souls, can't see anything funny in that story. But here we are, and you will now have to pay for your fun, Mr. Heyst."

"You have heard a lot of ugly lies," observed Heyst. "Take my word for it."

"You would say so, of course—very natural. As a matter of fact, I haven't heard very much. Strictly speaking, it was Martin. He collects information, and so on. You don't suppose I would talk to that Schomberg animal more than I could help? It was Martin whom he took into his confidence."

"The stupidity of that creature is so great that it becomes formidable," Heyst said, as if speaking to himself.

Involuntarily, his mind turned to the girl, wandering in the forest, alone and terrified. Would he ever see her again? At that thought he nearly lost his self-possession. But the idea that if she followed his instructions those men were not likely to find her, steadied him a little. They did not know that the island had any inhabitants; and he himself once disposed of, they would be too anxious to get away to waste time hunting for a vanished girl.

All this passed through Heyst's mind in a flash, as men think in moments of danger. He looked speculatively at Mr. Jones, who, of course, had never for a moment taken his eyes from his intended victim. And the conviction came to Heyst that this outlaw from the higher spheres was an absolutely hard and pitiless scoundrel.

Mr. Jones's voice made him start.

"It would be useless, for instance, to tell me that your Chinaman has run off with your money. A man living alone with a Chinaman on an island takes care to conceal property of that kind so well that the devil himself—"

"Certainly," Heyst muttered.

Again, with his left hand, Mr. Jones mopped his frontal bone, his stalk-like neck, his razor jaws, his fleshless chin. Again his voice faltered and his aspect became still more gruesomely malevolent, as of a wicked and pitiless corpse.

"I see what you mean," he cried, "but you mustn't put too much trust in your ingenuity. You don't strike me as a very ingenious person, Mr. Heyst. Neither am I. My talents lie another way. But Martin—"

"Who is now engaged in rifling my desk," interjected Heyst.

"I don't think so. What I was going to say is that Martin is much cleverer than a Chinaman. Do you believe in racial superiority, Mr. Heyst? I do, firmly. Martin is great at ferreting out such secrets as yours, for instance."

"Secrets like mine!" repeated Heyst bitterly. "Well, I wish him joy of all he can ferret out!"

"That's very kind of you," remarked Mr. Jones. He was beginning to be anxious for Martin's return. Of iron self-possession at the gaming-table, fear-

less in a sudden affray, he found that this rather special kind of work was telling on his nerves. "Keep still as you are!" he cried sharply.

"I've told you I am not armed," said Heyst, folding his arms on his breast.

"I am really inclined to believe that you are not," admitted Mr. Jones seriously. "Strange!" he mused aloud, the caverns of his eyes turned upon Heyst. Then briskly: "But my object is to keep you in this room. Don't provoke me, by some unguarded movement, to smash your knee or do something definite of that sort." He passed his tongue over his lips, which were dry and black, while his forehead glistened with moisture. "I don't know if it wouldn't be better to do it at once!"

"He who deliberates is lost," said Heyst with grave mockery.

Mr. Jones disregarded the remark. He had the air of communing with himself.

"Physically I am no match for you," he said slowly, his black gaze fixed upon the man sitting on the end of the bed. "You could spring—"

"Are you trying to frighten yourself?" asked Heyst abruptly. "You don't seem to have quite enough pluck for your business. Why don't you do it at once?"

Mr. Jones, taking violent offence, snorted like a savage skeleton.

"Strange as it may seem to you, it is because of my origin, my breeding, my traditions, my early associations, and such-like trifles. Not everybody can divest himself of the prejudices of a gentleman as easily as you have done, Mr. Heyst. But don't worry about my pluck. If you were to make a clean spring at me, you would receive in mid air, so to speak, something that would make you perfectly harmless by the time you landed. No, don't misapprehend us, Mr. Heyst. We are—er—adequate bandits; and we are after the fruit of your labours as a—er—successful swindler. It's the way of the world—gorge and disgorge!"

He leaned wearily the back of his head against the wall. His vitality seemed exhausted. Even his sunken eyelids drooped within the bony sockets. Only his thin, waspish, beautifully pencilled eyebrows, drawn together a little, suggested the will and the power to sting—something vicious, unconquerable, and deadly.

"Fruits! Swindler!" repeated Heyst, without heat, almost without contempt. "You are giving yourself no end of trouble, you and your faithful henchman, to crack an empty nut. There are no fruits here, as you imagine. There are a few sovereigns, which you may have if you like; and since you have called yourself a bandit—"

"Yaas!" drawled Mr. Jones. "That, rather than a swindler. Open warfare at least!"

"Very good! Only let me tell you that there were never in the world two more deluded bandits—never!"

Heyst uttered these words with such energy that Mr. Jones, stiffening up, seemed to become thinner and taller in his metallic blue dressing-gown against the whitewashed wall.

"Fooled by a silly rascally innkeeper!" Heyst went on. "Talked over like a pair of children with a promise of sweets!"

"I didn't talk with that disgusting animal," muttered Mr. Jones sullenly; "but he convinced Martin, who is no fool."

"I should think he wanted very much to be convinced," said Heyst, with the courteous intonation so well known in the islands. "I don't want to disturb your touching trust in your—your follower, but he must be the most credulous brigand in existence. What do you imagine? If the story of my riches were ever so true, do you think Schomberg would have imparted it to you from sheer altruism? Is that the way of the world, Mr. Jones?"

For a moment the lower jaw of Ricardo's gentleman dropped; but it came up with snap of scorn, and he said with spectral intensity:

"The beast is cowardly! He was frightened, and wanted to get rid of us, if you want to know, Mr. Heyst. I don't know that the material inducement was so very great, but I was bored, and we decided to accept the bribe. I don't regret it. All my life I have been seeking new impressions, and you have turned out to be something quite out of the common. Martin, of course, looks to the material results. He's simple—and faithful—and wonderfully acute."

"Ah, yes! He's on the track"—and now Heyst's speech had the character of politely grim raillery—"but not sufficiently on the track, as yet, to make it quite convenient to shoot me without more ado. Didn't Schomberg tell you precisely where I conceal the fruit of my rapines? Pah! Don't you know he would have told you anything, true or false, from a very clear motive? Revenge! Mad hate—the unclean idiot!"

Mr. Jones did not seem very much moved. On his right hand the doorway incessantly flickered with distant lightning, and the continuous rumble of thunder went on irritatingly, like the growl of an inarticulate giant muttering fatuously.

Heyst overcame his immense repugnance to allude to her whose image, cowering in the forest, was constantly before his eyes, with all the pathos and force of its appeal, august, pitiful, and almost holy to him. It was in a hurried, embarrassed manner that he went on:

"If it had not been for that girl whom he persecuted with his insane and odious passion, and who threw herself on my protection, he would never have —but you know well enough!"

"I *don't* know!" burst out Mr. Jones with amazing heat. "That hotelkeeper tried to talk to me once of some girl he had lost, but I told him I didn't want to hear any of his beastly women stories. It had something to do with you, had it?"

Heyst looked on serenely at this outburst, then lost his patience a little.

"What sort of comedy is this? You don't mean to say that you didn't know that I had—that there was a girl living with me here?"

One could see that the eyes of Mr. Jones had become fixed in the depths of their black holes by the gleam of white becoming steady there. The whole man seemed frozen still.

"Here! Here!" he screamed out twice. There was no mistaking his astonishment, his shocked incredulity—something like frightened disgust.

Heyst was disgusted also, but in another way. He too was incredulous. He

regretted having mentioned the girl; but the thing was done, his repugnance had been overcome in the heat of his argument against the absurd bandit.

"Is it possible that you didn't know of that significant fact?" he inquired. "Of the only effective truth in the welter of silly lies that deceived you so easily?"

"No, I didn't!" Mr. Jones shouted. "But Martin did!" he added in a faint whisper, which Heyst's ears just caught and no more.

"I kept her out of sight as long as I could," said Heyst. "Perhaps, with your bringing up, traditions, and so on, you will understand my reason for it."

"He knew. He knew before!" Mr. Jones mourned in a hollow voice. "He knew of her from the first!"

Backed hard against the wall, he no longer watched Heyst. He had the air of a man who had seen an abyss yawning under his feet.

"If I want to kill him, this is my time," thought Heyst; but he did not move.

Next moment Mr. Jones jerked his head up, glaring with sardonic fury.

"I have a good mind to shoot you, you woman-ridden hermit, you man in the moon, that can't exist without—no, it won't be you that I'll shoot. It's the other woman-lover—the prevaricating, sly, low-class, amorous cuss! And he shaved—shaved under my very nose. I'll shoot him!"

"He's gone mad," thought Heyst, startled by the spectre's sudden fury.

He felt himself more in danger, nearer death, than ever since he had entered that room. An insane bandit is a deadly combination. He did not, could not know that Mr. Jones was quick-minded enough to see already the end of his reign over his excellent secretary's thoughts and feelings; the coming failure of Ricardo's fidelity. A woman had intervened! A woman, a girl, who apparently possessed the power to awaken men's disgusting folly. Her power had been proved in two instances already—the beastly innkeeper, and that man with moustaches, upon whom Mr. Jones, his deadly right hand twitching in his pocket, glared more in repulsion than in anger. The very object of the expedition was lost from view in his sudden and overwhelming sense of utter insecurity. And this made Mr. Jones feel very savage; but not against the man with the moustaches. Thus, while Heyst was really feeling that his life was not worth two minutes' purchase, he heard himself addressed with no affectation of languid impertinence, but with a burst of feverish determination.

"Here! Let's call a truce!" said Mr. Jones.

Heyst's heart was too sick to allow him to smile.

"Have I been making war on you?" he asked wearily. "How do you expect me to attach any meaning to your words?" he went on. "You seem to be a morbid, senseless sort of bandit. We don't speak the same language. If I were to tell you why I am here, talking to you, you wouldn't believe me, because you would not understand me. It certainly isn't the love of life, from which I have divorced myself long ago—not sufficiently, perhaps; but if you are thinking of yours, then I repeat to you that it has never been in danger from me. I am unarmed."

Mr. Jones was biting his lower lip, in a deep meditation. It was only toward the last that he looked at Heyst.

"Unarmed, eh?" Then he burst out violently: "I tell you, a gentleman is no match for the common herd. And yet one must make use of the brutes. Unarmed, eh? And I suppose that creature is of the commonest sort. You could hardly have got her out of a drawing-room. Though they're all alike, for that matter. Unarmed! It's a pity. I am in much greater danger than you are, or were—or I am much mistaken. But I am not—I know my man!"

He lost his air of mental vacancy and broke out into shrill exclamations. To Heyst they seemed madder than anything that had gone before.

"On the track! On the scent!" he cried, forgetting himself to the point of executing a dance of rage in the middle of the floor.

Heyst looked on, fascinated by this skeleton in a gay dressing-gown, jerkily agitated like a grotesque toy on the end of an invisible string. It became quiet suddenly.

"I might have smelt a rat! I always knew that this would be the danger." He changed suddenly to a confidential tone, fixing his sepulchral stare on Heyst. "And yet here I am, taken in by the fellow, like the veriest fool. I've been always on the watch for some such beastly influence, but here I am, fairly caught. He shaved himself right in front of me—and I never guessed!"

The shrill laugh, following on the low tone of secrecy, sounded so convincingly insane that Heyst got up as if moved by a spring. Mr. Jones stepped back two paces, but displayed no uneasiness.

"It's as clear as daylight!" he uttered mournfully, and fell silent.

Behind him the doorway flickered lividly, and the sound as of a naval action somewhere away on the horizon filled the breathless pause. Mr. Jones inclined his head on his shoulder. His mood had completely changed.

"What do you say, unarmed man? Shall we go and see what is detaining my trusted Martin so long? He asked me to keep you engaged in friendly conversation till he made a further examination of that track. Ha, ha, ha!"

"He is no doubt ransacking my house," said Heyst.

He was bewildered. It seemed to him that all this was an incomprehensible dream, or perhaps an elaborate other-world joke, contrived by that spectre in a gorgeous dressing-gown.

Mr. Jones looked at him with a horrible, cadaverous smile of inscrutable mockery, and pointed to the door. Heyst passed through it first. His feelings had become so blunted that he did not care how soon he was shot in the back.

"How oppressive the air is!" the voice of Mr. Jones said at his elbow. "This stupid storm gets on my nerves. I would welcome some rain, though it would be unpleasant to get wet. On the other hand, this exasperating thunder has the advantage of covering the sound of our approach. The lightning's not so convenient. Ah, your house is fully illuminated! My clever Martin is punishing your stock of candles. He belongs to the unceremonious classes, which are also unlovely, untrustworthy, and so on."

"I left the candles burning," said Heyst, "to save him trouble."

"You really believed he would go to your house?" asked Mr. Jones with genuine interest.

"I had that notion, strongly. I do believe he is there now."

"And you don't mind?"

"No!"

"You don't?" Mr. Jones stopped to wonder. "You are an extraordinary man," he said suspiciously, and moved on, touching elbows with Heyst.

In the latter's breast dwelt a deep silence, the complete silence of unused faculties. At this moment, by simply shouldering Mr. Jones, he could have thrown him down and put himself by a couple of leaps beyond the certain aim of the revolver; but he did not even think of that. His very will seemed dead of weariness. He moved automatically, his head low, like a prisoner captured by the evil power of a masquerading skeleton out of a grave. Mr. Jones took charge of the direction. They fetched a wide sweep. The echoes of distant thunder seemed to dog their footsteps.

"By the by," said Mr. Jones, as if unable to restrain his curiosity, "aren't you anxious about that—ouch!—that fascinating creature to whom you owe whatever pleasure you can find in our visit?"

"I have placed her in safety," said Heyst. "I—I took good care of that."

Mr. Jones laid a hand on his arm.

"You have? Look! Is that what you mean?"

Heyst raised his head. In the flicker of lightning the desolation of the cleared ground on his left leaped out and sank into the night, together with the elusive forms of things distant, pale, unearthly. But in the brilliant square of the door he saw the girl—the woman he had longed to see once more—as if enthroned, with her hands on the arms of the chair. She was in black; her face was white, her head dreamily inclined on her breast. He saw her only as low as her knees. He saw her—there, in the room, alive with a sombre reality. It was no mocking vision. She was not in the forest—but there! She sat there in the chair, seemingly without strength, yet without fear, tenderly stooping.

"Can you understand their power?" whispered the hot breath of Mr. Jones into his ear. "Can there be a more disgusting spectacle? It's enough to make the earth detestable. She seems to have found her affinity. Move on closer. If I have to shoot you in the end, then perhaps you will die cured.

Heyst obeyed the pushing pressure of a revolver barrel between his shoulders. He felt it distinctly, but he did not feel the ground under his feet. They found the steps, without his being aware that he was ascending them—slowly, one by one. Doubt entered into him—a doubt of a new kind, formless, hideous. It seemed to spread itself all over him, enter his limbs, and lodge in his entrails. He stopped suddenly, with a thought that he who experienced such a feeling had no business to live—or perhaps was no longer living.

Everything—the bungalow, the forest, the open ground—trembled incessantly; the earth, the sky itself, shivered all the time, and the only thing immovable in the shuddering universe was the interior of the lighted room and the woman in black sitting in the light of the eight candle-flames. They flung around her an intolerable brilliance which hurt his eyes, seemed to sear his very brain with the radiation of infernal heat. It was some time before his scorched eyes made out Ricardo seated on the floor at some little distance, his back to the doorway, but only partly so; one side of his upturned face showing the absorbed, all-forgetful rapture of his contemplation.

The grip of Mr. Jones's hard claw drew Heyst back a little. In the roll of thunder, swelling and subsiding, he whispered in his ear a sarcastic: "Of course!"

A great shame descended upon Heyst—the shame of guilt, absurd and maddening. Mr. Jones drew him still farther back into the darkness of the verandah.

"This is serious," he went on, distilling his ghostly venom into Heyst's very ear. "I had to shut my eyes many times to his little flings; but this is serious. He has found his soul-mate. Mud souls, obscene and cunning! Mud bodies, too—the mud of the gutter! I tell you, we are no match for the vile populace. I, even I have been nearly caught. He asked me to detain you till he gave me the signal. It won't be you that I'll have to shoot, but him. I wouldn't trust him near me for five minutes after this!"

He shook Heyst's arm a trifle.

"If you had not happened to mention the creature, we should both have been dead before morning. He would have stabbed you as you came down the steps after leaving me, and then he would have walked up to me and planted the same knife between my ribs. He has no prejudices. The viler the origin, the greater the freedom of these simple souls!"

He drew a cautious, hissing breath and added in an agitated murmur: "I can see right into his mind; I have been nearly caught napping by his cunning."

He stretched his neck to peer into the room from the side. Heyst, too, made a step forward, under the slight impulse of that slender hand clasping his arm with a thin, bony grasp.

"Behold!" the skeleton of the crazy bandit jabbered thinly into his ear in spectral fellowship. "Behold the simple Acis kissing the sandals of the nymph, on the way to her lips, all forgetful, while the menacing fife of Polyphemus already sounds close at hand—if he could only hear it! Stoop a little."

XII

On returning to the Heyst bungalow, rapid as if on wings, Ricardo found Lena waiting for him. She was dressed in black; and at once his uplifting exultation was replaced by an awed and quivering patience before her white face, before the immobility of her reposeful pose, the more amazing to him who had encountered the strength of her limbs and the indomitable spirit in her body. She had come out after Heyst's departure and had sat down under the portrait to wait for the return of the man of violence and death. While lifting the curtain, she felt the anguish of her disobedience to her lover, which was soothed by a feeling she had known before—a gentle flood of penetrating sweetness. She was not automatically obeying a momentary suggestion; she was under influences more deliberate, more vague, and of greater potency. She had been prompted, not by her will, but by a force that was outside of her and more worthy. She reckoned upon nothing definite; she had calculated nothing. She saw only her purpose of capturing death—savage, sudden, irresponsible death, prowling round the man who possessed her; death embodied in the knife ready to strike into his heart. No doubt it had been a sin to throw herself into his arms. With that inspiration that descends at times from above

for the good or evil of our common mediocrity, she had a sense of having been for him only a violent and sincere choice of curiosity and pity—a thing that passes. She did not know him. If he were to go away from her and disappear, she would utter no reproach, she would not resent it; for she would hold in herself the impress of something most rare and precious—his embraces made her own by her courage in saving his life.

All she thought of—the essence of her tremors, her flushes of heat, and her shudders of cold—was the question how to get hold of that knife, the mark and sign of stalking death. A tremor of impatience to clutch the frightful thing, glimpsed once and unforgettable, agitated her hands.

The instinctive flinging forward of these hands stopped Ricardo dead short between the door and her chair, with the ready obedience of a conquered man who can bide his time. Her success disconcerted her. She listened to the man's impassioned transports of terrible eulogy and even more awful declarations of love. She was even able to meet his eyes, oblique, apt to glide away, throwing feral gleams of desire.

"No!" he was saying, after a fiery outpouring of words in which the most ferocious phrases of love were mingled with wooing accents of entreaty. "I will have no more of it! Don't you mistrust me. I am sober in my talk. Feel how quietly my heart beats. Ten times today when you, you, you, swam in my eye, I thought it would burst one of my ribs or leap out of my throat. It has knocked itself dead tired, waiting for this evening, for this very minute. And now it can do no more. Feel how quiet it is!"

He made a step forward, but she raised her clear voice commandingly:

"No nearer!"

He stopped with a smile of imbecile worship on his lips, and with the delighted obedience of a man who could at any moment seize her in his hands and dash her to the ground.

"Ah! If I had taken you by the throat this morning and had my way with you, I should never have known what you are. And now I do. You are a wonder! And so am I, in my way. I have nerve, and I have brains, too. We should have been lost many times but for me. I plan—I plot for my gentleman. Gentleman—pah! I am sick of him. And you are sick of yours, eh? You, you!"

He shook all over; he cooed at her a string of endearing names, obscene and tender, and then asked abruptly:

"Why don't you speak to me?"

"It's my part to listen," she said, giving him an inscrutable smile, with a flush on her cheek and her lips cold as ice.

"But you will answer me?"

"Yes," she said, her eyes dilated as if with sudden interest.

"Where's that plunder? Do you know?"

"No! Not yet."

"But there is plunder stowed somewhere that's worth having?"

"Yes, I think so. But who knows?" she added after a pause.

"And who cares?" he retorted recklessly. "I've had enough of this crawling on my belly. It's you who are my treasure. It's I who found you out where a gentleman had buried you to rot for his accursed pleasure!"

He looked behind him and all around for a seat, then turned to her his troubled eyes and dim smile.

"I am dog-tired," he said, and sat down on the floor. "I went tired this morning, since I came in here and started talking to you—as tired as if I had been pouring my life-blood here on these planks for you to dabble your white feet in."

Unmoved, she nodded at him thoughtfully. Woman-like, all her faculties remained concentrated on her heart's desire—on the knife—while the man went on babbling insanely at her feet, ingratiating and savage, almost crazy with elation. But he, too, was holding on to his purpose.

"For you! For you I will throw away money, lives—all the lives but mine! What you want is a man, a master that will let you put the heel of your shoe on his neck; not that skulker, who will get tired of you in a year—and you of him. And then what? You are not the one to sit still; neither am I. I live for myself, and you shall live for yourself, too—not for a Swedish baron. They make a convenience of people like you and me. A gentleman is better than an employer, but an equal partnership against all the 'yporcrits is the thing for you and me. We'll go on wondering the world over, you and I, both free and both true. You are no cage bird. We'll rove together, for we are of them that have no homes. We are born rovers!"

She listened to him with the utmost attention, as if any unexpected word might give her some sort of opening to get that dagger, that awful knife—to disarm murder itself, pleading for her love at her feet. Again she nodded at him thoughtfully, rousing a gleam in his yellow eyes, yearning devotedly upon her face. When he hitched himself a little closer, her soul had no movement of recoil. This had to be. Anything had to be which would bring the knife within her reach. He talked more confidentially now.

"We have met, and their time has come," he began, looking up into her eyes. "The partnership between me and my gentleman has to be ripped up. There's no room for him where we two are. Why, he would shoot me like a dog! Don't you worry. This will settle it not later than tonight!"

He tapped his folded leg below the knee, and was surprised, flattered, by the lighting up of her face, which stooped towards him eagerly and remained expectant, the lips girlishly parted, red in the pale face, and quivering in the quickened drawing of her breath.

"You marvel, you miracle, you man's luck and joy—one in a million! No, the only one. You have found your man in me," he whispered tremulously. "Listen! They are having their last talk together; for I'll do for your gentleman, too, by midnight!"

Without the slightest tremor she murmured, as soon as the tightening of her breast had eased off and the words would come:

"I wouldn't be in too much of a hurry—with him."

The pause, the tone, had all the value of meditated advice.

"Good, thrifty girl!" he laughed low, with a strange feline gaiety, expressed by the undulating movement of his shoulders and the sparkling snap of his oblique eyes. "You are still thinking about the chance of that swag. You'll

make a good partner, that you will! And, I say, what a decoy you will make! Jee-miny!"

He was carried away for a moment, but his face darkened swiftly.

"No! No reprieve. What do you think a fellow is—a scarecrow? All hat and clothes and no feeling, no inside, no brain to make fancies for himself? No!" he went on violently. "Never in his life will he go again into that room of yours—never any more!"

A silence fell. He was gloomy with the torment of his jealousy, and did not even look at her. She sat up and slowly, gradually, bent lower and lower over him, as if ready to fall into his arms. He looked up at last, and checked this droop unwittingly.

"Say! You, who are up to fighting a man with your bare hands, could you —eh?—could you manage to stick one with a thing like that knife of mine?"

She opened her eyes very wide and gave him a wild smile.

"How can I tell?" she whispered enchantingly. "Will you let me have a look at it?"

Without taking his eyes from her face, he pulled the knife out of its sheath —a short, broad, cruel, double-edged blade with a bone handle—and only then looked down at it.

"A good friend," he said simply. "Take it in your hand and feel the balance," he suggested.

At the moment when she bent forward to receive it from him, there was a flash of fire in her mysterious eyes—a red gleam in the white mist which wrapped the promptings and longings of her soul. She had done it! The very sting of death was in her hands; the venom of the viper in her paradise, extracted, safe in her possession—and the viper's head all but lying under her heel. Ricardo, stretched on the mats of the floor, crept closer and closer to the chair in which she sat.

All her thoughts were busy planning how to keep possession of that weapon which had seemed to have drawn into itself every danger and menace on the death-ridden earth. She said with a low laugh, the exultation in which he failed to recognize:

"I didn't think that you would ever trust me with that thing!"

"Why not?"

"For fear I should suddenly strike you with it."

"What for? For this morning's work? Oh, no! There's no spite in you for that. You forgave me. You saved me. You got the better of me, too. And anyhow, what good would it be?"

"No, no good," she admitted.

In her heart she felt that she would not know how to do it; that if it came to a struggle, she would have to drop the dagger and fight with her hands.

"Listen. When we are going about the world together, you shall always call me husband. Do you hear?"

"Yes," she said, bracing herself for the contest, in whatever shape it was coming.

The knife was lying in her lap. She let it slip into the fold of her dress, and laid her forearms with clasped fingers over her knees, which she pressed des-

perately together. The dreaded thing was out of sight at last. She felt a dampness break out all over her.

"I am not going to hide you, like that good-for-nothing, finicky, sneery gentleman. You shall be my pride and my chum. Isn't that better than rotting on an island for the pleasure of a gentleman, till he gives you the chuck?"

"I'll be anything you like," she said.

In his intoxication he crept closer with every word she uttered, with every movement she made.

"Give your foot," he begged in a timid murmur, and in the full consciousness of his power.

Anything! Anything to keep murder quiet and disarmed till strength had returned to her limbs and she could make up her mind what to do. Her fortitude had been shaken by the very facility of success that had come to her. She advanced her foot forward a little from under the hem of her skirt; and he threw himself on it greedily. She was not even aware of him. She had thought of the forest, to which she had been told to run. Yes, the forest—that was the place for her to carry off the terrible spoil, the sting of vanquished death. Ricardo, clasping her ankle, pressed his lips time after time to the instep muttering gasping words that were like sobs, making little noises that resembled the sounds of grief and distress. Unheard by them both, the thunder growled distantly with angry modulations of its tremendous voice, while the world outside shuddered incessantly around the dead stillness of the room where the framed profile of Heyst's father looked severely into space.

Suddenly Ricardo felt himself spurned by the foot he had been cherishing —spurned with a push of such violence into the very hollow of his throat that it swung him back instantly into an upright position on his knees. He read his danger in the stony eyes of the girl; and in the very act of leaping to his feet he heard sharply, detached on the comminatory voice of the storm, the brief report of a shot which half stunned him, in the manner of a blow. He turned his burning head, and saw Heyst towering in the doorway. The thought that the beggar had started to prance darted through his mind. For a fraction of a second his distracted eyes sought for his weapon all over the floor. He couldn't see it.

"Stick him, you!" he called hoarsely to the girl, and dashed headlong for the door of the compound.

While he thus obeyed the instinct of self-preservation, his reason was telling him that he could not possibly reach it alive. It flew open, however, with a crash, before his launched weight, and instantly he swung it to behind him. There, his shoulder leaning against it, his hands clinging to the handle, dazed and alone in the night full of shudders and muttered menaces, he tried to pull himself together. He asked himself if he had been shot at more than once. His shoulder was wet with the blood trickling from his head. Feeling above his ear, he ascertained that it was only a graze, but the shock of the surprise had unmanned him for the moment.

What the deuce was the governor about, to let the beggar break loose like this? Or—was the governor dead, perhaps?

The silence within the room awed him. Of going back there could be no question.

"But she knows how to take care of herself," he muttered.

She had his knife. It was she now who was deadly, while he was disarmed, no good for the moment. He stole away from the door, staggering, the warm trickle running down his neck, to find out what had become of the governor and to provide himself with a firearm from the armoury in the trunks.

XIII

Mr. Jones, after firing his shot over Heyst's shoulder, had thought it proper to dodge away. Like the spectre he was, he had noiselessly vanished from the verandah. Heyst stumbled into the room and looked around. All the objects in there—the books, the gleam of old silver familiar to him from boyhood, the very portrait on the wall—seemed shadowy, unsubstantial, the dumb accomplices of an amazing dream-plot ending in an illusory effect of awakening and the impossibility of ever closing his eyes again. With dread he forced himself to look at the girl. Still in the chair, she was leaning forward far over her knees, and had hidden her face in her hands. Heyst remembered Wang suddenly. How clear all this was—and how extremely amusing! Very.

She sat up a little, then leaned back, and taking her hands from her face, pressed both of them to her breast, as if moved to the heart by seeing him there looking at her with a black, horror-struck curiosity. He would have pitied her, if the triumphant expression of her face had not given him a shock which destroyed the balance of his feelings. She spoke with an accent of wild joy:

"I knew you would come back in time! You are safe now. I have done it! I would never, never have let him—" Her voice died out, while her eyes shone at him as when the sun breaks through a mist. "Never get it back. Oh, my beloved!"

He bowed his head gravely, and said in his polite, Heystian tone:

"No doubt you acted from instinct. Women have been provided with their own weapon. I was a disarmed man. I have been a disarmed man all my life as I see it now. You may glory in your resourcefulness and your profound knowledge of yourself; but I may say that the other attitude, suggestive of shame, had its charm. For you are full of charm!"

The exultation vanished from her face.

"You mustn't make fun of me now. I know no shame. I was thanking God with all my sinful heart for having been able to do it—for giving you to me in that way—oh, my beloved—all my own at last!"

He stared as if mad. Timidly she tried to excuse herself for disobeying his directions for her safety. Every modulation of her enchanting voice cut deep into his very breast, so that he could hardly understand the words for the sheer pain of it. He turned his back on her; but a sudden drop, an extraordinary faltering of her tone, made him spin round. On her white neck her pale head dropped as in a cruel drought a withered flower droops on its stalk. He caught his breath, looked at her closely, and seemed to read some awful intelligence in her eyes. At the moment when her eyelids fell as if smitten from above by an invisible power, he snatched her up bodily out of the chair, and disregarding

an unexpected metallic clatter on the floor, carried her off into the other room. The limpness of her body frightened him. Laying her down on the bed, he ran out again, seized a four-branched candlestick on the table, and ran back, tearing down with a furious jerk the curtain that swung stupidly in his way; but after putting the candlestick on the table by the bed, he remained absolutely idle. There did not seem anything more for him to do. Holding his chin in his hand, he looked down intently at her still face.

"Has she been stabbed with this thing?" asked Davidson, whom suddenly he saw standing by his side and holding up Ricardo's dagger to his sight. Heyst uttered no word of recognition or surprise. He gave Davidson only a dumb look of unutterable awe; then, as if possessed with a sudden fury, started tearing open the front of the girl's dress. She remained insensible under his hands, and Heyst let out a groan which made Davidson shudder inwardly—the heavy plaint of a man who falls clubbed in the dark.

They stood side by side, looking mournfully at the little black hole made by Mr. Jones's bullet under the swelling breast of a dazzling and as it were sacred whiteness. It rose and fell slightly—so slightly that only the eyes of the lover could detect the faint stir of life. Heyst, calm and utterly unlike himself in the face, moving about noiselessly, prepared a wet cloth, and laid it on the insignificant wound, round which there was hardly a trace of blood to mar the charm, the fascination, of that mortal flesh.

Her eyelids fluttered. She looked drowsily about, serene, as if fatigued only by the exertions of her tremendous victory, capturing the very sting of death in the service of love. But her eyes became very wide awake when they caught sight of Ricardo's dagger, the spoil of vanquished death, which Davidson was still holding unconsciously.

"Give it to me!" she said. "It's mine."

Davidson put the symbol of her victory into her feeble hands extended to him with the innocent gesture of a child reaching eagerly for a toy.

"For you," she gasped, turning her eyes to Heyst. "Kill nobody."

"No," said Heyst, taking the dagger and laying it gently on her breast, while her hands fell powerless by her side.

The faint smile on her deep-cut lips waned, and her head sank deep into the pillow, taking on the majestic pallor and immobility of marble. But over the muscles, which seemed set in their transfigured beauty for ever, passed a slight and awful tremor. With an amazing strength she asked loudly:

"What's the matter with me?"

"You have been shot, dear Lena," Heyst said in a steady voice, while Davidson, at the question, turned away and leaned his forehead against the post of the foot of the bed.

"Shot? I did think, too, that something had struck me."

Over Samburan the thunder had ceased to growl at last, and the world of material forms shuddered no more under the emerging stars. The spirit of the girl which was passing away from under them clung to her triumph, convinced of the reality of her victory over death.

"No more," she muttered. "There will be no more! Oh, my beloved," she

cried weakly, "I've saved you! Why don't you take me into your arms and carry me out of this lonely place?"

Heyst bent low over her, cursing his fastidious soul, which even at that moment kept the true cry of love from his lips in its infernal mistrust of all life. He dared not touch her, and she had no longer the strength to throw her arms about his neck.

"Who else could have done this for you?" she whispered gloriously.

"No one in the world," he answered her in a murmur of unconcealed despair.

She tried to raise herself, but all she could do was to lift her head a little from the pillow. With a terrified and gentle movement, Heyst hastened to slip his arm under her neck. She felt relieved at once of an intolerable weight, and was content to surrender to him the infinite weariness of her tremendous achievement. Exulting, she saw herself extended on the bed, in a black dress, and profoundly at peace; while, stooping over her with a kindly, playful smile, he was ready to lift her up in his firm arms and take her into the sanctuary of his innermost heart—for ever! The flush of rapture flooding her whole being broke out in a smile of innocent, girlish happiness; and with that divine radiance on her lips she breathed her last, triumphant, seeking for his glance in the shades of death.

XIV

"Yes, Excellency," said Davidson in his placid voice; "there are more dead in this affair—more white people, I mean—than have been killed in many of the battles of the last Achin war."

Davidson was talking with an Excellency, because what was alluded to in conversation as "the mystery of Samburan" had caused such a sensation in the Archipelago that even those in the highest spheres were anxious to hear something at first hand. Davidson had been summoned to an audience. It was a high official on his tour.

"You knew the late Baron Heyst well?"

"The truth is that nobody out here can boast of having known him well," said Davidson. "He was a queer chap. I doubt if he himself knew how queer he was. But everybody was aware that I was keeping my eye on him in a friendly way. And that's how I got the warning which made me turn round in my tracks in the middle of my trip and steam back to Samburan, where, I am grieved to say, I arrived too late."

Without enlarging very much, Davidson explained to the attentive Excellency how a woman, the wife of a certain hotel-keeper named Schomberg, had overheard two card-sharping rascals making inquiries from her husband as to the exact position of the island. She caught only a few words referring to the neighbouring volcano, but these were enough to arouse her suspicions—"which," went on Davidson, "she imparted to me, your Excellency. They were only too well founded!"

"That was very clever of her," remarked the great man.

"She's much cleverer than people have any conception of," said Davidson.

But he refrained from disclosing to the Excellency the real cause which had sharpened Mrs. Schomberg's wits. The poor woman was in mortal terror of the girl being brought back within reach of her infatuated Wilhelm.

Davidson only said that her agitation had impressed him; but he confessed that while going back, he began to have his doubts as to their being anything in it.

"I steamed into one of those silly thunderstorms that hang about the volcano, and had some trouble in making the island," narrated Davidson. "I had to grope my way dead slow into Diamond Bay. I don't suppose that anybody, even if looking out for me, could have heard me let go the anchor."

He admitted that he ought to have gone ashore at once; but everything was perfectly dark and absolutely quiet. He felt ashamed of his impulsiveness. What a fool he would have looked, waking up a man in the middle of the night just to ask him if he was all right! And then, the girl being there, he feared that Heyst would look upon his visit as an unwarrantable intrusion.

The first intimation he had of there being something wrong was a big white boat, adrift with the dead body of a very hairy man inside, bumping against the bows of his steamer. Then indeed he lost no time in going ashore —alone, of course, from motives of delicacy.

"I arrived in time to see that poor girl die, as I have told your Excellency," pursued Davidson. "I won't tell you what a time I had with him afterwards. He talked to me. His father seems to have been a crank, and to have upset his head when he was young. He was a queer chap. Practically the last words he said to me, as we came out on the verandah, were:

" 'Ah, Davidson, woe to the man whose heart has not learned while young to hope, to love—and to put its trust in life!'

"As we stood there, just before I left him, for he said he wanted to be alone with his dead for a time, we heard a snarly sort of voice near the bushes by the shore calling out:

" 'Is that you, governor?'

" 'Yes, it's me.'

" 'Jeeminy! I thought the beggar had done for you. He has started prancing and nearly had me. I have been dodging around, looking for you ever since.'

" 'Well, here I am,' suddenly screamed the other voice, and then a shot rang out.

" 'This time he has not missed him,' Heyst said to me bitterly, and went back into the house.

"I returned on board as he had insisted I should do. I didn't want to intrude on his grief. Later, about five in the morning, some of my calashes came running to me, yelling that there was a fire ashore. I landed at once, of course. The principal bungalow was blazing. The heat drove us back. The other two houses caught one after another like kindling-wood. There was no going beyond the shore end of the jetty till the afternoon."

Davidson sighed placidly.

"I suppose you are certain that Baron Heyst is dead?"

"He is—ashes, your Excellency," said Davidson, wheeling a little; "he and the girl together. I suppose he couldn't stand his thoughts before her dead body —and fire purifies everything. That Chinaman of whom I told your Excellency helped me to investigate next day, when the embers got cooled a little. We found enough to be sure. He's not a bad Chinaman. He told me that he had

followed Heyst and the girl through the forest from pity, and partly out of curiosity. He watched the house till he saw Heyst go out, after dinner, and Ricardo come back alone. While he was dodging there, it occurred to him that he had better cast the boat adrift, for fear those scoundrels should come round by water and bombard the village from the sea with their revolvers and Winchesters. He judged that they were devils enough for anything. So he walked down the wharf quietly; and as he got into the boat, to cast her off, that hairy man who, it seems, was dozing in her, jumped up growling, and Wang shot him dead. Then he shoved the boat off as far as he could and went away."

There was a pause. Presently Davidson went on, in his tranquil manner:

"Let Heaven look after what has been purified. The wind and rain will take care of the ashes. The carcass of that follower, secretary, or whatever the unclean ruffian called himself, I left where it lay, to swell and rot in the sun. His principal had shot him neatly through the heart. Then, apparently, this Jones went down the wharf to look for the boat and for the hairy man. I suppose he tumbled into the water by accident—or perhaps not by accident. The boat and the man were gone, and the scoundrel saw himself all alone, his game clearly up, and fairly trapped. Who knows? The water's very clear there, and I could see him huddled up on the bottom between two piles, like a heap of bones in a blue silk bag, with only the head and the feet sticking out. Wang was very pleased when he discovered him. That made everything safe, he said, and he went at once over the hill to fetch his Alfuro woman back to the hut."

Davidson took out his handkerchief to wipe the perspiration off his forehead.

"And then, your Excellency, I went away. There was nothing to be done there."

"Clearly," assented the Excellency.

Davidson, thoughtful, seemed to weigh the matter in his mind, and then murmured with placid sadness:

"Nothing!"

DRAMA

MOST readers of the *Omnibus* will be familiar with the kind of drama ably represented by two of the four plays in this section, *The Winslow Boy* and *The Little Foxes*. Both have been popular successes on Broadway and elsewhere. *The Little Foxes* opened in New York on February 15, 1939, and it is still frequently produced. *The Winslow Boy* came to New York in the fall of 1947 after a long run in England, and it has recently been made into a motion picture. Plays of this kind are so familiar, so seemingly lifelike, that it may be hard to see that they are in any way contrived or subject to the conventions of a particular theater.

The illusion of lifelikeness is produced in part by the fact that the characters are modern, English-speaking people of the kind we hear and read about or know personally. The illusion is also produced by the fact that the theater in which these characters act is so familiar that we rarely or never think of it as an extraordinarily artificial convention. We sit in the audience, actually or imaginatively; a wall of a room goes up, and without conscious effort we agree to believe that the persons in the room are unaware of our presence and are behaving as naturally as they would in real life at home. Analysis breaks the illusion momentarily, but ultimately it should make our enjoyment of a good play richer and more intelligent. We may gain the added pleasure of seeing how a playwright capitalizes on the virtues and limitations of a particular set of theatrical conventions, how the seemingly lifelike actions of the characters are really contrived to achieve certain effects. *The Little Foxes* and *The Winslow Boy* are comparable, in this respect, to the kind of story represented by Maugham's "Before the Party," in which, as Maugham explained, everything is selected and arranged to "serve the dramatic value."

How this is true of *The Winslow Boy* and how a play differs from other kinds of literature may be understood more clearly by comparing Rattigan's dramatic treatment with a factual account of the same subject, Alexander Woollcott's essay on the Archer-Shee case, which is reprinted on page 164. Life itself had begun the selecting and arranging in this instance, and both Woollcott and Rattigan start with the basic historical conflict between young Archer-Shee (Ronnie Winslow) and a bureaucratic division of the state. Both writers, too, sympathize with the boy, the individual; and even the essayist, as we have seen, uses fictional de-

vices (a partly non-chronological order, emotionally-toned words, etc.) to intensify our concern that right be done.

The play differs most strikingly from the essay, as we should expect, in its necessarily complete reliance on dialogue. An instructive example of this difference is the investigation by the famous lawyer Sir Edward Carson (Sir Robert Morton in the play) before he agrees to represent the boy against the government. Woollcott writes briefly: "It was only after he had heard the boy's own story (and raked him with such a bracketing fire of questions as he was famous for directing against a witness) that he agreed to take the case at all. From that interview he rose, saying in effect, 'This boy did not steal that postal order. Now, let's get at the facts.' " Without the record of the case (which has not been published), we cannot tell whether Woollcott lacked evidence for a fuller account of the interview or whether he subordinated it in order to emphasize his next and major point, the difficulty of getting at the facts when one party is official and powerful. Whatever the reason, the scene is an obviously exciting opportunity for the dramatist, who must work entirely with dialogue.

Rattigan, as the reader will see, makes full use of the opportunity. The result is a heightening of immediacy and suspense and a certain development in the characterization of the lawyer. From Woollcott's account we know in the length of a sentence that Carson will take the case. In the play we are kept in suspense, and the suspense is increased by the very nature of a cross-examination, its necessary objectivity. We begin to listen, convinced in our own hearts (by previously contrived effects) that the boy is innocent. Of the lawyer we know only that he is famous, a conservative supporter of the established government, a pitiless cross-examiner, and the only man who has a chance to save young Winslow. Will the boy withstand the attack? Will he become confused? Are the facts as conclusive as we believe; has our sympathy blinded us to some of them; will new facts be forced into the open? The encounter is obviously unequal, and we flinch with young Winslow under the "bracketing fire of questions." Our instinct to protect the boy is represented dramatically by the family's attempts to interfere, and with them we are forced back by Carson's harsh orders. When he has finished, the boy's story seems woefully inadequate. Carson's decisive acceptance of the case and of the boy's innocence is a relief, but it puzzles us. We are obliged to guess that Carson's mind is superhumanly sharp (sharper than ours), that his unfeeling legal behavior hides an inner softness, or that he will permit neither sentiment nor power to interfere with the working out of justice. Perhaps the com-

position of this scene first suggested certain possibilities about Carson's character to Rattigan. At any rate the mystery about Carson's real motives and nature is progressively exploited, and it is integrated with the major themes of the play. In general, this illustrative scene suggests that a comparison of essay and play will show that the remaking of prose fact into dramatic dialogue is not a mechanical translation from one form to another, but a creative process which closes certain lines of development and opens others.

A second basic difference between a play like *The Winslow Boy* and a non-dramatic treatment of the same subject is that the action of the play is confined by the stage set to one or a very few places. Rattigan chose to present his entire version of the material in the Winslow drawing room. That choice necessitated the creation of the Winslow family. Five characters are invented: a maid, the mother, an older daughter, and her two suitors. An older brother, whom Woollcott mentions, is radically changed, and the character of the father is greatly enlarged. The courtroom trial, its national repercussions, and its significance in the history of individual liberty (Woollcott's chief interests) all have to be presented through the family. How that is accomplished, and particularly how the focus on the family colors the total meaning of the play are interesting problems in dramatic analysis.

Since *The Little Foxes* was not based on a single historical incident, we cannot be helped to an analytical understanding by contrasting the play with a non-dramatic account. *The Cherry Orchard,* however, deals in a different way with the same general subject—social change; consequently a comparison of Chekhov's and Hellman's methods and effects may increase our appreciation of both plays. *The Little Foxes* is clearly intended to be an attack on modern materialism. To concentrate that attack, Miss Hellman makes the present time in her play the raw frontier moment when the past is first exploited and industrialized. The past was the kindly, gay, gracious, and aristocratic life on the southern plantation of Lionnet. It exists in the present only as a memory, as the natural goodness of the Negro servants, as a piece of an old violin in a safety deposit box, and as Birdie, the broken, ineffectual heiress of Lionnet. The present is represented by the aggressive, middle-class Hubbards, who boast that they have taken over the land, the cotton, and the daughter, Birdie. The future is represented by young Alexandra, the daughter of a Hubbard, but the spiritual child of Birdie. She promises to leave the present, to attack what it stands for, and to build a better present elsewhere. The central action

of the play is a savage comedy in which the Hubbards intrigue against one another for a lion's share of the new cotton mill, which represents the industrialized South. The tight, claustrophobic plot is a symbol of the Hubbard's self-centered energy, and a device for putting them into positions which expose their brutal greed and their disregard for all human values.

The central action of *The Cherry Orchard,* the purchase and subdivision of a mortgaged Russian aristocratic estate by a self-made businessman, is much like that of *The Little Foxes.* The play has even been transferred to the southern United States in a recent adaptation, *The Wisteria Trees.* Despite this, an American undergraduate on first reading *The Cherry Orchard* is likely to feel that it is rather vague and unreal. That feeling may be the result not only of the unfamiliar Russian names and customs, but also of expecting something that the play was not designed to provide. Chekhov was in conscious revolt against what he and the Moscow Art Theater conceived to be the unreal neatness of the well-made play of social purpose. It is helpful to recall that Maugham has frequently contrasted his own carefully plotted stories with Chekhov's impressionistic fiction. Chekhov belongs with Crane and James in his desire to render life as exactly as possible. As a result the play, like its counterparts in fiction, may not seem to have a clear plot and theme. Many readers and spectators report that they have been deeply moved by *The Cherry Orchard,* but have been unable to decide exactly what it "means."

A comparison of the attitudes of Chekhov and Hellman toward their basic subject, social change, may be helpful. Hellman, as we have noticed, thinks of time as being made up of a distinct present which has destroyed the past without absorbing it, and which is trying to corrupt the future in its own image. The past was good but it became ineffectual; the present is powerful but evil; the future must use the energy of the present for social justice. This pattern may appear to be very real and lifelike because it is the one that we instinctively adopt whenever we read the newspapers or are made conscious of change by other sources. The present seems overwhelmingly powerful and antagonistic; we think longingly of the quieter "normalcy" of the past; and we hope for a brighter future. This habitual reaction is a deep-seated source of power for Hellman's attack on modern materialism. It is not available for Chekhov because his conception of time is more complex, closer to our second thoughts than to our instinctive response. He believes, as we may on reflection, that any moment of time is a blend of past, present, and future, and that all three are both good

and bad. He believes, furthermore, that in real life things happen, changes occur, with much less conscious human control than is implied by Hellman's picture of the Hubbard's Machiavellian operations. When these beliefs, which are no less lifelike for being more reflective, are represented dramatically, they bring into existence their own kind of characterization and plot construction. The characters will be a more complex mixture of good and bad, strength and weakness, and the plot will be looser and more casual.

Instead of Hellman's pitiful Birdie as the embodiment of the aristocratic past, Chekhov offers the complicated Madam Liuboff. She is still vigorous and handsome with a life of her own, but she is interested only in personal relationships and she refuses to face up to business facts. Lopakhin is Chekhov's version of the Hubbards, and he, like Madam Liuboff, is a more intricate character. He envies the aristocratic way of life which he cannot buy even though he acquires the mortgaged estate on which it had existed. Corresponding to Alexandra, the voice of the future in *The Little Foxes,* are Chekhov's Peter Trofimoff, a young liberal, and Madam Liuboff's seventeen-year-old daughter, Anya. Near the end of Act II Anya asks: "What have you done to me, Peter? I don't love the cherry orchard as I used to. I loved it so tenderly, I thought there was no better place in the world than our orchard." And Peter answers: "All Russia is our orchard. The land is great and beautiful, there are many glorious places in it. [Pause] Think, Anya, . . . all your ancestors were serf-owners, they owned human beings; and now, doesn't something human look at you from every cherry in the orchard . . .? For it's so clear that to begin to live in the present we must first redeem the past. . . ." We are moved by Peter's generous and unselfish hopes, but our sympathy is tempered, as it may be in actual life, by evidence that he is intellectually sophomoric. He thinks, for example, that it is vulgar to fall in love, and he is incapable of efficient practical action.

The estate is sold and the cherry orchard cut down for building lots while these many-sided characters go about the casual business of everyday life and talk inconclusively of doing something. The terms (suspense, climax, resolution, etc.) which are effective in analyzing the plots of plays like *The Winslow Boy* or *The Little Foxes* cannot be easily or even fruitfully applied to *The Cherry Orchard.* This has led critics to borrow other terms from music and the plastic arts. Eric Bentley, for example, writes that "If the usual progression of a story is termed 'linear' the Chekhov pattern might be termed spatial. Chekhov's method is to arrange a natural

sequence of social gatherings around his key subject and situation. The progression of a Chekhov play is therefore the gradual uncovering of the subject and situation—by accidents, if you will, but by accidents which have to be carefully planned by the playwright on dramatic and rhythmical—one could almost say musical—principles."

We may finally prefer one kind of play to the other, but the first step is to give each a fair hearing. Analysis will help us find the particular strength of each kind, will help us make the demands that each has been designed to satisfy.

This is especially true of *The Importance of Being Earnest* because, as Eric Bentley points out in his essay reprinted on page 218, it gives the misleading impression of being merely frivolous entertainment. If we expect a lifelike and meaningful plot, we will be disturbed when we encounter what Bentley justly calls an absurdity "of lost infants and recovered brothers which can only be thought of to be laughed at." If we expect plausible and clearly differentiated characters, we will be puzzled by persons who are so much alike that they could exchange speeches with little alteration. The serious center of the play is in the verbal wit, which our experience, again, may prepare us to regard as only ornament or comic relief. The plot and characters earn their way not by their lifelikeness but as devices for organizing and voicing the witty discussion. The dramatic conflict is not on the stage but in our minds as our conventional stock notions are deranged by Wilde's paradoxes, puns, inverted clichés, anticlimaxes, and other forms of verbal comedy. Yet Wilde is serious enough in his farcical attack on the importance of being earnest. For comedy, as James Feibleman reminds us, "is an antidote to error. The beautifully simple means employed consists in the failure to take current estimations seriously on just those occasions when they are most expected to be taken seriously. Customs and institutions, in virtue of their own weight, have a way of coming to be regarded as ultimates. The corrosive effect of humor eats away the solemnity of accepted evaluations, and thus calls for a revaluation of values." (From *Aesthetics*.)

OSCAR WILDE

The Importance of Being Earnest

CHARACTERS

JOHN WORTHING, J.P.
ALGERNON MONCRIEFF
REV. CANON CHASUBLE, D.D.
MERRIMAN, *butler*
LANE, *manservant*
LADY BRACKNELL
HON. GWENDOLEN FAIRFAX
CECILY CARDEW
MISS PRISM, *governess*

THE SCENES OF THE PLAY

ACT I. Algernon Moncrieff's Flat in Half-Moon Street, W.
ACT II. The Garden at the Manor House, Woolton.
ACT III. Drawing-room of the Manor House, Woolton.
Time—*The Present.*
Place—*London.*

ACT I

SCENE. *Morning-room in* ALGERNON'S *flat in Half-Moon Street. The room is luxuriously and artistically furnished. The sound of a piano is heard in the adjoining room.*

(LANE *is arranging afternoon tea on the table, and after the music has ceased,* ALGERNON *enters.*)

AL. Did you hear what I was playing, Lane?

LANE. I didn't think it polite to listen, sir.

AL. I'm sorry for that, for your sake. I don't play accurately—anyone can play accurately—but I play with wonderful expression. As far as the piano is concerned, sentiment is my forte. I keep science for Life.

LANE. Yes, sir.

AL. And, speaking of the science of Life, have you got the cucumber sandwiches cut for Lady Bracknell?

LANE. Yes, sir. (*Hands them on a salver.*)

AL. (*inspects them, takes two, and sits down on the sofa*). Oh! . . . by the way, Lane, I see from your book that on Thursday night, when Lord Shoreman and Mr. Worthing were dining with me, eight bottles of champagne are entered as having been consumed.

LANE. Yes, sir; eight bottles and a pint.

AL. Why is it that at a bachelor's establishment the servants invariably drink the champagne? I ask merely for information.

LANE. I attribute it to the superior quality of the wine, sir. I have often observed that in married households the champagne is rarely of a first-rate brand.

AL. Good Heavens! Is marriage so demoralizing as that?

LANE. I believe it *is* a very pleasant state, sir. I have had very little experience of it myself up to the present. I have only been married once. That was in consequence of a misunderstanding between myself and a young woman.

AL. (*languidly*). I don't know that I am much interested in your family life, Lane.

LANE. No, sir; it is not a very interesting subject. I never think of it myself.

AL. Very natural, I am sure. That will do, Lane, thank you.

LANE. Thank you, sir. (LANE *goes out.*)

AL. Lane's views on marriage seem somewhat lax. Really, if the lower orders don't set us a good example, what on earth is the use of them? They seem, as a class, to have absolutely no sense of moral responsibility.

(*Enter* LANE.)

LANE. Mr. Ernest Worthing.

(*Enter* JACK. LANE *goes out.*)

AL. How are you, my dear Ernest? What brings you up to town?

JACK. Oh, pleasure, pleasure! What else should bring one anywhere? Eating as usual, I see, Algy!

AL. (*stiffly*). I believe it is customary in good society to take some slight refreshment at five o'clock. Where have you been since last Thursday?

JACK (*sitting down on the sofa*). In the country.

AL. What on earth do you do there?

JACK (*pulling off his gloves*). When one is in town one amuses oneself. When one is in the country one amuses other people. It is excessively boring.

AL. And who are the people you amuse?

JACK (*airily*). Oh, neighbours, neighbours.

AL. Got nice neighbours in your part of Shropshire?

JACK. Perfectly horrid! Never speak to one of them.

AL. How immensely you must amuse them! (*Goes over and takes sandwich.*) By the way, Shropshire is your county, is it not?

JACK. Eh? Shropshire? Yes, of course. Hallo! Why all these cups? Why cucumber sandwiches? Why such reckless extravagance in one so young? Who is coming to tea?

AL. Oh! merely Aunt Augusta and Gwendolen.

JACK. How perfectly delightful!

AL. Yes, that is all very well; but I am afraid Aunt Augusta won't quite approve of your being here.

JACK. May I ask why?

AL. My dear fellow, the way you flirt with Gwendolen is perfectly disgraceful. It is almost as bad as the way Gwendolen flirts with you.

JACK. I am in love with Gwendolen. I have come up to town expressly to propose to her.

AL. I thought you had come up for pleasure? . . . I call that business.

JACK. How utterly unromantic you are!

AL. I really don't see anything romantic in proposing. It is very romantic

to be in love. But there is nothing romantic about a definite proposal. Why, one may be accepted. One usually is, I believe. Then the excitement is all over. The very essence of romance is uncertainty. If ever I get married, I'll certainly try to forget the fact.

JACK. I have no doubt about that, dear Algy. The Divorce Court was specially invented for people whose memories are so curiously constituted.

AL. Oh! there is no use speculating on that subject. Divorces are made in heaven— (JACK *puts out his hand to take a sandwich.* AL. *at once interferes.*) Please don't touch the cucumber sandwiches. They are ordered specially for Aunt Augusta. (*Takes one and eats it.*)

JACK. Well, you have been eating them all the time.

AL. That is quite a different matter. She is my aunt. (*Takes plate from below.*) Have some bread and butter. The bread and butter is for Gwendolen. Gwendolen is devoted to bread and butter.

JACK (*advancing to table and helping himself*). And very good bread and butter it is, too.

AL. Well, my dear fellow, you need not eat as if you were going to eat it all. You behave as if you were married to her already. You are not married to her already, and I don't think you ever will be.

JACK. Why on earth do you say that?

AL. Well, in the first place girls never marry the men they flirt with. Girls don't think it right.

JACK. Oh, that is nonsense!

AL. It isn't. It is a great truth. It accounts for the extraordinary number of bachelors that one sees all over the place. In the second place, I don't give my consent.

JACK. Your consent!

AL. My dear fellow, Gwendolen is my first cousin. And before I allow you to marry her, you will have to clear up the whole question of Cecily. (*Rings bell.*)

JACK. Cecily! What on earth do you mean? What do you mean, Algy, by Cecily? I don't know anyone of the name of Cecily.

(*Enter* LANE.)

AL. Bring me that cigarette case Mr. Worthing left in the smoking-room the last time he dined here.

LANE. Yes, sir. (LANE *goes out.*)

JACK. Do you mean to say you have had my cigarette case all this time? I wish to goodness you had let me know. I have been writing frantic letters to Scotland Yard about it. I was very nearly offering a large reward.

AL. Well, I wish you would offer one. I happen to be more than usually hard up.

JACK. There is no good offering a large reward now that the thing is found. (*Enter* LANE *with the cigarette case on a salver.* AL. *takes it at once.* LANE *goes out.*)

AL. I think that is rather mean of you, Ernest, I must say. (*Opens case and examines it.*) However, it makes no matter, for, now that I look at the inscription, I find that the thing isn't yours after all.

JACK. Of course it's mine. (*Moving to him.*) You have seen me with it a hundred times, and you have no right whatsoever to read what is written inside. It is a very ungentlemanly thing to read a private cigarette case.

AL. Oh! it is absurd to have a hard-and-fast rule about what one should read and what one shouldn't. More than half of modern culture depends on what one shouldn't read.

JACK. I am quite aware of the fact, and I don't propose to discuss modern culture. It isn't the sort of thing one should talk of in private. I simply want my cigarette case back.

AL. Yes; but this isn't your cigarette case. This cigarette case is a present from someone of the name of Cecily, and you said you didn't know anyone of that name.

JACK. Well, if you want to know, Cecily happens to be my aunt.

AL. Your aunt!

JACK. Yes. Charming old lady she is, too. Lives at Tunbridge Wells. Just give it back to me, Algy.

AL. (*retreating to back of sofa*). But why does she call herself little Cecily if she is your aunt and lives at Tunbridge Wells? (*Reading.*) "From little Cecily with her fondest love."

JACK (*moving to sofa and kneeling upon it*). My dear fellow, what on earth is there in that? Some aunts are tall, some aunts are not tall. That is a matter that surely an aunt may be allowed to decide for herself. You seem to think that every aunt should be exactly like your aunt! That is absurd! For heaven's sake, give me back my cigarette case. (*Follows* AL. *round the room.*)

AL. Yes. But why does your aunt call you her uncle? "From little Cecily, with her fondest love to her dear Uncle Jack." There is no objection, I admit, to an aunt being a small aunt, but why an aunt, no matter what her size may be, should call her own nephew her uncle, I can't quite make out. Besides, your name isn't Jack at all; it is Ernest.

JACK. It isn't Ernest; it's Jack.

AL. You have always told me it was Ernest. I have introduced you to everyone as Ernest. You answer to the name of Ernest. You look as if your name was Ernest. You are the most earnest looking person I ever saw in my life. It is perfectly absurd your saying that your name isn't Ernest. It's on your cards. Here is one of them. (*Taking it from case.*) "Mr. Ernest Worthing, B 4, The Albany." I'll keep this as a proof your name is Ernest if ever you attempt to deny it to me, or to Gwendolen, or to anyone else. (*Puts the card in his pocket.*)

JACK. Well, my name is Ernest in town and Jack in the country, and the cigarette case was given to me in the country.

AL. Yes, but that does not account for the fact that your small Aunt Cecily, who lives at Tunbridge Wells, calls you her dear uncle. Come, old boy, you had much better have the thing out at once.

JACK. My dear Algy, you talk exactly as if you were a dentist. It is very vulgar to talk like a dentist when one isn't a dentist. It produces a false impression.

AL. Well, that is exactly what dentists always do. Now, go on! Tell me the

whole thing. I may mention that I have always suspected you of being a confirmed and secret Bunburyist; and I am quite sure of it now.

JACK. Bunburyist? What on earth do you mean by a Bunburyist?

AL. I'll reveal to you the meaning of that incomparable expression as soon as you are kind enough to inform me why you are Ernest in town and Jack in the country.

JACK. Well, produce my cigarette case first.

AL. Here it is. (*Hands cigarette case.*) Now produce your explanation, and pray make it improbable. (*Sits on sofa.*)

JACK. My dear fellow, there is nothing improbable about my explanation at all. In fact it's perfectly ordinary. Old Mr. Thomas Cardew, who adopted me when I was a little boy, made me in his will guardian to his grand-daughter, Miss Cecily Cardew. Cecily, who addresses me as her uncle from motives of respect that you could not possibly appreciate, lives at my place in the country under the charge of her admirable governess, Miss Prism.

AL. Where is that place in the country, by the way?

JACK. That is nothing to you, dear boy. You are not going to be invited. . . . I may tell you candidly that the place is not in Shropshire.

AL. I suspected that, my dear fellow! I have Bunburyed all over Shropshire on two separate occasions. Now, go on. Why are you Ernest in town and Jack in the country?

JACK. My dear Algy, I don't know whether you will be able to understand my real motives. You are hardly serious enough. When one is placed in the position of guardian, one has to adopt a very high moral tone on all subjects. It's one's duty to do so. And as a high moral tone can hardly be said to conduce very much to either one's health or one's happiness, in order to get up to town I have always pretended to have a younger brother of the name of Ernest, who lives in the Albany, and gets into the most dreadful scrapes. That, my dear Algy, is the whole truth pure and simple.

AL. The truth is rarely pure and never simple. Modern life would be very tedious if it were either, and modern literature a complete impossibility!

JACK. That wouldn't be at all a bad thing.

AL. Literary criticism is not your forte, my dear fellow. Don't try it. You should leave that to people who haven't been at a University. They do it so well in the daily papers. What you really are is a Bunburyist. I was quite right in saying you were a Bunburyist. You are one of the most advanced Bunburyists I know.

JACK. What on earth do you mean?

AL. You have invented a very useful younger brother called Ernest, in order that you may be able to come up to town as often as you like. I have invented an invaluable permanent invalid called Bunbury, in order that I may be able to go down into the country whenever I choose. Bunbury is perfectly invaluable. If it wasn't for Bunbury's extraordinary bad health, for instance, I wouldn't be able to dine with you at Willis's tonight; for I have been really engaged to Aunt Augusta for more than a week.

JACK. I haven't asked you to dine with me anywhere tonight.

AL. I know. You are absolutely careless about sending out invitations. It is very foolish of you. Nothing annoys people so much as not receiving invitations.

JACK. You had much better dine with your Aunt Augusta.

AL. I haven't the smallest intention of doing anything of the kind. To begin with, I dined there on Monday, and once a week is quite enough to dine with one's own relatives. In the second place, whenever I do dine there I am always treated as a member of the family, and sent down with either no woman at all, or two. In the third place, I know perfectly well whom she will place me next to, tonight. She will place me next Mary Farquhar, who always flirts with her own husband across the dinner-table. That is not very pleasant. Indeed, it is not even decent . . . and that sort of thing is enormously on the increase. The amount of women in London who flirt with their own husbands is perfectly scandalous. It looks so bad. It is simply washing one's clean linen in public. Besides, now that I know you to be a confirmed Bunburyist I naturally want to talk to you about Bunburying. I want to tell you the rules.

JACK. I'm not a Bunburyist at all. If Gwendolen accepts me, I am going to kill my brother, indeed, I think I'll kill him in any case. Cecily is a little too much interested in him. It is rather a bore. So I am going to get rid of Ernest. And I strongly advise you to do the same with Mr. . . . with your invalid friend who has the absurd name.

AL. Nothing will induce me to part with Bunbury, and if you ever get married, which seems to me extremely problematic, you will be very glad to know Bunbury. A man who marries without knowing Bunbury has a very tedious time of it.

JACK. That is nonsense. If I marry a charming girl like Gwendolen, and she is the only girl I ever saw in my life that I would marry, I certainly won't want to know Bunbury.

AL. Then your wife will. You don't seem to realize, that in married life three is company and two is none.

JACK (*sententiously*). That, my dear young friend, is the theory that the corrupt French Drama has been propounding for the last fifty years.

AL. Yes; and that the happy English home has proved in half the time.

JACK. For heaven's sake, don't try to be cynical. It's perfectly easy to be cynical.

AL. My dear fellow, it isn't easy to be anything now-a-days. There's such a lot of beastly competition about. (*The sound of an electric bell is heard.*) Ah! that must be Aunt Augusta. Only relatives, or creditors, ever ring in that Wagnerian manner. Now, if I get her out of the way for ten minutes, so that you can have an opportunity for proposing to Gwendolen, may I dine with you tonight at Willis's?

JACK. I suppose so, if you want to.

AL. Yes, but you must be serious about it. I hate people who are not serious about meals. It is so shallow of them.

(*Enter* LANE.)

LANE. Lady Bracknell and Miss Fairfax. (ALGERNON *goes forward to meet them. Enter* LADY BRACKNELL *and* GWENDOLEN.)

LADY B. Good afternoon, dear Algernon, I hope you are behaving very well.

AL. I'm feeling very well, Aunt Augusta.

LADY B. That's not quite the same thing. In fact the two things rarely go together. (*Sees* JACK *and bows to him with icy coldness.*)

AL. (*to* GWEN.). Dear me, you are smart!

GWEN. I am always smart! Aren't I, Mr. Worthing?

JACK. You're quite perfect, Miss Fairfax.

GWEN. Oh! I hope I am not that. It would leave no room for developments, and I intend to develop in *many directions.* (GWEN. *and* JACK *sit down together in the corner.*)

LADY B. I'm sorry if we are a little late, Algernon, but I was obliged to call on dear Lady Harbury. I hadn't been there since her poor husband's death. I never saw a woman so altered; she looks quite twenty years younger. And now I'll have a cup of tea, and one of those nice cucumber sandwiches you promised me.

AL. Certainly, Aunt Augusta. (*Goes over to tea-table.*)

LADY B. Won't you come and sit here, Gwendolen?

GWEN. Thanks, mamma, I'm quite comfortable where I am.

AL. (*picking up empty plate in horror*). Good heavens! Lane! Why are there no cucumber sandwiches? I ordered them specially.

LANE (*gravely*). There were no cucumbers in the market this morning, sir. I went down twice.

AL. No cucumbers!

LANE. No, sir. Not even for ready money.

AL. That will do, Lane, thank you.

LANE. Thank you, sir. (*Goes out.*)

AL. I am greatly distressed, Aunt Augusta, about there being no cucumbers, not even for ready money.

LADY B. It really makes no matter, Algernon. I had some crumpets with Lady Harbury, who seems to me to be living entirely for pleasure now.

AL. I hear her hair has turned quite gold from grief.

LADY B. It certainly has changed its colour. From what cause I, of course, cannot say. (AL. *crosses and hands tea.*) Thank you. I've quite a treat for you tonight, Algernon. I am going to send you down with Mary Farquhar. She is such a nice woman, and so attentive to her husband. It's delightful to watch them.

AL. I am afraid, Aunt Augusta, I shall have to give up the pleasure of dining with you tonight after all.

LADY B. (*frowning*). I hope not, Algernon. It would put my table completely out. Your uncle would have to dine upstairs. Fortunately he is accustomed to that.

AL. It is a great bore, and, I need hardly say, a terrible disappointment to me, but the fact is I have just had a telegram to say that my poor friend Bunbury is very ill again. (*Exchanges glances with* JACK.) They seem to think I should be with him.

LADY B. It is very strange. This Mr. Bunbury seems to suffer from curiously bad health.

AL. Yes; poor Bunbury is a dreadful invalid.

LADY B. Well, I must say, Algernon, that I think it is high time that Mr. Bunbury made up his mind whether he was going to live or to die. This shilly-shallying with that question is absurd. Nor do I in any way approve of the modern sympathy with invalids. I consider it morbid. Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others. Health is the primary duty of life. I am always telling that to your poor uncle, but he never seems to take much notice . . . as far as any improvement in his ailments goes. I should be much obliged if you would ask Mr. Bunbury, from me, to be kind enough not to have a relapse on Saturday, for I rely on you to arrange my music for me. It is my last reception and one wants something that will encourage conversation, particularly at the end of the season when everyone has practically said whatever he had to say, which, in most cases, was probably not much.

AL. I'll speak to Bunbury, Aunt Augusta, if he is still conscious, and I think I can promise you he'll be all right by Saturday. You see, if one plays good music, people don't listen, and if one plays bad music people don't talk. But I'll run over the programme I've drawn out, if you will kindly come into the next room for a moment.

LADY B. Thank you, Algernon. It is very thoughtful of you. (*Rising, and following* AL.) I'm sure the programme will be delightful, after a few expurgations. French songs I cannot possibly allow. People always seem to think that they are improper, and either look shocked, which is vulgar, or laugh, which is worse. But German sounds a thoroughly respectable language, and indeed, I believe it so. Gwendolen, you will accompany me.

GWEN. Certainly, mamma. (LADY B. *and* AL. *go into the music-room,* GWEN. *remains behind.*)

JACK. Charming day it has been, Miss Fairfax.

GWEN. Pray don't talk to me about the weather, Mr. Worthing. Whenever people talk to me about the weather, I always feel quite certain that they mean something else. And that makes me so nervous.

JACK. I do mean something else.

GWEN. I thought so. In fact, I am never wrong.

JACK. And I would like to be allowed to take advantage of Lady Bracknell's temporary absence. . . .

GWEN. I would certainly advise you to do so. Mamma has a way of coming back suddenly into a room that I have often had to speak to her about.

JACK (*nervously*). Miss Fairfax, ever since I met you I have admired you more than any girl . . . I have ever met since . . . I met you.

GWEN. Yes, I am quite aware of the fact. And I often wish that in public, at any rate, you had been more demonstrative. For me you have always had an irresistible fascination. Even before I met you I was far from indifferent to you. (JACK *looks at her in amazement.*) We live, as I hope you know, Mr. Worthing, in an age of ideals. The fact is constantly mentioned in the more expensive monthly magazines, and has reached the provincial pulpits, I am told: and my ideal has always been to love some one of the name of Ernest. There is something in that name that inspires absolute confidence. The mo-

ment Algernon first mentioned to me that he had a friend called Ernest, I knew I was destined to love you.

JACK. You really love me, Gwendolen?

GWEN. Passionately!

JACK. Darling! You don't know how happy you've made me.

GWEN. My own Ernest!

JACK. But you don't really mean to say that you couldn't love me if my name wasn't Ernest?

GWEN. But your name is Ernest.

JACK. Yes, I know it is. But supposing it was something else? Do you mean to say you couldn't love me then?

GWEN. (*glibly*). Ah! that is clearly a metaphysical speculation, and like most metaphysical speculations has very little reference at all to the actual facts of real life, as we know them.

JACK. Personally, darling, to speak quite candidly, I don't much care about the name of Ernest . . . I don't think that name suits me at all.

GWEN. It suits you perfectly. It is a divine name. It has music of its own. It produces vibrations.

JACK. Well, really, Gwendolen, I must say that I think there are lots of other much nicer names. I think Jack, for instance, a charming name.

GWEN. Jack? . . . No, there is very little music in the name Jack, if any at all, indeed. It does not thrill. It produces absolutely no vibrations. . . . I have known several Jacks, and they all, without exception, were more than usually plain. Besides, Jack is a notorious domesticity for John! And I pity any woman who is married to a man called John. She would probably never be allowed to know the entrancing pleasure of a single moment's solitude. The only really safe name is Ernest.

JACK. Gwendolen, I must get christened at once—I mean we must get married at once. There is no time to be lost.

GWEN. Married, Mr. Worthing?

JACK (*astounded*). Well . . . surely. You know that I love you, and you led me to believe, Miss Fairfax, that you were not absolutely indifferent to me.

GWEN. I adore you. But you haven't proposed to me yet. Nothing has been said at all about marriage. The subject has not even been touched on.

JACK. Well . . . may I propose to you now?

GWEN. I think it would be an admirable opportunity. And to spare you any possible disappointment, Mr. Worthing, I think it only fair to tell you quite frankly beforehand that I am fully determined to accept you.

JACK. Gwendolen!

GWEN. Yes, Mr. Worthing, what have you got to say to me?

JACK. You know what I have got to say to you.

GWEN. Yes, but you don't say it.

JACK. Gwendolen, will you marry me? (*Goes on his knees.*)

GWEN. Of course I will, darling. How long you have been about it! I am afraid you have had very little experience in how to propose.

JACK. My own one, I have never loved any one in the world but you.

GWEN. Yes, but men often propose for practice. I know my brother Gerald does. All my girl-friends tell me so. What wonderfully blue eyes you have, Ernest! They are quite, quite blue. I hope you will always look at me just like that, especially when there are other people present.

(*Enter* LADY B.)

LADY B. Mr. Worthing! Rise, sir, from this semi-recumbent posture. It is most indecorous.

GWEN. Mamma! (*He tries to rise; she restrains him.*) I must beg you to retire. This is no place for you. Besides, Mr. Worthing has not quite finished yet.

LADY B. Finished what, may I ask?

GWEN. I am engaged to Mr. Worthing, mamma. (*They rise together.*)

LADY B. Pardon me, you are not engaged to any one. When you do become engaged to some one, I, or your father, should his health permit him, will inform you of the fact. An engagement should come on a young girl as a surprise, pleasant or unpleasant, as the case may be. It is hardly a matter that she could be allowed to arrange for herself. . . . And now I have a few questions to put to you, Mr. Worthing. While I am making these inquiries, you, Gwendolen, will wait for me below in the carriage.

GWEN. (*reproachfully*). Mamma!

LADY B. In the carriage, Gwendolen! (GWEN. *goes to the door. She and* JACK *blow kisses to each other behind* LADY B.'S *back.* LADY B. *looks vaguely about as if she could not understand what the noise was. Finally turns round.*) Gwendolen, the carriage!

GWEN. Yes, mamma. (*Goes out, looking back at* JACK.)

LADY B. (*sitting down*). You can take a seat, Mr. Worthing. (*Looks in her pocket for note-book and pencil.*)

JACK. Thank you, Lady Bracknell, I prefer standing.

LADY B. (*pencil and note-book in hand*). I feel bound to tell you that you are not down on my list of eligible young men, although I have the same list as the dear Duchess of Bolton has. We work together, in fact. However, I am quite ready to enter your name, should your answers be what a really affectionate mother requires. Do you smoke?

JACK. Well, yes, I must admit I smoke.

LADY B. I am glad to hear it. A man should always have an occupation of some kind. There are far too many idle men in London as it is. How old are you?

JACK. Twenty-nine.

LADY B. A very good age to be married at. I have always been of opinion that a man who desires to get married should know either everything or nothing. Which do you know?

JACK (*after some hesitation*). I know nothing, Lady Bracknell.

LADY B. I am pleased to hear it. I do not approve of anything that tampers with natural ignorance. Ignorance is like a delicate exotic fruit; touch it and the bloom is gone. The whole theory of modern education is radically unsound. Fortunately in England, at any rate, education produces no effect whatsoever. If it did, it would prove a serious danger to the upper classes, and probably lead to acts of violence in Grosvenor Square. What is your income?

JACK. Between seven and eight thousand a year.

LADY B. (*makes a note in her book*). In land, or in investments?

JACK. In investments, chiefly.

LADY B. That is satisfactory. What between the duties expected of one during one's life-time, and the duties exacted from one after one's death, land has ceased to be either a profit or a pleasure. It gives one position, and prevents one from keeping it up. That's all that can be said about land.

JACK. I have a country house with some land, of course, attached to it, about fifteen hundred acres, I believe; but I don't depend on that for my real income. In fact, as far as I can make out, the poachers are the only people who make anything out of it.

LADY B. A country house! How many bedrooms? Well, that point can be cleared up afterwards. You have a town house, I hope? A girl with a simple, unspoiled nature, like Gwendolen, could hardly be expected to reside in the country.

JACK. Well, I own a house in Belgrave Square, but it is let by the year to Lady Bloxham. Of course, I can get it back whenever I like, at six months' notice.

LADY B. Lady Bloxham? I don't know her.

JACK. Oh, she goes about very little. She is a lady considerably advanced in years.

LADY B. Ah, now-a-days that is no guarantee of respectability of character. What number in Belgrave Square?

JACK. 149.

LADY B. (*shaking her head*). The unfashionable side. I thought there was something. However, that could easily be altered.

JACK. Do you mean the fashion, or the side?

LADY B. (*sternly*). Both, if necessary, I presume. What are your politics?

JACK. Well, I am afraid I really have none. I am a Liberal Unionist.

LADY B. Oh, they count as Tories. They dine with us. Or come in the evening, at any rate. Now to minor affairs. Are your parents living?

JACK. I have lost both my parents.

LADY B. Both? . . . That seems like carelessness. Who was your father? He was evidently a man of some wealth. Was he born in what the Radical papers call the purple of commerce, or did he rise from the ranks of the aristocracy?

JACK. I am afraid I really don't know. The fact is, Lady Bracknell, I said I had lost my parents. It would be nearer the truth to say that my parents seem to have lost me . . . I don't actually know who I am by birth. I was . . . well, I was found.

LADY B. Found!

JACK. The late Mr. Thomas Cardew, an old gentleman of a very charitable and kindly disposition, found me, and gave me the name of Worthing, because he happened to have a first-class ticket for Worthing in his pocket at the time. Worthing is a place in Sussex. It is a seaside resort.

LADY B. Where did the charitable gentleman who had a first-class ticket for this seaside resort find you?

JACK (*gravely*). In a hand-bag.

LADY B. A hand-bag?

JACK (*very seriously*). Yes, Lady Bracknell. I was in a hand-bag—a somewhat large, black leather hand-bag, with handles to it—an ordinary hand-bag in fact.

LADY B. In what locality did this Mr. James, or Thomas, Cardew come across this ordinary hand-bag?

JACK. In the cloak-room at Victoria Station. It was given to him in mistake for his own.

LADY B. The cloak-room at Victoria Station?

JACK. Yes. The Brighton line.

LADY B. The line is immaterial. Mr. Worthing, I confess I feel somewhat bewildered by what you have just told me. To be born, or at any rate bred, in a hand-bag, whether it had handles or not, seems to me to display a contempt for the ordinary decencies of family life that remind one of the worst excesses of the French Revolution. And I presume you know what that unfortunate movement led to? As for the particular locality in which the hand-bag was found, a cloak-room at a railway station might serve to conceal a social indiscretion—has probably, indeed, been used for that purpose before now—but it could hardly be regarded as an assured basis for a recognized position in good society.

JACK. May I ask you then what you would advise me to do? I need hardly say I would do anything in the world to ensure Gwendolen's happiness.

LADY B. I would strongly advise you, Mr. Worthing, to try and acquire some relations as soon as possible, and to make a definite effort to produce at any rate one parent, of either sex, before the season is quite over.

JACK. Well, I don't see how I could possibly manage to do that. I can produce the hand-bag at any moment. It is in my dressing-room at home. I really think that should satisfy you, Lady Bracknell.

LADY B. Me, sir! What has it to do with me? You can hardly imagine that I and Lord Bracknell would dream of allowing our only daughter—a girl brought up with the utmost care—to marry into a cloak-room, and form an alliance with a parcel? Good morning, Mr. Worthing! (LADY B. *sweeps out in majestic indignation.*)

JACK. Good morning! (AL., *from the other room, strikes up the Wedding March.* JACK *looks perfectly furious, and goes to the door.*) For goodness' sake, don't play that ghastly tune, Algy! How idiotic you are! (*The music stops, and* AL. *enters cheerily.*)

AL. Didn't it go off all right, old boy? You don't mean to say Gwendolen refused you? I know it is a way she has. She is always refusing people. I think it is most ill-natured of her.

JACK. Oh, Gwendolen is as right as a trivet. As far as she is concerned, we are engaged. Her mother is perfectly unbearable. Never met such a Gorgon . . . I don't really know what a Gorgon is like, but I am quite sure that Lady Bracknell is one. In any case, she is a monster, without being a myth, which is rather unfair. . . . I beg your pardon, Algy, I suppose I shouldn't talk about your own aunt in that way before you.

AL. My dear boy, I love hearing my relations abused. It is the only thing that makes me put up with them at all. Relations are simply a tedious pack of people, who haven't got the remotest knowledge of how to live, nor the smallest instinct about when to die.

JACK. Oh, that is nonsense.

AL. It isn't!

JACK. Well, I won't argue about the matter. You always want to argue about things.

AL. That is exactly what things were originally made for.

JACK. Upon my word, if I thought that, I'd shoot myself . . . (*A pause.*) You don't think there is any chance of Gwendolen becoming like her mother in about a hundred and fifty years, do you, Algy?

AL. All women become like their mothers. That is their tragedy. No man does. That's his.

JACK. Is that clever?

AL. It is perfectly phrased! and quite as true as any observation in civilized life should be.

JACK. I am sick to death of cleverness. Everybody is clever now-a-days. You can't go anywhere without meeting clever people. The thing has become an absolute public nuisance. I wish to goodness we had a few fools left.

AL. We have.

JACK. I should extremely like to meet them. What do they talk about?

AL. The fools? Oh! about the clever people of course.

JACK. What fools!

AL. By the way, did you tell Gwendolen the truth about your being Ernest in town, and Jack in the country?

JACK (*in a very patronizing manner*). My dear fellow, the truth isn't quite the sort of thing one tells to a nice, sweet, refined girl. What extraordinary ideas you have about the way to behave to a woman!

AL. The only way to behave to a woman is to make love to her, if she is pretty, and to someone else if she is plain.

JACK. Oh, that is nonsense.

AL. What about your brother? What about the profligate Ernest?

JACK. Oh, before the end of the week I shall have got rid of him. I'll say he died in Paris of apoplexy. Lots of people die of apoplexy, quite suddenly, don't they?

AL. Yes, but it's hereditary, my dear fellow. It's a sort of thing that runs in families. You had much better say a severe chill.

JACK. You are sure a severe chill isn't hereditary, or anything of that kind?

AL. Of course it isn't!

JACK. Very well, then. My poor brother Ernest is carried off suddenly in Paris, by a severe chill. That gets rid of him.

AL. But I thought you said that . . . Miss Cardew was a little too much interested in your poor brother Ernest? Won't she feel his loss a good deal?

JACK. Oh, that is all right. Cecily is not a silly, romantic girl, I am glad to say. She has got a capital appetite, goes for long walks, and pays no attention at all to her lessons.

AL. I would rather like to see Cecily.

JACK. I will take very good care you never do. She is excessively pretty, and she is only just eighteen.

AL. Have you told Gwendolen yet that you have an excessively pretty ward who is only just eighteen?

JACK. Oh! one doesn't blurt these things out to people. Cecily and Gwendolen are perfectly certain to be extremely great friends. I'll bet you anything you like that half an hour after they have met, they will be calling each other sister.

AL. Women only do that when they have called each other a lot of other things first. Now, my dear boy, if we want to get a good table at Willis's, we really must go and dress. Do you know it is nearly seven?

JACK (*irritably*). Oh! it always is nearly seven.

AL. Well, I'm hungry.

JACK. I never knew you when you weren't.

AL. What shall we do after dinner? Go to a theatre?

JACK. Oh, no! I loathe listening.

AL. Well, let us go to the Club?

JACK. Oh, no! I hate talking.

AL. Well, we might trot round to the Empire at ten?

JACK. Oh, no! I can't bear looking at things. It is so silly.

AL. Well, what shall we do?

JACK. Nothing!

AL. It is awfully hard work doing nothing. However, I don't mind hard work where there is no definite object of any kind.

(*Enter* LANE.)

LANE. Miss Fairfax.

(*Enter* GWEN. LANE *goes out.*)

AL. Gwendolen, upon my word.

GWEN. Algy, kindly turn your back. I have something very particular to say to Mr. Worthing.

AL. Really, Gwendolen, I don't think I can allow this at all.

GWEN. Algy, you always adopt a strictly immoral attitude towards life. You are not quite old enough to do that. (AL. *retires to the fireplace.*)

JACK. My own darling!

GWEN. Ernest, we may never be married. From the expression on mamma's face I fear we never shall. Few parents now-a-days pay any regard to what their children say to them. The old-fashioned respect for the young is fast dying out. Whatever influence I ever had over mamma, I lost at the age of three. But although she may prevent us from becoming man and wife, and I may marry someone else, and marry often, nothing that she can possibly do can alter my eternal devotion to you.

JACK. Dear Gwendolen.

GWEN. The story of your romantic origin, as related to me by mamma, with unpleasing comments, has naturally stirred the deeper fibres of my nature. Your Christian name has an irresistible fascination. The simplicity of your character makes you exquisitely incomprehensible to me. Your town address at the Albany I have. What is your address in the country?

JACK. The Manor House, Woolton, Hertfordshire.

(AL., *who has been carefully listening, smiles to himself, and writes the address on his shirt-cuff. Then picks up the Railway Guide.*)

GWEN. There is a good postal service, I suppose? It may be necessary to do something desperate. That, of course, will require serious consideration. I will communicate with you daily.

JACK. My own one!

GWEN. How long do you remain in town?

JACK. Till Monday.

GWEN. Good! Algy, you may turn round now.

AL. Thanks, I've turned round already.

GWEN. You may also ring the bell.

JACK. You will let me see you to your carriage, my own darling?

GWEN. Certainly.

JACK (*to* LANE., *who now enters*). I will see Miss Fairfax out.

LANE. Yes, sir. (JACK *and* GWEN. *go off.* LANE *presents several letters on a salver to* AL. *It is to be surmised that they are bills, as* AL., *after looking at the envelopes, tears them up.*)

AL. A glass of sherry, Lane.

LANE. Yes, sir.

AL. Tomorrow, Lane, I'm going Bunburying.

LANE. Yes, sir.

AL. I shall probably not be back till Monday. You can put up my dress clothes, my smoking jacket, and all the Bunbury suits . . .

LANE. Yes, sir. (*Handing sherry.*)

AL. I hope tomorrow will be a fine day, Lane.

LANE. It never is, sir.

AL. Lane, you're a perfect pessimist.

LANE. I do my best to give satisfaction, sir.

(*Enter* JACK. LANE *goes off.*)

JACK. There's a sensible, intellectual girl! the only girl I ever cared for in my life. (AL. *is laughing immoderately.*) What on earth are you so amused at?

AL. Oh, I'm a little anxious about poor Bunbury, that's all.

JACK. If you don't take care, your friend Bunbury will get you into a serious scrape some day.

AL. I love scrapes. They are the only things that are never serious.

JACK. Oh, that's nonsense, Algy. You never talk anything but nonsense.

AL. Nobody ever does. (JACK *looks indignantly at him, and leaves the room.* AL. *lights a cigarette, reads his shirt-cuff and smiles.*)

ACT II

SCENE. *Garden at the Manor House. A flight of gray stone steps leads up to the house. The garden, an old-fashioned one, full of roses. Time of year, July. Basket chairs, and a table covered with books, are set under a large yew tree.*

(MISS PRISM *discovered seated at the table.* CECILY *is at the back, watering flowers.*)

MISS P. (*calling*). Cecily, Cecily! Surely such a utilitarian occupation as the watering of flowers is rather Moulton's duty than yours? Especially at a moment when intellectual pleasures await you. Your German grammar is on the table. Pray open it at page fifteen. We will repeat yesterday's lesson.

CEC. (*coming over very slowly*). But I don't like German. It isn't at all a becoming language. I know perfectly well that I look quite plain after my German lesson.

MISS P. Child, you know how anxious your guardian is that you should improve yourself in every way. He laid particular stress on your German, as he was leaving for town yesterday. Indeed, he always lays stress on your German when he is leaving for town.

CEC. Dear Uncle Jack is so very serious! Sometimes he is so serious that I think he cannot be quite well.

MISS P. (*drawing herself up*). Your guardian enjoys the best of health, and his gravity of demeanour is especially to be commended in one so comparatively young as he is. I know no one who has a higher sense of duty and responsibility.

CEC. I suppose that is why he often looks a little bored when we three are together.

MISS P. Cecily! I am surprised at you. Mr. Worthing has many troubles in his life. Idle merriment and triviality would be out of place in his conversation. You must remember his constant anxiety about that unfortunate young man, his brother.

CEC. I wish Uncle Jack would allow that unfortunate young man, his brother, to come down here sometimes. We might have a good influence over him, Miss Prism. I am sure you certainly would. You know German, and geology, and things of that kind influence a man very much. (CEC. *begins to write in her diary.*)

MISS P. (*shaking her head*). I do not think that even I could produce any effect on a character that, according to his own brother's admission, is irretrievably weak and vacillating. Indeed, I am not sure that I would desire to reclaim him. I am not in favour of this modern mania for turning bad people into good people at a moment's notice. As a man sows, so let him reap. You must put away your diary, Cecily. I really don't see why you should keep a diary at all.

CEC. I keep a diary in order to enter the wonderful secrets of my life. If I didn't write them down, I should probably forget all about them.

MISS P. Memory, my dear Cecily, is the diary that we all carry about with us.

CEC. Yes, but it usually chronicles the things that have never happened, and couldn't possibly have happened. I believe that Memory is responsible for nearly all the three-volume novels that Mudie sends us.

MISS P. Do not speak slightingly of the three-volume novel, Cecily. I wrote one myself in earlier days.

CEC. Did you really, Miss Prism? How wonderfully clever you are! I hope

it did not end happily? I don't like novels that end happily. They depress me so much.

MISS P. The good ended happily, and the bad unhappily. That is what Fiction means.

CEC. I suppose so. But it seems very unfair. And was your novel ever published?

MISS P. Alas! no. The manuscript unfortunately was abandoned. I use the word in the sense of lost or mislaid. To your work, child, these speculations are profitless.

CEC. (*smiling*). But I see dear Dr. Chasuble coming up through the garden.

MISS P. (*rising and advancing*). Dr. Chasuble! This is indeed a pleasure.

(*Enter* CANON CHASUBLE.)

CHAS. And how are we this morning? Miss Prism, you are, I trust, well?

CEC. Miss Prism has just been complaining of a slight headache. I think it would do her so much good to have a short stroll with you in the park, Dr. Chasuble.

MISS P. Cecily, I have not mentioned anything about a headache.

CEC. No, dear Miss Prism, I know that, but I felt instinctively that you had a headache. Indeed I was thinking about that, and not about my German lesson, when the Rector came in.

CHAS. I hope, Cecily, you are not inattentive.

CEC. Oh, I am afraid I am.

CHAS. That is strange. Were I fortunate enough to be Miss Prism's pupil, I would hang upon her lips. (MISS P. *glares.*) I spoke metaphorically.—My metaphor was drawn from bees. Ahem! Mr. Worthing, I suppose, has not returned from town yet?

MISS P. We do not expect him till Monday afternoon.

CHAS. Ah yes, he usually likes to spend his Sunday in London. He is not one of those whose sole aim is enjoyment, as, by all accounts, that unfortunate young man, his brother, seems to be. But I must not disturb Egeria and her pupil any longer.

MISS P. Egeria? My name is Lætitia, Doctor.

CHAS. (*bowing*). A classical allusion merely, drawn from the Pagan authors. I shall see you both no doubt at Evensong.

MISS P. I think, dear Doctor, I will have a stroll with you. I find I have a headache after all, and a walk might do it good.

CHAS. With pleasure, Miss Prism, with pleasure. We might go as far as the schools and back.

MISS P. That would be delightful. Cecily, you will read your Political Economy in my absence. The chapter on the Fall of the Rupee you may omit. It is somewhat too sensational. Even these metallic problems have their melodramatic side. (*Goes down the garden with* DR. CHASUBLE.)

CEC. (*picks up books and throws them back on table*). Horrid Political Economy! Horrid Geography! Horrid, horrid German!

(*Enter* MERRIMAN *with a card on a salver.*)

MERR. Mr. Ernest Worthing has just driven over from the station. He has brought his luggage with him.

CEC. (*takes the card and reads it*). "Mr. Ernest Worthing, B 4, The Albany, W." Uncle Jack's brother! Did you tell him Mr. Worthing was in town?

MERR. Yes, miss. He seemed very much disappointed. I mentioned that you and Miss Prism were in the garden. He said he was anxious to speak to you privately for a moment.

CEC. Ask Mr. Ernest Worthing to come here. I suppose you had better talk to the housekeeper about a room for him.

MERR. Yes, Miss. (MERR. *goes off.*)

CEC. I have never met any really wicked person before. I feel rather frightened. I am so afraid he will look just like everyone else.

(*Enter* AL., *very gay and debonair.*)

He does!

AL. (*raising his hat*). You are my little cousin Cecily, I'm sure.

CEC. You are under some strange mistake. I am not little. In fact, I am more than usually tall for my age. (AL. *is rather taken aback.*) But I am your cousin Cecily. You, I see from your card, are Uncle Jack's brother, my cousin Ernest, my wicked cousin Ernest.

AL. Oh! I am not really wicked at all, cousin Cecily. You mustn't think that I am wicked.

CEC. If you are not, then you have certainly been deceiving us all in a very inexcusable manner. I hope you have not been leading a double life, pretending to be wicked and being really good all the time. That would be hypocrisy.

AL. (*looks at her in amazement*). Oh! of course I have been rather reckless.

CEC. I am glad to hear it.

AL. In fact, now you mention the subject, I have been very bad in my own small way.

CEC. I don't think you should be so proud of that, though I am sure it must have been very pleasant.

AL. It is much pleasanter being here with you.

CEC. I can't understand how you are here at all. Uncle Jack won't be back till Monday afternoon.

AL. That is a great disappointment. I am obliged to go up by the first train on Monday morning. I have a business appointment that I am anxious . . . to miss.

CEC. Couldn't you miss it anywhere but in London?

AL. No; the appointment is in London.

CEC. Well, I know, of course, how important it is not to keep a business engagement, if one wants to retain any sense of the beauty of life, but still I think you had better wait till Uncle Jack arrives. I know he wants to speak to you about your emigrating.

AL. About my what?

CEC. Your emigrating. He has gone up to buy your outfit.

AL. I certainly wouldn't let Jack buy my outfit. He has no taste in neckties at all.

CEC. I don't think you will require neckties. Uncle Jack is sending you to Australia.

AL. Australia! I'd sooner die.

CEC. Well, he said at dinner on Wednesday night, that you would have to choose between this world, the next world, and Australia.

AL. Oh, well! The accounts I have received of Australia and the next world are not particularly encouraging. This world is good enough for me, cousin Cecily.

CEC. Yes, but are you good enough for it?

AL. I'm afraid I'm not that. That is why I want you to reform me. You might make that your mission, if you don't mind, cousin Cecily.

CEC. I'm afraid I've not time, this afternoon.

AL. Well, would you mind my reforming myself this afternoon?

CEC. That is rather Quixotic of you. But I think you should try.

AL. I will. I feel better already.

CEC. You are looking a little worse.

AL. That is because I am hungry.

CEC. How thoughtless of me. I should have remembered that when one is going to lead an entirely new life, one requires regular and wholesome meals. Won't you come in?

AL. Thank you. Might I have a button-hole first? I never have any appetite unless I have a button-hole first.

CEC. A Maréchal Niel? (*Picks up scissors.*)

AL. No, I'd sooner have a pink rose.

CEC. Why? (*Cuts a flower.*)

AL. Because you are like a pink rose, cousin Cecily.

CEC. I don't think it can be right for you to talk to me like that. Miss Prism never says such things to me.

AL. Then Miss Prism is a short-sighted old lady. (CEC. *puts the rose in his button-hole.*) You are the prettiest girl I ever saw.

CEC. Miss Prism says that all good looks are a snare.

AL. They are a snare that every sensible man would like to be caught in.

CEC. Oh! I don't think I would care to catch a sensible man. I shouldn't know what to talk to him about. (*They pass into the house.* MISS P. *and* DR. CHASUBLE *return.*)

MISS P. You are too much alone, dear Dr. Chasuble. You should get married. A misanthrope I can understand—a womanthrope, never!

CHAS. (*with a scholar's shudder*). Believe me, I do not deserve so neologistic a phrase. The precept as well as the practice of the Primitive Church was distinctly against matrimony.

MISS P. (*sententiously*). That is obviously the reason why the Primitive Church has not lasted up to the present day. And you do not seem to realize, dear Doctor, that by persistently remaining single, a man converts himself into a permanent public temptation. Men should be careful; this very celibacy leads weaker vessels astray.

CHAS. But is a man not equally attractive when married?

MISS P. No married man is ever attractive except to his wife.

CHAS. And often, I've been told, not even to her.

MISS P. That depends on the intellectual sympathies of the woman. Maturity can always be depended on. Ripeness can be trusted. Young women are green.

(DR. CHASUBLE *starts.*) I spoke horticulturally. My metaphor was drawn from fruits. But where is Cecily?

CHAS. Perhaps she followed us to the schools.

(*Enter* JACK *slowly from the back of the garden. He is dressed in the deepest mourning, with crape hatband and black gloves.*)

MISS P. Mr. Worthing!

CHAS. Mr. Worthing?

MISS P. This is indeed a surprise. We did not look for you till Monday afternoon.

JACK (*shakes* MISS P.'s *hand in a tragic manner*). I have returned sooner than I expected. Dr. Chasuble, I hope you are well?

CHAS. Dear Mr. Worthing, I trust this garb of woe does not betoken some terrible calamity?

JACK. My brother.

MISS P. More shameful debts and extravagance?

CHAS. Still leading his life of pleasure?

JACK (*shaking his head*). Dead!

CHAS. Your brother Ernest dead?

JACK. Quite dead.

MISS P. What a lesson for him! I trust he will profit by it.

CHAS. Mr. Worthing, I offer you my sincere condolence. You have at least the consolation of knowing that you were always the most generous and forgiving of brothers.

JACK. Poor Ernest! He had many faults, but it is a sad, sad blow.

CHAS. Very sad indeed. Were you with him at the end?

JACK. No. He died abroad; in Paris, in fact. I had a telegram last night from the manager of the Grand Hotel.

CHAS. Was the cause of death mentioned?

JACK. A severe chill, it seems.

MISS P. As a man sows, so shall he reap.

CHAS. (*raising his hand*). Charity, dear Miss Prism, charity! None of us is perfect. I myself am peculiarly susceptible to draughts. Will the interment take place here?

JACK. No. He seems to have expressed a desire to be buried in Paris.

CHAS. In Paris! (*Shakes his head.*) I fear that hardly points to any very serious state of mind at the last. You would no doubt wish me to make some slight allusion to this tragic domestic affliction next Sunday. (JACK *presses his hand convulsively.*) My sermon on the meaning of the manna in the wilderness can be adapted to almost any occasion, joyful, or, as in the present case, distressing. (*All sigh.*) I have preached it at harvest celebrations, christenings, confirmations, on days of humiliation, and festal days. The last time I delivered it, it was in the Cathedral, as a charity sermon on behalf of the Society for the Prevention of Discontentment among the Upper Orders. The Bishop, who was present, was much struck by some of the analogies I drew.

JACK. Ah, that reminds me, you mentioned christenings I think, Dr. Chasuble? I suppose you know how to christen all right? (DR. CHASUBLE *looks astounded.*) I mean, of course, you are continually christening, aren't you?

MISS P. It is, I regret to say, one of the Rector's most constant duties in this parish. I have often spoken to the poorer classes on the subject. But they don't seem to know what thrift is.

CHAS. But is there any particular infant in whom you are interested, Mr. Worthing? Your brother was, I believe, unmarried, was he not?

JACK. Oh, yes.

MISS P. (*bitterly*). People who live entirely for pleasure usually are.

JACK. But it is not for any child, dear Doctor. I am very fond of children. No! the fact is, I would like to be christened myself, this afternoon, if you have nothing better to do.

CHAS. But surely, Mr. Worthing, you have been christened already?

JACK. I don't remember anything about it.

CHAS. But have you any grave doubts on the subject?

JACK. I certainly intend to have. Of course, I don't know if the thing would bother you in any way, or if you think I am a little too old now.

CHAS. Not at all. The sprinkling, and, indeed, the immersion of adults is a perfectly canonical practice.

JACK. Immersion.

CHAS. You need have no apprehensions. Sprinkling is all that is necessary, or indeed I think advisable. Our weather is so changeable. At what hour would you wish the ceremony performed?

JACK. Oh, I might trot around about five if that would suit you.

CHAS. Perfectly, perfectly! In fact I have two similar ceremonies to perform at that time. A case of twins that occurred recently in one of the outlying cottages on your own estate. Poor Jenkins the carter, a most hard-working man.

JACK. Oh! I don't see much fun in being christened along with other babies. It would be childish. Would half-past five do?

CHAS. Admirably! Admirably! (*Takes out watch.*) And now, dear Mr. Worthing, I will not intrude any longer into a house of sorrow. I would merely beg you not to be too much bowed down by grief. What seem to us bitter trials at the moment are often blessings in disguise.

MISS P. This seems to me a blessing of an extremely obvious kind.

(*Enter* CEC. *from the house.*)

CEC. Uncle Jack! Oh, I am pleased to see you back. But what horrid clothes you have on! Do go and change them.

MISS P. Cecily!

CHAS. My child! my child! (CEC. *goes towards* JACK; *he kisses her brow in a melancholy manner.*)

CEC. What is the matter, Uncle Jack? Do look happy? You look as if you had a toothache and I have such a surprise for you. Who do you think is in the dining-room? Your brother!

JACK. Who?

CEC. Your brother Ernest. He arrived about half an hour ago.

JACK. What nonsense! I haven't got a brother.

CEC. Oh, don't say that. However badly he may have behaved to you in the past he is still your brother. You couldn't be so heartless as to disown him.

I'll tell him to come out. And you will shake hands with him, won't you, Uncle Jack? (*Runs back into the house.*)

CHAS. These are very joyful tidings.

MISS P. After we had all been resigned to his loss, his sudden return seems to me peculiarly distressing.

JACK. My brother is in the dining-room? I don't know what it all means. I think it is perfectly absurd. (*Enter* AL. *and* CEC. *hand in hand. They come slowly up to* JACK.) Good heavens! (*Motions* AL. *away.*)

AL. Brother John, I have come down from town to tell you that I am very sorry for all the trouble I have given you, and that I intend to lead a better life in the future. (JACK *glares at him and does not take his hand.*)

CEC. Uncle Jack, you are not going to refuse your own brother's hand?

JACK. Nothing will induce me to take his hand. I think his coming down here disgraceful. He knows perfectly well why.

CEC. Uncle Jack, do be nice. There is some good in everyone. Ernest has just been telling me about his poor invalid friend, Mr. Bunbury, whom he goes to visit so often. And surely there must be much good in one who is kind to an invalid, and leaves the pleasures of London to sit by a bed of pain.

JACK. Oh, he has been talking about Bunbury, has he?

CEC. Yes, he has told me all about poor Mr. Bunbury, and his terrible state of health.

JACK. Bunbury! Well, I won't have him talk to you about Bunbury or about anything else. It is enough to drive one perfectly frantic.

AL. Of course I admit that the faults were all on my side. But I must say that I think that Brother John's coldness to me is peculiarly painful. I expected a more enthusiastic welcome, especially considering it is the first time I have come here.

CEC. Uncle Jack, if you don't shake hands with Ernest I will never forgive you.

JACK. Never forgive me?

CEC. Never, never, never!

JACK. Well, this is the last time I shall ever do it. (*Shakes hands with* AL. *and glares.*)

CHAS. It's pleasant, is it not, to see so perfect a reconciliation? I think we might leave the two brothers together.

MISS P. Cecily, you will come with us.

CEC. Certainly, Miss Prism. My little task of reconciliation is over.

CHAS. You have done a beautiful action today, dear child.

MISS P. We must not be premature in our judgments.

CEC. I feel very happy. (*They all go off.*)

JACK. You young scoundrel, Algy, you must get out of this place as soon as possible. I don't allow any Bunburying here.

(*Enter* MERR.)

MERR. I have put Mr. Ernest's things in the room next to yours, sir. I suppose that is all right?

JACK. What?

MERR. Mr. Ernest's luggage, sir. I have unpacked it and put it in the room next to your own.

JACK. His luggage?

MERR. Yes, sir. Three portmanteaus, a dressing-case, two hat-boxes, and a large luncheon-basket.

AL. I am afraid I can't stay more than a week this time.

JACK. Merriman, order the dog-cart at once. Mr. Ernest has been suddenly called back to town.

MERR. Yes, sir. (*Goes back into the house.*)

AL. What a fearful liar you are, Jack. I have not been called back to town at all.

JACK. Yes, you have.

AL. I haven't heard anyone calling me.

JACK. Your duty as a gentleman calls you back.

AL. My duty as a gentleman has never interfered with my pleasures in the smallest degree.

JACK. I can quite understand that.

AL. Well, Cecily is a darling.

JACK. You are not to talk of Miss Cardew like that. I don't like it.

AL. Well, I don't like your clothes. You look perfectly ridiculous in them. Why on earth don't you go up and change? It is perfectly childish to be in deep mourning for a man who is actually staying for a whole week with you in your house as a guest. I call it grotesque.

JACK. You are certainly not staying with me for a whole week as a guest or anything else. You have got to leave . . . by the four-five train.

AL. I certainly won't leave you so long as you are in mourning. It would be most unfriendly. If I were in mourning you would stay with me, I suppose. I should think it very unkind if you didn't.

JACK. Well, will you go if I change my clothes?

AL. Yes, if you are not too long. I never saw anybody take so long to dress, and with such little result.

JACK. Well, at any rate, that is better than being always over-dressed as you are.

AL. If I am occasionally a little over-dressed, I make up for it by being always immensely over-educated.

JACK. Your vanity is ridiculous, your conduct an outrage, and your presence in my garden utterly absurd. However, you have got to catch the four-five, and I hope you will have a pleasant journey back to town. This Bunburying, as you call it, has not been a great success for you. (*Goes into the house.*)

AL. I think it has been a great success. I'm in love with Cecily, and that is everything. (*Enter* CEC. *at the back of the garden. She picks up the can and begins to water the flowers.*) But I must see her before I go, and make arrangements for another Bunbury. Ah, there she is.

CEC. Oh, I merely came back to water the roses. I thought you were with Uncle Jack.

AL. He's gone to order the dog-cart for me.

CEC. Oh, is he going to take you for a nice drive?

AL. He's going to send me away.

CEC. Then have we got to part?

AL. I am afraid so. It's a very painful parting.

CEC. It is always painful to part from people whom one has known for a very brief space of time. The absence of old friends one can endure with equanimity. But even a momentary separation from anyone to whom one has just been introduced is almost unbearable.

AL. Thank you.

(*Enter* MERR.)

MERR. The dog-cart is at the door, sir. (AL. *looks appealingly at* CEC.)

CEC. It can wait, Merriman . . . for . . . five minutes.

MERR. Yes, miss. (*Exit* MERR.)

AL. I hope, Cecily, I shall not offend you if I state quite frankly and openly that you seem to me to be in every way the visible personification of absolute perfection.

CEC. I think your frankness does you great credit, Ernest. If you will allow me, I will copy your remarks into my diary. (*Goes over to table and begins writing in diary.*)

AL. Do you really keep a diary? I'd give anything to look at it. May I?

CEC. Oh, no. (*Puts her hand over it.*) You see, it is simply a very young girl's record of her own thoughts and impressions, and consequently meant for publication. When it appears in volume form I hope you will order a copy. But pray, Ernest, don't stop. I delight in taking down from dictation. I have reached "absolute perfection." You can go on. I am quite ready for more.

AL. (*somewhat taken aback*). Ahem! Ahem!

CEC. Oh, don't cough, Ernest. When one is dictating one should speak fluently and not cough. Besides, I don't know how to spell a cough. (*Writes as* AL. *speaks.*)

AL. (*speaking very rapidly*). Cecily, ever since I first looked upon your wonderful and incomparable beauty, I have dared to love you wildly, passionately, devotedly, hopelessly.

CEC. I don't think that you should tell me that you love me wildly, passionately, devotedly, hopelessly. Hopelessly doesn't seem to make much sense, does it?

AL. Cecily!

(*Enter* MERR.)

MERR. The dog-cart is waiting, sir.

AL. Tell it to come round next week, at the same hour.

MERR. (*looks at* CEC., *who makes no sign*). Yes, sir. (MERR. *retires.*)

CEC. Uncle Jack would be very much annoyed if he knew you were staying on till next week, at the same hour.

AL. Oh, I don't care about Jack. I don't care for anybody in the whole world but you. I love you, Cecily. You will marry me, won't you?

CEC. You silly, you! Of course. Why, we have been engaged for the last three months.

AL. For the last three months?

CEC. Yes, it will be exactly three months on Thursday.

AL. But how did we become engaged?

CEC. Well, ever since dear Uncle Jack first confessed to us that he had a younger brother who was very wicked and bad, you of course have formed the chief topic of conversation between myself and Miss Prism. And of course a man who is much talked about is always very attractive. One feels there must be something in him after all. I daresay it was foolish of me, but I fell in love with you, Ernest.

AL. Darling! And when was the engagement actually settled?

CEC. On the fourth of February last. Worn out by your entire ignorance of my existence, I determined to end the matter one way or the other, and after a long struggle with myself I accepted you under this dear old tree here. The next day I bought this little ring in your name, and this is the little bangle with the true lovers' knot I promised you always to wear.

AL. Did I give you this? It's very pretty, isn't it?

CEC. Yes, you've wonderfully good taste, Ernest. It's the excuse I've always given for your leading such a bad life. And this is the box in which I keep all your dear letters. (*Kneels at table, opens box, and produces letters tied up with blue ribbon.*)

AL. My letters! But my own sweet Cecily, I have never written you any letters.

CEC. You need hardly remind me of that, Ernest. I remember only too well that I was forced to write your letters for you. I wrote always three times a week, and sometimes oftener.

AL. Oh, do let me read them, Cecily?

CEC. Oh, I couldn't possibly. They would make you far too conceited. (*Replaces box.*) The three you wrote me after I had broken off the engagement are so beautiful, and so badly spelled, that even now I can hardly read them without crying a little.

AL. But was our engagement ever broken off?

CEC. Of course it was. On the twenty-second of last March. You can see the entry if you like. (*Shows diary.*) "Today I broke off my engagement with Ernest. I feel it is better to do so. The weather still continues charming."

AL. But why on earth did you break it off? What had I done? I had done nothing at all. Cecily, I am very much hurt indeed to hear you broke it off. Particularly when the weather was so charming.

CEC. It would hardly have been a really serious engagement if it hadn't been broken off at least once. But I forgave you before the week was out.

AL. (*crossing to her, and kneeling*). What a perfect angel you are, Cecily.

CEC. You dear romantic boy. (*He kisses her, she puts her fingers through his hair.*) I hope your hair curls naturally, does it?

AL. Yes, darling, with a little help from others.

CEC. I am so glad.

AL. You'll never break off our engagement again, Cecily?

CEC. I don't think I could break it off now that I have actually met you. Besides, of course, there is the question of your name.

AL. Yes, of course. (*Nervously.*)

CEC. You must not laugh at me, darling, but it had always been a girlish dream of mine to love some one whose name was Ernest. (AL. *rises,* CEC. *also.*) There is something in that name that seems to inspire absolute confidence. I pity any poor married woman whose husband is not called Ernest.

AL. But, my dear child, do you mean to say you could not love me if I had some other name?

CEC. But what name?

AL. Oh, any name you like—Algernon, for instance. . . .

CEC. But I don't like the name of Algernon.

AL. Well, my own dear, sweet, loving little darling, I really can't see why you should object to the name of Algernon. It is not at all a bad name. In fact, it is rather an aristocratic name. Half of the chaps who get into the Bankruptcy Court are called Algernon. But seriously, Cecily . . . (*Moving to her.*) . . . if my name was Algy, couldn't you love me?

CEC. (*rising*). I might respect you, Ernest, I might admire your character, but I fear that I should not be able to give you my undivided attention.

AL. Ahem! Cecily! (*Picking up hat.*) Your Rector here is, I suppose, thoroughly experienced in the practice of all the rites and ceremonials of the church?

CEC. Oh, yes. Dr. Chasuble is a most learned man. He has never written a single book, so you can imagine how much he knows.

AL. I must see him at once on a most important christening—I mean on most important business.

CEC. Oh!

AL. I shan't be away more than half an hour.

CEC. Considering that we have been engaged since February the fourteenth, and that I only met you today for the first time, I think it is rather hard that you should leave me for so long a period as half an hour. Couldn't you make it twenty minutes?

AL. I'll be back in no time. (*Kisses her and rushes down the garden.*)

CEC. What an impetuous boy he is. I like his hair so much. I must enter his proposal in my diary.

(*Enter* MERR.)

MERR. A Miss Fairfax has just called to see Mr. Worthing. On very important business, Miss Fairfax states.

CEC. Isn't Mr. Worthing in his library?

MERR. Mr. Worthing went over in the direction of the Rectory some time ago.

CEC. Pray ask the lady to come out here; Mr. Worthing is sure to be back soon. And you can bring tea.

MERR. Yes, miss. (*Goes out.*)

CEC. Miss Fairfax! I suppose one of the many good elderly women who are associated with Uncle Jack in some of his philanthropic work in London. I don't quite like women who are interested in philanthropic work. I think it is so forward of them.

(*Enter* MERR.)

MERR. Miss Fairfax.

(*Enter* GWEN. *Exit* MERR.)

CEC. (*advancing to meet her*). Pray let me introduce myself to you. My name is Cecily Cardew.

GWEN. Cecily Cardew? (*Moving to her and shaking hands.*) What a very sweet name! Something tells me that we are going to be great friends. I like you already more than I can say. My first impressions of people are never wrong.

CEC. How nice of you to like me so much after we have known each other such a comparatively short time. Pray sit down.

GWEN. (*still standing up*). I may call you Cecily, may I not?

CEC. With pleasure!

GWEN. And you will always call me Gwendolen, won't you?

CEC. If you wish.

GWEN. Then that is all quite settled, is it not?

CEC. I hope so. (*A pause. They both sit down together.*)

GWEN. Perhaps this might be a favorable opportunity for my mentioning who I am. My father is Lord Bracknell. You have never heard of papa, I suppose?

CEC. I don't think so.

GWEN. Outside the family circle, papa, I am glad to say, is entirely unknown. I think that is quite as it should be. The home seems to me the proper sphere for the man. And certainly once a man begins to neglect his domestic duties he becomes painfully effeminate, does he not? And I don't like that. It makes men so very attractive. Cecily, mamma, whose views on education are remarkably strict, has brought me up to be extremely short-sighted; it is part of her system; so do you mind my looking at you through my glasses?

CEC. Oh, not at all, Gwendolen. I am very fond of being looked at.

GWEN. (*after examining* CEC. *carefully through a lorgnette*). You are here on a short visit, I suppose.

CEC. Oh, no, I live here.

GWEN. (*severely*). Really? Your mother, no doubt, or some other female relative of advanced years, resides here also?

CEC. Oh, no. I have no mother, nor, in fact, any relations.

GWEN. Indeed?

CEC. My dear guardian, with the assistance of Miss Prism, has the arduous task of looking after me.

GWEN. Your guardian?

CEC. Yes, I am Mr. Worthing's ward.

GWEN. Oh! It is strange he never mentioned to me that he had a ward. How secretive of him! He grows more interesting hourly. I am not sure, however, that the news inspires me with feelings of unmixed delight. (*Rising and going to her.*) I am very fond of you, Cecily; I have liked you ever since I met you. But I am bound to state that now that I know that you are Mr. Worthing's ward, I cannot help expressing a wish you were—well, just a little older than you seem to be—and not quite so very alluring in appearance. In fact, if I may speak candidly—

CEC. Pray do! I think that whenever one has anything unpleasant to say, one should always be quite candid.

GWEN. Well, to speak with perfect candour, Cecily, I wish that you were fully forty-two, and more than usually plain for your age. Ernest has a strong upright nature. He is the very soul of truth and honour. Disloyalty would be as impossible to him as deception. But even men of the noblest possible moral character are extremely susceptible to the influence of the physical charms of others. Modern, no less than Ancient History, supplies us with many most painful examples of what I refer to. If it were not so, indeed, History would be quite unreadable.

CEC. I beg your pardon, Gwendolen, did you say Ernest?

GWEN. Yes.

CEC. Oh, but it is not Mr. Ernest Worthing who is my guardian. It is his brother—his elder brother.

GWEN. (*sitting down again*). Ernest never mentioned to me that he had a brother.

CEC. I am sorry to say they have not been on good terms for a long time.

GWEN. Ah! that accounts for it. And now that I think of it I have never heard any man mention his brother. The subject seems distasteful to most men. Cecily, you have lifted a load from my mind. I was growing almost anxious. It would have been terrible if any cloud had come across a friendship like ours, would it not? Of course you are quite, quite sure that it is not Mr. Ernest Worthing who is your guardian?

CEC. Quite sure. (*A pause.*) In fact, I am going to be his.

GWEN. (*enquiringly*). I beg your pardon?

CEC. (*rather shy and confidingly*). Dearest Gwendolen, there is no reason why I should make a secret of it to you. Our little county newspaper is sure to chronicle the fact next week. Mr. Ernest Worthing and I are engaged to be married.

GWEN. (*quite politely, rising*). My darling Cecily, I think there must be some slight error. Mr. Ernest Worthing is engaged to me. The announcement will appear in the *Morning Post* on Saturday at the latest.

CEC. (*very politely, rising*). I am afraid you must be under some misconception. Ernest proposed to me exactly ten minutes ago. (*Shows diary.*)

GWEN. (*examines diary through her lorgnette carefully*). It is certainly very curious, for he asked me to be his wife yesterday afternoon at 5:30. If you would care to verify the incident, pray do so. (*Produces diary of her own.*) I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train. I am so sorry, dear Cecily, if it is any disappointment to you, but I am afraid *I* have the prior claim.

CEC. It would distress me more than I can tell you, dear Gwendolen, if it caused you any mental or physical anguish, but I feel bound to point out that since Ernest proposed to you he clearly has changed his mind.

GWEN. (*meditatively*). If the poor fellow has been entrapped into any foolish promise I shall consider it my duty to rescue him at once, and with a firm hand.

CEC. (*thoughtfully and sadly*). Whatever unfortunate entanglement my dear boy may have got into, I will never reproach him with it after we are married.

GWEN. Do you allude to me, Miss Cardew, as an entanglement? You are presumptuous. On an occasion of this kind it becomes more than a moral duty to speak one's mind. It becomes a pleasure.

CEC. Do you suggest, Miss Fairfax, that I entrapped Ernest into an engagement? How dare you? This is no time for wearing the shallow mask of manners. When I see a spade I call it a spade.

GWEN. (*satirically*). I am glad to say that I have never seen a spade. It is obvious that our social spheres have been widely different.

(*Enter* MERR., *followed by the footman. He carries a salver, tablecloth, and plate-stand.* CEC. *is about to retort. The presence of the servants exercises a restraining influence, under which both girls chafe.*)

MERR. Shall I lay tea here as usual, miss?

CEC. (*sternly, in a calm voice*). Yes, as usual. (MERR. *begins to clear and lay cloth. A long pause.* CEC. *and* GWEN. *glare at each other.*)

GWEN. Are there many interesting walks in the vicinity, Miss Cardew?

CEC. Oh, yes, a great many. From the top of one of the hills quite close one can see five counties.

GWEN. Five counties! I don't think I should like that. I hate crowds.

CEC. (*sweetly*). I suppose that is why you live in town? (GWEN. *bites her lip, and beats her foot nervously with her parasol.*)

GWEN. (*looking around*). Quite a well-kept garden this is, Miss Cardew.

CEC. So glad you like it, Miss Fairfax.

GWEN. I had no idea there were any flowers in the country.

CEC. Oh, flowers are as common here, Miss Fairfax, as people are in London.

GWEN. Personally, I cannot understand how anybody manages to exist in the country, if anybody who is anybody does. The country always bores me to death.

CEC. Ah! This is what the newspapers call agricultural depression, is it not? I believe the aristocracy are suffering very much from it just at present. It is almost an epidemic amongst them, I have been told. May I offer you some tea, Miss Fairfax.

GWEN. (*with elaborate politeness*). Thank you. (*Aside.*) Detestable girl! But I require tea!

CEC. (*sweetly*). Sugar?

GWEN. (*superciliously*). No, thank you. Sugar is not fashionable any more. (CEC. *looks angrily at her, takes up the tongs and puts four lumps of sugar into the cup.*)

CEC. (*severely*). Cake or bread and butter?

GWEN. (*in a bored manner*). Bread and butter, please. Cake is rarely seen at the best houses nowadays.

CEC. (*cuts a very large slice of cake, and puts it on the tray*). Hand that to Miss Fairfax. (MERR. *does so, and goes out with footman.* GWEN. *drinks the tea and makes a grimace. Puts down cup at once, reaches out her hand to the bread and butter, looks at it, and finds it is cake. Rises in indignation.*)

GWEN. You have filled my tea with lumps of sugar, and though I asked most distinctly for bread and butter, you have given me cake. I am known for the

gentleness of my disposition, and the extraordinary sweetness of my nature, but I warn you, Miss Cardew, you may go too far.

CEC. (*rising*). To save my poor, innocent, trusting boy from the machinations of any other girl there are no lengths to which I would not go.

GWEN. From the moment I saw you I distrusted you. I felt that you were false and deceitful. I am never deceived in such matters. My first impressions of people are invariably right.

CEC. It seems to me, Miss Fairfax, that I am trespassing on your valuable time. No doubt you have many other calls of a similar character to make in the neighbourhood.

(*Enter* JACK)

GWEN. (*catching sight of him*). Ernest! My own Ernest!

JACK. Gwendolen! Darling! (*Offers to kiss her.*)

GWEN. (*drawing back*). A moment! May I ask if you are engaged to be married to this young lady? (*Points to* CEC.)

JACK (*laughing*). To dear little Cecily! Of course not! What could have put such an idea into your pretty little head?

GWEN. Thank you. You may. (*Offers her cheek.*)

CEC. (*very sweetly*). I knew there must be some misunderstanding, Miss Fairfax. The gentleman whose arm is at present around your waist is my dear guardian, Mr. John Worthing.

GWEN. I beg your pardon?

CEC. This is Uncle Jack.

GWEN. (*receding*). Jack! Oh!

(*Enter* AL.)

CEC. Here is Ernest.

AL. (*goes straight over to* CEC. *without noticing anyone else*). My own love! (*Offers to kiss her.*)

CEC. (*drawing back*). A moment, Ernest! May I ask you—are you engaged to be married to this young lady?

AL. (*looking around*). To what young lady? Good heavens! Gwendolen!

CEC. Yes, to good heavens, Gwendolen, I mean to Gwendolen.

AL. (*laughing*). Of course not! What could have put such an idea into your pretty little head?

CEC. Thank you. (*Presents her cheek to be kissed.*) You may. (AL. *kisses her.*)

GWEN. I felt there was some slight error, Miss Cardew. The gentleman who is now embracing you is my cousin, Mr. Algernon Moncrieff.

CEC. (*breaking away from* AL.). Algernon Moncrieff! Oh! (*The two girls move towards each other and put their arms round each other's waists as if for protection.*)

CEC. Are you called Algernon?

AL. I cannot deny it.

CEC. Oh!

GWEN. Is your name really John?

JACK (*standing rather proudly*). I could deny it if I liked. I could deny anything if I liked. But my name certainly is John. It has been John for years.

CEC. (*to* GWEN.). A gross deception has been practiced on both of us.

GWEN. My poor wounded Cecily!

CEC. My sweet, wronged Gwendolen!

GWEN. (*slowly and seriously*). You will call me sister, will you not? (*They embrace.* JACK *and* AL. *groan and walk up and down.*)

CEC. (*rather brightly*). There is just one question I would like to be allowed to ask my guardian.

GWEN. An admirable idea! Mr. Worthing, there is just one question I would like to be permitted to put to you. Where is your brother Ernest? We are both engaged to be married to your brother Ernest, so it is a matter of some importance to us to know where your brother Ernest is at present.

JACK (*slowly and hesitatingly*). Gwendolen—Cecily—it is very painful for me to be forced to speak the truth. It is the first time in my life that I have ever been reduced to such a painful position, and I am really quite inexperienced in doing anything of the kind. However I will tell you quite frankly that I have no brother Ernest. I have no brother at all. I never had a brother in my life, and I certainly have not the smallest intention of ever having one in the future.

CEC. (*surprised*). No brother at all?

JACK (*cheerily*). None!

GWEN. (*severely*). Had you never a brother of any kind?

JACK (*pleasantly*). Never. Not even of any kind.

GWEN. I am afraid it is quite clear, Cecily, that neither of us is engaged to be married to anyone.

CEC. It is not a very pleasant postion for a young girl suddenly to find herself in. Is it?

GWEN. Let us go into the house. They will hardly venture to come after us there.

CEC. No, men are so cowardly, aren't they? (*They retire into the house with scornful looks.*)

JACK. This ghastly state of things is what you call Bunburying, I suppose?

AL. Yes, and a perfectly wonderful Bunbury it is. The most wonderful Bunbury I have ever had in my life.

JACK. Well, you've no right whatsoever to Bunbury here.

AL. That is absurd. One has a right to Bunbury anywhere one chooses. Every serious Bunburyist knows that.

JACK. Serious Bunburyist! Good heavens!

AL. Well, one must be serious about something, if one wants to have any amusement in life. I happen to be serious about Bunburying. What on earth you are serious about I haven't got the remotest idea. About everything, I should fancy. You have such an absolutely trivial nature.

JACK. Well, the only small satisfaction I have in the whole of this wretched business is that your friend Bunbury is quite exploded. You won't be able to run down to the country quite so often as you used to do, dear Algy. And a very good thing, too.

AL. Your brother is a little off colour, isn't he, dear Jack? You won't be able to disappear to London quite so frequently as your wicked custom was. And not a bad thing, either.

JACK. As for your conduct towards Miss Cardew, I must say that your taking

in a sweet, simple, innocent girl like that is quite inexcusable. To say nothing of the fact that she is my ward.

AL. I can see no possible defense at all for your deceiving a brilliant, clever, thoroughly experienced young lady like Miss Fairfax. To say nothing of the fact that she is my cousin.

JACK. I wanted to be engaged to Gwendolen, that is all. I love her.

AL. Well, I simply wanted to be engaged to Cecily. I adore her.

JACK. There is certainly no chance of your marrying Miss Cardew.

AL. I don't think there is much likelihood, Jack, of you and Miss Fairfax being united.

JACK. Well, that is no business of yours.

AL. If it was my business, I wouldn't talk about it. (*Begins to eat muffins.*) It is very vulgar to talk about one's business. Only people like stock-brokers do that, and then merely at dinner parties.

JACK. How you can sit there, calmly eating muffins, when we are in this horrible trouble, I can't make out. You seem to me to be perfectly heartless.

AL. Well, I can't eat muffins in an agitated manner. The butter would probably get on my cuffs. One should always eat muffins quite calmly. It is the only way to eat them.

JACK. I say it's perfectly heartless your eating muffins at all, under the circumstances.

AL. When I am in trouble, eating is the only thing that consoles me. Indeed, when I am in really great trouble, as anyone who knows me intimately will tell you, I refuse everything except food and drink At the present moment I am eating muffins because I am unhappy. Besides, I am particularly fond of muffins. (*Rising.*)

JACK (*rising*). Well, that is no reason why you should eat them all in that greedy way. (*Takes muffins from* AL.)

AL. (*offering tea-cake*). I wish you would have tea-cake instead. I don't like tea-cake.

JACK. Good heavens! I suppose a man may eat his own muffins in his own garden.

AL. But you have just said it was perfectly heartless to eat muffins.

JACK. I said it was perfectly heartless of you, under the circumstances. That is a very different thing.

AL. That may be. But the muffins are the same. (*He seizes the muffin-dish from* JACK.)

JACK. Algy, I wish to goodness you would go.

AL. You can't possibly ask me to go without having some dinner. It's absurd. I never go without my dinner. No one ever does, except vegetarians and people like that. Besides I have just made arrangements with Dr Chasuble to be christened at a quarter to six under the name of Ernest.

JACK. My dear fellow, the sooner you give up that nonsense the better. I made arrangements this morning with Dr. Chasuble to be christened myself at 5:30, and I naturally will take the name of Ernest. Gwendolen would wish it. We can't both be christened Ernest. It's absurd. Besides, I have a perfect right to be christened if I like. There is no evidence at all that I ever have

been christened by anybody. I should think it extremely probable I never was, and so does Dr. Chasuble. It is entirely different in your case. You have been christened already.

AL. Yes, but I have not been christened for years.

JACK. Yes, but you have been christened. That is the important thing.

AL. Quite so. So I know my constitution can stand it. If you are not quite sure about your ever having been christened, I must say I think it rather dangerous your venturing on it now. It might make you very unwell. You can hardly have forgotten that someone very closely connected with you was very nearly carried off this week in Paris by a severe chill.

JACK. Yes, but you said yourself that a severe chill was not hereditary.

AL. It usedn't to be, I know—but I daresay it is now. Science is always making wonderful improvements in things.

JACK (*picking up the muffin-dish*). Oh, that is nonsense; you are always talking nonsense.

AL. Jack, you are at the muffins again! I wish you wouldn't. There are only two left. (*Takes them.*) I told you I was particularly fond of muffins.

JACK. But I hate tea-cake.

AL. Why on earth then do you allow tea-cake to be served up for your guests? What ideas you have of hospitality!

JACK. Algernon! I have already told you to go. I don't want you here. Why don't you go?

AL. I haven't quite finished my tea yet, and there is still one muffin left. (JACK *groans, and sinks into a chair.* AL. *still continues eating.*)

ACT III

SCENE. *Morning-room at the Manor House.* GWEN. *and* CEC. *are at the window, looking out into the garden.*

GWEN. The fact that they did not follow us at once into the house, as anyone else would have done, seems to me to show that they have some sense of shame left.

CEC. They have been eating muffins. That looks like repentance.

GWEN. (*after a pause*). They don't seem to notice us at all. Couldn't you cough? They're looking at us. What effrontery!

CEC. They're approaching. That's very forward of them.

GWEN. Let us preserve a dignified silence.

CEC. Certainly. It's the only thing to do now.

(*Enter* JACK, *followed by* AL. *They whistle some dreadful popular air from a British opera.*)

GWEN. This dignified silence seems to produce an unpleasant effect.

CEC. A most distasteful one.

GWEN. But we will not be the first to speak.

CEC. Certainly not.

GWEN. Mr. Worthing, I have something very particular to ask you. Much depends on your reply.

CEC. Gwendolen, your common sense is invaluable. Mr. Moncrieff, kindly answer me the following question. Why did you pretend to be my guardian's brother?

AL. In order that I might have an opportunity of meeting you.

CEC. (*to* GWEN.). That certainly seems a satisfactory explanation, does it not?

GWEN. Yes, dear, if you can believe him.

CEC. I don't. But that does not affect the wonderful beauty of his answer.

GWEN. True. In matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity, is the vital thing. Mr. Worthing, what explanation can you offer to me for pretending to have a brother? Was it in order that you might have an opportunity of coming up to town to see me as often as possible?

JACK. Can you doubt it, Miss Fairfax?

GWEN. I have the gravest doubts upon the subject. But I intend to crush them. This is not the moment for German scepticism. (*Moving to* CEC.) Their explanations appear to be quite satisfactory, especially Mr. Worthing's. That seems to me to have the stamp of truth upon it.

CEC. I am more than content with what Mr. Moncrieff said. His voice alone inspires one with absolute credulity.

GWEN. Then you think we should forgive them?

CEC. Yes. I mean no.

GWEN. True! I had forgotten. There are principles at stake that one cannot surrender. Which of us should tell them? The task is not a pleasant one.

CEC. Could we not both speak at the same time?

GWEN. An excellent idea! I nearly always speak at the same time as other people. Will you take the time from me?

CEC. Certainly. (GWEN. *beats time with uplifted finger.*)

GWEN. and CEC. (*speaking together*). Your Christian names are still an insuperable barrier. That is all!

JACK and AL. (*speaking together*). Our Christian names! Is that all? But we are going to be christened this afternoon.

GWEN. (*to* JACK). For my sake you are prepared to do this terrible thing?

JACK. I am.

CEC. (*to* AL.). To please me you are ready to face this fearful ordeal?

AL. I am!

GWEN. How absurd to talk of the equality of the sexes! Where questions of self-sacrifice are concerned, men are infinitely beyond us.

JACK. We are. (*Clasps hands with* AL.)

CEC. They have moments of physical courage of which we women know absolutely nothing.

GWEN. (*to* JACK). Darling!

AL. (*to* CEC.). Darling! (*They fall into each other's arms.*)

(*Enter* MERR. *When he enters he coughs loudly, seeing the situation.*)

MERR. Ahem! Ahem! Lady B.!

JACK. Good heavens!

(*Enter* LADY B. *The couples separate in alarm,*)
(*Exit* MERR.)

LADY B. Gwendolen! What does this mean?

GWEN. Merely that I am engaged to be married to Mr. Worthing, Mamma.

LADY B. Come here. Sit down. Sit down immediately. Hesitation of any kind is a sign of mental decay in the young, of physical weakness in the old. (*Turns to* JACK.) Apprised, sir, of my daughter's sudden flight by her trusty maid, whose confidence I purchased by means of a small coin, I followed her at once by a luggage train. Her unhappy father is, I am glad to say, under the impression that she is attending a more than usually lengthy lecture by the University Extension Scheme on the Influence of a Permanent Income on Thought. I do not propose to undeceive him. Indeed I have never undeceived him on any question. I would consider it wrong. But of course, you will clearly understand that all communication between yourself and my daughter must cease immediately from this moment. On this point, as indeed on all points, I am firm.

JACK. I am engaged to be married to Gwendolen, Lady Bracknell!

LADY B. You are nothing of the kind, sir. And now, as regards Algernon! . . . Algernon!

AL. Yes, Aunt Augusta.

LADY B. May I ask if it is in this house that your invalid friend Mr. Bunbury resides?

AL. (*stammering*). Oh, no! Bunbury doesn't live here. Bunbury is somewhere else at present. In fact, Bunbury is dead.

LADY B. Dead! When did Mr. Bunbury die? His death must have been extremely sudden.

AL. (*airily*). Oh, I killed Bunbury this afternoon. I mean poor Bunbury died this afternoon.

LADY B. What did he die of?

AL. Bunbury? Oh, he was quite exploded.

LADY B. Exploded! Was he the victim of a revolutionary outrage? I was not aware that Mr. Bunbury was interested in social legislation. If so, he is well punished for his morbidity.

AL. My dear Aunt Augusta, I mean he was found out! The doctors found out that Bunbury could not live, that is what I mean—so Bunbury died.

LADY B. He seems to have had great confidence in the opinion of his physicians. I am glad, however, that he made up his mind at the last to some definite course of action, and acted under proper medical advice. And now that we have finally got rid of this Mr. Bunbury, may I ask, Mr. Worthing, who is that young person whose hand my nephew Algernon is now holding in what seems to me a peculiarly unnecessary manner?

JACK. That lady is Miss Cecily Cardew, my ward. (LADY B. *bows coldly to* CEC.)

AL. I am engaged to be married to Cecily, Aunt Augusta.

LADY B. I beg your pardon?

CEC. Mr. Moncrieff and I are engaged to be married, Lady Bracknell.

LADY B. (*with a shiver, crossing to the sofa and sitting down*). I do not know whether there is anything peculiarly exciting in the air of this particular part of Hertfordshire, but the number of engagements that go on seems to me considerably above the proper average that statistics have laid down for our guidance. I think some preliminary enquiry on my part would not be out of place. Mr. Worthing, is Miss Cardew at all connected with any of the larger railway stations in London? I merely desire information. Until yesterday I had no idea that there were any families or persons whose origin was a Terminus. (JACK *looks perfectly furious, but restrains himself.*)

JACK (*in a clear, cold voice*). Miss Cardew is the granddaughter of the late Mr. Thomas Cardew of 149, Belgrave Square, S.W.; Gervase Park, Dorking, Surrey; and the Sporran, Fifeshire, N. B.

LADY B. That sounds not unsatisfactory. Three addresses always inspire confidence, even in tradesmen. But what proof have I of their authenticity?

JACK. I have carefully preserved the Court Guide of the period. They are open to your inspection, Lady Bracknell.

LADY B. (*grimly*). I have known strange errors in that publication.

JACK. Miss Cardew's family solicitors are Messrs. Markby, Markby, and Markby.

LADY B. Markby, Markby, and Markby? A firm of the very highest position in their profession. Indeed I am told that one of the Mr. Markbys is occasionally to be seen at dinner parties. So far I am satisfied.

JACK (*very irritably*). How extremely kind of you, Lady Bracknell! I have also in my possession, you will be pleased to hear, certificates of Miss Cardew's birth, baptism, whooping cough, registration, vaccination, confirmation, and the measles; both the German and the English variety.

LADY B. Ah! A life crowded with incident, I see; though perhaps somewhat too exciting for a young girl I am not myself in favour of premature experiences. (*Rises, looks at her watch.*) Gwendolen! the time approaches for our departure. We have not a moment to lose. As a matter of form, Mr. Worthing, I had better ask you if Miss Cardew has any little fortune?

JACK. Oh, about a hundred and thirty thousand pounds in the Funds. That is all. Good-bye, Lady Bracknell. So pleased to have seen you.

LADY B. (*sitting down again*). A moment, Mr. Worthing. A hundred and thirty thousand pounds! And in the Funds! Miss Cardew seems to me a most attractive young lady, now that I look at her. Few girls of the present day have any really solid qualities, any of the qualities that last, and improve with time. We live, I regret to say, in an age of surfaces. (*To* CEC.) Come over here, dear. (CEC. *goes across.*) Pretty child! your dress is sadly simple, and your hair seems almost as Nature might have left it. But we can soon alter all that. A thoroughly experienced French maid produces a really marvellous result in a very brief space of time. I remember recommending one to young Lady Lancing, and after three months her own husband did not know her.

JACK (*aside*). And after six months nobody knew her.

LADY B. (*glares at* JACK *for a few moments. Then bends, with a practised smile to* CEC.). Kindly turn round, sweet child. (CEC. *turns completely round.*) No, the side view is what I want. (CEC. *presents her profile.*) Yes, quite as I ex-

pected. There are distinct social possibilities in your profile. The two weak points in our age are its want of principle and its want of profile. The chin a little higher, dear. Style largely depends on the way the chin is worn. They are worn very high, just at present. Algernon!

AL. Yes, Aunt Augusta!

LADY B. There are distinct social possibilities in Miss Cardew's profile.

AL. Cecily is the sweetest, dearest, prettiest girl in the whole world. And I don't care twopence about social possibilities.

LADY B. Never speak disrespectfully of society, Algernon. Only people who can't get into it do that. (*To* CEC.) Dear child, of course you know that Algernon has nothing but his debts to depend upon. But I do not approve of mercenary marriages. When I married Lord Bracknell I had no fortune of any kind. But I never dreamed for a moment of allowing that to stand in my way. Well, I suppose I must give my consent.

AL. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

LADY B. Cecily, you may kiss me!

CEC. (*kisses her*). Thank you, Lady Bracknell.

LADY B. You may also address me as Aunt Augusta for the future.

CEC. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

LADY B. The marriage, I think, had better take place quite soon.

AL. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

CEC. Thank you, Aunt Augusta.

LADY B. To speak frankly, I am not in favour of long engagements. They give people the opportunity of finding out each other's character before marriage, which I think is never advisable.

JACK. I beg your pardon for interrupting you, Lady Bracknell, but this engagement is quite out of the question. I am Miss Cardew's guardian, and she cannot marry without my consent until she comes of age. That consent I absolutely decline to give.

LADY B. Upon what grounds, may I ask? Algernon is an extremely, I may almost say an ostentatiously, eligible young man. He has nothing, but he looks everything. What more can one desire?

JACK. It pains me very much to have to speak frankly to you, Lady Bracknell, about your nephew, but the fact is that I do not approve at all of his moral character. I suspect him of being untruthful. (AL. *and* CEC. *look at him in indignant amazement.*)

LADY B. Untruthful! My nephew Algernon? Impossible! He is an Oxonian.

JACK. I fear there can be no possible doubt about the matter. This afternoon, during my temporary absence in London on an important question of romance, he obtained admission to my house by means of the false pretence of being my brother. Under an assumed name he drank, I've just been informed by my butler, an entire pint bottle of my Perrier-Jouet, Brut, '89; a wine I was specially reserving for myself. Continuing his disgraceful deception, he succeeded in the course of the afternoon in alienating the affections of my only ward. He subsequently stayed to tea, and devoured every single muffin. And what makes his conduct all the more heartless is, that he was perfectly well aware from the first that I have no brother, that I never had a brother, and that

I don't intend to have a brother, not even of any kind. I distinctly told him so myself yesterday afternoon.

LADY B. Ahem! Mr. Worthing, after careful consideration I have decided entirely to overlook my nephew's conduct to you.

JACK. That is very generous of you, Lady Bracknell. My own decision, however, is unalterable. I decline to give my consent.

LADY B. (*to* CEC.). Come here, sweet child. (CEC. *goes over.*) How old are you, dear?

CEC. Well, I am really only eighteen, but I always admit to twenty when I go to evening parties.

LADY B. You are perfectly right in making some slight alteration. Indeed, no woman should ever be quite accurate about her age. It looks so calculating. . . . (*In meditative manner.*) Eighteen, but admitting to twenty at evening parties. Well, it will not be very long before you are of age and free from the restraints of tutelage. So I don't think your guardian's consent is, after all, a matter of any importance.

JACK. Pray excuse me, Lady Bracknell, for interrupting you again, but it is only fair to tell you that according to the terms of her grandfather's will Miss Cardew does not come legally of age till she is thirty-five.

LADY B. That does not seem to me to be a grave objection. Thirty-five is a very attractive age. London society is full of women of the very highest birth who have, of their own free choice, remained thirty-five for years. Lady Dumbleton is an instance in point. To my own knowledge she has been thirty-five ever since she arrived at the age of forty, which was many years ago now. I see no reason why our dear Cecily should not be even still more attractive at the age you mention than she is at present. There will be a large accumulation of property.

CEC. Algy, could you wait for me till I was thirty-five?

AL. Of course I could, Cecily. You know I could.

CEC. Yes, I felt it instinctively, but I couldn't wait all that time. I hate waiting even five minutes for anybody. It always makes me rather cross. I am not punctual myself, I know, but I do like punctuality in others, and waiting, even to be married, is quite out of the question.

AL. Then what is to be done, Cecily?

CEC. I don't know, Mr. Moncrieff.

LADY B. My dear Mr. Worthing, as Miss Cardew states positively that she cannot wait till she is thirty-five—a remark which I am bound to say seems to me to show a somewhat impatient nature—I would beg of you to reconsider your decision.

JACK. But my dear Lady Bracknell, the matter is entirely in your own hands. The moment you consent to my marriage with Gwendolen, I will most gladly allow your nephew to form an alliance with my ward.

LADY B. (*rising and drawing herself up*). You must be quite aware that what you propose is out of the question.

JACK. Then a passionate celibacy is all that any of us can look forward to.

LADY B. That is not the destiny I propose for Gwendolen. Algernon, of course, can choose for himself. (*Pulls out her watch.*) Come, dear (GWEN. *rises*), we

have already missed five, if not six, trains. To miss any more might expose us to comment on the platform.

(*Enter* DR. CHAS.)

CHAS. Everything is quite ready for the christenings.

LADY B. The christenings, sir! Is not that somewhat premature?

CHAS. (*looking rather puzzled, and pointing to* JACK *and* AL.). Both these gentlemen have expressed a desire for immediate baptism.

LADY B. At their age? The idea is grotesque and irreligious! Algernon, I forbid you to be baptised. I will not hear of such excesses. Lord Bracknell would be highly displeased if he learned that that was the way in which you wasted your time and money.

CHAS. Am I to understand then that there are to be no christenings at all this afternoon?

JACK. I don't think that, as things are now, it would be of much practical value to either of us, Dr. Chasuble.

CHAS. I am grieved to hear such sentiments from you, Mr. Worthing. They savour of the heretical views of the Anabaptists, views that I have completely refuted in four of my unpublished sermons. However, as your present mood seems to be one peculiarly secular, I will return to the church at once. Indeed, I have just been informed by the pew-opener that for the last hour and a half Miss Prism has been waiting for me in the vestry.

LADY B. (*starting*). Miss Prism! Did I hear you mention a Miss Prism?

CHAS. Yes, Lady Bracknell. I am on my way to join her.

LADY B. Pray allow me to detain you for a moment. This matter may prove to be one of vital importance to Lord Bracknell and myself. Is this Miss Prism a female of repellent aspect, remotely connected with education?

CHAS. (*somewhat indignantly*). She is the most cultivated of ladies, and the very picture of respectability.

LADY B. It is obviously the same person. May I ask what position she holds in your household?

CHAS. (*severely*). I am a celibate, madam.

JACK (*interposing*). Miss Prism, Lady Bracknell, has been for the last three years Miss Cardew's esteemed governess and valued companion.

LADY B. In spite of what I hear of her, I must see her at once. Let her be sent for.

CHAS. (*looking off*). She approaches; she is nigh.

(*Enter* MISS P. *hurriedly.*)

MISS P. I was told you expected me in the vestry, dear Canon. I have been waiting for you there for an hour and three-quarters. (*Catches sight of* LADY B., *who has fixed her with a stony glare.* MISS P. *grows pale and quails. She looks anxiously round as if desirous to escape.*)

LADY B. (*in a severe, judicial voice*). Prism! (MISS P. *bows her head in shame.*) Come here, Prism! (MISS P. *approaches in a humble manner.*) Prism! Where is that baby? (*General consternation. The Canon starts back in horror.* AL. *and* JACK *pretend to be anxious to shield* CEC. *and* GWEN. *from hearing the details of a terrible public scandal.*) Twenty-eight years ago, Prism, you left Lord Bracknell's house, Number 104, Upper Grosvenor Street, in charge of a

perambulator that contained a baby, of the male sex. You never returned. A few weeks later, through the elaborate investigations of the Metropolitan police, the perambulator was discovered at midnight, standing by itself in a remote corner of Bayswater. It contained the manuscript of a three-volume novel of more than usually revolting sentimentality. (MISS P. *starts in involuntary indignation.*) But the baby was not there! (*Everyone looks at* MISS P.) Prism, where is that baby? (*A pause.*)

MISS P. Lady Bracknell, I admit with shame that I do not know. I only wish I did. The plain facts of the case are these. On the morning of the day you mention, a day that is forever branded on my memory, I prepared as usual to take the baby out in its perambulator. I had also with me a somewhat old but capacious hand-bag in which I had intended to place the manuscript of a work of fiction that I had written during my few unoccupied hours. In a moment of mental abstraction, for which I never can forgive myself, I deposited the manuscript in the bassinette, and placed the baby in the hand-bag.

JACK (*who has been listening attentively*). But where did you deposit the hand-bag?

MISS P. Do not ask me, Mr. Worthing.

JACK. Miss Prism, this is a matter of no small importance to me. I insist on knowing where you deposited the hand-bag that contained that infant.

MISS P. I left it in the cloak-room of one of the larger railway stations in London.

JACK. What railway station?

MISS P. (*quite crushed*). Victoria. The Brighton line. (*Sinks into a chair.*)

JACK. I must retire to my room for a moment. Gwendolen, wait here for me.

GWEN. If you are not too long, I will wait here for you all my life. (*Exit* JACK *in great excitement.*)

CHAS. What do you think this means, Lady Bracknell?

LADY B. I dare not even suspect, Dr. Chasuble. I need hardly tell you that in families of high position strange coincidences are not supposed to occur. They are hardly considered the thing. (*Noises heard overhead as if someone was throwing trunks about. Everybody looks up.*)

CEC. Uncle Jack seems strangely agitated.

CHAS. Your guardian has a very emotional nature.

LADY B. This noise is extremely unpleasant. It sounds as if he was having an argument. I dislike arguments of any kind. They are always vulgar, and often convincing

CHAS. (*looking up*). It has stopped now. (*The noise is redoubled.*)

LADY B. I wish he would arrive at some conclusion.

GWEN. This suspense is terrible. I hope it will last. (*Enter* JACK *with a hand-bag of black leather in his hand.*)

JACK (*rushing over to* MISS P.). Is this the hand-bag, Miss Prism? Examine it carefully before you speak. The happiness of more than one life depends on your answer.

MISS P. (*calmly*). It seems to be mine. Yes, here is the injury it received through the upsetting of a Gower Street omnibus in younger and happier days. Here is the stain on the lining caused by the explosion of a temperance bever-

age, an incident that occurred at Leamington. And here, on the lock, are my initials. I had forgotten that in an extravagant mood I had had them placed there. The bag is undoubtedly mine. I am delighted to have it so unexpectedly restored to me. It has been a great inconvenience being without it all these years.

JACK (*in a pathetic voice*). Miss Prism, more is restored to you than this hand-bag. I was the baby you placed in it.

MISS P. (*amazed*). You?

JACK (*embracing her*). Yes . . . mother!

MISS P. (*recoiling in indignant astonishment*). Mr. Worthing! I am unmarried!

JACK. Unmarried! I do not deny that is a serious blow. But after all, who has the right to cast a stone against one who has suffered? Cannot repentance wipe out an act of folly? Why should there be one law for men and another for women? Mother, I forgive you. (*Tries to embrace her again.*)

MISS P. (*still more indignant*). Mr. Worthing, there is some error. (*Pointing to* LADY B.) There is the lady who can tell you who you really are.

JACK (*after a pause*). Lady Bracknell, I hate to seem inquisitive, but would you kindly inform me who I am?

LADY B. I am afraid that the news I have to give you will not altogether please you. You are the son of my poor sister, Mrs. Moncrieff, and consequently Algernon's elder brother.

JACK. Algy's elder brother! Then I have a brother after all. I knew I had a brother! I always said I had a brother! Cecily,—how could you have ever doubted that I had a brother? (*Seizes hold of* AL.) Dr. Chasuble, my unfortunate brother. Miss Prism, my unfortunate brother. Gwendolen, my unfortunate brother. Algy, you young scoundrel, you will have to treat me with more respect in the future. You have never behaved to me like a brother in all your life.

AL. Well, not till today, old boy, I admit. I did my best, however, though I was out of practice. (*Shakes hands.*)

GWEN. (*to* JACK). My own! But what own are you? What is your Christian name, now that you have become someone else?

JACK. Good heavens! . . . I had quite forgotten that point. Your decision on the subject of my name is irrevocable, I suppose?

GWEN. I never change, except in my affections.

CEC. What a noble nature you have, Gwendolen!

JACK. Then the question had better be cleared up at once. Aunt Augusta, a moment. At the time when Miss Prism left me in the hand-bag, had I been christened already?

LADY B. Every luxury that money could buy, including christening, had been lavished on you by your fond and doting parents.

JACK. Then I was christened! That is settled. Now, what name was I given? Let me know the worst.

LADY B. Being the eldest son you were naturally christened after your father.

JACK. (*irritably*). Yes, but what was my father's Christian name?

LADY B. (*meditatively*). I cannot at the present moment recall what the General's Christian name was. But I have no doubt he had one. He was eccentric, I admit. But only in later years. And that was the result of the Indian climate, and marriage, and indigestion, and other things of that kind.

JACK. Algy! Can't you recollect what our father's Christian name was?

AL. My dear boy, we were never even on speaking terms. He died before I was a year old.

JACK. His name would appear in the Army Lists of the period, I suppose, Aunt Augusta?

LADY B. The General was essentially a man of peace, except in his domestic life. But I have no doubt his name would appear in any military directory.

JACK. The Army Lists of the last forty years are here. These delightful records should have been my constant study. (*Rushes to bookcase and tears the books out.*) M. Generals . . . Mallam, Maxbohm, Magley, what ghastly names they have—Markby, Migsby, Mobbs, Moncrieff! Lieutenant 1840, Captain, Lieutenant-Colonel, Colonel, General 1869, Christian names, Ernest John. (*Puts book very quietly down and speaks quite calmly.*) I always told you, Gwendolen, my name was Ernest, didn't I? Well, it is Ernest after all. I mean it naturally is Ernest.

LADY B. Yes, I remember that the General was called Ernest. I knew I had some particular reason for disliking the name.

GWEN. Ernest! My own Ernest! I felt from the first that you could have no other name!

JACK. Gwendolen, it is a terrible thing for a man to find out suddenly that all his life he has been speaking nothing but the truth. Can you forgive me?

GWEN. I can. For I feel that you are sure to change.

JACK. My own one!

CHAS. (*to* MISS P.). Lætitia! (*Embraces her.*)

MISS P. (*enthusiastically*). Frederick! At last!

AL. Cecily! (*Embraces her.*) At last!

JACK. Gwendolen! (*Embraces her.*) At last!

LADY B. My nephew, you seem to be displaying signs of triviality.

JACK. On the contrary, Aunt Augusta, I've now realized for the first time in my life the vital importance of Being Earnest.

TERENCE RATTIGAN

The Winslow Boy

CHARACTERS

RONNIE WINSLOW	CATHERINE WINSLOW
VIOLET	JOHN WATHERSTONE
ARTHUR WINSLOW	DESMOND CURRY
GRACE WINSLOW	MISS BARNES
DICKIE WINSLOW	SIR ROBERT MORTON

The action passes in the drawing-room of a house in Kensington, and extends over two years of a period which, though unspecified, may be taken as preceding the war of 1914-1918.

ACT I. A Sunday morning in July.
ACT II. An afternoon in April. Nine months later.
ACT III. An evening in February. Two months later.
ACT IV. An afternoon in June. Four months later.

ACT I

SCENE. *The drawing-room of a house in Courtfield Gardens, South Kensington, on a morning in July, at some period not long before the war of 1914-1918. The furnishings betoken solid but not undecorative upper middle-class comfort.*

A glass door at back leads, down a few iron steps, into a tiny, rectangular garden. Through this door and the windows on either side of it, we can see the back of a row of exactly similar houses, with exactly similar glass doors leading, down exactly similar iron steps, into exactly similar gardens. In the center of the wall L. is a door which leads to the hall and front door. In the opposite wall, downstage, another door leads into the dining-room. There is a fireplace R.C., concealed at the moment by a very ornate fire-screen.

THE WINSLOW BOY Copyright, 1946, by Terence Rattigan The text of the play that appears in this volume is exclusively for reading and study purposes It must not be used in connection with any public reading or performance of the play The authorized acting edition, with all necessary stage directions, is the only text that may be used for acting purposes. This is published by the Dramatists Play Service, Inc, 14 East 38th Street, New York 16, N Y. The Play Service is the sole agent permitted to allow performances by nonprofessionals (amateurs). No such performance of the play may be made without the written consent of the Service. Regarding all other rights on this play inquiries should be addressed to Harold Freedman, 101 Park Avenue, New York 17, N. Y.

On the rise of the curtain A BOY *of about fourteen, dressed in the uniform of an Osborne naval cadet, is discovered perched on an arm of the sofa, staring, with wide, unblinking eyes, at his neatly polished boots. There is something rigid and tense in his attitude, and his face is blank and without expression.*

There is the sound of someone in the hall. THE BOY *is on his feet at once, swiveled to face the hall door. As the sound comes nearer, he looks despairingly round, as if contemplating flight. An elderly maid* VIOLET *comes in, with dust-pan and brush, and stops in astonishment at sight of him.*

VIOLET. Master Ronnie!

RONNIE (*with ill managed sang-froid*). Hello, Violet.

VI. Why, good gracious! We weren't expecting you back till Thursday.

RON. Yes, I know.

VI. Why ever didn't you let us know you were coming, you silly boy? Your mother should have been at the station to meet you. The idea of a child like you wandering all over London by yourself! I never did. And where's your trunk and your tuck box?

RON. Upstairs. The taximan carried them up—

VI. Taximan? You took a taxi? (RON. *nods.*) All by yourself? Well, I don't know what little boys are coming to, I'm sure. What your father and mother will say, I don't know—

RON. Where are they, Violet?

VI. Church, of course.

RON. (*vacantly*). Oh, yes. It's Sunday, isn't it?

VI. What's the matter with you? What have they been doing to you at Osborne?

RON. (*sharply*). What do you mean?

VI. They seem to have made you a bit soft in the head, or something. Well—I suppose I'd better get your unpacking done—Mr. Dickie's been using your chest of drawers for all his dress clothes and things. I'll just clear 'em out and put 'em on his bed—that's what I'll do. He can find room for 'em somewhere else.

RON. Shall I help you?

VI. (*scornfully*). I know *your* help. With *your* help I'll be at it all day. No, you just wait down here for your mother and father. They'll be back in a minute. (RON. *nods and turns hopelessly away.* VI. *looks at his retreating back, puzzled.*) Well?

RON. (*turning*). Yes?

VI. Don't I get a kiss or are you too grown-up for that now?

RON. Sorry, Violet. (*He goes up to her and is enveloped in her ample bosom.*)

VI. That's better. My, what a big boy you're getting! (*She holds him at arm's length and inspects him.*) Quite the little naval officer, aren't you?

RON. (*smiling forlornly*). Yes. That's right.

VI. Well, well—I must be getting on— (*She goes out.* RON., *left alone, resumes his attitude of utter dejection. He takes out of his pocket a letter in a sealed envelope. After a second's hesitation, he opens it, and reads contents. The pe-*

rusal appears to increase his misery. Again as if acting on some obscure impulse, he takes a fountain pen from his breast pocket, and appears, for a moment, to be about to write something on the letter. Then he shakes his head, hopelessly, and puts pen back in his pocket.

The sound of church bells, coming from quite close, suddenly breaks the silence. RON. *looks up and hurriedly puts letter back into envelope. He makes for a moment as if to tear it up; then changes his mind again, and puts it back in his pocket. He gets up and takes two or three quick steps toward hall door. Then he stops, uncertainly. The church bells continue their dismal clanging.* RON. *is evidently near tears. He sits down again, suddenly, as if his knees failed to support him.*

There is the sound of voices in the hall. RON. *jumps to his feet; then, with a strangled sob, runs to garden door, and down the iron steps into the garden.*

The hall door opens and the rest of the Winslow family file in. They are ARTHUR *and* GRACE—*Ronnie's father and mother—and* DICKIE *and* CATHERINE—*his brother and sister. All are carrying prayer-books, and wear that faintly unctuous, after-church air.*

ART. *leans heavily on a stick. He is a man of about sixty, with a rather deliberately cultured patriarchal air.* GRACE *is about ten years younger, with the faded remnants of prettiness.* DICK. *is an Oxford undergraduate, large, noisy, and cheerful.* CATH., *approaching thirty, has an air of masculinity about her which is at odd variance with her mother's intense femininity.*)

GRACE (*as she enters*). But he's so old, dear. From the back of the church you really can't hear a word he says—

ART. He's a good man, Grace.

GRACE. But what's the use of being good, if you're inaudible?

CATH. A problem in ethics for you, Father. (ART. *has sat down heavily, in what is evidently his favorite arm-chair. He looks round at the open garden door.*)

ART. There's a draught, Grace. (GRACE *goes to door and closes it.*)

GRACE. Oh, dear—it's coming on to rain. I hoped we could have had our coffee in the garden.

DICK. I'm on Mother's side. The old boy's so doddery now he can hardly finish the course at all. I timed him today. It took him seventy-five seconds dead from a flying start to reach the pulpit, and then he needed the whip coming round the bend. I call that pretty bad going.

ART. I'm afraid I don't think that's very funny, Richard.

DICK. Oh, don't you, Father?

ART. Doddery though Mr. Jackson may seem now, I very much doubt if when he was at Oxford he failed in his pass mods.

DICK. (*aggrieved*). Dash it—Father—you promised not to mention that again this vac—

GRACE. You did, you know, Arthur.

ART. There was a condition to my promise—if you remember—that Dickie should provide me with reasonable evidence of his intentions to remedy his lapse—

DICK. Well, haven't I, Father? Didn't I stay in all last night—a Saturday night—and work?

ART. You stayed in, Dickie. I would be the last to deny that.

GRACE. You *were* making rather a noise, dear, with that old gramophone of yours. I really can't believe you could have been doing much work with that going on all the time—

DICK. Funnily enough, Mother, it helps me to concentrate—

ART. Concentrate on what?

DICK. Work, of course.

ART. That was exactly what you appeared to be concentrating on when I came down to fetch a book—sleep, may I say—having been rendered out of the question, by the hideous sounds emanating from this room.

DICK. Edwina and her father had just looked in on their way to the Grantchesters' dance—they only stayed a minute.

GRACE. What an idiotic girl that is! Oh, sorry, Dickie—I was forgetting. You're rather keen on her, aren't you?

ART. You would have had ample proof of that fact, Grace, if you had seen them in the attitude in which I found them last night.

DICK. We were practising the Bunny Hug.

GRACE. The what, dear?

DICK. The Bunny Hug. It's the new dance.

CATH. (*helpfully*). It's like the Turkey Trot—only more dignified.

GRACE. Oh, I thought that was the Tango?

DICK. No. More like a Fox Trot, really. Something between a Boston Glide and a Kangaroo Hop.

ART. We appear to be straying from the point. Whatever animal was responsible for the posture I found you in with Edwina Gunn has little to do with the fact that to my certain knowledge you have not yet done one single stroke of work so far this vacation.

DICK. Oh. Well, I do work awfully fast, you know—once I get down to it.

ART. Indeed? That assumption can hardly be based on experience, I take it?

DICK. Dash it, Father! You are laying in to me this morning.

ART. I think it's time you found out, Dickie, that I'm not spending two hundred pounds a year keeping you at Oxford, merely that you may make a lot of useless friends and learn to dance the Bunny Hop.

DICK. Hug, Father.

ART. The exact description of the obscenity is immaterial.

GRACE. Father's quite right, you know, dear. You really have been going the pace a bit, this vac.

DICK. Yes, I know, Mother—but the season's nearly over now—

GRACE (*with a sigh*). I wish you were as good about work as Ronnie.

DICK. (*hotly*). I like that! That's a bit thick, I must say! All Ronnie ever has to do with his footling little homework is to add two and two, while I—

ART. Ronnie, may I remind you, is at least proving a good deal more successful in adding two and two than you were at his age.

DICK. (*now furious*). Oh, yes, *I* know. *I* know. *He* got into Osborne, and *I* failed. That's going to be brought up again—

GRACE. Nobody's bringing it up, dear—

DICK. Oh, yes, they are. It's going to be brought up against me all my life.

Ronnie's the good little boy, I'm the bad little boy. You've just stuck a couple of labels on us that nothing on earth is ever going to change.

GRACE. Don't be so absurd, dear—

DICK. It's not absurd. It's quite true. Isn't it, Kate? (CATH. *looks up from a book she has been reading in the corner.*)

CATH. I'm sorry, Dickie. I haven't been listening. Isn't what quite true?

DICK. That in the eyes of Mother and Father nothing that Ronnie does is ever wrong, and nothing that I do is ever right?

CATH. (*after a pause*). If I were you, Dickie dear, I'd go and have a nice lie-down before lunch.

DICK. (*after a further pause*). Perhaps you're right. (*He goes toward hall door.*)

ART. If you're going to your room I suggest you take that object with you. (*He points to a gramophone—1912 model, with horn—lying on a table.*) It's out of place in a drawing-room. (DICK., *with an air of hauteur, picks up gramophone and carries it to door.*) It might help you to concentrate on the work you're going to do this afternoon. (DICK. *stops at door, then turns slowly.*)

DICK. (*with dignity*). That is out of the question, I'm afraid.

ART. Indeed? Why?

DICK. I have an engagement with Miss Gunn.

ART. On a Sunday afternoon? You're escorting her to the National Gallery, no doubt?

DICK. No. The Victoria and Albert Museum. (*He goes out with as much dignity as is consistent with the carrying of a very bulky gramophone.*)

GRACE. How stupid of him to say that about labels! There's no truth in it at all—is there, Kate?

CATH. (*deep in her book*). No, Mother.

GRACE (*noticing rain outside*). Oh, dear, it's simply pelting. What are you reading, Kate?

CATH. Len Rogers' Memoirs.

GRACE. Who's Len Rogers?

CATH. A Trades Union Leader.

GRACE. Does John know you're a Radical?

CATH. Oh, yes.

GRACE. And a Suffragette?

CATH. Certainly.

GRACE (*with a smile*). And he still wants to marry you?

CATH. He seems to.

GRACE. Oh, by the way, I've told him to come early for lunch—so that he can have a few words with Father first.

CATH. Good idea. I hope you've been primed, have you, Father?

ART. (*who has been nearly asleep*). What's that?

CATH. You know what you're going to say to John, don't you? You're not going to let me down and forbid the match, or anything, are you? Because I warn you, if you do, I shall elope— (*Behind his chair, she kisses top of his head.*)

ART. (*taking her hand*). Never fear, my dear. I'm far too delighted at the prospect of getting you off our hands at last.

CATH. (*smiling*). I'm not sure I like that "at last."

GRACE. Do you love him, dear?

CATH. John? Yes, I do.

GRACE. You're such a funny girl. You never show your feelings much, do you? You don't behave as if you were in love.

CATH. How does one behave as if one is in love?

ART. One doesn't read Len Rogers. One reads Byron.

CATH. I do both.

ART. An odd combination.

CATH. A satisfying one.

GRACE. I meant—you don't talk about him much, do you?

CATH. No. I suppose I don't.

GRACE (*sighing*). I don't think you modern girls have the feelings our generation did. It's this New Woman attitude.

CATH. Very well, Mother. I love John in every way that a woman can love a man, and far, far more than he loves me. Does that satisfy you?

GRACE (*embarrassed*). Well, really, Kate darling—I didn't ask for anything quite like that— (*To* ART.) What are you laughing at, Arthur?

ART. (*chuckling*). One up to the New Woman.

GRACE. Nonsense. She misunderstood me, that's all. (*At window.*) Just look at the rain! (*Turning to* CATH.) Kate, darling, does Desmond know about you and John?

CATH. I haven't told him. On the other hand, if he hasn't guessed, he must be very dense.

ART. He *is* very dense.

GRACE. Oh, no. He's quite clever, if you really get under his skin.

ART. Oddly enough I've never had that inclination.

GRACE. I think he's a dear. Kate, darling, you *will* be kind to him, won't you?

CATH. (*patiently*). Yes, Mother. Of course I will.

GRACE. Poor Desmond! He's really a very good sort— (*She breaks off suddenly and stares out of window.*) Hullo! There's someone in our garden.

CATH. (*coming to look*). Where?

GRACE (*pointing*). Over there, do you see?

CATH. No.

GRACE. He's just gone behind that bush. It was a boy, I think. Probably Mrs. Williamson's awful little Dennis.

CATH. (*leaving window*). Well, whoever it is must be getting terribly wet.

GRACE. Why can't he stick to his own garden? (*There is a ring of a bell outside in hall.*) Was that the front door?

CATH. It sounded like it.

GRACE (*after listening*). Yes. It's John. (*To* CATH.) Quick! In the dining-room!

CATH. All right. (*She dashes across to dining-room door.*)

GRACE. Here! You've forgotten your bag. (*She darts to table and picks it up.*)

ART. (*startled*). What on earth is going on?

GRACE (*in a stage whisper*). We're leaving you alone with John. When you've finished, cough or something.

ART. (*testily*). What do you mean, or something?

GRACE. I know. Knock on the floor with your stick—three times. Then we'll come in.

ART. You don't think that might look a trifle coincidental?

GRACE. Sh! (*She disappears from view as hall door opens and* VI. *comes in.*)

VI. (*announcing*). Mr. Watherstone. (JOHN WATHERSTONE *comes in. He is a man of about thirty, dressed in an extremely well-cut morning coat and striped trousers, an attire which, though excused by church parade, we may well feel has been donned for this occasion.*)

ART. How are you, John? I'm very glad to see you.

JOHN. How do you do, sir?

ART. Will you forgive me not getting up? My arthritis has been troubling me rather a lot lately.

JOHN. I'm very sorry to hear that, sir. Catherine told me it was better.

ART. It was, for a time. Now it's worse again. Do you smoke? (*He indicates cigarette box.*)

JOHN. Yes, sir. I do. Thank you. (*He takes cigarette, adding hastily:*) In moderation, of course.

ART. (*with a faint smile*). Of course. (*Pause, while* JOHN *lights his cigarette and* ART. *watches him.*) Well, now. I understand you wish to marry my daughter?

JOHN. Yes, sir. That's to say, I've proposed to her and she's done me the honor of accepting me.

ART. I see. I trust when you corrected yourself, your second statement wasn't a denial of your first? (JOHN *looks puzzled.*) I mean, you do *really* wish to marry her?

JOHN. Of course, sir.

ART. Why, of course? There are plenty of people about who don't wish to marry her.

JOHN. I mean, of course, because I proposed to her.

ART. That, too, doesn't necessarily follow. However, we don't need to quibble. We'll take the sentimental side of the project for granted. As regards the more practical aspect, perhaps you won't mind if I ask you a few rather personal questions?

JOHN. Naturally not, sir. It's your duty.

ART. Quite so. Now your income, I take it, is derived chiefly from your army pay?

JOHN. Yes, sir. With an allowance from my father.

ART. Exactly. Now, as a subaltern in the West Berkshires, you would be earning something, I gather, in the neighborhood of two hundred and sixty-three pounds a year, plus sundry allowances?

JOHN (*surprised*). Yes, sir. That's exactly right—

ART. And your father's allowance would be roughly, I imagine, about twenty-four pounds a month?

JOHN (*more surprised*). Again, exactly the figure.

ART. Quite so. So, in all—what with your army pay and your father's allowance your total income is, at a vague computation, not far off five hundred and fifty-one pounds a year.

JOHN. Er—yes, sir. Not far off.

ART. Well, well. It all seems perfectly satisfactory. I really don't think I need delay my congratulations any longer. (*He extends his hand, which* JOHN *gratefully takes.*)

JOHN. Thank you, sir, very much.

ART. I must say, it was very good of you to be so frank and informative.

JOHN. Not at all.

ART. Your answers to my questions deserve an equal frankness from me about Catherine's own affairs. I'm afraid she's not—just in case you thought otherwise—the daughter of a rich man.

JOHN. I didn't think otherwise, sir.

ART. Good. Well, now— (*He suddenly cocks his head on one side and listens. There is the sound of a gramophone playing "You Made Me Love You" from somewhere upstairs.*) Would you be so good as to touch the bell? (JOHN *does so.*) Thank you. Well, now, continuing about my own financial affairs. The Westminster Bank pays me a small pension—three hundred and fifty, to be precise—and my wife has about two hundred a year of her own. Apart from that we have nothing, except such savings as I've been able to make during my career at the bank. The interest from which raises my total income to about nine hundred and fifty pounds per annum. (VI. *comes in.*)

VI. You rang, sir?

ART. Yes, Violet. My compliments to Mr. Dickie and if he doesn't stop that cacophonous hullaballoo at once, I'll throw him and his infernal machine into the street.

VI. Yes, sir. What was that word again? Cac—something—

ART. Never mind. Say anything you like, only stop him.

VI. Very good, sir. (*She goes out.*)

ART. Now, in addition to the ordinary expenses of life in Courtfield Gardens, I have to maintain two sons—one at Osborne, and the other at Oxford—neither of whom, I'm afraid, will be in a position to support themselves for some time to come—one, because of his extreme youth and the other because of—er—other reasons. (*Gramophone stops suddenly.*) So, you see, I am not in a position to be very lavish as regards Catherine's dowry.

JOHN. No, sir. I quite see that.

ART. I propose to settle on her twelve hundred and fifty pounds, which represents precisely one sixth of my total capital.

JOHN. I call that very generous, sir.

ART. Not as generous as I would have liked, I'm afraid. However—as my wife would say—beggars can't be choosers.

JOHN. Exactly, sir.

ART. Well, then, if you're agreeable to that arrangement, I don't think there's anything more we need discuss.

JOHN. No, sir.

ART. Splendid. (*Pause.* ART. *takes his stick and raps it with an air of studied unconcern, three times on floor. Nothing happens.*)

JOHN. Pretty rotten weather, isn't it?

ART. Yes. Vile. (*He raps again. Again nothing happens.*) Would you care for another cigarette?

JOHN. No, thank you, sir. I'm still smoking. (ART. *takes up his stick to rap again, then thinks better of it. He begins to struggle out of his chair.*)

ART. Would you mind? (JOHN *goes to his assistance.*) Thank you so much. (ART. *goes slowly but firmly to dining-room door, which he throws open—in apparent surprise.*) Well, imagine that! My wife and daughter are in here, of all places. Come in, Grace. Come in, Catherine. John's here. (GRACE *comes in, with* CATH. *behind.*)

GRACE. Why, John—how nice! (*She shakes hands.*) My, you do look a swell! Doesn't he, Kate darling?

CATH. Quite one of the Knuts. (*Pause.* GRACE *is unable to repress herself.*)

GRACE (*coyly*). Well?

ART. Well, what?

GRACE. How did your little talk go?

ART. (*testily*). I understood you weren't supposed to know we were having a little talk?

GRACE. Oh, you are infuriating! Is everything all right, John? (JOHN *nods, smiling.*)

GRACE. Oh, I'm so glad. I really am.

JOHN. Thank you, Mrs. Winslow.

GRACE. May I kiss you? After all, I'm practically your mother now.

JOHN. Yes. Of course. (*He allows himself to be kissed.*)

ART. While I, by the same token, am practically your father, but if you will forgive me—

JOHN (*smiling*). Certainly, sir.

ART. Grace, I think we might allow ourselves a little modest celebration at luncheon. Will you find me the key of the cellars? (*He goes out through hall door.*)

GRACE. Yes, dear. (*She turns at door. Coyly.*) I don't suppose you two will mind being left alone for a few minutes, will you? (*She follows* ART. *out.* JOHN *goes to* CATH. *and kisses her.*)

CATH. Was it an ordeal?

JOHN. I was scared to death.

CATH. My poor darling—

JOHN. The annoying thing was that I had a whole lot of neatly turned phrases ready for him and he wouldn't let me use them.

CATH. Such as—?

JOHN. Oh—how proud and honored I was by your acceptance of me, and how determined I was to make you a loyal and devoted husband—and to maintain you in the state to which you were accustomed—all that sort of thing. All very sincerely meant.

CATH. Anything about loving me a little?

JOHN (*lightly*). That I thought we could take for granted. So did your father, incidentally.

CATH. I see. (*She gazes at him.*) Goodness, you do look smart!

JOHN. Not bad, is it? Poole's.

CATH. What about *your* father? How did he take it?

JOHN. All right.

CATH. I bet he didn't.

JOHN. Oh, yes. He's been wanting me to get married for years. Getting worried about grandchildren, I suppose.

CATH. He disapproves of me, doesn't he?

JOHN. Oh, no. Whatever makes you think that?

CATH. He has a way of looking at me through his monocle that shrivels me up.

JOHN. He's just being a colonel, darling, that's all. All colonels look at you like that. Anyway, what about the way your father looks at me! Tell me, are all your family as scared of him as I am?

CATH. Dickie is, of course; and Ronnie, though he doesn't need to be. Father worships him. I don't know about Mother being scared of him. Sometimes, perhaps. I'm not—ever.

JOHN. You're not scared of anything, are you?

CATH. Oh, yes. Heaps of things.

JOHN. Such as?

CATH. (*with a smile*). Oh—they're nearly all concerned with you. (RON. *looks cautiously in at window door. He now presents a very bedraggled and woebegone appearance, with his uniform wringing wet, and his damp hair over his eyes.*)

JOHN. You might be a little more explicit—

RON. (*in a low voice*). Kate! (CATH. *turns and sees him.*)

CATH. (*amazed*). Ronnie! What on earth—?

RON. Where's Father?

CATH. In the cellar. I'll go and tell him—

RON. (*urgently*). No, don't. Please, Kate, don't! (CATH., *half way to door, stops, puzzled.*)

CATH. What's the trouble, Ronnie? (RON. *trembling on the edge of tears, does not answer her. She approaches him.*) You're wet through. You'd better go and change.

RON. No.

CATH. (*gently*). What's the trouble, darling? You can tell me. (RON. *looks at* JOHN.) You know John Watherstone, Ronnie? You met him last holidays, don't you remember? (RON. *remains silent, obviously reluctant to talk in front of a comparative stranger.*)

JOHN (*tactfully*). I'll disappear.

CATH. (*pointing to dining-room*). In there, do you mind? (JOHN *goes out quietly.* CATH. *gently leads* RON. *further into the room.*) Now, darling, tell me. What is it? Have you run away? (RON. *shakes his head, evidently not trusting himself to speak.*) What is it, then? (RON. *pulls out the document from his*

pocket which we have seen him reading earlier, and slowly hands it to her. CATH. *reads it quietly.*) Oh, God!

RON. I didn't do it. (CATH. *re-reads letter in silence.*) Kate, I didn't. Really, I didn't.

CATH. (*abstractedly*). No, darling. (*She seems uncertain of what to do.*) This letter is addressed to Father. Did you open it?

RON. Yes.

CATH. You shouldn't have done that—

RON. I was going to see if I could alter it. Then I was going to tear it up. Then I heard you come in from church and ran into the garden—I didn't know what to do—

CATH. (*still distracted*). How brutal of them to send you up alone!

RON. They sent a petty officer up with me. He was supposed to wait and see Father, but I sent him away. (*Indicating letter.*) Kate—shall we tear it up, now?

CATH. No, darling.

RON. We could tell Father term had ended two days sooner—?

CATH. No, darling.

RON. It's all lies, Kate. It's all lies. I didn't do it—really I didn't— (DICK. *comes in from hall. He does not seem surprised to see* RON.)

DICK. (*cheerfully*). Hullo, Ronnie, old lad. How's everything? (RON. *turns away from him.*)

CATH. You knew he was here?

DICK. Oh, yes. His trunks and things are all over our room. Trouble?

CATH. Yes.

DICK. I'm sorry.

CATH. You stay here with him. I'll find Mother.

DICK. All right. (CATH. *goes out by hall door. There is a pause.*)

DICK. What's up old chap?

RON. Nothing.

DICK. Come on—tell me.

RON. It's all right.

DICK. Have you been sacked? (RON. *nods.*) Bad luck. What for?

RON. I didn't do it!

DICK. (*reassuringly*). No, of course you didn't.

RON. Honestly, I didn't.

DICK. That's all right, old chap. No need to go on about it. I believe you.

RON. You don't.

DICK. Well, I don't know what it is they've sacked you for, yet—

RON. (*in a low voice*). Stealing.

DICK. (*evidently relieved*). Oh, is that all? Good Lord! I didn't know they sacked chaps for *that,* these days.

RON. I didn't do it.

DICK. Why, good Heavens, at Repton we used to pinch everything we could jolly well lay our hands on. All of us. I remember there was one chap—Carstairs his name was—captain of cricket, believe it or not—absolutely nothing was safe with him—nothing at all. Pinched a squash racket of mine once, I remember— (*He has quietly approached* RON., *and now puts his arm on his*

shoulder.) Believe me, old chap, pinching's nothing. Nothing at all. I say—you're a bit damp, aren't you?

RON. I've been out in the rain—

DICK. You're shivering a bit, too, aren't you? Oughtn't you to go and change? I mean, we don't want you catching pneumonia—

RON. I'm all right. (GRACE *comes in, with* CATH. *following.* GRACE *comes quickly to* RON., *who, as he sees her, turns away from* DICK. *and runs into her arms.*)

GRACE. There, darling! It's all right, now. (RON. *begins to cry quietly, his head buried in her dress.*)

RON. (*his voice muffled*). I didn't do it, Mother.

GRACE. No, darling. Of course you didn't. We'll go upstairs now, shall we, and get out of these nasty wet clothes.

RON. Don't tell Father.

GRACE. No, darling. Not yet. I promise. Come along, now. (*She leads him towards door held open by* CATH.) Your new uniform, too. What a shame! (*She goes out with him.*)

DICK. I'd better go and keep "cave" for them. Ward off the old man if he looks like going upstairs. (CATH. *nods. At door.*) I say—who's going to break the news to him eventually? I mean, someone'll have to.

CATH. Don't let's worry about that now.

DICK. Well, you can count me out. In fact, I don't want to be within a thousand miles of that explosion. (*He goes out.* CATH. *comes to dining-room door, which she opens.* JOHN *comes out.*)

JOHN. Bad news? (CATH. *nods. She is plainly upset, and dabs her eyes with her handkerchief.*) That's rotten for you. I'm awfully sorry.

CATH. (*violently*). How can people be so cruel!

JOHN (*uncomfortably*). Expelled, I suppose? (*He gets his answer from her silence, while she recovers herself.*)

CATH. God, how little imagination some people have! Why should they torture a child of that age, John, darling? What's the point of it?

JOHN. What's he supposed to have done?

CATH. Stolen some money.

JOHN. Oh.

CATH. Ten days ago, it said in the letter. Why on earth didn't they let us know? Just think what that poor little brat has been going through these last ten days up there, entirely alone, without anyone to look after him, knowing what he had to face at the end of it! And then, finally, they send him up to London with a petty officer—. Is it any wonder he's nearly out of his mind?

JOHN. It does seem pretty heartless, I know—

CATH. Heartless? It's cold, calculated inhumanity. God, how I'd love to have that Commanding Officer here for just two minutes! I'd—I'd—

JOHN (*gently*). Darling, it's quite natural you should feel angry about it, but you must remember, he's not really at school. He's in the Service.

CATH. What difference does that make?

JOHN. Well, they have ways of doing things in the Service which may seem to an outsider horribly brutal—and probably are, come to that—but at least they're always scrupulously fair. You can take it from me that there must have been a very full inquiry before they'd take a step of this sort. What's more, if there's been a delay of ten days, it would only have been in order to give the boy a better chance to clear himself— (*Pause.* CATH. *is silent.*) I'm sorry, Catherine darling. I'd have done better to keep my mouth shut.

CATH. No. What you said was perfectly true—

JOHN. It was idiotically tactless of me to say it, though. I'm sorry.

CATH. (*lightly*). That's all right.

JOHN. Forgive me? (*He lays his arm on her shoulder.*)

CATH. (*taking his hand*). Nothing to forgive.

JOHN. Believe me, I'm awfully sorry. (*After a pause.*) How will your father take it?

CATH. (*simply*). It might kill him— (*There is the sound of a ring at front door.*) Oh Heavens! We've got Desmond to lunch. I'd forgotten—

JOHN. Who?

CATH. Desmond Curry—our family solicitor. Oh Lord! (*In a hasty whisper.*) Darling—be polite to him, won't you?

JOHN. Why? Am I usually so rude to your guests?

CATH. No, but he doesn't know about us yet—

JOHN. Who does?

CATH. (*still in a whisper*). Yes, but he's been in love with me for years—it's a family joke— (VI. *comes in.*)

VI. (*announcing*). Mr. Curry. (DESMOND CURRY *comes in. He is a man of about forty-five, with a drooping moustache, and the figure of an athlete gone to seed. He has a mildly furtive manner, rather as if he had just absconded with his firm's petty cash, but hopes no one is going to be too angry about it.* JOHN, *when he sees him, cannot repress a faint smile at the thought of his loving Catherine.*)

CATH. Hullo, Desmond. I don't think you know John Watherstone—

DES. No—but, of course, I've heard a lot about him—

JOHN. How do you do? (*He wipes the smile off his face, as he meets* CATHERINE'S *glance. There is a pause.*)

DES. Well, well, well. I trust I'm not early?

CATH. No. Dead on time, Desmond—as always.

DES. Capital. Capital. (*There is another pause, broken by* CATH. *and* JOHN *both suddenly speaking at once.*)

CATH. Tell me, Desmond—
JOHN. Pretty ghastly this rain— } (*Simultaneously.*)

JOHN. I'm so sorry—

CATH. It's quite all right. I was only going to ask how you did in your cricket match yesterday, Desmond?

DES. Not too well, I'm afraid. My shoulder's still giving me trouble— (*There is another pause.*) (*At length.*) Well, well. I hear I'm to congratulate you both—

CATH. Desmond—you know?

DES. Violet told me, just now—in the hall. Yes—I must congratulate you both.

CATH. Thank you so much, Desmond.

JOHN. Thank you.

DES. Of course, it's quite expected, I know. Quite expected. Still it was rather a surprise, hearing it like that—from Violet in the hall—

CATH. We were going to tell you, Desmond dear. It was only official this morning, you know. In fact, you're the first person to hear it.

DES. Am I? And I, indeed? Well, I'm sure you'll both be very happy.

CATH. Thank you, Desmond.
JOHN. Thank you. } (*Murmuring together.*)

DES. Only this morning? Fancy. (GRACE *comes in.*)

GRACE. Hullo, Desmond, dear.

DES. Hullo, Mrs. Winslow.

GRACE (*to* CATH.). I've got him to bed—

CATH. Good.

DES. Nobody ill, I hope?

GRACE. No, no. Nothing wrong at all— (ART. *comes in, with two wine bottles under his arm. He rings bell.*)

ART. Grace, when did we last have the cellars seen to?

GRACE. I can't remember, dear.

ART. Well, they're in a shocking condition. Hullo, Desmond. How are you? You're not looking well.

DES. Am I not? I've strained my shoulder, you know—

ART. Well, why do you play these ridiculous games of yours? Resign yourself to the onrush of middle age, and abandon them, my dear Desmond.

DES. Oh, I could never do that. Not give up cricket. Not altogether.

JOHN (*making conversation*). Are you any relation of D. W. H. Curry who used to play for Middlesex?

DES. (*whose moment has come*). I *am* D. W. H. Curry.

GRACE. Didn't you know we had a great man in the room?

JOHN. Gosh! Curry of Curry's match?

DES. That's right.

JOHN. Hat trick against the players in—what year was it?

DES. 1895. At Lord's. Twenty-six overs, nine maidens, thirty-seven runs, eight wickets.

JOHN. Gosh! Do you know you used to be a schoolboy hero of mine?

DES. Did I? Did I, indeed?

JOHN. Yes. I had a signed photograph of you.

DES. Yes. I used to sign a lot once, for schoolboys, I remember.

ART. Only for schoolboys, Desmond?

DES. I fear so—yes. Girls took no interest in cricket in those days.

JOHN. Gosh! D. W. H. Curry—in person. Well, I'd never have thought it.

DES. (*sadly*). I know. Very few people would nowadays—

CATH. (*quickly*). Oh, John didn't mean that, Desmond—

DES. I fear he did. (*He pats his protuberant stomach.*) This is the main trouble. Too much office work and too little exercise, I fear.

ART. Nonsense. Too much exercise and too little office work.

(VI. *comes in.*)

VI. You rang, sir?

ART. Yes, Violet. Bring some glasses, would you?

VI. Very good, sir. (*She goes out.*)

ART. I thought we'd try a little of the Madeira before luncheon—we're celebrating, you know, Desmond—(GRACE *jogs his arm furtively, indicating* DES. *Adding hastily*)—my wife's *fifty-fourth birthday*—

GRACE. Arthur! Really!

CATH. It's all right, Father, Desmond knows—

DES. Yes, indeed. It's wonderful news, isn't it? I'll most gladly drink a toast to the—er—to the—

ART. (*politely*). Happy pair, I think, is the phrase that is eluding you—

DES. Well, as a matter of fact, I was looking for something new to say—

ART. (*murmuring*). A forlorn quest, my dear Desmond.

GRACE (*protestingly*). Arthur, really! You mustn't be so rude.

ART. I meant, naturally, that no one—with the possible exception of Voltaire—could find anything new to say about an engaged couple— (DICK. *comes in.*) Ah, my dear Dickie—just in time for a glass of Madeira in celebration of Kate's engagement to John— (VI. *comes in with tray of glasses.* ART. *begins to pour out wine.*)

DICK. Oh, is that all finally spliced up now? Kate definitely being withdrawn to stud? Good egg!

ART. Quite so. I should have added just now—with the possible exception of Voltaire and Dickie Winslow. (*To* VI.) Take these round, will you, Violet? (VI. *goes first to* GRACE, *then to* CATH., *then to* JOHN, DES., DICK., *and finally* ART.)

CATH. Are we allowed to drink our own healths?

ART. I think it's permissible.

GRACE. No. It's bad luck.

JOHN. We defy augury. Don't we, Kate?

GRACE. You mustn't say that, John dear. I know. You can drink each other's healths. That's all right.

ART. Are my wife's superstitious terrors finally allayed? Good. (*Drinks have now been handed round. Toasting.*) Catherine and John! (*All drink*—CATH. *and* JOHN *to each other.* VI. *lingers, smiling, in doorway.*)

ART. (*seeing* VI.). Ah, Violet. We mustn't leave you out. You must join this toast.

VI. Well—thank you, sir. (*He pours her out a glass.*) Not too much, sir, please. Just a sip.

ART. Quite so. Your reluctance would be more convincing if I hadn't noticed you'd brought an extra glass—

VI. (*taking glass from* ART.). Oh, I didn't bring it for myself, sir. I brought it for Master Ronnie— (*She extends her glass.*) Miss Kate and Mr. John. (*She takes a sip, makes a wry face and hands glass back to* ART.)

ART. You brought an extra glass for Master Ronnie, Violet?

VI. (*mistaking his bewilderment*). Well—I thought you might allow him just a sip, sir. Just to drink the toast. He's that grown-up these days. (*She turns to go. The others, with the exception of* DES., *who is staring gloomily into his glass, are frozen with apprehension.*)

ART. Master Ronnie isn't due back from Osborne until Thursday, Violet.

VI. (*turning*). Oh, no, sir. He's back already. Came back unexpected this morning, all by himself.

ART. No, Violet. That isn't true. Someone has been playing a joke—

VI. Well, I saw him with my own two eyes, sir, as large as life, sitting on that there sofa, just before you come in from church—and then I heard Mrs. Winslow talking to him in his room—

ART. Grace—what does this mean?

CATH. (*instinctively taking charge*). All right, Violet. You can go—

VI. Yes, Miss. (*She goes out.*)

ART. (*to* CATH.). Did *you* know Ronnie was back?

CATH. Yes—

ART. And you, Dickie? (DICK. *nods.*) Grace?

GRACE (*helplessly*). We thought it best you shouldn't know—for the time being. Only for the time being, Arthur.

ART. (*slowly*). Is the boy very ill? (*No one answers.* ART. *looks from one face to another in bewilderment.*) Answer me, someone! Is the boy very ill? Why must I be cozened like this? Surely I have the right to know. If he's ill I must be with him—

CATH. (*steadily*). No, Father. He's not ill. (ART. *suddenly realizes the truth from her tone of voice. Leaning heavily on his stick he sinks on to the arm of a chair.*)

ART. Will someone tell me what has happened, please? (GRACE *looks at* CATH. *with helpless inquiry.* CATH. *nods.* GRACE *takes letter from her dress.*)

GRACE (*timidly*). He brought this letter for you—Arthur.

ART. Read it to me, please—

GRACE. Arthur—not in front of—

ART. Read it to me, please. (GRACE *again looks at* CATH. *for advice, and again receives a nod.* ART. *is sitting with his head bowed.* GRACE *begins to read.*)

GRACE (*reading*). "Confidential. I am commanded by My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to inform you that they have received a communication from the Commanding Officer of the Royal Naval College at Osborne, reporting the theft of a five-shilling postal order at the College on the 7th instant, which was afterwards cashed at the Post Office. Investigation of the circumstances of the case leaves no other conclusion possible than that the postal order was taken by your son, Cadet Ronald Arthur Winslow. My Lords deeply regret that they must therefore request you to withdraw your son from the College." It's signed by someone—I can't quite read his name— (*She turns away quickly to hide her tears.* CATH. *puts a comforting arm on her shoulder.* ART. *has not changed his attitude. There is a pause, during which we can hear sound of a gong in the hall outside.*)

ART. (*at length*). Desmond—be so good as to touch the bell. (DES. *does so. There is another pause, until* VI. *comes in.*)

ART. Violet, will you ask Master Ronnie to come down and see me, please?

GRACE. Arthur—he's in bed.

ART. You told me he wasn't ill?

GRACE. He's not at all well.

ART. Do as I say, please, Violet.

VI. Very good, sir. (*She goes out.*)

ART. Perhaps the rest of you would go in to luncheon? Grace, would you take them in?

GRACE (*hovering*). Arthur—don't you think—?

ART. (*ignoring her*). Dickie, will you decant that bottle of claret I brought up from the cellar?

DICK. Right-o.

ART. I put the bottle on the table in the hall.

DICK. I know. (*He goes out.*)

ART. Will you go in, Desmond? And John? (*The two men go out into dining-room, in silence.* GRACE *still hovers.*)

GRACE. Arthur?

ART. Yes, Grace?

GRACE. Please don't—please don't— (*She stops, uncertainly.*)

ART. What mustn't I do?

GRACE. Please don't forget he's only a child— (ART. *does not answer her.* CATH. *takes* GRACE's *arm.*)

CATH. Come on, Mother. (*She leads* GRACE *to dining-room door. At door* GRACE *looks back at* ART. *He has still not altered his position and is ignoring her. She goes into dining-room, followed by* CATH. ART. *does not move after they are gone, but his hands take a convulsive hold of the handle of his stick. After an appreciable pause there comes a timid knock on door.*)

ART. Come in. (RON. *appears in doorway. He is in a dressing-gown. He stands on threshold.*) Come in and shut the door. (RON. *closes door behind him.*) Come over here. (RON. *walks slowly up to* ART. ART. *gazes at him steadily for some time, without speaking. At length.*) Why aren't you in your uniform?

RON. (*murmuring*). It got wet.

ART. How did it get wet?

RON. I was out in the garden in the rain.

ART. Why?

RON. (*reluctantly*). I was hiding.

ART. From me? (RON. *nods.*) Do you remember once, you promised me that if ever you were in trouble of any sort you would come to me first?

RON. Yes, Father.

ART. Why didn't you come to me now? Why did you have to go and hide in the garden?

RON. I don't know, Father.

ART. Are you so frightened of me? (RON. *does not reply.* ART. *gazes at him for a moment, then picks up letter, which is on his lap.*) In this letter it says you stole a postal order. (RON. *opens his mouth to speak.* ART. *stops him.*) Now I don't want you to say a word until you've heard what *I've* got to say. If you did it, you must tell me. I shan't be angry with you, Ronnie—provided you tell me the truth. But if you tell me a lie, I shall know it, because a lie between

son and father can't be hidden. I shall know it, Ronnie—so remember that before you speak. (*Pause.*) Did you steal this postal order?

RON. (*without hesitation*). No, Father. I didn't. (ART. *takes him by the arms and pulls him violently towards him.*)

ART. (*staring into his eyes*). Did you steal this postal order?

RON. No, Father. I didn't. (ART. *continues to stare into his eyes for a second, then relaxes and pushes him gently away.*)

ART. Go on back to bed. (RON. *goes gratefully to door.*) And in future I trust that a son of mine will at least show enough sense to come in out of the rain.

RON. Yes, Father. (*He disappears.* ART. *gets up quite briskly and goes to telephone in corner of room.*)

ART. (*at telephone*). Hullo. Are you there? (*Speaking very distinctly.*) I want to put a trunk call through, please. A trunk call . . . Yes . . . The Royal Naval College, Osborne . . . That's right . . . Replace receiver? Certainly, dear lady. (*He replaces receiver and then, after a moment's meditation, turns and walks briskly into dining-room.*)

ACT II

SCENE. *The same, six months later. It is about six o'clock of a winter evening.*

DICK. *is winding up his gramophone which, somehow or other, appears to have found its way back into the drawing-room. A pile of books and an opened notebook on the table provide evidence of interrupted labors.*

The gramophone, once started, emits a scratchy and muffled rendering of an early ragtime. DICK. *listens for a few seconds with evident appreciation, then essays a little "pas seul."*

CATH. *comes in. She is in evening dress.* DICK. *switches off gramophone.*

DICK. Hullo. Do you think the old man can hear this upstairs?

CATH. I shouldn't think so. I couldn't.

DICK. Soft needle and an old pair of flannel bags down the horn. Is the doctor still with him? (CATH. *nods.*) What's the verdict, do you know?

CATH. I heard him say he needed a complete rest.

DICK. Don't we all?

CATH. (*indicating books*). It doesn't look as if *you* did. He said he ought to go to the country and forget all his worries—

DICK. Fat chance there is of that, I'd say.

CATH. I know.

DICK. I say, you look a treat. New dress?

CATH. Is it likely? No, it's an old one I've had done up.

DICK. Where are you going to?

CATH. Daly's. Dinner first—at the Criterion.

DICK. Nice. You wouldn't care to take me along with you, I suppose?

CATH. You suppose quite correctly.

DICK. John wouldn't mind.

CATH. I dare say not. I would.

DICK. I wish I had someone to take me out. In your new Feminist world do you suppose women will be allowed to do some of the paying?

CATH. Certainly.

DICK. Really? Then the next time you're looking for someone to chain themselves to Mr. Asquith you can jolly well call on me—

CATH. (*laughing*). Edwina might take you out if you gave her the hint. She's very rich—

DICK. If I gave Edwina a hint of that sort I wouldn't see her this side of doomsday.

CATH. You sound a little bitter, Dickie dear.

DICK. Oh, no. Not bitter. Just realistic. (VI. *comes in with an evening paper on a salver.*) Good egg! The *Star!* (CATH. *makes a grab for it and gets it before* DICK.)

VI. You won't throw it away, will you, Miss? If there's anything in it again, Cook and I would like to read it, after you. (CATH. *is hastily turning over the pages, with* DICK. *craning his head over her shoulder.*)

CATH. No. That's all right, Violet. (VI. *goes out.*) Here it is. (*Reading.*) "The Osborne Cadet." There are two more letters.

DICK. Read them out.

CATH. (*reading*). "Sir. I am entirely in agreement with your correspondent, Democrat, concerning the scandalously high-handed treatment by the Admiralty of the case of the Osborne Cadet. The efforts of Mr. Arthur Winslow to secure a fair trial for his son have evidently been thwarted at every turn by a soulless oligarchy—"

DICK. "Soulless oligarchy." That's rather good—

CATH. "It is high time private and peaceful citizens of this country awoke to the increasing encroachment—"

DICK. "Increasing encroachment"—not so good—

CATH. "Encroachment of their ancient freedom by the new despotism of Whitehall. The compulsory filling in of forms and the enforced adhesion of stamps to Insurance Cards and suchlike bare-faced interferences with our personal liberties—" (*Breaking off.*) Idiot! Social legislation's a different thing altogether—

DICK. Only to Socialists. Go on.

CATH. (*reading*). "—are, in all conscience, bad enough but may, perhaps, be excused by social necessity"—Sucks, Dickie—"but arbitrary condemnation without trial is another matter. The Englishman's home was once said to be his castle. It seems it is rapidly becoming his prison. Your obedient servant, Libertatis Amator."

DICK. Good for old Amator!

CATH. The other's from "Perplexed." (*Reading.*) "Dear sir I cannot understand what all the fuss is about in the case of the Osborne Cadet. Surely we have more important matters to get ourselves worked up about than a fourteen-year-old boy and a five-shilling postal order." Silly old fool!

DICK. How do you know he's old?

CATH. Isn't it obvious? (*Reading.*) "With the present troubles in the Balkans and a certain major European Power rapidly outbuilding our navy, the Ad-

miralty might be forgiven if it stated that it had rather more urgent affairs to deal with than Master Ronnie Winslow's little troubles. But, on the other hand, the First Lord's answer in the House last Wednesday to the member for Kensington shows that his department has behaved with scrupulous fairness throughout. A further inquiry before the judge advocate of the Fleet has now fully confirmed the original findings that the boy was guilty, and in addition has wasted valuable time and the taxpayer's money. I sincerely trust that this will finally end this ridiculous and sordid little storm in a teacup. I am, sir etc. Perplexed." (*Pause.*)

DICK. (*reading over her shoulder*). "This correspondence must now cease. Editor." Damn!

CATH. Oh, dear! How hopeless it seems, sometimes!

DICK. Yes it does, doesn't it? (*Thoughtfully, after a pause.*) You know, old girl—don't give me away to the old man, will you—but the awful thing is, if it hadn't been my own brother, I think I might quite likely have seen "Perplexed's" point.

CATH. Might you?

DICK. Well, I mean—looking at it from every angle and all that—it does seem rather a much ado about damn all. I mean to say—a mere matter of pinching. (*Bitterly.*) And it's all so beastly expensive—. Let's cheer ourselves up with some music. (*He sets gramophone going.*)

CATH. (*listening to record*). Is that what it's called?

DICK. Come and practise a few steps. (CATH. *joins him and they dance, in the manner of the period, with arms fully outstretched and working up and down, pump-handle style.—Surprised.*) I say! Jolly good!

CATH. Thank you, Dickie.

DICK. Who taught you? John, I suppose?

CATH. No. I taught John, as it happens—

DICK. Feminism—even in love? (CATH. *nods, smiling. Pause, while they continue to dance.*) When's the happy date now?

CATH. Postponed again.

DICK. Oh, no. Why?

CATH. His father's gone abroad for six months.

DICK. Why pay any attention to that old—(*He substitutes word.*) gentleman?

CATH. I wouldn't—but John does—so I have to. (*Something in her tone makes* DICK. *stop dancing and gaze at her seriously.*)

DICK. I say, old girl—nothing wrong, is there? (CATH. *shakes head, smiling, but not too emphatically.*) I mean—you're not going to be left on the altar rails or anything, are you?

CATH. Oh, no. I'll get him to the altar rails, if I have to drag him there.

DICK. (*as they resume their dance*). Do you think you might have to?

CATH. Quite frankly, yes.

DICK. Competition?

CATH. Not yet. Only—differences of opinion.

DICK. I see. Well, take some advice from an old hand, will you?

CATH. Yes, Dickie.

DICK. Suppress your opinions. Men don't like 'em in their lady friends, even if they agree with 'em. And if they don't—it's fatal. Pretend to be half-witted, like Edwina, then he'll adore you.

CATH. I know. I do, sometimes, and then I forget. Still, you needn't worry. If there's ever a clash between what I believe and what I feel, there's not much doubt about which will win.

DICK. That's the girl. Of course I don't know why you didn't fall in love with Ramsay Macdonald— (ART. *comes in. He is walking with more difficulty than when we last saw him.* DICK. *and* CATH. *hastily stop dancing, and* DICK. *turns off gramophone.*)

CATH. (*quickly*). It was entirely my fault, Father. I enticed Dickie from his work to show me a few dance steps.

ART. Oh? I must admit I am surprised you succeeded.

DICK. (*getting off subject*). What did the doctor say, Father?

ART. (*sitting very painfully*). He said, if I remember his exact words, that we weren't quite as well as when we last saw each other. That information seems expensive at a guinea. (*Seeing evening paper.*) Oh, is that the *Star?* Let me see it, please. (CATH. *brings it over to him.*) John will be calling for you here, I take it?

CATH. Yes, Father.

ART. It might be better, perhaps, if you didn't ask him in. This room will shortly be a clutter of journalists, solicitors, barristers, and other impedimenta.

CATH. Is Sir Robert Morton coming to see you here?

ART. (*deep in the "Star"*). Certainly. I could hardly go and see him, could I? (DICK., *in deference to his father's presence, has returned to his books.* ART. *reads "Star."* CATH. *glances at herself in mirror, and then wanders to door.*)

CATH. I must go and do something about my hair.

DICK. What's the matter with your hair?

CATH. Nothing, except I don't like it very much. (*She goes out.* DICK. *opens two more books with a busy air and chews his pencil.* ART. *finishes reading paper and stares moodily into space.*)

ART. (*at length*). I wonder if I could sue "Perplexed"?

DICK. It might be a way of getting the case into court.

ART. On the other hand, he has not been libellous. Merely base. (*He throws paper away and regards* DICK. *thoughtfully.* DICK. *feeling his father's eye on him, is elaborately industrious— At length, politely.*) Do you mind if I disturb you for a moment?

DICK. (*pushing books away*). No, Father.

ART. I want to ask you a question.

DICK. Fire away.

ART. I must impress on you the urgent necessity for an absolutely truthful answer.

DICK. Naturally.

ART. "Naturally" means by nature, and I'm afraid I have not yet noticed that it has invariably been your nature to answer my questions truthfully.

DICK. Oh. Well, I will, this one, Father, I promise.

ART. Very well. (*He stares at him a moment.*) What do you suppose one of your bookmaker friends would lay in the way of odds against your getting a degree? (*Pause.*)

DICK. Oh. Well, let's think. Say—about evens.

ART. Hm. I rather doubt if at that price your friend would find many takers.

DICK. Well—perhaps seven to four against.

ART. I see. And what about the odds against your eventually becoming a civil servant?

DICK. Well—a bit steeper, I suppose.

ART. Exactly. Quite a bit steeper. (*Pause.*)

DICK. You don't want to have a bet, do you?

ART. No, Dickie. I'm not a gambler. And that's exactly the trouble.

DICK. What's exactly the trouble, Father?

ART. That I'm afraid I'm no longer in a position to gamble two hundred pounds a year on what you yourself admit is an outside chance.

DICK. Not an outside chance, Father. A good chance.

ART. Not good enough, Dickie, I'm afraid—with things as they are at the moment. Definitely not good enough. I fear my mind is finally made up. (*There is a long pause.*)

DICK. You want me to leave Oxford—is that it?

ART. I'm very much afraid so, Dickie.

DICK. Oh.—Straightaway?

ART. No. You can finish your second year.

DICK. And what then?

ART. I can get you a job in the bank.

DICK. (*quietly*). Oh, Lord! (*Pause.*)

ART. (*rather apologetically*). It'll be quite a good job, you know. Luckily, my influence in the bank still counts for something. (DICK. *gets up and wanders about, slightly in a daze.*)

DICK. Father—if I promised you—I mean, *really* promised you—that from now on I'll work like a black— (ART. *shakes his head slowly.*) It's the case, I suppose?

ART. It's costing me a lot of money.

DICK. I know. It must be. Still, couldn't you—I mean, isn't there any way—? (ART. *again shakes his head.*) Oh, Lord!

ART. I'm afraid this is rather a shock for you. I'm sorry.

DICK. What? No. No, it isn't, really. I've been rather expecting it, as a matter of fact—especially since I heard you'd briefed Morton. Still, I can't say but what it isn't a bit of a slap in the face with a wet haddock—

ART. (*sincerely*). I can only tell you, Dickie, that I am genuinely sorry to have been forced to administer it. (*There is a ring at front door.*) There is a journalist coming to see me. Do you mind if we talk about this some other time?

DICK. No. That's all right. (DICK. *begins forlornly to gather his books.*)

ART. (*with a half-smile*). I should leave those there, if I were you.

DICK. Yes. I will. Good idea. (*He goes to door.*)

ART. (*politely*). Tell me—how is your nice friend, Miss Gunn, these days?

DICK. Very well, thanks awfully.

ART. You don't suppose she might like you to take her to the theatre—or buy her a little present perhaps?

DICK. Well, I do. Yes. (ART. *has taken out his wallet and now extracts two pound notes.* DICK. *comes and takes them.*) Thanks awfully, Father.

ART. With what's left over you can always buy something for yourself.

DICK. Oh. Well, as a matter of fact, I don't suppose there will be an awful lot left over. Still, it's jolly decent of you—. I say, Father—I think I could do with a little spot of something. Would you mind?

ART. Of course not. You'll find the decanter in the dining-room.

DICK. Thanks awfully. (*He goes to dining-room door.*)

ART. I must thank you, Dickie, for bearing what must have been a very unpleasant blow with some fortitude.

DICK. (*uncomfortably*). Oh. Rot! (*He goes out.* ART. *sighs deeply.* VI. *comes in at hall-door.*)

VI. (*announcing proudly*). The *Daily Mirror!* (MISS BARNES *comes in. She is a rather untidily dressed woman of about forty, with a gushing manner.*)

MISS B. Mr. Winslow? So good of you to see me.

ART. How do you do? Will you forgive me for not getting up? I have arthritis—

MISS B. Oh, but of course—

ART. (*eyeing her with surprise and some distaste*). If I'd known it was a lady I was going to receive I would have made arrangements to have myself hoisted to a standing position—

MISS B. (*simpering*). You're surprised to see a lady reporter? I know. Everyone is. And yet why not? What could be more natural?

ART. What, indeed? Pray sit down—

MISS B. My paper usually sends me out on stories which have a special appeal to women—stories with a little heart, you know, like this one—a father's fight for his little boy's honor— (ART. *visibly winces.*)

ART. I venture to think this case has rather wider implications than that—

MISS B. Oh, yes. The political angle. I know. Very interesting but not quite my line of country. Now what I'd really like to do—is to get a nice picture of you and your little boy together. I've brought my assistant and camera. They're in the hall. Where is your little boy?

ART. My son is arriving from school in a few minutes. His mother has gone to the station to meet him.

MISS B. (*making a note*). From school? How interesting! So you got a school to take him? I mean, they didn't mind the unpleasantness?

ART. No.

MISS B. And why is he coming back this time?

ART. He hasn't been expelled again, if that is what you're implying. He is coming to London to be examined by Sir Robert Morton, whom we are hoping to brief—

MISS B. Sir Robert Morton! (*She whistles appreciatively.*) Well!

ART. Exactly.

MISS B. (*doubtingly*). But do you *really* think he'll take a little case like this?

ART. (*explosively*). It is *not* a little case, madam—

MISS B. No, no. Of course not. But still—Sir Robert Morton!

ART. I understand that he is the best advocate in the country. He is certainly the most expensive—

MISS B. Oh, yes. I suppose if one is prepared to pay his fee, one can get him for almost *any* case.

ART. Once more, madam—this is *not* almost any case—

MISS B. No, no. Of course not. Well, now, perhaps you wouldn't mind giving me a few details? When did it all start?

ART. Six months ago. My son was expelled from Osborne as a thief and a forger without any trial. During the preliminary so-called investigation, which lasted ten days, I was not informed that anything was amiss. The first I knew of the charge was when my son arrived home with a letter from the Admiralty informing me of his expulsion. I telephoned Osborne to protest and was referred by them to their Lordships. My solicitors then took the matter up, and demanded from the Admiralty the fullest possible inquiry. For weeks we were ignored, then met with a blank refusal, and only finally got reluctant permission to view the evidence.

MISS B. (*indifferently*). Really? (*During* ARTHUR'S *speech she has been looking round the room, making notes on its appearance and furnishing.*)

ART. My solicitors decided that the evidence was highly unsatisfactory, and fully justified the re-opening of proceedings. We applied to the Admiralty for a Court Martial. They ignored us. We applied for a civil brief. They ignored us again. Are you listening to me, madam?

MISS B. (*still viewing room*). Oh, yes, indeed. They ignored you, you were saying—

ART. Exactly. So far, the Admiralty could, possibly, be excused for their behavior by the usual inertia and incompetence of any government department. But what follows will seem to you incredible. After tremendous pressure had been brought to bear—letters to the papers, questions in the House and other means open to private citizens of this country—the Admiralty eventually agreed to what they called an independent inquiry.

MISS B. (*vaguely*). Oh, good!

ART. It was not good, madam. At that independent inquiry, conducted by the judge advocate of the Fleet—against whom I am saying nothing, mind you—my son—a child of fourteen, was not represented by counsel, solicitors or friends. What do you think of that?

MISS B. Fancy!

ART. You may well say "fancy."

MISS B. (*jerking her attention back to* ART.). And what happened at the inquiry?

ART. What do you think happened? Inevitably he was found guilty again, and thus branded for the second time before the world as a thief and a forger—

MISS B. (*her attention wandering again*). What a shame! (*She gets up and goes purposefully to window.*)

ART. I need hardly tell you, madam, that I am not prepared to let the matter

rest there. I shall continue to fight this monstrous injustice with every weapon and every means at my disposal. Now it happens I have a plan—

MISS B. Oh, what charming curtains! What are they made of? (ART. *sits for a moment in paralyzed silence.*)

ART. (*at length*). Madam—I fear I have no idea. (*There is the sound of voices in hall.*)

MISS B. Ah. Do I hear the poor little chap himself? (*Hall door opens and* RON. *comes in boisterously, followed by* GRACE. *He is evidently in the highest of spirits.*)

RON. Hullo, Father! (*He runs to him.*)

ART. Hullo, Ronnie.

RON. I say, how long am I supposed to stay up, because Mr. Moore said I was to tell you he'd like me back by Saturday, because that's the day the house colts are playing Parkin's, and I'm scrum half but it doesn't matter because we'll beat them anyway and I'd jolly well rather be here, I can tell you—

ART. Mind my leg! (*He kisses his forehead.*) How are you, my boy?

RON. Oh, I'm absolutely tophole, Father. Mother says I've grown an inch—

MISS B. Ah! Now that's exactly the way I'd like to take my picture. Would you hold it, Mr. Winslow? (*She goes to hall door and calls.*) Fred! Come in now, will you?

RON. (*in a sibilant whisper*). Who's she? (FRED *appears. He is a listless photographer, complete with apparatus.*)

FRED (*gloomily*). Afternoon, all.

MISS B. That's the pose I suggest.

FRED. Yes. It'll do. (*He begins to set up his apparatus.* ART., *holding* RON. *close against him in pose suggested, turns his head to* GRACE.)

ART. Grace, dear, this lady is from the *Daily Mirror*. She is extremely interested in your curtains.

GRACE (*delighted*). Oh, really? How nice!

MISS B. Yes, indeed. I was wondering what they were made of?

GRACE. Well, it's an entirely new material, you know. I'm afraid I don't know what it's called, but I got them at Peter Jones'. Apparently it's a sort of mixture of wild silk and—

MISS B. (*now genuinely busy with pencil and pad*). Just a second, Mrs. Winslow. I'm afraid my shorthand isn't very good. I must just get that down—

RON. (*to* ART.). Father, are we going to be in the *Daily Mirror*?

ART. It appears so—

RON. Oh, good! They get the *Daily Mirror* in the school library and everyone's bound to see it—

FRED. Quite still, please— (*He takes his photograph.*) All right, Miss Barnes.

MISS B. (*engrossed with* GRACE). Thank you, Fred. (*To* GRACE, *effusively.*) Well, it was very good of you to tell me all that, Mrs. Winslow. I'm sure our readers will be most interested. (*To* ART.) Goodbye, Mr. Winslow, and the very best of good fortune in your inspiring fight. (*Turning to* RON.) Goodbye, little chap. Remember. The darkest hour is just before the dawn. (*She goes out, followed by* FRED.)

RON. (*before she has gone, to* ART.). What's she talking about?

GRACE. What a charming woman, Arthur!

ART. Charming! I trust you gave her full details about our curtains?

GRACE. Oh, yes. I told her everything.

ART. (*wearily*). I'm so glad.

GRACE. I do think women reporters are a good idea—

RON. (*excitedly*). I say, Father—I was top in history at half-term, and I was only second by three marks in French and Mr. Markham says if I keep it up they'll give me a double remove— (*He jogs his father's leg again.*)

ART. Mind my leg.

RON. Oh, sorry, Father. Is it bad?

ART. Yes, it is. I'm glad to hear of your successes, Ronnie. (*To* GRACE.) Grace, take him upstairs and clean him up a bit. Sir Robert will be here in a few minutes.

GRACE. (*to* RON.). Come on, darling.

RON. All right. (*On his way to door with his mother.*) I say, do you know how long the train took? 123 miles in two hours and fifty-two minutes. That's an average of 46.73 miles an hour—I worked it out— (*He disappears, still chattering shrilly.*)

ART. (*calling*). Grace! (GRACE *reappears.*)

GRACE. Yes?

ART. That ridiculous doctor you foisted on me has left some brew or other with which you are supposed to massage my leg, four times a day. I think you'd better do one now— (GRACE *goes to his assistance as he struggles out of his chair.*)

GRACE. Have we time, dear?

ART. (*looking at his watch*). Ten minutes. (CATH. *comes in.*)

CATH. Ronnie's back, judging by the noise.

GRACE (*examining her*). I must say that old frock has come out very well. John'll never know it isn't brand new—

CATH. He's late, curse him.

ART. Grace, go on up and attend to Ronnie. I'll go to my room and prepare for your ministrations—

GRACE. Very well, dear. (*To* CATH.) Yes, that does look good. I must say Mme. Dupont's a treasure. (*She goes out.*)

ART. (*wearily*). Oh, Kate, Kate! Are we both mad, you and I?

CATH. What's the matter, Father?

ART. I don't know. I suddenly feel suicidally inclined. (*Bitterly.*) A father's fight for his little boy's honor. Special appeal to all women. Photo inset of Mrs. Winslow's pink curtains—Oh God! Is there any hope for the world?

CATH. (*smiling*). I think so, Father.

ART. Shall we drop the whole thing, Kate? The whole, shabby business?

CATH. It's not a shabby business, Father—and you know it.

ART. You wouldn't have said that if you'd been here five minutes ago. (*He sighs deeply.*) You really think we should go on, Kate?

CATH. I don't consider that a serious question, Father.

ART. (*slowly*). You realize that if we do, your dowry must go?

CATH. (*lightly*). Oh, yes. I gave that up for lost weeks ago.

ART. Things are all right between you and John, aren't they?

CATH. Oh, yes, Father, of course. Everything's perfect.

ART. I mean—it won't make any difference between you, will it?

CATH. Good Heavens, no!

ART. Very well, then. Let us pin our faith to Sir Robert Morton. (CATH. *is silent.* ART. *looks at her as if he had expected an answer, then nods.*) I see I'm speaking only for myself in saying that.

CATH. (*lightly*). You know what I think of Sir Robert Morton, Father. Don't let's go into it again, now. It's too late, anyway.

ART. It's not too late. He hasn't accepted the brief yet.

CATH. (*shortly*). Then I'm rather afraid I hope he never does. And that has nothing to do with my dowry, either. (*Pause.* ART. *looks angry for a second, then subsides.*)

ART. (*mildly*). I made inquiries about that fellow you suggested—I am told he is not nearly as good an advocate as Morton—

CATH. He's not nearly so fashionable.

ART. (*doubtfully*). I want the best—

CATH. The best in this case certainly isn't Morton.

ART. Then why does everyone say he is?

CATH. (*roused*). Because if one happens to be a large monopoly attacking a Trade Union or a Tory paper libelling a Labor Leader, he *is* the best. But it utterly defeats me how you or anyone else could expect a man of his record to have even a tenth of his heart in a case where the boot is entirely on the other foot—

ART. Well, I imagine, if his heart isn't in it, he won't accept the brief.

CATH. He might still. It depends what there is in it for him. Luckily there isn't much—

ART. (*bitterly*). There is a fairly substantial check—

CATH. He doesn't want money. He must be a very rich man.

ART. What does he want, then?

CATH. Anything that advances his interests. (ART. *shrugs his shoulders. Pause.*)

ART. I believe you are prejudiced because he spoke against Women's Suffrage.

CATH. I am. I'm prejudiced because he is always speaking against what is right and just. Did you read his speech in the House on the Trades Disputes Bill? (*Pause.*)

ART. (*smiling*). Oh, well—in the words of the Prime Minister—let us wait and see. (*He turns to door.* CATH. *to recover her loss of composure, takes a cigarette from silver box and lights it.* ART. *turns at door.*) You're my only ally, Kate. Without you I believe I should have given up long ago.

CATH. Rubbish.

ART. It's true. Still, you must sometimes allow me to make my own decisions. I have an instinct about Morton. (CATH. *does not reply.*) (*Doubtfully.*) We'll see which is right—my instinct or your reason, eh? (*He goes out.*)

CATH. (*half to herself*). I'm afraid we will. (DICK. *comes out of dining-room door.*)

DICK. (*bitterly*). Hullo, Kate.

CATH. Hullo, Dickie. (DICK. *crosses mournfully to other door.*) What's the matter? Edwina jilted you or something?

DICK. Haven't you heard? (CATH. *shakes her head.*) I'm being scratched from the Oxford Stakes at the end of the year—

CATH. Oh, Dickie! I'm awfully sorry—

DICK. Did you know it was in the wind?

CATH. I knew there was a risk—

DICK. You might have warned a fellow. I fell plumb into the old man's trap. My gosh, I could just about murder that little brother of mine. (*Bitterly.*) What's he have to go about pinching postal orders for? And why the hell does he have to get himself nabbed doing it? Silly little blighter! (*He goes out gloomily. There is a ring at front door.* CATH. *obviously believing it is* JOHN, *picks up her cloak and goes to hall door.*)

CATH. (*calling*). All right, Violet. It's only Mr. Watherstone. I'll answer it. (*She goes out. The sound of voices in hall, and then* CATH. *reappears, leading in* DES. *and* SIR ROBERT MORTON. SIR ROBERT *is a man in the early forties, tall, thin, cadaverous and immensely elegant. He wears a long overcoat, and carries his hat and stick. He looks rather a fop, and his supercilious expression bears out this view.*) (*As she re-enters.*) I'm so sorry. I was expecting a friend. Won't you sit down, Sir Robert? My father won't be long. (SIR ROBERT *bows slightly, and sits down on a hard chair, still in his overcoat.*) Won't you sit here? It's far more comfortable.

SIR R. No, thank you.

DES. (*fussing*). Sir Robert has a most important dinner engagement, so we came a little early.

CATH. I see.

DES. I'm afraid he can only spare us a very few minutes of his most valuable time this evening. Of course it's a long way for him to come—so far from his chambers—and very good of him to do it, too, if I may say so— (*He bows to* SIR R., *who bows slightly back.*)

CATH. I know. I can assure you we're very conscious of the honor he is doing us. (SIR R. *gives her a quick look, and a faint smile.*)

DES. Perhaps I had better advise your father of our presence—?

CATH. Yes, do, Desmond. You'll find him in his bedroom—having his leg rubbed.

DES. Oh. I see. (*He goes out. A pause.*)

CATH. Is there anything I can get you, Sir Robert? A whiskey and soda or a brandy?

SIR R. No, thank you.

CATH. Will you smoke?

SIR R. No, thank you.

CATH. (*holding her cigarette*). I hope you don't mind me smoking?

SIR R. Why should I?

CATH. Some people find it shocking.

SIR R. (*indifferently*). A lady in her own home is surely entitled to behave as she wishes. (*Pause.*)

CATH. Won't you take your coat off, Sir Robert?

SIR R. No, thank you.

CATH. You find it cold in here? I'm sorry.

SIR R. It's perfectly all right. (*Conversation languishes again.* SIR R. *looks at his watch.*)

CATH. What time are you dining?

SIR R. Eight o'clock.

CATH. Far from here?

SIR R. Devonshire House.

CATH. Oh. Then of course you mustn't on any account be late.

SIR R. No. (*Another pause.*)

CATH. I suppose you know the history of this case, do you, Sir Robert?

SIR R. (*examining his nails*). I believe I have seen most of the relevant documents.

CATH. Do you think we can bring the case into court by a collusive action?

SIR R. I really have no idea—

CATH. Curry and Curry seem to think that might hold—

SIR R. Do they? They are a very reliable firm. (*Pause.* CATH. *is on verge of losing her temper.*)

CATH. I'm rather surprised that a case of this sort should interest you, Sir Robert.

SIR R. Are you?

CATH. It seems such a very trivial affair, compared to most of your great forensic triumphs. (SIR R., *staring languidly at ceiling, does not reply.*) I was in court during your cross-examination of Len Rogers, in the Trades Union embezzlement case.

SIR R. Really?

CATH. It was masterly.

SIR R. Thank you.

CATH. I suppose you heard that he committed suicide a few months ago?

SIR R. Yes. I had heard.

CATH. Many people believed him innocent, you know.

SIR R. So I understand. (*After a faint pause.*) As it happens, however, he was guilty. (GRACE *comes in hastily.*)

GRACE. Sir Robert? My husband's so sorry to have kept you, but he's just coming.

SIR R. It's perfectly all right. How do you do?

CATH. Sir Robert is dining at Devonshire House, Mother.

GRACE. Oh, really? Oh, then, you have to be punctual, of course, I do see that. It's the politeness of princes, isn't it?

SIR R. So they say.

GRACE. In this case the other way round, of course. Ah, I think I hear my husband on the stairs. I hope Catherine entertained you all right?

SIR R. (*with a faint bow to* CATH.). Very much indeed, thank you. (ART. *comes in, followed by* DES.)

ART. Sir Robert? I am Arthur Winslow.

SIR R. How do you do?

ART. I understand you are rather pressed for time?

GRACE. Yes. He's dining at Devonshire House—

ART. Are you indeed? My son should be down in a minute. I expect you will wish to examine him.

SIR R. (*indifferently*). Just a few questions. I fear that is all I will have time for this evening—

ART. I am rather sorry to hear that. He has made the journey specially from school for this interview—

DES. (*pacifically*). Well, perhaps Sir Robert would consent to finish his examination some other time?

SIR R. It might be arranged.

ART. Tomorrow?

SIR R. Tomorrow is impossible. I am in court all the morning and in the House of Commons for the rest of the day. (*Carelessly.*) If a further examination should prove necessary it will have to be sometime next week.

ART. I see. Will you forgive me if I sit down? (*He sits in his usual chair.*) Desmond has been telling me you think it might be possible to proceed by Petition of Right?

CATH. What's a Petition of Right?

DES. Well—granting the assumption that the Admiralty, as the Crown, can do no wrong—

CATH. (*murmuring*). I thought that was exactly the assumption we refused to grant?

DES. In law, I mean. Now, a subject can sue the Crown nevertheless, by Petition of Right, redress being granted as a matter of grace—and the custom is for the Attorney-general—on behalf of the King—to endorse the Petition, and allow the case to come to court.

SIR R. It is interesting to note that the exact words he uses on such occasions are: "Let Right be done."

ART. "Let Right be done?" I like that phrase, sir.

SIR R. It has a certain ring about it—has it not? (*Languidly.*) "Let Right be done." (RON. *comes in. He is in an Eton suit, looking very spick and span.*)

ART. This is my son, Ronald. Ronnie, this is Sir Robert Morton.

RON. How do you do, sir?

ART. He is going to ask you a few questions. You must answer them all truthfully—as you always have. (*He begins to struggle out of his chair.*) I expect you would like us to leave—

SIR R. No. I would like you all to remain, provided, of course, that you don't interrupt. (*To* CATH.) Miss Winslow, will you sit down, please? (CATH. *takes a seat abruptly.*)

DES. (*to* CATH.). Courtroom atmosphere, you see—

SIR R. (*to* RON.). Will you stand at the table, facing me? (RON. *does so.*) That's right. (SIR R. *and* RON. *now face each other across table,* SIR R. *with his hands on the lapels of his overcoat, towering over the boy. He begins his examination very quietly.*) Now, Ronald, how old are you?

RON. Fourteen and three months.

SIR R. You were, then, thirteen and ten months old when you left Osborne: is that right?

RON. Yes, sir.

SIR R. Now I would like you to cast your mind back to July 22nd of this year. Will you tell me in your own words exactly what happened to you on that day?

RON. All right. Well, it was a half-hol, so we didn't have any work after lunch—at least until prep at seven. Just before lunch I went to the Chief Petty Officer and asked him to let me have sixteen bob out of what I had in the school bank—

SIR R. Why did you do that?

RON. I wanted to buy an air-pistol.

SIR R. How much was the air-pistol?

RON. Fifteen and six.

SIR R. And how much money did you have in the school bank at the time?

RON. Two pounds three shillings.

ART. So you see, sir, what incentive could there possibly be for him to steal five shillings?

SIR R. (*coldly*). I must ask you to be good enough not to interrupt me, sir. (*To* RON.) After you had withdrawn the sixteen shillings, what did you do?

RON. I had lunch.

SIR R. Then what?

RON. I went to the locker-room and put the sixteen shillings in my locker.

SIR R. Yes. Then?

RON. I went to get permission to go down to the Post Office. Then I went to the locker-room again, got out my money, and went down to the Post Office.

SIR R. What time was that?

RON. About a quarter past three.

SIR R. I see. Go on.

RON. I bought my postal order—

SIR R. For fifteen and six?

RON. Yes. Then I went back to college. Then I met Elliot minor, and he said: "I say, isn't it rot? Someone's broken into my locker and pinched a postal order. I've reported it to the P.O."

SIR R. Those were Elliot minor's exact words?

RON. He might have used another word for rot—

SIR R. I see. Continue—

RON. Well, then, just before prep I was told to go along and see Commander Flower. The woman from the Post Office was there, and the Commander said: "Is this the boy?" and she said: "It might be. I can't be sure. They all look so much alike."

ART. You see? She couldn't identify him. (SIR R. *glares at him.*)

SIR R. (*to* RON.). Go on.

RON. Then she said: "I only know that the boy who bought a postal order for fifteen and six was the same boy that cashed one for five shillings." So the Commander said: "Did you buy a postal order for fifteen and six?" And I said: "Yes," and then they made me write Elliot minor's name on an envelope, and compared it to the signature on the back of the postal order—then they sent me to the sanatorium and ten days later I was sacked—I mean—expelled.

SIR R. I see. (*Quietly.*) Did you cash a postal order belonging to Elliot minor for five shillings?

RON. No, sir.

SIR R. Did you break into his locker and steal it?

RON. No, sir.

SIR R. And that is the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth?

RON. Yes, sir. (DICK. *has come in during this, and is standing furtively in doorway, not knowing whether to come in or go out.* SIR R. *waves him impatiently to a seat.*)

SIR R. Right. Now, Ronald, when the Commander asked you to write Elliot's name on an envelope, how did you write it? With Christian name or initials?

RON. I wrote Joseph K. Elliot.

SIR R. And how was his name written on the back of the postal order?

RON. The same.

SIR R. The same? Joseph K. Elliot?

RON. Yes, sir.

SIR R. What made you choose that particular form?

RON. That was the way he usually signed his name—

SIR R. How did you know?

RON. Well—he was a great friend of mine—

SIR R. That is no answer. How did you know?

RON. I'd seen him sign things.

SIR R. What things?

RON. Oh—ordinary things.

SIR R. I repeat: what things?

RON. (*reluctantly*). Bits of paper.

SIR R. Bits of paper? And why did he sign his name on bits of paper?

RON. I don't know.

SIR R. You do know. Why did he sign his name on bits of paper?

RON. He was practising his signature.

SIR R. And you saw him?

RON. Yes.

SIR R. Did he know you saw him?

RON. Well—yes—

SIR R. In other words, he showed you exactly how he wrote his signature?

RON. Yes. I suppose he did.

SIR R. Did you practise writing it yourself?

RON. I might have done.

SIR R. What do you mean you might have done? Did you, or did you not?

RON. Yes—

ART. (*sharply*). Ronnie! You never told me that.

RON. It was only for a joke—

SIR R. Never mind whether it was for a joke or not. The fact is you practised forging Elliot's signature—

RON. It wasn't forging—

SIR R. What do you call it then?

RON. Writing.

SIR R. Very well. Writing. Whoever stole the postal order and cashed it also *wrote* Elliot's signature, didn't he?

RON. Yes.

SIR R. And, oddly enough, in the exact form in which you had earlier been practising *writing* his signature—

RON. (*indignantly*). I say. Which side are you on?

SIR R. (*snarling*). Don't be impertinent! You know that the Admiralty sent up the forged postal order to Mr. Williams—the greatest handwriting expert in England?

RON. Yes.

SIR R. And you know that he said that there was no doubt that the signature on the postal order and the signature you wrote on the envelope were by one and the same hand?

RON. Yes.

SIR R. And you still say that you didn't forge that signature?

RON. Yes, I do.

SIR R. In other words, Mr. Williams doesn't know his job?

RON. Well, he's wrong anyway.

SIR R. When you went into the locker-room after lunch, were you alone?

RON. I don't remember.

SIR R. I think you do. Were you alone in the locker-room?

RON. Yes.

SIR R. And you knew which Elliot's locker was?

RON. Yes. Of course.

SIR R. Why did you go in there at all?

RON. I've told you. To put my sixteen shillings away.

SIR R. Why?

RON. I thought it would be safer.

SIR R. Why safer than your pocket?

RON. I don't know.

SIR R. You had it in your pocket at lunchtime. Why this sudden fear for its safety?

RON. (*plainly rattled*). I tell you, I don't know—

SIR R. It was rather an odd thing to do, wasn't it? The money was perfectly safe in your pocket. Why did you suddenly feel yourself impelled to put it away in your locker?

RON. (*almost shouting*). I don't know.

SIR R. Was it because you knew you would be alone in the locker-room at the time?

RON. No.

SIR R. Where was Elliot's locker in relation to yours?

RON. Next to it, but one.

SIR R. Next, but one. What time did Elliot put his postal order in his locker?

RON. I don't know. I didn't even know he had a postal order in his locker. I didn't know he had a postal order at all.

SIR R. Yet you say he was a great friend of yours—

RON. He didn't tell me.

SIR R. How very secretive of him! What time did you go to the locker room?

RON. I don't remember.

SIR R. Was it directly after lunch?

RON. Yes. I think so.

SIR R. What did you do after leaving the locker-room?

RON. I've told you. I went for permission to go to the Post Office.

SIR R. What time was that?

RON. About a quarter past two.

SIR R. Lunch is over at one forty-five. What were you doing in the locker-room for half an hour?

RON. I wasn't there all that time—

SIR R. You've just said you were.

RON. Well—you're muddling me—

SIR R. How long were you there?

RON. About five minutes.

SIR R. What were you doing for the other twenty-five?

RON. I don't remember.

SIR R. It's odd that your memory is so good about some things and so bad about others—

RON. Perhaps I waited outside the C.O.'s office!

SIR R. (*with seering sarcasm*). Perhaps you waited outside the C.O.'s office! And perhaps no one saw you there, either?

RON. No. I don't think they did.

SIR R. What were you thinking about outside the C.O.'s office for twenty-five minutes?

RON. (*wildly*). I don't even know if I was there. I can't remember. Perhaps I wasn't there at all.

SIR R. No. Perhaps you were still in the locker-room rifling Elliot's locker—?

ART. (*indignantly*). Sir Robert, I must ask you—

SIR R. Quiet!

RON. I remember now. I remember. Someone did see me outside the C.O.'s office. A chap called Casey. I remember I spoke to him.

SIR R. What did you say?

RON. I said: "Come down to the Post Office with me. I'm going to cash a postal order."

SIR R. (*triumphantly*). *Cash* a postal order.

RON. I mean get.

SIR R. You said "cash." Why did you say "cash" if you meant get?

RON. I don't know. I didn't mean it.

SIR R. I suggest "cash" was the truth.

RON. No, no. It wasn't, really. You're muddling me.

SIR R. You seem easily muddled. Why did you lie about the time you went to the Post Office?

RON. I didn't.

SIR R. You told the Commander two-thirty. You told me three-fifteen.

RON. I was muddled, with the Commander.

SIR R. Muddled again? How many other lies have you told?

RON. None. Really, I haven't—

SIR R. (*bending forward malevolently*). I suggest your whole testimony is a lie—

RON. No! It's the truth—

SIR R. I suggest there is barely one single word of truth in anything you have said either to me, or to the judge advocate or to the Commander. I suggest that you did break into Elliot's locker, that you did steal the postal order, that you did cash it and forge his name—

RON. (*wailing*). I didn't. I didn't. I didn't need the money—

SIR R. I suggest that you did it for a joke, meaning to give Elliot the five shillings back, but that when you met him and he said he had reported the matter that you got frightened and decided to keep quiet—

RON. No, no, no. It isn't true—

SIR R. I suggest that by continuing to deny your guilt you are causing great hardship to your own family, and considerable annoyance to high and important persons in this country—

CATH. (*on her feet*). That's a disgraceful thing to say!

ART. I agree.

SIR R. (*leaning forward and glaring at* RON. *with the utmost venom*). I suggest, boy, that the time has at last come for you to undo some of the misery you have caused by confessing to us all now that you are a forger, a liar and a thief!

RON. (*in tears*). I'm not! I'm not! I'm not! I didn't do it— (GRACE *has flown to his side and now envelops him.*)

GRACE. There, darling! Never mind, now! Never mind—

ART. This is outrageous, sir— (JOHN *appears at door, dressed in evening clothes.*)

JOHN. Kate, dear, I'm most terribly sorry— (*He stops short as he takes in the scene, with* RON. *sobbing hysterically on his mother's breast, and* ART. *and* CATH. *glaring indignantly at* SIR R. *who is engaged in putting his papers together.*)

SIR R. (*to* DES.). Can I drop you anywhere? My car is at the door.

DES. Er—no—I thank you—

SIR R. (*carelessly*). Well, send all this stuff round to my chambers tomorrow morning, will you?

DES. But—but will you need it now?

SIR R. Oh, yes. The boy is plainly innocent. I accept the brief. (*He bows to* ART. *and* CATH. *and walks languidly to door past the bewildered* JOHN, *to whom he gives a polite nod as he goes out.* RON. *continues to sob hysterically.*)

ACT III

SCENE. *The same. Nine months later. The time is about ten-thirty* P.M.

ART. *is sitting in his favorite arm-chair, reading aloud from an evening paper, whose wide headline:* "WINSLOW DEBATE: FIRST LORD REPLIES," *we can read on the front page. Listening to him are* RON. *and* GRACE, *though neither of them*

seems to be doing so with much concentration. RON., *on sofa, is finding it hard to keep his eyes open, and* GRACE, *darning socks in other arm-chair, has evidently other and, to her, more important matters on her mind.*

ART. (*reading*). "—The Admiralty, during the whole of this long drawn-out dispute, have at no time acted hastily or ill-advisedly, and it is a matter of mere histrionic hyperbole for the right honorable and learned gentleman opposite to characterize the conduct of my department as that of callousness so inhuman as to amount to deliberate malice towards the boy Winslow. (Ministerial cheers and opposition cries of Oh!) Such unfounded accusations I can well choose to ignore. (An honorable member: 'You can't.') Honorable members opposite may interrupt as much as they please, but I repeat—there is nothing whatever that the Admiralty has done, or failed to do, in the case of this cadet for which I, as First Lord, need to apologize. (Further opposition interruptions.)" (*He stops reading and looks up.*) I must say it looks as if the First Lord's having rather a rough passage— (*He breaks off, noticing* RONNIE'S *head has fallen back on cushions, and he is asleep.*) I trust my reading isn't keeping you awake. (*There is no answer.*) I say I trust my reading isn't keeping you awake! (*Again there is no answer. Helplessly.*) Grace!

GRACE. My poor sleepy little lamb! It's long past his bedtime, Arthur.

ART. Grace, dear—at this very moment your poor sleepy little lamb is the subject of a very violent and heated debate in the House of Commons. I should have thought, in the circumstances, it might have been possible for him to contrive to stay awake for a few minutes past his bedtime—

GRACE. I expect he's over-excited. (ART. *and* GRACE *both look at the tranquilly oblivious form on sofa.*)

ART. A picture of over-excitement. (*Sharply.*) Ronnie! (*No answer.*) Ronnie!

RON. (*opening his eyes*). Yes, Father?

ART. I am reading the account of the debate. Would you like to listen, or would you rather go to bed?

RON. Oh, I'd like to listen, of course, Father. I was listening too, only I had my eyes shut—

ART. I see. That, no doubt, was why your attitude was barely distinguishable from a heavy doze—

RON. Oh no, Father. It's jolly interesting. Go on—do.

ART. Very well. (*Reading.*) "The First Lord continued amid further interruptions: The chief point of criticism against the Admiralty appears to center in the purely legal question of the Petition of Right brought by Mr. Arthur Winslow and the Admiralty's demurrer thereto. I am very ready to admit that this has raised a constitutional issue of the first importance, but the implications must be viewed from every angle. The right honorable and learned gentleman has made great play with his eloquent reference to the liberty of the individual menaced, as he puts it, by the new despotism of bureaucracy—and I was as moved as any honorable member opposite by his resonant use of the words: 'Let Right be done'—the time-honored phrase with which, in his opinion, the Attorney-General should without question have endorsed Mr. Winslow's Petition of Right. Nevertheless, the matter is not nearly as simple as the right honorable and learned gentleman appears to imagine. The Ad-

miralty, it is true, in instructing the Attorney-General to reject this Petition, have relied upon an ancient prerogative of the Crown. But it must be remembered that in this Twentieth Century the prerogatives of the Crown are no longer exercised on behalf of a despotic monarch, but on behalf of a free and democratically protected people. (Ministerial cheers and further opposition interruptions.) Cadet Ronald Winslow is a servant of the Crown, and has therefore no right whatever—no more right than any other member of His Majjesty's forces—to sue the Crown in open court. To allow him to do so—whether through legal quibble of a claim for breach of contract by his father or by any other means his legal advisers may hit upon, would undoubtedly raise the most dangerous precedents. (Honorable members: Dangerous to whom?) There is no doubt whatever in my mind that in certain cases—and this is one of them—private rights may have to be sacrificed for the public good—(Opposition laughter and ministerial counter cheers.)" (*He looks up.*) And what other excuse, pray, did Charles I make for ship money and—? (RON., *after a manful attempt to keep his eyes open by self-pinchings and other devices, has once more succumbed to oblivion. Sharply.*) Ronnie! Ronnie! (RON. *stirs, turns over, and slides more comfortably into cushions.*) Would you believe it!

GRACE. He's dead tired. I'd better take him up to his bed—

ART. No. If he must sleep, let him sleep there.

GRACE. Oh, but he'd be much more comfy in his little bed—

ART. I dare say; but the debate continues and until it's ended the cause of it all will certainly not make himself comfy in his little bed. (VI. *comes in.*)

VI. There are three more reporters in the hall, sir. Want to see you very urgently. Shall I let them in?

ART. No. Certainly not. I issued a statement yesterday. Until the debate is over I have nothing more to say.

VI. Yes, sir. That's what I told them, but they wouldn't go.

ART. Well, make them. Use force, if necessary.

VI. Yes, sir. And shall I cut some sandwiches for Miss Catherine, as she missed her dinner?

GRACE. Yes, Violet. Good idea. (VI. *goes out.*)

VI. (*off-stage*). Mr. Winslow made a statement yesterday. He has nothing more to say. (VOICES *answer her, fading at length into silence.* GRACE *puts a rug over* RON., *now sleeping very soundly.*)

ART. Grace, dear—

GRACE. Yes?

ART. I fancy this might be a good opportunity of talking to Violet?

GRACE (*quite firmly*). No, dear.

ART. Meaning that it isn't a good opportunity? Or meaning that you have no intention at all of ever talking to Violet?

GRACE. I'll do it one day, Arthur. Tomorrow, perhaps. Not now.

ART. I believe you'd do better to grasp the nettle. Delay only adds to your worries—

GRACE (*bitterly*). My worries! What do you know about my worries?

ART. A good deal, Grace. But I feel they would be a lot lessened if you faced the situation squarely.

GRACE. It's easy for you to talk, Arthur. You don't have to do it.

ART. I will, if you like.

GRACE. No, dear.

ART. If you explain the dilemma to her carefully—if you even show her the figures I jotted down for you yesterday—I venture to think you won't find her unreasonable.

GRACE. She's nearly seventy, Arthur. It won't be easy for her to find another place. I don't mind how many figures she's shown, it's a brutal thing to do.

ART. Facts are brutal things.

GRACE (*a shade hysterically*). Facts? I don't think I know what facts are any more—

ART. The facts, at this moment, are that we have a half of the income we had a year ago and we're living at nearly the same rate. However you look at it that's bad economics—

GRACE. I'm not talking about economics, Arthur. I know about those facts as well as you. Probably better, as I have to deal with them. I'm talking about ordinary, common or garden facts—things we took for granted a year ago and which now don't seem to matter any more.

ART. Such as?

GRACE (*with rising voice*). Such as a happy home and peace and quiet and an ordinary respectable life, and some sort of future for us and our children. In the last year you've thrown all that overboard, Arthur. There's your return for it, I suppose (*She indicates headline in paper.*), and it's all very exciting and important, I'm sure, but it doesn't bring back any of the things that we've lost. I can only pray to God that you know what you're doing. (RON. *stirs in his sleep.* GRACE *automatically pulls rug over him and lowers her voice at end of her speech. A pause.*)

ART. (*quietly*). I do know what I'm doing, Grace.

GRACE. Do you? I'm not so sure. I sometimes think you're just marching blindly ahead without knowing where you're going.

ART. I know exactly where I'm going, Grace. I'm going to publish my son's innocence before the world, and for that end I am not prepared to weigh the cost.

GRACE. But the cost may be out of all proportion—

ART. It may be. That doesn't concern me. I hate heroics, Grace, but you force me to say this. An injustice has been done. I am going to set it right, and there is no sacrifice in the world I am not prepared to make in order to do so.

GRACE (*with sudden violence*). Oh, I wish I could see the sense of it all! (*Pointing to* RON.) He's perfectly happy, at a good school, doing very well. No one need ever have known about Osborne, if you hadn't gone and shouted it out to the whole world. As it is, whatever happens now, he'll go through the rest of his life as the boy in that Winslow case—the boy that stole that postal order—

ART. (*grimly*). The boy that didn't steal that postal order.

GRACE (*wearily*). What's the difference? When millions are talking and gossiping about him, a *did* or a *didn't* hardly matters. The Winslow boy is bad enough. You talk about sacrificing everything for him: but when he's grown

up he won't thank you for it, Arthur—even though you've given your life to—publish his innocence, as you call it. (ART. *makes impatient gesture.*) Yes, Arthur—your life. You talk gaily about arthritis and a touch of gout and old age and the rest of it, but you know as well as any of the doctors what really is the matter with you and how vital it is for you to have some rest and quiet. (*Nearly in tears.*) You're destroying yourself, Arthur, and me and your family besides—and for what? For what, I'd like to know? I've asked you and Kate to tell me a hundred times—but you can't. You never can— For what, Arthur? For what? (ART. *has struggled painfully out of his seat and now approaches her.*)

ART. (*quietly*). For justice, Grace.

GRACE. Justice? That sounds very noble. Are you sure it's true? Are you sure it isn't just plain pride and self-importance and sheer brute stubbornness? You and Kate can't bear the thought of anyone ever getting the better of you. Isn't it just plain selfishness in you both that stops you saying: "All right. I'll give up. They've *won?*"

ART. (*putting a hand out*). No, Grace. I don't think it is. I really don't think it is—

GRACE (*shaking off his hand*). No. This time I'm not going to cry and say I'm sorry, and make it all up again. It's past that now, Arthur. I can't stand it any more. If there was a reason I could stand anything. Anything. But for no reason at all, it's unfair to ask so much of me. It's unfair— (*She breaks down. As* ART. *puts a comforting arm around her she pushes him off and runs out of door.* RON. *has meanwhile opened his eyes.*)

RON. What's the matter, Father?

ART. (*turning from door*). Your mother is a little upset—

RON. (*drowsily*). Why? Aren't things going well?

ART. Oh, yes. (*Murmuring.*) Very well. (*He sits with more than his usual difficulty, as if he were utterly exhausted.*) Very well indeed. (RON. *contentedly closes his eyes again.* ART., *for a long time, stares broodingly into space, laying his stick methodically beside him. Then he turns his head to sofa. Gently.*) You'd better go to bed now, Ronnie. You'll be more comfortable. (*He sees* RON. *is asleep again. He struggles out of his chair and goes over to sofa, where he stands looking down at his sleeping son, barely visible under the rug. He makes as if to wake him, then shrugs his shoulders and turns away.* VI. *comes in with sandwiches on a plate, and a letter on a salver.*) Thank you, Violet. (VI. *puts sandwiches on table and hands* ART. *letter.* ART. *puts it down on table beside him without opening it.* VI. *turns to go out.*) Oh, Violet—

VI. (*turning placidly*). Yes, sir?

ART. How long have you been with us?

VI. Twenty-four years next April, sir.

ART. As long as that?

VI. Yes, sir. Miss Kate was that high when I first came (*She indicates a small child.*) and Mr. Dickie hadn't even been thought of—

ART. I remember you coming to us now. I remember it well. What do you think of this case, Violet?

VI. A fine old rumpus that is, and no mistake.

ART. It is, isn't it? A fine old rumpus.

VI. There was a leading article in the *Evening News*. Did you read it, sir?

ART. No. What did it say?

VI. Oh, about how it was a fuss about nothing and a shocking waste of the Government's time, but how it was a good thing all the same because it could only happen in England—

ART. There seems to be a certain lack of logic in that argument—

VI. Well, perhaps they put it a bit different, sir. Still, that's what it said all right. And when you think it's all because of that little mite over there on the sofa—I have to laugh about it sometimes, I really do. Wasting the Government's time at his age! I never did. Well, wonders will never cease.

ART. I know. Wonders will never cease.

VI. Well—would that be all, sir? (*Slight pause.*)

ART. Yes, Violet. That'll be all. (VI. *goes out; we can hear her greeting* CATH. *in hall with the news that Mr. Winslow's in drawing-room.* CATH. *comes in.*)

CATH. Hullo, Father. (*She kisses him. Indicating* RON.) An honorable member described that this evening as a piteous little figure, crying aloud to humanity for justice and redress. I wish he could see him now.

ART. (*testily*). It's long past his bedtime. What's happened? Is the debate over?

CATH. As good as. When I left all excitement had gone out of it. The First Lord gave an assurance that in future there would be no inquiry at Osborne or Dartmouth without informing the parents first. That seemed to satisfy most members—

ART. But what about *this* case? Is he going to allow us a fair trial?

CATH. Apparently not.

ART. But that's iniquitous. I thought he would be forced to—

CATH. I thought so, too. The House evidently thought otherwise.

ART. Will there be a division?

CATH. There may be. If there is the Government will win.

ART. What is the motion?

CATH. To reduce the First Lord's salary by a hundred pounds. (*With a faint smile.*) Naturally, no one really wants to do that. (*Indicating sandwiches.*) Are these for me?

ART. Yes. (CATH. *starts to eat sandwiches.*) So we're back where we started, then?

CATH. It looks like it.

ART. The debate has done us no good at all?

CATH. It's aired the case a little, perhaps. A few more thousand people will say to each other at breakfast tomorrow: "That boy ought to be allowed a fair trial."

ART. What's the good of that, if they can't make themselves heard?

CATH. I think they can—given time.

ART. Given time? (*Pause.*) But didn't Sir Robert make any protest when the First Lord refused a trial?

CATH. Not a verbal protest: something far more spectacular and dramatic. He uncoiled those long legs of his—he'd had his feet on the Treasury table and his hat over his eyes, during most of the First Lord's speech—and got up very deliberately. Then he glared at the First Lord, threw a whole bundle of notes on the floor, and stalked out of the House. It made a magnificent effect. If I hadn't known I could have sworn he was genuinely indignant—

ART. Of course he was genuinely indignant. So would any man of feeling be—

CATH. Sir Robert, Father dear, is not a man of feeling. I don't think any emotion at all can stir that fishy heart—

ART. Except perhaps a single-minded love of justice.

CATH. Nonsense. A single-minded love of Sir Robert Morton.

ART. You're very ungrateful to him, considering all he's done for us these last months—

CATH. I'm not ungrateful, Father. He's been wonderful—I admit it freely. No one could have fought a harder fight.

ART. Well, then—?

CATH. It's only his motives I question. At least I *don't* question them at all. I know them.

ART. What are they?

CATH. First—publicity—you know—look at me, the staunch defender of the little man—and then second—a nice popular stick to beat the Government with. Both very useful to an ambitious man. Luckily for him, we've provided them.

ART. Luckily for us, too, Kate.

CATH. Oh, granted. But don't fool yourself about him, Father, for all that. The man is a fish, a hard, cold-blooded, supercilious, sneering fish. (VI. *enters.*)

VI. (*announcing*). Sir Robert Morton. (CATH. *chokes over her sandwich.* SIR R. *comes in.*)

SIR R. Good evening.

CATH. (*still choking*). Good evening.

SIR R. Something gone down the wrong way?

CATH. Yes.

SIR R. May I assist? (*He pats her on back.*)

CATH. Thank you.

SIR R. (*to* ART.). Good evening, sir. I thought I would call and give you an account of the day's proceedings, but I see your daughter has forestalled me.

CATH. Did you know I was in the gallery?

SIR R. (*gallantly*). With such a charming hat, how could I have missed you?

ART. It was very good of you to call, sir, nevertheless—

SIR. R. (*seeing* RON.). Ah. The *casus belli*—dormant—

ART. Kate—wake him up.

SIR R. No, no. I beg of you. He is a delightful boy, but a litle rampageous. I imply no disparagement. All youngsters are, at that age, of course. But I think, none the less, that I prefer him—asleep.

ART. My daughter has told me of your demonstration during the First Lord's speech. She described it as—magnificent.

SIR R. (*with a glance at* CATH.). Did she? That was good of her. It's a very old trick, you know. I've done it a hundred times in the courts. It's nearly al-

ways surprisingly effective— (CATH. *catches her father's eye and nods triumphantly. To* CATH.) Was the First Lord at all put out by it—did you notice?

CATH. How could he have failed to be? (*To* ART., *approaching his chair.*) I wish you could have seen it, Father— It was— (*She notices letter on table beside* ART., *and snatches it up with a sudden gesture. She examines envelope.*) When did this come?

ART. A few minutes ago. Do you know the writing?

CATH. Yes. (*She puts letter back on table.*)

ART. Whose is it?

CATH. I shouldn't bother to read it, if I were you. (ART. *looks at her, puzzled, then takes up letter.*)

ART. (*to* SIR R.). Will you forgive me?

SIR R. Of course. (ART. *opens letter and begins to read.* CATH. *watches him for a moment, then turns with a certain forced liveliness to* SIR R.)

CATH. Well, what do you think the next step should be?

SIR R. I have already been considering that, Miss Winslow. I believe that perhaps the best plan would be to renew our efforts to get the Director of Public Prosecutions to act.

CATH. (*with one eye on her father*). But do you think there's any chance of that?

SIR R. Oh, yes. In the main, it will chiefly be a question of making ourselves a confounded nuisance—

CATH. We've certainly done that quite successfully so far—thanks to you—

SIR R. (*suavely*). Ah. That is perhaps the only quality I was born with—the ability to make myself a confounded nuisance. (*He, too, has his eye on* ART., *sensing something amiss.* ART. *finishes reading letter and lays it slowly on his lap.*)

CATH. (*with false vivacity*). Father—Sir Robert thinks we might get the Director of Public Prosecutions to act—

ART. What?

SIR R. We were discussing how to proceed with the case—

ART. The case? (*He stares, a little blankly, from one to the other.*) Yes. We must think of that, mustn't we? (*Pause.*) How to proceed with the case? (*To* SIR R., *abruptly.*) I'm afraid I don't think, all things considered, that much purpose would be served by going on— (SIR R. *and* CATH. *stare at him blankly.* CATH. *goes quickly to him and snatches letter from his lap. She begins to read.*)

SIR R. (*with a sudden change of tone*). Of course we must go on.

ART. (*in a low voice*). It is not for you to choose, sir. The choice is mine.

SIR R. (*harshly*). Then you must reconsider it. To give up now would be insane.

ART. Insane? My sanity has already been called in question tonight—for carrying the case as far as I have.

SIR R. Whatever the contents of that letter, sir—or whatever has happened to make you lose heart, I insist that we continue the fight—

ART. Insist? We? It is my fight, sir—my fight alone—and it is for me alone to judge when the time has come to give up.

SIR R. (*violently*). But why give up? Why? In Heaven's name, man, why give up?

ART. (*slowly*). I have made many sacrifices for this case. Some of them I had no right to make, but I made them, none the less. But there is a limit and I have reached it. I am sorry, Sir Robert. More sorry, perhaps, than you are, but the Winslow case is now closed.

SIR R. Balderdash! (ART. *looks surprised at this unparliamentary expression.* CATH. *has read and re-read letter, and now breaks silence in a calm, methodical voice.*)

CATH. My father doesn't mean what he says, Sir Robert.

SIR R. I am glad to hear it.

CATH. Perhaps I should explain this letter—

ART. No, Kate.

CATH. Sir Robert knows so much about our family affairs, Father, I don't see it will matter much if he learns a little more. (*To* SIR R.) This letter is from a certain Colonel Watherstone, who is the father of the man I'm engaged to. We've always known he was opposed to the case, so it really comes as no surprise. In it he says that our efforts to discredit the Admiralty in the House of Commons today have resulted merely in our making the name of Winslow a nation-wide laughing-stock. I think that's his phrase. (*She consults letter.*) Yes. That's right. A nation-wide laughing-stock.

SIR R. I don't care for his English.

CATH. It's not very good, is it? He goes on to say that unless my father will give him a firm understanding to drop this—this (*She consults letter again.*) whining and reckless agitation—I suppose he means the case—he will exert every bit of influence he has over his son to prevent him marrying me.

SIR R. I see. An ultimatum.

CATH. Yes—but a pointless one.

SIR R. He has no influence over his son?

CATH. Oh, yes. A little, naturally. But his son is of age, and his own master—

SIR R. Is he dependent on his father for money?

CATH. He gets an allowance. But he can live perfectly well—we both can live perfectly well without it. (*Pause.* SIR R. *stares hard at her, then turns abruptly to* ART.)

SIR R. Well, sir?

ART. I'm afraid I can't go back on what I have already said. I will give you a decision in a few days—

SIR R. Your daughter seems prepared to take the risk—

ART. I am not. Not, at least, until I know how great a risk it is—

SIR R. How do you estimate the risk, Miss Winslow? (*Pause.* CATH., *for all her bravado, is plainly scared. She is engaged in lighting a cigarette as* SIR R. *asks his question.*)

CATH. (*at length*). Negligible. (SIR R. *stares at her again. Feeling his eyes on her, she returns his glance defiantly. Pause.*)

SIR R. (*returning abruptly to his languid manner*). I see. May I take a cigarette, too?

CATH. Yes, of course. I thought you didn't smoke?

SIR R. Only occasionally—in moments of stress. (*To* ART.) I really must apologize to you, sir, for speaking to you as I did just now. It was unforgivable.

ART. Not at all, sir. You were upset at giving up the case—and, to be frank, I liked you for it—

SIR R. (*with a deprecating gesture*). It was more, I fear, a matter of overstrained nerves. It has been rather a tiring day. The House of Commons is a peculiarly exhausting place, you know. Too little ventilation, and far too much hot air—I really am most truly sorry, sir—

ART. Please—

SIR R. (*carelessly*). Of course, you must decide about the case as you wish. That really is a most charming hat, Miss Winslow—

CATH. I'm glad you like it.

SIR R. It seems decidedly wrong to me that a lady of your political persuasion should be allowed to adorn herself with such a very feminine allurement. It really looks so awfully like trying to have the best of both worlds—

CATH. I'm not a militant, you know, Sir Robert. I don't go about breaking shop windows with a hammer or pouring acid down pillar boxes.

SIR R. (*languidly*). I am truly glad to hear it. Both those activities would be highly unsuitable in that hat— (CATH. *glares at him, but suppresses an angry retort.*) I have never yet fully grasped what active steps you do take to propagate your cause, Miss Winslow.

CATH. (*shortly*). I'm an organizing secretary at the West London Branch of the Woman's Suffrage Association.

SIR R. Indeed? Is the work hard?

CATH. Very.

SIR R. But not, I should imagine, particularly lucrative?

CATH. The work is voluntary and unpaid.

SIR R. (*murmuring*). Dear me! What sacrifices you young ladies seem prepared to make for your convictions— (VI. *enters.*)

VI. (*to* CATH.) Mr. Watherstone is in the hall, Miss. Says he would like to have a word with you in private—most particular— (*Pause.*)

CATH. Oh. I'll come out to him—

ART. No. See him in here. (*He begins to struggle out of his chair.* SIR R. *assists him.*) You wouldn't mind coming to the dining-room, would you, Sir Robert, for a moment? (VI., *at a nod from* CATH., *goes out.*)

SIR R. Not in the least. (JOHN *comes in. He is looking depressed and anxious.* CATH. *greets him with a smile, which he returns only half-heartedly. This exchange is lost on* ART., *who has his back to them, but not on* SIR R.)

CATH. Hullo, John.

JOHN. Hullo. (*To* ART.) Good evening, sir.

ART. Good evening. (*He goes on towards dining-room.*)

CATH. I don't think you've met Sir Robert Morton?

JOHN. No, I haven't. How do you do, sir?

SIR R. How do you do? (*He sizes him up quickly.*) May I offer my very belated congratulations?

JOHN. Congratulations? Oh, yes. Thank you, sir.

ART. (*at door*). Can I get you a whiskey and soda, Sir Robert?

SIR R. Thank you, yes. That would be most welcome. (ART. *and* SIR R. *go into dining-room. There is a pause.* CATH. *is watching* JOHN *with an anxious expression.*)

JOHN (*indicating* RON.). Is he asleep?

CATH. Yes.

JOHN. Sure he's not shamming?

CATH. Yes.

JOHN (*after a pause*). My father's written your father a letter.

CATH. I know. I've read it.

JOHN. Oh.

CATH. Did you?

JOHN. Yes. He showed it to me. (*Pause.* JOHN *is carefully not looking at her. At length.*) Well, what's his answer?

CATH. My father? I don't suppose he'll send one.

JOHN. You think he'll ignore it?

CATH. Isn't that the best answer to blackmail?

JOHN (*muttering*). It was damned high-handed of the old man, I admit.

CATH. High-handed?

JOHN. I tried to get him not to send it—

CATH. I'm glad.

JOHN. The trouble is—he's perfectly serious.

CATH. I never thought he wasn't.

JOHN. If your father does decide to go on with the case, I'm very much afraid he'll do everything he threatens.

CATH. Forbid the match?

JOHN. Yes.

CATH. (*almost pleadingly*). Isn't that rather an empty threat, John?

JOHN (*slowly*). Well, there's always the allowance—

CATH. (*dully*). Yes, I see. There's always the allowance.

JOHN. I tell you, Kate darling, this is going to need damned careful handling; otherwise we'll find ourselves in the soup.

CATH. Without your allowance would we be in the soup?

JOHN. And without your dowry? My dear old girl, of course we would. Dash it all, I can't even live on my pay as it is, but with two of us—

CATH. I've heard it said that two can live as cheaply as one.

JOHN. Don't you believe it. Two can live as cheaply as two, and that's all there is to it.

CATH. Yes, I see. I didn't know.

JOHN. Unlike you, I have a practical mind, Kate. I'm sorry, but it's no good dashing blindly ahead without thinking of these things first. The problem has got to be faced.

CATH. I'm ready to face it, John. What do you suggest?

JOHN (*cautiously*). Well—I think you should consider very carefully before you take the next step—

CATH. I can assure you we will, John. The question is—what *is* the next step?

JOHN. Well—this is the way I see it. I'm going to be honest now. I hope you don't mind—

CATH. No. I should welcome it.

JOHN. Your kid brother over there pinches, or doesn't pinch, a five-bob postal order. For over a year you and your father fight a magnificent fight on his behalf, and I'm sure everyone admires you for it—

CATH. Your father hardly seems to—?

JOHN. Well, he's a diehard. He's like the type you've been up against at the Admiralty. I meant ordinary reasonable people, like myself. But now look—you've had two inquiries, the Petition of Right case which the Admiralty had thrown out of Court, and the Appeal. And now, good Heavens, you've had the whole damned House of Commons getting themselves worked up into a frenzy about it. Surely, darling, that's enough for you? My God! Surely the case can end there?

CATH. (*slowly*). Yes. I suppose the case can end there.

JOHN (*pointing to* RON.). *He* won't mind.

CATH. No. I know he won't.

JOHN. Look at him! Perfectly happy and content. Not a care in the world. How do you know what's going on in his mind? How can you be so sure he didn't do it?

CATH. (*also gazing down at* RON.). I'm not so sure he didn't do it.

JOHN (*appalled*). Good Lord! Then why in Heaven's name have you and your father spent all this time and money trying to prove his innocence?

CATH. (*quietly*). His innocence or guilt aren't important to me. They are to my father. Not to me. I believe he didn't do it: but I may be wrong. All that I care about is that people should know that a government department has ignored a fundamental human right, and that people should force it to acknowledge it. That's all that's important to me, John, but it *is* terribly important.

JOHN. But, darling, after all those long noble words, it does really resolve itself to a question of a fourteen-year-old kid and a five-bob postal order, doesn't it?

CATH. Yes, it does.

JOHN (*reasonably*). Well now, look. There's a European war blowing up, there's a coal strike on, there's a fair chance of civil war in Ireland, and there's a hundred and one other things on the horizon at the moment that I think you genuinely could call *important*. And yet, with all that on its mind, the House of Commons takes a whole damned day to discuss him (*Pointing to sofa.*) and his beastly postal order. Surely you must see that's a little out of proportion—? (*Pause.* CATH. *raises her head slowly.*)

CATH. (*with some spirit*). All I know is, John, that if ever the time comes that the House of Commons has so much on its mind that it can't find time to discuss a Ronnie Winslow and his beastly postal order, this country will be a far poorer place than it is now. (*Wearily.*) But you needn't go on, John dear. You've said quite enough. I entirely see your point of view.

JOHN. Well, perhaps there is just one thing I ought to mention. I haven't said

anything about it up to now because I didn't want to upset you. But it's this. I don't know whether you realize that all this publicity you're getting is making the name of Winslow a bit of a—well—

CATH. (*steadily*). A nation-wide laughing-stock, your father said.

JOHN. Well, that's putting it a bit steep. But people do find the case a bit ridiculous, you know. I mean, I got chaps coming up to me in the mess all the time and saying: "I say, is it true you're going to marry the Winslow girl? By gosh, old man, you'd better be careful. You'll find yourself up in front of the House of Lords for pinching the Adjutant's bath." Things like that. They're not awfully funny—

CATH. That's nothing. They're singing a verse about us at the Alhambra—

> Winslow one day went to Heaven
> And found a poor fellow in quod.
> The fellow said I didn't do it,
> So naturally Winslow sued God.

JOHN. Well darling—you see—

CATH. Yes. I see. (*Quietly.*) Do you want to marry me, John?

JOHN. What?

CATH. I said: do you want to marry me?

JOHN. Well, of course I do. You know I do. We've been engaged a year now. Have I ever wavered before?

CATH. No. Never before.

JOHN (*correcting himself*). I'm not wavering now. Not a bit—I'm only telling you what I think is the best course for us to take.

CATH. But isn't it already too late? Even if we gave up the case, would you still want to marry—the Winslow girl?

JOHN. All that would die down in a couple of weeks.

CATH. (*slowly*). And we'd have the allowance—

JOHN. Yes. We would.

CATH. And that's so important—

JOHN (*quietly*). It is, darling. I'm sorry, but you can't shame me into saying it isn't.

CATH. I didn't mean to shame you—

JOHN. Oh yes, you did. I know that tone of voice.

CATH. (*humbly*). I'm sorry.

JOHN (*confidently*). Well, now—what's the answer?

CATH. (*slowly*). The answer? You know quite well what the answer is, John. I've told it to you often enough. I love you and want to be your wife. Do you need another answer?

JOHN. No. That's quite good enough for me. Quite good enough. Darling! I was sure nothing so stupid and trivial could possibly come between us. (*He kisses her. She responds wearily. Telephone rings. After a pause she releases herself and picks up receiver.*)

CATH. Hullo . . . Yes . . . Will you hold on? (*She goes to dining-room door and calls.*) Sir Robert! Someone wants you on the telephone— (SIR R. *comes out of dining-room.*)

SIR R. Thank you. I'm so sorry to interrupt.

CATH. You didn't. We'd finished our talk. (SIR R. *looks at her inquiringly. She gives him no sign. He walks to telephone.*)

SIR R. (*noticing sandwiches*). How delicious. May I help myself?

CATH. Do.

SIR R. (*into receiver*). Hello . . . Yes, Michael . . . F.E.? I didn't know he was going to speak . . . I see . . . Go on . . . (*The man at other end of line speaks for some time.* SIR R. *listens with closed eyelids, munching a sandwich, meanwhile. At length.*) Thank you, Michael. (*He rings off.* ART. *has appeared in dining-room doorway. To* ART.) There has been a most interesting development in the House, sir.

ART. What?

SIR. R. It appears that a barrister friend of mine who, quite unknown to me, was interested in the case, got on his feet shortly after nine-thirty and delivered one of the most scathing denunciations of a government department ever heard in the House. (*To* CATH.) What a shame we missed it. His style is quite superb —I am one of his most ardent admirers—

ART. Never mind that, sir. What happened?

SIR R. The debate revived, of course, and the First Lord, who must have felt himself fairly safe, suddenly found himself under attack from all parts of the House. My secretary tells me that rather than risk a division he has this moment given an undertaking that he will instruct the Attorney-General to endorse our Petition of Right. The case of Winslow versus Rex can now therefore come to court. (*There is a pause.* ART. *and* CATH. *stare at him unbelievingly. At length.*) Well, sir. What are my instructions?

ART. (*slowly*). The decision is no longer mine, sir. You must ask my daughter.

SIR R. What are my instructions, Miss Winslow? (CATH. *goes slowly to sofa and looks down at the sleeping* RON. ART. *is at other end of the sofa, watching her intensely.* SIR R., *in the middle, munching sandwiches, is also looking at her.*)

CATH. (*in a flat voice*). Do you need any instructions, Sir Robert? Aren't they already on the Petition? Doesn't it say: Let Right be done? (JOHN *makes a move of protest toward her. She does not look at him. He turns abruptly to door.*)

JOHN (*furiously*). Good-night, Kate. (*He goes out.* SIR R., *with languid speculation, watches him go.*)

SIR R. (*his mouth full*). Well, then—we must endeavor to see that it is.

ACT IV

SCENE. *The same, about four months later. It is a stiflingly hot June day—nearly two years, less one month, since* RONNIE'S *dismissal from Osborne. The glass door to the garden stands open, and a bath-chair, unoccupied, has been placed nearby. On the rise of the curtain the stage is empty and telephone is ringing insistently.*

DICK. *comes in from hall carrying a suitcase, evidently very hot, his straw hat pushed on to the back of his head and panting from his exertions. He is*

wearing a neat, dark blue suit, a sober tie and a stiff collar. He puts suitcase down and mops his face with his handkerchief. Then he goes to hall door and calls:

DICK. Mother! (*There is no reply.*) Violet! (*Again no reply.*) Anyone about? (*He closes door, shrugs his shoulders and goes to telephone—taking off receiver.*) Hullo . . . No, not Senior—Junior . . . I don't know where he is . . . *Daily Mail?* . . . No, I'm the brother . . . Elder brother—that's right . . . Well—I'm in the banking business. . . . That's right. Following in Father's footsteps . . . My views on the case? Well—I—er—I don't know I have any, except, I mean, I hope we win and all that . . . No, I haven't been in court. I've only just arrived from Reading . . . Reading . . . Yes. That's where I work . . . Yes, I've come up for the last two days of the trial. Verdict's expected tomorrow, isn't it? . . . Twenty-two, last March . . . *Seven* years older . . . No. He was thirteen when it happened, but now he's fifteen . . . Well, I suppose, if I'm anything I'm a sort of Liberal—Conservative . . . Single . . . No. No immediate prospects. I say, is this at all interesting to you? . . . Well, a perfectly ordinary kid, just like any other—makes a noise, does fretwork, doesn't wash and all that . . . Doesn't wash . . . (*Alarmed.*) I say, don't take that too literally. I mean he does, sometimes . . . Yes. All right. Goodbye . . . (*He rings off and is just going to sit down when telephone rings again. He gets up to answer it, when* GRACE, *dressed for going out, comes out of dining-room.*)

GRACE. Oh, hullo, darling. When did you get here? (*On her way to him she picks up telephone receiver. Into receiver.*) Everyone out. (*She rings off and embraces* DICK.) You're thinner. I like your new suit.

DICK. Straight from Reading's Savile Row. Off the peg at three and a half guineas. (*Pointing to telephone.*) I say—does that go on all the time?

GRACE. All blessed day. The last four days it simply hasn't stopped.

DICK. I had to fight my way in through an army of reporters and people—

GRACE. Yes, I know. You didn't say anything, I hope, Dickie dear? It's better not to say a word—

DICK. I don't think I said anything much . . . (*Carelessly.*) Oh, yes. I did say that I personally thought he did it—

GRACE (*horrified*). Dickie! You didn't! (*He is smiling at her.*) Oh, I see. It's a joke. You mustn't say things like that, even in fun, Dickie dear—

DICK. How's it all going?

GRACE. I don't know. I've been there all four days now and I've hardly understood a word that's going on. Kate says the judge is against us, but he seems a charming old gentleman to me. (*Faintly shocked.*) Sir Robert's so rude to him— (*Telephone rings.* GRACE *answers it automatically.*) Nobody in. (*She rings off and turns to garden door—Calling.*) Arthur! Lunch! I'll come straight down. Dickie's here. (*To* DICK.) Kate takes the morning session, then she comes and relieves me with Arthur, and I go in the afternoons, so you can come with me as soon as she's in.

DICK. Will there be room for me?

GRACE. Oh, yes. They reserve places for the family. You never saw such

crowds in all your life. And such excitement! Cheers and applause and people being turned out. It's thrilling—you'll love it, Dickie.

DICK. Well—if I don't understand a word—

GRACE. Oh, that doesn't matter. They all get so terribly worked up, you find yourself getting worked up yourself. Sir Robert and the Attorney-General go at each other hammer and tongs—you wait and hear them—all about petitions and demurrers and prerogatives and things. Nothing to do with Ronnie at all —seems to me—

DICK. How did Ronnie get on in the witness box?

GRACE. Two days he was cross-examined. Two whole days. Imagine it, the poor little pet! I must say he didn't seem to mind much. He said two days with the Attorney-General wasn't nearly as bad as two minutes with Sir Robert. Kate says he made a very good impression with the jury—

DICK. How is Kate, Mother?

GRACE. Oh, all right. You heard about John, I suppose—?

DICK. Yes. That's what I meant. How has she taken it?

GRACE. You can never tell with Kate. She never lets you know what she's feeling. We all think he's behaved very badly— (ART. *appears at garden door, walking very groggily.*) Arthur! You shouldn't have come up the stairs by yourself.

ART. I had little alternative.

GRACE. I'm sorry, dear. I was talking to Dickie. (GRACE *helps* ART. *into bath-chair.*)

ART. How are you, Dickie?

DICK. (*shaking hands*). Very well, thank you, Father.

ART. I've been forced to adopt this ludicrous form of propulsion. I apologize. (*He wheels himself into room and examines* DICK.) You look very well. A trifle thinner, perhaps—

DICK. Hard work, Father.

ART. Or late hours?

DICK. You can't keep late hours in Reading.

ART. I should have thought you could keep late hours anywhere. I've had quite a good report about you from Mr. Lamb.

DICK. Good egg! He's a decent old stick, the old baa-lamb. I took him racing last Saturday. Had the time of his life and lost his shirt.

ART. Quite so. I have no doubt that, given the chance, you'll succeed in converting the entire Reading branch of the Westminster Bank into a bookmaking establishment. Mr. Lamb says you've joined the Territorials?

DICK. Yes, Father.

ART. Why have you done that?

DICK. Well, from all accounts there's a fair chance of a bit of a scrap quite soon. If there is I don't want it to be all over before I can get in on it—

ART. If there is what you call a scrap you'll do far better to stay in the bank—

DICK. Oh no, Father. I mean, the bank's all right—but still—a chap can't help looking forward to a bit of a change—I can always go back to the bank afterwards— (*Telephone rings.* GRACE *answers it.*)

GRACE. Hullo! . . . Sorry. Everyone's out. (*She rings off.*)

ART. Why don't you disconnect that thing? Look. (ART. *wheels himself over and takes receiver off.*)

GRACE. Oh, no, dear. You can't do that.

ART. Why not?

GRACE. It annoys the exchange.

ART. I prefer to annoy the exchange than have the exchange annoy me. (*To* GRACE.) Catherine's late. She was in at half-past yesterday.

GRACE. Perhaps they're taking the lunch interval later today?

ART. Lunch interval? This isn't a cricket match. (*Looking at her.*) Nor, may I say, is it a matinee at the Gaiety. Why are you wearing that highly unsuitable get-up?

GRACE. Don't you like it, dear? I think it's Mme. Dupont's best.

ART. Grace—your son is facing a charge of theft and forgery—

GRACE. Oh, dear! It's so difficult! I simply can't be seen in the same old dress, day after day. (*A thought strikes her.*) I tell you what, Arthur. I'll wear my black coat and skirt tomorrow—for the verdict. (ART. *glares at her, helplessly, then turns his chair to dining-room.*)

ART. Did you say my lunch was ready?

GRACE. Yes, dear. It's only cold. I did the salad myself. Violet and Cook are at the trial.

DICK. Is Violet still with you? She was under sentence last time I saw you—?

GRACE. She's been under sentence for the last six months, poor thing—only she doesn't know it. Neither Arthur nor I have the courage to tell her—

ART. (*stopping at door*). I have the courage to tell her.

GRACE. It's funny that you don't, then, dear.

ART. I will.

GRACE (*hastily*). No, no, you mustn't. When it's to be done, I'll do it.

ART. You see, Dickie? These taunts of cowardice are daily flung at my head; but should I take them up I'm forbidden to move. Such is the logic of women. (*He goes into dining-room.* DICK., *who has been holding door open, closes it after him.*)

DICK. (*seriously*). How *is* he? (GRACE *shakes her head quietly.*) Will you take him away after the trial?

GRACE. He's promised to go into a home.

DICK. Do you think he will?

GRACE. How do I know? He'll probably find some new excuse—

DICK. But surely, if he loses this time, he's lost for good, hasn't he?

GRACE (*slowly*). So they say, Dickie dear—I can only hope it's true.

DICK. How did you keep him away from the trial?

GRACE. Kate and Sir Robert together. He wouldn't listen to me or the doctor.

DICK. Poor old Mother! You must have been having a pretty rotten time of it, one way and another—

GRACE. I've said my say, Dickie. He knows what I think. Not that he cares. He never has—all his life. Anyway, I've given up worrying. He's always said he knew what he was doing. It's my job to try and pick up the pieces, I suppose. (CATH. *comes in.*)

CATH. Lord! The heat! Mother, can't you get rid of those reporters—? Hullo, Dickie.

DICK. (*embracing her*). Hullo, Kate.

CATH. Come to be in at the death?

DICK. Is that what it's going to be?

CATH. Looks like it. I could cheerfully strangle that old brute of a judge, Mother. He's dead against us.

GRACE (*fixing her hat in mirror*). Oh, dear! Do I look all right, Kate?

CATH. Yes, Mother. You look extremely smart. Sir Robert's very worried. He said the Attorney-General's speech made a great impression on the jury.

GRACE. Such a fine-looking man, the Attorney-General, don't you think, Kate?

CATH. Yes, Mother. Very fine-looking. Also, I'm afraid, very eloquent. To listen to him yesterday you would have thought that a verdict for Ronnie would simultaneously cause a mutiny in the Royal Navy and triumphant jubilation in Berlin. Very clever. (ART. *appears in his chair, at dining-room door.*)

ART. You're late, Catherine.

CATH. I know, Father. I'm sorry. There was such a huge crowd outside as well as inside the court that I couldn't get a cab. And I stayed to talk to Sir Robert.

GRACE (*pleased*). Is there a bigger crowd even than yesterday, Kate?

CATH. Yes, Mother. Far bigger.

ART. How did it go this morning?

CATH. Sir Robert finished his cross-examination of the postmistress. I thought he'd demolished her completely. She admitted she couldn't identify Ronnie in the Commander's office. She admitted she couldn't be sure of the time he came in. She admitted that she was called away to the telephone while he was buying his fifteen-and-six postal order, and that all Osborne cadets looked alike to her in their uniforms, so that it might quite easily have been another cadet who cashed the five shillings. It was a brilliant cross-examination. So gentle and quiet. He didn't bully her, or frighten her—he just coaxed her into tying herself into knots. Then when he finished the Attorney-General asked her again whether she was absolutely positive that the same boy that bought the fifteen-and-six postal order also cashed the five shilling one. She said yes. She was quite, quite sure because Ronnie was such a good-looking little boy that she had specially noticed him. She hadn't said that in her examination-in-chief. I could see those twelve good men and true nodding away to each other. I believe it undid the whole of that magnificent cross-examination.

ART. If she thought him so especially good-looking, why couldn't she identify him the same evening?

CATH. Don't ask me, Father. Ask the Attorney-General. I'm sure he has a beautifully reasonable answer.

DICK. Ronnie good-looking! What utter rot! She must be lying, that woman.

GRACE. Nonsense, Dickie! I thought he looked very well in the box yesterday, didn't you, Kate?

CATH. Yes, Mother.

ART. Who else gave evidence for the other side?

CATH. The Commander, the Chief Petty Officer and one of the boys at the College.

ART. Anything very damaging?

CATH. Nothing that we didn't expect. The boy showed obviously he hated Ronnie and was torn to shreds by Sir Robert. The Commander scored, though. He's an honest man and genuinely believes Ronnie did it.

GRACE. Did you see anybody interesting in court, dear?

CATH. Yes, Mother. John Watherstone.

GRACE. John? I hope you didn't speak to him, Kate?

CATH. Of course I did.

GRACE. Kate, how could you! What did he say?

CATH. He wished us luck.

GRACE. What impertinence!

CATH. He said some fellows in his battalion had been having quite heated arguments lately about the rights and wrongs of the case. He was surprised, he said. People didn't seem to be finding it a joke any more. Some people, even —quite intelligent fellows, too—seemed to be finding it rather important. That was why he had come to court—

ART. Did he find it important?

CATH. No. He pretended to, politely, for my benefit—of course—

GRACE. I should hope so—

CATH. But to him it's still a five-bob postal order and a fourteen-year-old kid.

DICK. Sorry for being dense, but what else is it?

CATH. Quite a lot, Dickie. I'll explain to you some time.

ART. You will be wasting your breath if you do.

GRACE. The idea of John Watherstone coming calmly up in court to wish you luck—I think it's the most disgraceful, cold-blooded—

ART. Grace—you will be late for the resumption.

GRACE. Oh, will I? Are you ready, Dickie?

DICK. Yes, Mother.

GRACE. You don't think that nice, gray suit of yours you paid so much money for—?

ART. What time are they resuming, Kate?

CATH. Two o'clock.

ART. It's twenty past two now.

GRACE. Oh, dear! We'll be terribly late. Kate—that's your fault. Arthur, you must finish your lunch—

ART. Yes, Grace.

GRACE. Promise now.

ART. I promise.

GRACE (*to herself*). I wonder if Violet will remember to pick up those onions? Perhaps I'd better do it on the way back from the court. (*As she passes* CATH.) Kate, dear, I'm so sorry—

CATH. What for, Mother?

GRACE. John proving such a bad hat. I never did like him very much, you know.

CATH. I know.

GRACE. Has Desmond been in to see you at all lately?

CATH. No, Mother.

GRACE. Funny. Oh, well. I expect he's so busy on the case. (*To* DICK.) Now, Dickie, when you get to the front door put your head down, like me, and just charge through them all.

ART. Why don't you go out by the garden into the mews?

GRACE. I wouldn't like to risk tearing this dress getting through that hedge. Come on, Dickie. I always shout: "I'm the maid and don't know nothing," so don't be surprised.

DICK. Right-o, Mother. (GRACE *goes out.* DICK. *follows her to door.*)

CATH. What's happened to Edwina, Dickie?

DICK. Engaged to a chap I used to know. Stockbroker. You wouldn't expect her to look at a mere bank-clerk, would you?

CATH. Bad luck.

DICK. Oh I don't know. On a long view I suppose you might say it's about the only good thing that's come out of this case— Well—goodbye-ee! (*He goes out.*)

ART. Goodbye-ee! Where does he pick up these loathsome expressions?

CATH. I think it comes from a song. (*There is a pause.*)

ART. Are we going to lose this case, Kate? (CATH. *quietly shrugs her shoulders.*) It's our last chance.

CATH. I know.

ART. (*with sudden violence*). We've got to win it. (CATH. *does not reply.*) What does Sir Robert think?

CATH. He's very worried.

ART. (*thoughtfully*). I wonder if you were right, Kate? I wonder if we could have had a better man?

CATH. No, Father. We couldn't have had a better man.

ART. You admit that now, do you?

CATH. Only that he's the best advocate in England and for some reason—prestige, I suppose—he seems genuinely anxious to win this case. I don't go back on anything else I've ever said about him.

ART. The papers said that he began today by telling the judge he felt ill and might have to ask for an adjournment. I trust he won't collapse—

CATH. He won't. It was just another of those brilliant tricks of his that he's always boasting about. It got him the sympathy of the court and possibly—no, I won't say that—

ART. Say it.

CATH. (*slowly*). Possibly provided him with an excuse if he's beaten.

ART. You don't like him, do you?

CATH. (*indifferently*). There's nothing in him to like or dislike, Father. I admire him. (DES. *appears at garden door. Standing inside the room, he knocks diffidently.* CATH. *and* ART. *turn and see him.*)

DES. I trust you do not object to me employing this rather furtive entrance? The crowds at the front door are most alarming—

ART. Come in, Desmond. Why have you left the court?

DES. I have not returned there since the lunch adjournment. My partner will be holding the fort. He is perfectly competent, I promise you—as competent in some aspects of the case, as I myself.

ART. That is truly reassuring.

DES. I wonder if I might see Catherine alone? I have a matter of some urgency to communicate to her—

ART. Oh. Do you wish to hear this urgent matter, Kate?

CATH. Yes, Father.

ART. Very well. I shall go and finish my lunch. (*He wheels his chair to dining-room door.* DES. *flies to help.*) Thank you. I can manage this vehicle without assistance. (*He goes out.*)

DES. I fear I should have warned you of my visit this afternoon. Perhaps I have interrupted—?

CATH. No, Desmond. Please sit down.

DES. Thank you. I'm afraid I have only a very short time. A very short time. I must get back to court for the cross-examination of the Judge-Advocate. My partner is, I can confess to you, Kate, not really so well-versed in this case as I am. Not his fault, of course, poor fellow. It just so happens that I have been involved in the battle from the beginning. From the very beginning, in fact. Do you remember that day?

CATH. Yes, Desmond. Well.

DES. Of course you do. Who better? I have a taxicab waiting at the end of the street.

CATH. (*smiling*). How very extravagant of you, Desmond!

DES. (*also smiling*). Is it not? But it shows you how rushed this visit must necessarily be. The fact of the matter is—it suddenly occurred to me during the lunch recess that I had far better see you today than tomorrow, and if today, why not this very minute?

CATH. (*her thoughts far distant*). Why not, indeed?

DES. I have a question to put to you, Kate, which, if I had postponed putting until after the verdict, you might—who knows—have thought had been prompted by pity—if we had lost. Or—if we had won, your reply might—again who knows?—have been influenced by gratitude. Do you follow me, Kate?

CATH. Yes, Desmond. I think I do.

DES. Ah. Then possibly you have some inkling of what the question is I have to put to you?

CATH. Yes. I think I have.

DES. (*a trifle disconcerted*). Oh.

CATH. I'm sorry, Desmond. I ought, I know, to have followed the usual practice in such cases, and told you I had no inkling whatever.

DES. No, no. Your directness and honesty are two of the qualities I so much admire in you. I am glad you have guessed. It makes my task the easier—

CATH. (*in a matter-of-fact voice*). Will you give me a few days to think it over?

DES. Of course. Of course.

CATH. I need hardly tell you how flattered I feel, Desmond.

DES. (*a trifle bewildered*). There is no need, Kate. No need at all— (CATH. *has risen brusquely.*)

CATH. You mustn't keep your taxi waiting—

DES. Oh, bother my taxi! (*He glares at her almost fiercely.*) I know perfectly well you are pining to get rid of me and be alone with your thoughts of the man you really love. Oh, yes, I saw you talking to him this morning in court. I saw the way you looked at him. Nevertheless, I am determined to say my say.

CATH. (*subsiding into a chair*). I'm sorry, Desmond.

DES. It is this. I am entirely aware of what you really feel about me. If I proved the most devoted and adoring husband that ever lived—which, I may say, if you give me the chance, I intend to be—I know that you could never, never feel anything for me except a faintly affectionate but nevertheless contemptuous pity. I know you think—you and your father both—that I'm a middle-aged nonentity living on the memory of a past athletic eminence.

CATH. Desmond!

DES. It's no good saying "Desmond!" like that. I know that's what you both think of me and worst of all, I know that it's true. (CATH., *this time, is silent, looking at him surprised.*) However, that is beside the point. The points germane to the issue are that you don't love me and that you never can: that I love you, always have, and always will. That is the situation—and it is a situation which—after most careful consideration of all the relevant pros and cons—I am fully prepared to accept. I reached this decision some months ago, but thought at first it would be better to wait until this case, which is so much on all our minds, should be over. Then at lunch today I determined, as I told you, to anticipate the verdict tomorrow, and acquaint you with my decision forthwith. No matter what you feel or don't feel for me—no matter what you feel for anyone else; I want you to be my wife, Kate. (*Pause.*)

CATH. (*at length*). I see. Thank you, Desmond. That makes everything much clearer.

DES. There is much more that I had meant to say, but your directness in coming to the point has a little disconcerted me. I shall put it in a letter.

CATH. Yes, Desmond. Do.

DES. Then I may expect your answer in a few days?

CATH. Yes, Desmond.

DES. Can you give me any hint at all now as to what that answer might be?

CATH. No. No hint at all, I'm afraid. Like you, I shall have to give very careful consideration to all the relevant pros and cons.

DES. That is most hopeful. Most hopeful. I don't mind telling you I had feared an instant and furious rebuttal.

CATH. Then you don't know me, Desmond, as well as you think you do.

DES. I say I feared it. I didn't say I expected it. (*Looking at his watch.*) I must get back to court. (*He collects his hat, stick and gloves.*) How did you think it went this morning?

CATH. I thought the postmistress restored the Admiralty's case with that point about Ronnie's looks—

DES. Oh, no, no. Not at all. There is still the overwhelming fact that she couldn't identify him. What a brilliant cross-examination, was it not?

CATH. Brilliant.

DES. He is a strange man, Sir Robert. At times, so cold and distant and—and—

CATH. Fish-like.

DES. Fish-like, exactly. And yet he has a real passion about this case. A real passion. I happen to know—of course this must on no account go any further—but I happen to know that he has made a very, very great personal sacrifice in order to bring it to court.

CATH. Sacrifice? What? Of another brief?

DES. No, no. Of course not. That is no sacrifice to him. No—he was offered—you really promise to keep this to yourself?

CATH. (*impatiently*). Yes, yes, I promise.

DES. (*tenderly*). The first secret—of many—let us hope.

CATH. What was he offered, Desmond?

DES. The post of Lord Chief Justice. He turned it down, simply in order to be able to carry on with the case of Winslow versus Rex. Strange are the ways of men, are they not? Goodbye, my dear. I shall await your reply in all eagerness.

CATH. Goodbye, Desmond. (DES. *goes.* CATH. *turns from window, deep in thought. She has a puzzled, strained expression. It does not look as though it were* DES. *she was thinking of. There is a peremptory knock on dining-room door. She goes to open it.* ART. *wheels his chair in. Slowly.*) I've been a fool, Father.

ART. Have you, my dear?

CATH. An utter fool. (ART. *waits for* CATH. *to make herself plain. She does not do so.*)

ART. In default of further information, I can only repeat, have you, my dear?

CATH. There's no further information. I'm under a pledge of secrecy.

ART. Oh. What did Desmond want?

CATH. To marry me.

ART. I trust the folly you were referring to wasn't your acceptance of him?

CATH. (*smiling*). No, Father. (*She comes and sits on arm of his chair.*) Would it be such folly, though?

ART. Lunacy.

CATH. Oh, I don't know. He's a nice old thing and he's doing very well as a solicitor.

ART. Neither very compelling reasons for marrying him.

CATH. Seriously—I shall have to think it over.

ART. Think it over, by all means. But decide against it.

CATH. I'm nearly thirty, you know.

ART. Thirty isn't the end of life.

CATH. It might be—for an unmarried woman, with not much looks and no charm.

ART. Rubbish. (CATH. *shakes her head.*) Better far to live and die an old maid than to marry Desmond.

CATH. Even an old maid must eat. (*Pause.*)

ART. I am leaving you and Grace everything, you know.

CATH. (*quietly*). Everything?

ART. There is still a little left. (*Pause.*) Did you take my suggestion as regards your Suffrage Association?

CATH. Yes, Father.

ART. You demanded a salary?

CATH. I asked for one.

ART. And they're going to give it to you, I trust?

CATH. Yes, Father. Two pounds a week.

ART. (*angrily*). That's insulting.

CATH. No. It's very generous. It's all they can afford. We're not a very rich organization—you know.

ART. You'll have to think of something else.

CATH. What else? Darning socks? That's about my only other accomplishment.

ART. There must be something useful you can do.

CATH. You don't think the work I am doing at the W.S.A. is useful? (ART. *is silent.*) You may be right. But it's the only work I'm fitted for, all the same. (*Pause.*) No, Father. The choice is quite simple. Either I marry Desmond and settle down into quite a comfortable and not really useless existence—or I go on for the rest of my life earning two pounds a week in the service of a hopeless cause.

ART. A hopeless cause? I've never heard you say that before.

CATH. I've never felt it before. (ART. *is silent.* CATH. *leans her head against his chair.*) John's going to get married next month.

ART. Did he tell you?

CATH. Yes. He was very apologetic.

ART. Apologetic!

CATH. He didn't need to be. It's a girl I know slightly. She'll make him a good wife.

ART. Is he in love with her?

CATH. No more than he was with me. Perhaps, even, a little less.

ART. Why is he marrying her so soon after—after—?

CATH. After jilting me? Because he thinks there's going to be a war. If there is his regiment will be among the first to go overseas. Besides, his father approves strongly. She's a general's daughter. Very, very suitable.

ART. Poor Kate! (*Pause. He takes her hand slowly.*) How I've messed up your life, haven't I?

CATH. No, Father. Any messing-up that's been done has been done by me.

ART. I'm so sorry, Kate. I'm so sorry.

CATH. Don't be, Father. We both knew what we were doing.

ART. Did we?

CATH. I think we did.

ART. Yet our motives seem to have been different all along—yours and mine, Kate? Can we both have been right?

CATH. I believe we can. I believe we have been.

ART. And yet they've always been so infernally logical, our opponents, haven't they?

CATH. I'm afraid logic has never been on our side.

ART. Brute stubbornness—a selfish refusal to admit defeat. That's what your mother thinks have been our motives—

CATH. Perhaps she's right. Perhaps that's all they've been.

ART. But perhaps brute stubbornness isn't such a bad quality in the face of injustice?

CATH. Or in the face of tyranny. (*Pause.*) If you could go back, Father, and choose again—would your choice be different?

ART. Perhaps.

CATH. I don't think so.

ART. I don't think so, either.

CATH. I still say we both knew what we were doing. And we were right to do it. (ART. *kisses the top of her head.*)

ART. Dear Kate. Thank you. (*There is a silence. A* NEWSBOY *can be heard dimly shouting from the street outside.*) You aren't going to marry Desmond, are you?

CATH. (*with a smile*). In the words of the Prime Minister, Father—let us wait and see. (*He squeezes her hand.* NEWSBOY *can still be heard—now a little louder.*)

ART. What's the boy shouting, Kate?

CATH. Only—Winslow case—Latest.

ART. It didn't sound to me like "Latest." (CATH. *gets up to listen at window. Suddenly we hear it quite plainly: "Winslow Case Result! Winslow Case Result!"*) Result?

CATH. There must be some mistake. (*There is a very loud knocking at front door.* ART. *is struggling out of his chair.*) Stay there, Father! Stay there! (*Knocking continues, growing louder and more incessant.* CATH. *runs out of room.* ART. *stays still in his chair, clutching its sides with a convulsive grip. There is a sudden babel of* VOICES *and* CHEERS *as the front door is opened, ceasing again as we hear it being slammed.* CATH. *reappears, walking quite slowly. She is reading in the stop-press column. She slips on to floor beside* ART. *and begins to read with a voice in which emotion is at war with a desperate attempt to keep her tones flat and level. Reading.*) "Winslow Case Result. Immediately on court reassembling after adjournment Attorney-General, after consultation Sir R. Morton, announced on point fact Admiralty now prepared accept R. Winslow's statement he did not steal postal order. Scenes of tremendous enthusiasm greeted judge's—" (*Her voice breaks. She repeats.*) "Scenes of tremendous enthusiasm greeted judge's announcement. Case now closed with complete vindication R. Winslow and Mr. A. Winslow's action in bringing Petition of Right." (*She pauses to control her voice before going on.* ART. *is listening without a sign of emotion.*) "Cheering lasted several minutes and was taken up in street outside. Neither R. Winslow nor Mr. A. Winslow nor any member of Winslow family in court to hear verdict which not expected until tomorrow. Reports say demonstrations still continue"— (*She finishes reading.*) That's all, Father.

ART. It would seem, then, that we've won?

CATH. Yes. It would seem that we've won. (*She rests her head in his lap and cries quietly.* ART. *strokes her head.*)

ART. I would have liked to have been there. (*There is another sudden outburst of noise from hall as front door is opened. It subsides again.* VI. *comes in quickly with a broad smile.*)

VI. Oh, sir! Oh, sir! (*She shakes hands with* ART.)

ART. Thank you, Violet.

VI. Oh, Miss Kate, what a shame you missed it! Just after they come back from lunch, and Mrs. Winslow she wasn't there neither, nor Master Ronnie. The cheering and the shouting and the carrying-on—you never heard anything like it in all your life—and Sir Robert standing there at the table with his wig on crooked and the tears running down his face and not able to speak because of the noise. Cook and me did a bit of crying, too; we just couldn't help it—you couldn't, you know. Oh, we did enjoy ourselves! And then outside—the street it was just the same—the cheering and the shouting—you couldn't move for the crowd and when Sir Robert came out and got in his car they sang "For he's a jolly good Fellow," and he asked us to get in—fancy, Miss—a great big Rolls Royce, and he drove us away through the crowd all singing and cheering still, and some of them even climbing on the car—

CATH. Sir Robert drove you home?

VI. Oh, yes, Miss. We sat on the back seat, one on either side of him. You would have laughed— Cook said—

CATH. Where is he now?

VI. Oh, those reporters caught him at the door, Miss. You know what they're like. I just slipped him the key and went on in. (*To* ART.) Well, sir—you must be feeling nice and pleased, now it's all over?

ART. Yes, Violet. I am.

VI. That's right. I always said it would come all right in the end, didn't I?

ART. Yes. You did.

VI. Two years all but one month it's been now, since Master Ronnie come back that day. Fancy.

ART. Yes.

VI. I don't mind telling you, sir, I wondered sometimes whether you and Miss Kate weren't just wasting your time carrying on the way you have all the time. Still—you couldn't have felt that if you'd been in court today—(*She turns to go, and stops.*) Oh, sir, Mrs. Winslow asked me to remember most particular to pick up some onions from the Green-grocer, but seeing as I was in a Rolls Royce car—

CATH. That's all right, Violet. I think Mrs. Winslow is picking them up herself, on her way back—

VI. I see, Miss. Poor Madam! What a sell for her when she gets to the court and finds it's all over. Well, sir—congratulations, I'm sure.

ART. Thank you, Violet. (VI. *is about to go out, when* SIR R. *walks in.*)

VI. Oh, sir—thank you so much for the ride—

SIR R. Not at all. Glad to have been of service. (VI. *goes out.* SIR R. *walks calmly and methodically into the room. He looks as spruce and neat as ever, and* VIOLET'S *description of him in court does not seem to tally with his com-*

posed features.) I thought you might like to hear the actual terms of the Attorney-General's statement— (*He pulls out a scrap of paper.*) So I jotted it down for you. (*Reading.*) "I say now, on behalf of the Admiralty, that I accept the declaration of Ronald Arthur Winslow that he did not write the name on the postal order, that he did not take it and that he did not cash it, and that consequently he was innocent of the charge which was brought against him two years ago. I make that statement without any reservation of any description, intending it to be a complete acceptance of the boy's statements." (*He folds paper up and hands it to* ART.)

ART. Thank you, sir. It is rather hard for me to find the words I should speak to you.

SIR R. Pray do not trouble yourself to search for them, sir. Let us take these rather tiresome and conventional expressions of gratitude for granted, shall we? Now, on the question of damages and costs. I fear we shall find the Admiralty rather niggardly. You are likely still to be left considerably out of pocket. However, doubtless we can apply a slight spur to the First Lord's posterior in the House of Commons—

ART. Please, sir—no more trouble—I beg. Let the matter rest here. (*He shows piece of paper.*) This is all I have ever asked for.

SIR R. Well, we shall see. (*Turning to* CATH.) A pity you were not in court, Miss Winslow. The verdict appeared to cause quite a sensible stir.

CATH. So I heard. Why did the Admiralty throw up the case?

SIR R. (*carelessly*). Oh, it was a foregone conclusion. No jury in the world would have convicted on the postmistress's evidence.

CATH. But this morning you seemed so depressed?

SIR R. Did I? The heat in the courtroom was very trying, you know. Perhaps I was a little fatigued— (*There is, again, a loud knocking at front door—To* ART.) Ah, yes. The gentlemen at the front door are rather anxious that you should make a statement to them—

ART. Yes? What shall I say?

SIR R. (*indifferently*). I hardly think it matters. Whatever you say will have little bearing on what they write.

ART. What shall I say, Kate?

CATH. You'll think of something, Father. (*She begins to wheel his chair toward door.*)

ART. (*sharply*). No! I refuse to meet the Press in this ridiculous conveyance. (*To* CATH.) Get me my stick!

CATH. (*protestingly*). Father—you know what the doctor—

ART. Get me my stick! (CATH. *without more ado gets his stick for him. She and* SIR R. *help him out of his chair.*) How is this? "I am happy to have lived long enough to have seen justice done to my son—"

CATH. It's a little gloomy, Father. You're going to live for ages yet—

ART. Am I? In the words of the Prime Minister, my dear—let us wait and see. I could say: "This victory is not mine. It is the people who have triumphed —as they always will triumph—over despotism." How does that strike you, sir? A trifle pretentious, perhaps?

SIR R. Perhaps, sir. I should say it, none the less. It will be very popular.

ART. Hm! Perhaps I had better say what I really feel, which is merely: "Thank God we beat 'em." (*He goes out.* SIR R. *turns abruptly to* CATH.)

SIR R. Miss Winslow—might I be rude enough to ask you for a little of your excellent whiskey?

CATH. Of course. (*She goes into dining-room.* SIR R., *left alone, droops his shoulders wearily. He subsides into a chair. When* CATH. *comes back with whiskey he straightens his shoulders instinctively, but does not rise.*)

SIR R. That is very kind. Perhaps you would forgive me not getting up? The heat in that courtroom was really so infernal. (*He takes glass from her and drains it quickly. She notices his hand is trembling slightly.*)

CATH. Would you like me to get a doctor, Sir Robert?

SIR R. No, no. Certainly not. There is nothing the matter with me. Just a slight nervous reaction—that's all. Besides, I have not been feeling myself all day. I told the judge so, this morning, if you remember, but I doubt if he believed me. He thought it was a trick. What suspicious minds people have, have they not?

CATH. Yes.

SIR R. (*handing her back the glass*). Thank you. (CATH. *puts glass down, then turns slowly back to face him as if nerving herself for an ordeal.*)

CATH. Sir Robert—I'm afraid I have a confession and an apology to make to you.

SIR R. (*sensing what is coming*). Dear lady—I am sure the one is rash and the other superfluous. I would far rather hear neither—

CATH. (*with a smile*). I am afraid you must. This is probably the last time I shall see you, and it is a better penance for me to say this than to write it. I have entirely misjudged your attitude to this case, and if in doing so I have ever seemed to you either rude or ungrateful, I am sincerely and humbly sorry.

SIR R. (*indifferently*). My dear Miss Winslow, you have never seemed to me either rude or ungrateful. And my attitude to this case has been the same as yours—to win it at all costs. Only—when you talk of gratitude—you must remember that those costs were not mine, but yours.

CATH. Weren't they also yours, Sir Robert?

SIR R. I beg your pardon?

CATH. Haven't you too made a certain sacrifice for the case? (*Pause.*)

SIR R. The robes of that office would not have suited me.

CATH. Wouldn't they?

SIR R. No. (*With venom.*) And what is more, I fully intend to have Curry expelled from the Law Society.

CATH. Please don't. He did me a great service by telling me—

SIR R. I must ask you never to divulge it to another living soul, and even to forget it yourself.

CATH. I shall never divulge it. I'm afraid I can't promise to forget it myself.

SIR R. Very well. If you choose to give an unimportant incident a romantic significance, you are perfectly at liberty to do so. I must go. (*He gets up.*)

CATH. Why are you always at such pains to prevent people knowing the truth about you, Sir Robert?

SIR R. Am I, indeed?

CATH. You know you are. Why?

SIR R. Perhaps because *I* do not know the truth about myself.

CATH. That is no answer.

SIR R. My dear Miss Winslow, are you cross-examining me?

CATH. On this point, yes. Why are you so ashamed of your emotions?

SIR R. Because, as a lawyer, I must necessarily distrust them.

CATH. Why?

SIR R. To fight a case on emotional grounds is the surest way I know of losing it. Emotions muddy the issue. Cold, clear logic—and buckets of it—should be the lawyer's only equipment.

CATH. Was it cold clear logic that made you weep today at the verdict? (*Pause.*)

SIR R. Your maid, of course, told you that? It doesn't matter. It will be in the papers tomorrow, anyway. (*Fiercely.*) Very well, then, young lady, if you must have it, here it is, in all its high-falutin repulsiveness. I wept today because Right had been done.

CATH. Not justice?

SIR R. No. Not justice. Right. It is easy to do justice—very hard to do right. Unfortunately, while the appeal of justice is intellectual, the appeal of right appears for some odd reason to induce tears in court. That is my answer and my excuse. And now, may I leave the witness box?

CATH. No. One last question. How can you reconcile your support of Winslow against the Crown with your political beliefs?

SIR R. Very easily. No one party has a monopoly of concern for individual liberty. On that issue all parties are united.

CATH. I don't think so.

SIR R. You don't?

CATH. No. Not all parties. Only some people from all parties.

SIR R. That—oddly enough—is quite a wise remark. We can only hope, then, that those same people will always prove enough people. And now, may I go?

CATH. Yes, Sir Robert. Please forgive me for being impertinent.

SIR R. Not at all. It was an interesting experience to get a little of my own medicine. You would make a good advocate.

CATH. Would I?

SIR R. Yes. It is a pity your leanings are more political than forensic. (*Playfully.*) Why do you not canalize your feministic impulses towards the law-courts, Miss Winslow, and abandon the lost cause of Women's Suffrage?

CATH. Because I don't believe it *is* a lost cause.

SIR R. No? Are you going to continue to pursue it?

CATH. Certainly.

SIR R. You will be wasting your time.

CATH. I don't think so.

SIR R. A pity. Well. Goodbye, Miss Winslow.

CATH. Goodbye, Sir Robert.

SIR R. In the House of Commons in days to come I shall make a point of looking up at the Gallery in the hope of catching a glimpse of you in that provocative hat. (RON. *comes in. He is fifteen now, and there are distinct signs of an incipient man about town. He is very smartly dressed in lounge suit and homburg hat.*)

RON. I say, Sir Robert, I'm most awfully sorry. I didn't know anything was going to happen.

SIR R. Where-were you?

RON. At the flicks.

SIR R. Flicks. What is that?

CATH. Cinematograph show.

RON. You see, there's one just near the Courts and there was the *Trial of Madame X* on and I thought it would be rather fun to have a squint at it, as I'd been sitting in a court myself for four days. I'm most awfully sorry. I say—we won, didn't we?

SIR R. Yes. We won. Now that it's all over, tell me something, Ronald.

RON. Right-o.

SIR R. What were you really doing in the locker-room all that time?

RON. I was smoking.

SIR R. That's just what I thought. (*He brings his stick down with some force on* RONNIE'S *backside.*)

RON. Ow!

SIR R. Goodbye, Miss Winslow. Shall I see you in the House then, one day?

CATH. (*with a smile*). Yes, Sir Robert. One day. But not in the Gallery. Across the floor.

SIR R. (*with a faint smile*). Perhaps. Goodbye. (*He turns to go.*)

LILLIAN HELLMAN

The Little Foxes

CHARACTERS

ADDIE	REGINA GIDDENS
CAL	WILLIAM MARSHALL
BIRDIE HUBBARD	BENJAMIN HUBBARD
OSCAR HUBBARD	ALEXANDRA GIDDENS
LEO HUBBARD	HORACE GIDDENS

The scene of the play is in the living room of the Giddens house, a small town in the South. ACT I: *The spring of 1900, evening.* ACT II: *A week later, early morning.* ACT III: *Two weeks later, late afternoon. There has been no attempt to write Southern dialect. It is to be understood that the accents are Southern.*

ACT I

SCENE. *The living room of the Giddens house, a small town in the deep South, the spring of 1900. Upstage is a staircase leading to the second story. Upstage, right, are double doors to the dining room. When these doors are open we see a section of the dining room and the furniture. Upstage, left, is an entrance hall with a coat-rack and umbrella stand. There are large lace-curtained windows on the left wall. The room is lit by a center gas chandelier and painted china oil lamps on the tables. Against the wall is a large piano. Downstage, right, is a high couch, a large table, several chairs. Against the left back wall is a table and several chairs. Near the window there is a smaller couch and tables. The room is good-looking, the furniture expensive; but it reflects no particular taste. Everything is of the best, and that is all.*

AT RISE: ADDIE, *a tall, nice-looking Negro women of about fifty-five, is closing the windows. From behind the closed dining room doors there is the sound of voices. After a second* CAL, *a middle-aged Negro, comes in from the entrance hall, carrying a tray with glasses and a bottle of port wine.* ADDIE *crosses, takes the tray from him, puts it on table, begins to arrange it.*

AD. (*pointing to the bottle*). You gone stark out of your head?

CAL. No, smart lady, I ain't. Miss Regina told me to get out that bottle (*points*

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to bottle), that very bottle for the mighty honored guest. When Miss Regina changes orders like that you can bet your dime she got her reason.

AD. (*points to dining room*). Go on. You'll be needed.

CAL. Miss Zan she had two helpings frozen fruit cream and she tell that honored guest, she tell him that you make the best frozen fruit cream in all the South.

AD. (*smiles, pleased*). Did she? Well, see that Belle saves a little for her. She like it right before she go to bed. Save a few little cakes, too, she like—

(*The dining room doors are opened and quickly closed again by* BIRDIE HUBBARD. BIRD. *is a woman of about forty, with a pretty, well-bred, faded face. Her movements are usually nervous and timid, but now, as she comes running into the room, she is gay and excited.* CAL *turns to* BIRD.)

BIRD. Oh, Cal. (*Closes door.*) I want you to get one of the kitchen boys to run home for me. He's to look in my desk drawer and— My, Addie. What a good supper. Just as good as good can be.

AD. You look pretty this evening, Miss Birdie, and young.

BIRD. (*laughing*). Me, young? Maybe you better find Simon and tell him to do it himself. He's to look in my desk, the left drawer, and bring my music album right away. Mr. Marshall is very anxious to see it because of his father and the opera in Chicago. (*To* AD.) Mr. Marshall is such a polite man with his manners, and very educated and cultured, and I've told him all about how my Mama and Papa used to go to Europe for the music— (*Laughs. To* AD.) Imagine going all the way to Europe just to listen to music. Wouldn't that be nice, Addie? Just to sit there and listen and— *Left* drawer, Cal. Tell him that twice because he forgets. And tell him not to let any of the things drop out of the album and to bring it right in here when he comes back.

(*The dining room doors are opened and quickly closed by* OSCAR HUBBARD. *He is a man in his late forties.*)

CAL. Yes'm. But Simon he won't get it right. (*Crossing to door left.*) But I'll tell him.

BIRD. Left drawer, Cal, and tell him to bring the blue book and—

OSCAR (*sharply*). Birdie.

BIRD. (*turning nervously*). Oh, Oscar. I was just sending Simon for my music album.

OSCAR (*to* CAL *who has stopped at door left to listen*). Never mind about the album. Miss Birdie has changed her mind.

BIRD. But, really, Oscar. Really I promised Mr. Marshall. I— (CAL *looks at them and goes out.*)

OSCAR. Why do you leave the dinner table and go running about like a child? (AD. *crosses around sofa to window, closes windows.*)

BIRD. (*trying to be gay*). But Oscar, Mr. Marshall said most specially he *wanted* to see my album. I told him about the time Mama met Wagner and Mrs. Wagner gave her the signed program and the big picture. (OSCAR *moves away.*) Mr. Marshall wants to see that. (BIRD. *moves to him.*) Very, very much. We had such a nice talk and—

OSCAR (*taking step to her*). You have been chattering to him like a magpie.

You haven't let him be for a second. I can't think he came South to be bored with you. (*He turns away.*)

BIRD. (*quickly, hurt*). He wasn't bored. I don't believe he was bored. He's a very educated, cultured gentleman. (*Her voice rises.*) I just don't believe it. You always talk like that when I'm having a nice time.

OSCAR (*turning to her, sharply*). You have had too much wine. Get yourself in hand now.

BIRD. (*drawing back, about to cry, shrilly*). What am I doing? I am not doing anything. What am I doing?

OSCAR (*taking a step to her, tensely*). I said get yourself in hand. Stop acting like a fool. (AD. *closes windows.*)

BIRD. (*moves up, then turns to him, quietly*). I don't believe he was bored. I just don't believe it. Some people like music and like to talk about it. (LEO *enters from dining room.* REGINA *in dining room rings bell.*) That's all I was doing.

(LEO HUBBARD *comes hurrying through the door. He is a young man of twenty, with a weak kind of good looks.*)

LEO. Mama! (BIRD. *turns sharply to him.*) Papa. They are coming in now.

OSCAR (*softly, stepping up to* BIRD.). Sit down, Birdie. Sit down now. (BIRD. *sits down in chair and bows her head as if to hide her face.*)

(*The dining room doors are opened by* CAL. *We see people beginning to rise from the table.* REGINA GIDDENS *comes in with* WILLIAM MARSHALL. REG. *is a handsome woman of forty.* MARSH. *is forty-five, pleasant looking, self-possessed. Behind them comes* ALEXANDRA GIDDENS, *a very pretty, rather delicate looking girl of seventeen. She is followed by* BENJAMIN HUBBARD, *fifty-five, with a large jovial face and the light graceful movements that one often finds in large men.* REG., *after a sharp look at* BIRD. *and* OSCAR, *crosses to sofa right.* MARSH. *crosses center to chair right center.* ALEX. *sits on settee.*)

REG. Mr. Marshall, I think you're trying to console me. Chicago may be the noisiest, dirtiest city in the world but I should still prefer it to the sound of our horses and the smell of our azaleas. I should like crowds of people, and theaters, and lovely women— (REG. *sits on sofa, smiles at* MARSH. *and indicates for him to sit next to her.*) *Very* lovely women, Mr. Marshall?

MARSH. In Chicago? Oh, I suppose so. But I can tell you this: I've never dined there with three *such* lovely ladies. (*He sits on sofa to right of* REG.)

(AD. *comes down to table, takes bottle off tray and serves wine.*)

BEN (*nods*). Our Southern women are well favored.

LEO (*laughs*). But one must go to Mobile for the ladies, sir. Very elegant worldly ladies, too.

(AD. *is serving* REG. *who hands a glass to* MARSH., *then takes one for herself.*)

BEN (*looks at him very deliberately*). Worldly, eh? *Worldly,* did you say?

OSCAR (*hastily, to* LEO). Your Uncle Ben means that worldliness is not a mark of beauty in any woman.

LEO (*quickly*). Of course, Uncle Ben. I didn't mean—

(BEN *crosses to chair right center, sits.*)

MARSH. Your port is excellent, Mrs. Giddens.

(AD. *serves* BIRD., *who catches* OSCAR'S *look at her, and refuses the drink.*)

REG. Thank you, Mr. Marshall. We had been saving that bottle, hoping we could open it just for you.

ALEX. (*as* AD. *comes to her with tray*). Oh. May I *really,* Addie?

AD. Better ask Mama.

ALEX. May I, Mama?

REG. (*nods, smiles*). In Mr. Marshall's honor.

ALEX. (*smiles*). Mr. Marshall, this will be the first taste of port I've ever had. (AD. *serves* LEO.)

MARSH. (*leaning forward*). No one ever had their first taste of a better port. (*He lifts his glass in a toast; she lifts hers, they both drink. Sits back. Looks around the room, smiles.*) Well, I suppose it is all true, Mrs. Giddens.

REG. What is true?

(AD. *crosses to table for bottle, takes the tray to table, places it there, then exits.*)

MARSH. That you Southerners occupy a unique position in America. You live better than the rest of us, you eat better, you drink better. I wonder you find time, or want to find time, to do business.

BEN (*laughs*). A great many Southerners don't.

MARSH. Do all of you live here together?

REG. Here with me? (*Laughs.*) Oh, no. My brother Ben lives next door. My brother Oscar and his family live in the next square.

BEN (*sitting forward*). But we are a very close family. We've always *wanted* it that way.

MARSH. That is very pleasant. Keeping your family together to share each other's lives. My family moves around too much. My children seem never to come home. Away at school in the winter; in the summer, Europe with their mother—

REG. (*eagerly*). Oh, yes. Even down here we read about Mrs. Marshall in the society pages.

MARSH. I dare say. She moves about a great deal. And all of you are part of the same business? Hubbard Sons?

BEN (*motions to* OSCAR). Oscar and me. (*Motions to* REG.) My sister's good husband is a banker.

MARSH. (*looks at* REG., *surprised*). Oh.

REG. I am so sorry that my husband isn't here to meet you. He's been very ill. He is at Johns Hopkins. But he will be home soon. We think he is getting better now.

LEO. I work for Uncle Horace. (REG. *looks at him.*) I mean I work for Uncle Horace at his bank. I keep an eye on things while he's away.

REG. (*smiles*). Really, Leo?

BEN (*looks at him, then to* MARSH.). Modesty in the young is as excellent as it is rare. (*Looks at* LEO *again.*)

OSCAR (*to* LEO). Your Uncle means that a young man should speak more modestly.

LEO (*hastily*). Oh, I didn't mean, sir—

MARSH. Oh, Mrs. Hubbard. Where's that Wagner autograph you promised to let me see? My train will be leaving soon and—

(LEO *crosses to table and pours himself a drink.*)

BIRD. The autograph? Oh. Well. Really, Mr. Marshall, I didn't mean to chatter so about it. Really I— (*Nervously, looking at* OSCAR.) You must excuse me. I didn't get it because, well, because I had—I—I had a little headache and—

OSCAR. My wife is a miserable victim of headaches.

REG. (*quickly*). Mr. Marshall said at supper that he would like you to play for him, Alexandra.

ALEX. (*who has been looking at* BIRD.). It's not I who play well, sir. It's my aunt. She plays just wonderfully. She's my teacher. (*Rises, eagerly.*) May we play a duet? May we, Mama?

BIRD. (*taking* ALEXANDRA's *hand*). Thank you, dear. But I have my headache now. I—

OSCAR (*sharply*). Don't be stubborn, Birdie. Mr. Marshall wants you to play.

MARSH. Indeed I do. If your headache isn't—

BIRD. (*hesitates, then gets up, pleased*). But I'd like to, sir. Very much. (*She and* ALEX. *go to piano.* ALEX. *brings chair from upstage left corner to piano for herself.* BIRD. *moves stool, then takes some music from top of piano. They talk about the music for a second, then study it.*)

MARSH. It's very remarkable how you Southern aristocrats have kept together. Kept together and kept what belonged to you.

BEN. You misunderstand, sir. Southern aristocrats have *not kept* together and have *not* kept what belonged to them.

MARSH. (*laughs, indicates room*). You don't call this keeping what belongs to you?

BEN. But we are not aristocrats. (*Points to* BIRD. *at piano.*) Our brother's wife is the only one of us who belongs to the Southern aristocracy.

(BIRD. *selects a book of music. She opens it as* ALEX. *sits down. She is stopped by "our brother's wife," looks toward* BEN. ALEX. *looks up at her.*)

MARSH. (*smiles*). My information is that you people have been here, and solidly here, for a long time.

(BIRD. *turns back and goes through the pages.*)

OSCAR. And so we have. Since our great-grandfather.

BEN (*smiles*). Who was *not* an aristocrat, like Birdie's.

MARSH. (*a little sharply*). You make great distinctions.

(BIRD. *has found the page, and looks up again on "like* BIRDIE'S." ALEX. *turns head a little to them.* BIRD. *turns back to music.*)

BEN. Oh, they have been made for us. And maybe they are important distinctions. (*Leans forward, intimately.*) Now you take Birdie's family. When my great-grandfather came here they were the highest tone plantation owners in this state.

(BIRD. *looks at them.* ALEX. *looks back to her, takes her hand, pats it.*)

LEO (*steps to* MARSH. *Proudly*). My mother's grandfather was *governor* of the state before the war.

OSCAR. They owned the plantation, Lionnet. You may have heard of it, sir?

MARSH. (*laughs*). No, I've never heard of anything but brick houses on a lake, and *cotton mills.*

BEN. Lionnet in its day was the best cotton land in the South. It still brings us in a fair crop. (*Sits back.*) Ah, they were great days for those people—even when I can remember. They had the best of everything. (BIRD. *turns to them.*) Clothes from Paris, trips to Europe, horses you can't raise any more, niggers to lift their fingers—

BIRD. (*suddenly*). We were good to our people. Everybody knew that. We were better to them than—

(MARSH. *looks up at* BIRD.)

REG. (*a quick look at* MARSH., *then to* BIRD). Why, Birdie. You aren't playing.

(MARSH. *has been looking curiously at* BIRD.)

BEN. But when the war comes these fine gentlemen ride off and leave the cotton, *and* the women, to rot.

BIRD. My father was killed in the war. He was a fine soldier, Mr. Marshall. A fine man.

REG. Oh, certainly, Birdie. A famous soldier.

BEN (*to* BIRD.). But that isn't the tale I am telling Mr. Marshall. (*To* MARSH.) Well, sir, the war ends. (BIRD. *goes back to piano, puts down music, sits and is ready to play.*) Lionnet is almost ruined, and the sons finish ruining it. And there were thousands like them. Why? (*Leans forward.*) Because the Southern aristocrat can adapt himself to nothing. Too high-toned to try.

MARSH. Sometimes it is difficult to learn new ways.

(BIRD. *and* ALEX. *begin to play.* MARSH. *leans forward, listening.*)

BEN. Perhaps, perhaps. (*All listen to music. He sees that* MARSH. *is paying attention to the music. Irritated, he turns to* BIRD. *and* ALEX. *at piano, then back to* MARSH.) You're right, Mr. Marshall. It is difficult to learn new ways. But maybe that's why it's profitable. *Our* grandfather and *our* father learned the new ways and learned how to make them pay. They work. (*Smiles nastily.*) *They* are in trade. Hubbard Sons, Merchandise. Others, Birdie's family for example, look down on them. (*Settles back in chair.*) To make a long story short, Lionnet now belongs to *us.* (BIRD. *stops playing and turns to them.*) Twenty years ago we took over their land, their cotton, and their daughter.

(BIRD. *rises and stands stiffly by piano.* MARSH., *who has been watching her, rises.*)

MARSH. May I bring you a glass of port, Mrs. Hubbard?

BIRD. (*softly*). No thank you, sir. You are most polite.

(*She turns away and sits.* ALEX. *tries to soothe her and asks her to play again. She pantomimes that she cannot, and for* ALEX. *to play alone.*)

REG. (*sharply, to* BEN). You are boring Mr. Marshall with these ancient family tales.

BEN. I hope not. I hope not. I am trying to make an important point—(*bows to* MARSH.) for our future business partner.

OSCAR (*to* MARSH.). My brother always says that it's folks like us who have struggled and fought to bring to our land some of the prosperity of your land.

BEN. Some people call that patriotism.

REG. (*laughs gaily*). I hope you don't find my brothers too obvious, Mr. Marshall. I'm afraid they mean that this is the time for the ladies to leave the gentlemen to talk business.

MARSH. (*hastily*). Not at all. We settled everything this afternoon. (ALEX. *starts to play, alone.* MARSH. *looks at his watch.*) I have only a few minutes before I must leave for the train. (*Smiles at her.*) And I insist they be spent with you.

REG. *And* with another glass of port.

MARSH. Thank you.

(REG. *looks at him, smiles, gets up, takes his glass and crosses to table.* MARSH. *rises when she does, then sits.*)

BEN (*to* REG. *as she passes him*). My sister is right. (*To* MARSH.) I am a plain man and I am trying to say a plain thing. (*Sitting forward.*) A man ain't only in business for what he can get out of it. It's got to give him something here. (*Puts hand to his breast.* REG. *pours* MARSHALL'S *drink.*) That's every bit as true for the nigger picking cotton for a silver quarter, as it is for you and me. If it don't give him something here, then he don't pick the cotton right. Money isn't all. Not by three shots.

MARSH. Really? Well, I always thought it was a great deal.

REG. And so did I, Mr. Marshall.

MARSH. (*leans forward. Pleasantly, but with meaning*). Now you don't have to convince me that you are the right people for the deal. I wouldn't be here if you hadn't convinced me six months ago. You want the mill here, and I want it here. It isn't my business to find out *why* you want it.

BEN. To bring the machine to the cotton, and not the cotton to the machine.

MARSH. (*amused*). You have a turn for neat phrases, Hubbard. Well, however grand your reasons are, mine are simple: (LEO *crosses to table—pours drink.*) I want to make money and I believe I'll make it on you. (*As* BEN *starts to speak, he smiles.*) Mind you, I have no objections to more high minded reasons. They are mighty valuable in business. It's fine to have partners who so closely follow the teachings of Christ. (*Gets up.*) And now I must leave for my train. (*Puts his glass on table. All except* BIRD. *rise.* ALEX. *stops playing.*)

REG. I'm sorry you won't stay over with us, Mr. Marshall, but you'll come again, any time you like.

BEN (*motions to* LEO, *indicating bottle*). Fill them up, boy, fill them up. (LEO *moves around, filling glasses as* BEN *speaks.*) Down here, sir, we have a strange custom. We drink the *last* drink for a toast. That's to prove that the Southerner is always still on his feet for the last drink. (*Picks up his glass.*) It was Henry Frick, your Mr. Henry Frick, who said, "Railroads are the Rembrandts of investments." Well, *I* say "Southern cotton mills *will* be the Rembrandts of investments." So I give you the firm of Hubbard Sons and Marshall, Cotton Mills, and to it a long and prosperous life.

(*They all pick up their glasses.* MARSH. *looks at them, amused. Then he, too, lifts his glass, smiles.*)

OSCAR. The children will drive you to the depot. Leo! Alexandra! You will drive Mr. Marshall down.

LEO (*eagerly, looks at* BEN *who nods*). Yes, sir. (*To* MARSH.) Not often Uncle Ben lets *me* drive the horses. And a beautiful pair they are. (*Starts for hall.*) Come on Zan. (*Exits.*)

ALEX. (*crosses to* BEN). May I drive tonight, Uncle Ben, please? I'd like to and—

BEN (*shakes his head, laughs*). In your evening clothes? Oh, no, my dear.

ALEX. But Leo, always— (*Stops, exits quickly.*)

REG. I don't like to say goodbye to you, Mr. Marshall.

MARSH. Then we won't say goodbye. You have promised that you would come and let me show you Chicago. Do I have to make you promise again?

REG. (*looks at him as he presses her hand*). I promise again.

(BEN *crosses to hall.*)

MARSH. (*touches her hand again, then moves to* BIRD.). Goodbye, Mrs. Hubbard.

(BIRD. *rises.*)

BIRD. (*shyly, with sweetness and dignity*). Goodbye, sir.

(*He bows, starts toward entrance hall.* REG. *crosses to center.*)

MARSH. (*as he passes* REG.). Remember.

REG. I will.

OSCAR. We'll see you to the carriage.

(MARSH. *exits followed by* OSCAR. *For a second* REG. *and* BIRD. *stand looking after them. Then* REG. *throws up her arms, laughs happily.*)

REG. And there, Birdie, goes the man who has opened the door to our future.

BIRD. (*surprised at the unaccustomed friendliness*). What?

REG. (*turning to her*). *Our future.* Yours and mine, Ben's and Oscar's, the children's— (*Looks at* BIRDIE's *puzzled face, laughs.*) Our future! You were charming at supper, Birdie. Mr. Marshall certainly thought so.

BIRD. (*pleased*). Why, Regina. Do you think he did?

REG. Can't you tell when you're being admired?

BIRD. Oscar said I bored Mr. Marshall. (*Then quietly.*) But he admired *you.* He told me so.

REG. What did he say?

BIRD. He said to me, "I hope your sister-in-law will come to Chicago. Chicago will be at her feet." He said the ladies would bow to your manners and the gentlemen to your looks.

REG. (*crossing to sofa*). Did he? He seems a lonely man. Imagine being lonely with all that money. I don't think he likes his wife.

BIRD. Not like his wife? What a thing to say.

REG. (*sits on sofa*). She's away a great deal. He said that several times. And once he made fun of her being so social and high-toned. But that fits in all right. (*Sits back, arms on back of sofa, stretches.*) Her being social, I mean. She can introduce me. It won't take long with an introduction from her.

BIRD. (*bewildered*). Introduce you? In Chicago? You mean you really might go? (*Crosses to table.*) Oh, Regina, you can't leave here. What about Horace?

REG. Don't look so scared about everything, Birdie. I'm going to live in Chicago. I've always wanted to. And now there'll be plenty of money to go with.

BIRD. (*sits*). But Horace won't be able to move around. You know what the doctor wrote.

REG. There'll be millions, Birdie, millions. You know what I've always said when people told me we were rich? I said I think you should either be a nigger

or a millionaire. In between, like us, what for? (*Laughs. Looks at* BIRD.) But I'm not going away tomorrow, Birdie. (*Takes her arms down.*) There's plenty of time to worry about Horace when he comes home. If he ever decides to come home.

BIRD. Will we be going to Chicago? I mean, Oscar and Leo and me?

REG. You? I shouldn't think so. (*Laughs. Leaning forward.*) Well, we must remember tonight. It's a very important night and we mustn't forget it. We shall plan all the things we'd like to have and then we'll really have them. Make a wish, Birdie, any wish. It's bound to come true now.

(BEN *and* OSCAR *enter.*)

BIRD. (*laughs*). Well. Well, I don't know. Maybe. (REG. *turns to look at* BEN.) Well, I guess I'd know right off what I wanted.

(BEN *crosses to above* REG. OSCAR *stands by the upper window, waves to the departing carriage.*)

REG. (*looks up at* BEN, *smiles. He smiles back at her*). Well, you did it. (*Grasps his hand.*)

BEN. Looks like it might be we did.

REG. (*springs up, laughs*). Looks like it! Don't pretend. (*Rises.*) You're like a cat who's been licking the cream. (*Crosses to wine bottle on table.*) Now we must all have a drink to celebrate.

OSCAR (*from window*). The children, Alexandra and Leo, make a very handsome couple, Regina. (REG. *does not look at him.* BEN *and* REG. *drink.* OSCAR *steps in.*) Marshall remarked himself what fine young folks they were. How well they looked together.

REG. (*sharply*). Yes. You said that before, Oscar. (*She puts drink down, crosses to chair left center—sits.*)

BEN. Yes, sir. It's beginning to look as if the deal's all set. I may not be a subtle man—but— Now somebody ask me how I know the deal is set.

OSCAR. What do you mean, Ben?

BEN. You remember I told him that down here we drink the *last* drink for a toast?

OSCAR (*thoughtfully*). Yes. I never heard that before.

BEN. Nobody's ever heard it before. (*Turns chair downstage, right, to face room. Stands in front of it.*) God forgives those who invent what they need. (*Holding up his glass.*) I already had his signature. But we've all done business with men whose word over a glass is better than a bond. Anyway it don't hurt to have both. (*He sits.*)

OSCAR (*turns to* REG.). You understand what Ben means?

REG. (*smiles*). Yes, Oscar. I understand. I understood immediately.

BEN (*looks at her admiringly*). Did you, Regina? Well, when he lifted his glass to drink, I closed my eyes and saw the bricks going into place.

REG. And *I* saw a lot more than that.

(OSCAR *sits on sofa, lights cigar, sits back to relax.*)

BEN. Slowly, slowly. As yet we have only our hopes.

REG. Birdie and I have just been planning what we want. I know what I want. What will you want, Ben?

BEN. Caution. Don't count the chickens. (*Leans back, laughs.* REG. *laughs.*) Well, God would allow us a little day dreaming. Good for the soul when you've worked hard enough to deserve it. (*Pauses.*) I think I'll have a stable. For a long time I've had my good eyes on Carter's in Savannah. A rich man's pleasure, the sport of kings, why not the sport of Hubbards? Why not?

REG. (*smiles*). Why not? What will you have, Oscar?

OSCAR. I don't know. (*Thoughtfully—leaning forward on table.*) The pleasure of seeing the bricks grow will be enough for me.

BEN. Oh, of course. Our *greatest* pleasure will be to see the bricks grow. But we are all entitled to a little side indulgence.

OSCAR (*looking front*). Yes, I suppose so. Well, then, I think we might take a few trips here and there (*to* BIRD.), eh, Birdie?

BIRD. (*surprised at being consulted*). Yes, Oscar. I'd like that.

OSCAR (*looking front*). We might even make a regular trip to Jekyll Island. I've heard the Cornelly place is for sale. We might think about buying it. Make a nice change. (*To* BIRD.) Do you good, Birdie, a change of climate. Fine shooting, on Jekyll, the best.

BIRD. I'd like—

OSCAR (*indulgently*). What would you like?

BIRD. *Two* things. Two things I'd like most.

REG. Two! I should like a thousand. You are modest, Birdie.

BIRD. (*warmly, delighted with the unexpected interest*). I should like to have Lionnet back. I know you own it now, but I'd like to see it fixed up again, the way Mama and Papa had it. Every year it used to get a nice coat of paint—Papa was very particular about the paint—and the lawn was so smooth all the way down to the river, with the trims of zinnias and red-feather plush. And the figs and blue little plums and the scuppernongs— (*Smiles. Turns to* REG.) The organ is still there and it wouldn't cost much to fix. We could have parties for Zan (*rises, crosses to* REG.), the way Mama used to have for me. (*Crosses upstage, center, moving about, dreamily.*)

BEN. That's a pretty picture, Birdie. Might be a most pleasant way to live. (*Dismissing* BIRD.) What do you want, Regina?

BIRD. (*very happily, not noticing that they are no longer listening to her*). I could have a cutting garden. Just where Mama's used to be. Oh, I do think we could be happier there. Papa used to say that *nobody* had ever lost their temper at Lionnet, and *nobody* ever would. Papa would never let anybody be nasty spoken, or mean. No, sir. He just didn't like it.

BEN. What do you want, Regina?

REG. I'm going to Chicago. And when I'm settled there and know the right people and the right things to buy—because I certainly don't now—I shall go to *Paris* and buy them. (*Laughs.*) I'm going to leave you and Oscar to count the bricks.

BIRD. (*turning to* OSCAR). Oscar. Please let me have Lionnet back.

OSCAR (*to* REG.). You are serious about moving to Chicago?

(BIRD. *crosses to table, pours drink, drinks it fast.*)

BEN. She is going to see the great world and leave us in the little one. Well,

we'll come and visit you and meet all the great and be proud to think you are our sister.

REG. (*gaily*). Certainly. And you won't even have to learn to be subtle, Ben. Stay as you are. You will be rich and the rich don't have to be subtle.

OSCAR. But what about Alexandra? She's seventeen. Old enough to be thinking about marrying.

BIRD. (*crosses to* OSCAR). And, Oscar, I have one more wish. Just one more wish.

OSCAR (*turns*). What is it, Birdie? What are you saying?

BIRD. I want you to stop shooting. I mean, so much. I don't like to see animals and birds killed just for the killing. You only throw them away—

BEN (*to* REG.). It'll take a great deal of money to live as you're planning, Regina.

REG. Certainly. But there'll be plenty of money. You have estimated the profits very high.

BEN. I have—

BIRD. (*does not notice that* OSCAR *is looking at her furiously*). And you never let anybody else shoot, and the niggers need it so much to keep from starving. It's wicked to shoot food just because you like to shoot, when poor people need it so—

BEN (*laughs*). I have estimated the profits very high—for myself.

REG. What did you say?

BIRD. I've always wanted to speak about it, Oscar.

OSCAR (*slowly, carefully*). What are you chattering about?

BIRD. (*finally catches his tone, nervously*). I was talking about Lionnet and—and about your shooting—

OSCAR. You are exciting yourself.

REG. (*to* BEN). I didn't hear you. There was so much talking.

OSCAR (*to* BIRD.). You have been acting very childish, very excited, all evening.

BIRD. Regina asked me what I'd like—

REG. What did you say, Ben?

BIRD. —now that we'll be so rich. Everybody was saying what they would like, so *I* said what *I* would like, too.

BEN. I said— (*He is interrupted by* OSCAR.)

OSCAR (*to* BIRD.). Very well. We've all heard you. That's enough now.

BEN. I am waiting! (*They stop. Irritated, to* OSCAR.) I am waiting for you to finish. You and Birdie. Four conversations are three too many. (BIRD. *crosses, upstage, center, slowly, sits in chair right of table.* OSCAR *nods,* BEN *waits, sees that everything is quiet. Smiles, to* REG.) I said that I had, and I do, estimate the profits very high—for myself, and Oscar, of course.

REG. (*slowly*). And what does that mean?

(BEN *shrugs, looks toward* OSCAR.)

OSCAR (*looks at* BEN, *clears throat*). Well, Regina, it's like this. For forty-nine per cent Marshall will put up four hundred thousand dollars. For fifty-one per cent (*smiles archly*)—a controlling interest, mind you, we will put up two hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars besides offering him certain bene-

fits that our (*looks at* BEN *to include him*) local position allows us to manage. Ben means that two hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars is a lot of money.

REG. I know the terms and I know it's a lot of money.

BEN (*nodding*). It is.

OSCAR. Ben means that we are ready with our two-thirds of the money. Your third, Horace's, I mean, doesn't seem to be ready. (*Raises his hand as* REG. *starts to speak.*) Ben has written to Horace, I have written, and you have written. He answers. But he never mentions this business. Yet we have explained it to him in great detail, and told him the urgency. Still he never mentions it. Ben has been very patient, Regina. (*Sits back.*) Naturally, you are our sister and we want you to benefit from anything we do. (*Looks at* BEN.)

REG. (*rises. To* OSCAR). And in addition to your concern for me, you do not want control to go out of the family. (*To* BEN.) That right, Ben?

BEN. That's cynical. (*Smiles.*) Cynicism is only an unpleasant way of saying the truth.

OSCAR (*rises*). No need to be cynical. We'd have no trouble raising the third share, the share that you want to take.

REG. I am sure you could get the third share, the share you were saving for me. But that would give you a strange partner. And strange partners sometimes want a great deal. (*Smiles unpleasantly.*) But perhaps it would be wise for you to find him.

OSCAR (*turns*). Now, now. Nobody says we *want* to do that. We would like to have you in and you would like to come in.

REG. Yes. I certainly would.

BEN (*laughs, puts up his hand*). But we haven't heard from Horace.

REG. I've given my word that Horace will put up the money. That should be enough.

(OSCAR *crosses to table downstage, left—flicks ash off cigar.*)

BEN. Oh, it was enough. I took your word. But I've got to have more than your word now. The contracts will be signed this week, and Marshall will want to see our money soon after. Regina, Horace has been in Baltimore for five months. I know that you've written him to come home, and that he hasn't come.

OSCAR. It's beginning to look as if he doesn't want to come home.

REG. Of course, he wants to come home. You can't move around with heart trouble at any moment you choose. You know what doctors are like once they get their hands on a case like this—

OSCAR. They can't very well keep him from answering letters, can they? They couldn't keep him from arranging for the money if he wanted to—

REG. Has it occurred to you that Horace is also a good business man?

BEN. Certainly. He is a shrewd trader. Always has been. The bank is proof of that.

REG. Then, possibly, he may be keeping silent because he doesn't think he is getting enough for his money. Seventy-five thousand he has to put up. That's a lot of money, too. (*She sits on sofa.*)

OSCAR. Nonsense. He knows a good thing when he hears it. He knows that we can make *twice* the profit on cotton goods manufactured *here* than can be made in the North.

BEN. That isn't what Regina means. (*Smiles.*) May I interpret you, Regina? (*To* OSCAR.) Regina is saying that Horace wants *more* than a third of our share.

OSCAR (*amazed, playing along*). But he's only putting up a third of the money. You put up a third and you get a third. What else *could* he expect?

REG. Well, *I* don't know. I don't know about these things. It would seem that if you put up a third you should only get a third. But then again, there's no law about it, is there? I should think that if you knew your money was very badly needed, well, you just might say, I want more, I want a bigger share. You *boys* have done that. I've heard you say so.

BEN. So you believe he has deliberately held out? For a larger share? (*Leaning forward.*) Well, I *don't* believe it. But I *do* believe that's what *you* want. Am I right, Regina?

REG. Oh, I shouldn't like to be too definite. (OSCAR *sits. To* BEN.) But I *could* say that I wouldn't like to persuade Horace unless he did get a larger share. I must look after his interests. It seems only natural—

OSCAR. And where would the larger share come from?

REG. I don't know. That's not my business. (*Giggles.*) But perhaps it could come off your share, Oscar.

(REG. *and* BEN *laugh.*)

OSCAR (*rises and wheels furiously on both of them as they laugh*). What kind of talk is this?

BEN. I haven't said a thing.

OSCAR. *You* are talking very big tonight.

REG. (*stops laughing*). Am I? Well, you should know me well enough to know that I wouldn't be asking for things I didn't think I could get.

OSCAR. Listen. I don't believe you can even get Horace to come home, much less get money from him or talk quite so big about what you want.

REG. Oh, I can get him home.

OSCAR. Then why haven't you?

REG. I thought I should fight his battles for him, before he came home. Horace is a very sick man. And even if *you* don't care how sick he is, I do.

BEN. Stop this foolish squabbling. (OSCAR *turns.*) How *can* you get him home?

REG. I will send Alexandra to Baltimore. She will ask him to come home. She will say that she *wants* him to come home, and that *I* want him to come home.

BIRD. (*suddenly*). Well, of course she wants him here, but he's sick and maybe he's happy where he is.

REG. (*as if she had not heard* BIRD., *to* BEN). You agree that he will come home if she asks him to, if she says that I miss him and want him—

BEN (*looks at her, smiles*). I admire you, Regina. And I agree. That's settled now, and— (*Starts to rise.*)

REG. (*quickly stopping him*). But before she brings him home, I want to know what he's going to get.

BEN. What do you want?

REG. Twice what you offered.

BEN. Well, you won't get it.

OSCAR (*to* REG.). I think you've gone crazy.

REG. I don't want to fight, Ben—

BEN. I don't either. You won't get it. There isn't any chance of that. (*Roguishly.*) You're holding us up, and that's not pretty, Regina, not pretty. (*Holds up his hand as he sees she is about to speak.*) But we need you, and I don't want to fight. Here's what I'll do: I'll give Horace forty per cent, instead of the thirty-three and a third he really should get. I'll do that provided he is home and his money is up within two weeks. How's that?

REG. All right.

OSCAR (*crossing center to* BEN). I've asked before: Where is this extra share coming from?

BEN (*pleasantly*). From you. From your share.

OSCAR (*furiously*). From me, is it? That's just fine and dandy. That's my reward. For thirty-five years I've worked my hands to the bone for you. For thirty-five years I've done all the things you didn't want to do. And this is what I—

BEN (*turns slowly to look at* OSCAR. OSCAR *breaks off*). My, my. I am being attacked tonight on all sides. First by my sister, then by my brother. And I ain't a man who likes being attacked. I can't believe that God wants the strong to parade their strength, but I don't mind doing it, if it's got to be done. (OSCAR *turns, crosses to chair left center, facing left. Leans back in his chair.*) You ought to take these things better, Oscar. I've made you money in the past. I'm going to make you more money now. You'll be a very rich man. What's the difference to any of us if a little more goes here, a little less goes there—it's all in the family. And it will stay in the family. (AD. *enters, begins to gather the glasses from table upstage, center.* OSCAR *turns to* BEN.) So my money will go to Alexandra and Leo. They may even marry some day and— (AD. *looks at* BEN, *crosses to table right, picks up glasses, then crosses to table upstage, center, picks up tray and exits.*)

BIRD. (*rising*). Marry—Zan and Leo—

OSCAR (*carefully*). That would make a great difference in my feelings. If they married. (*Sits in chair left, center.* BIRD. *sits in chair upstage, center.*)

BEN. Yes, that's what I mean. Of course it would make a difference.

OSCAR (*carefully*). Is that what *you* mean, Regina?

REG. Oh, it's too far away. We'll talk about it in a few years.

OSCAR. I want to talk about it now.

BEN (*nods*). Naturally.

REG. There's a lot of things to consider. They are first cousins, and—

OSCAR. That isn't unusual. Our grandmother and grandfather were first cousins.

REG. (*giggles*). And look at us.

(BEN *giggles.*)

OSCAR (*angrily—rises*). You're both being very gay with my money. (OSCAR *pacing in front of piano.*)

BEN (*sighs*). These quarrels. I dislike them so. (*Leans forward to* REG. OSCAR *stops walking at table on left. Listens.*) A marriage might be a very wise arrangement, for several reasons. And then, Oscar has given up something for you. You should try to manage something for him.

REG. I haven't said I was opposed to it. But Leo is a wild boy. There were those times when he took a little money from the bank and—

OSCAR. That's all past history—

REG. Oh, I know. And I know all young men are wild. I'm only mentioning it to show you that there are considerations—

BEN (*irritated that she does not understand he is trying to keep* OSCAR *quiet*). All right, so there are. But please assure Oscar that you will think about it very seriously.

REG. (*smiles, nods*). Very well. I assure Oscar that I will think about it seriously.

OSCAR (*sharply*). That is not an answer.

REG. My (*rises*), you're in a bad humor and you shall put me in one. I have said all that I am willing to say now. After all, Horace has to give his consent, too.

OSCAR. Horace will do what you tell him to.

REG. Yes, I think he will.

OSCAR. And I have your word that you will try to—

REG. (*patiently*). Yes, Oscar. You have my word that I will think about it. Now do leave me alone.

(*There is the sound of* ALEX. *and* LEO *opening and closing the front door.*)

BIRD. (*rising*). I— Alexandra is only seventeen. She—

REG. (*calling, crossing in to hall*). Alexandra? Are you back?

(BIRD. *sits.*)

ALEX. Yes, Mama.

LEO (*comes into room*). Mr. Marshall got off safe and sound. Weren't those fine clothes he had? You can always spot clothes made in a good place. Look like maybe they were done in England. (REG. *and* ALEX. *enter room.*) Lots of men in the North send all the way to England for their stuff.

BEN (*to* LEO). Were you careful driving the horses?

LEO (*turns to* BEN). Oh, yes, sir. I was.

(ALEX. *has come in on* BEN'S *question, hears the answer, looks angrily at* LEO.)

ALEX. (*crosses to* BIRD.). It's a lovely night. You should have come, Aunt Birdie.

REG. Were you gracious to Mr. Marshall?

ALEX. I think so, Mama. I liked him.

(LEO *crosses to settee on left.—Sits.*)

REG. Good. And now I have great news for you. (AD. *enters with tray with water pitcher and glasses. Crosses to table upstage, center.* ALEX. *crosses to* REG.) You are going to Baltimore in the morning to bring your father home.

ALEX. (*gasps, then delighted*). Me? Papa said I should come? That must mean— (*Turns to* AD.) Addie, he must be well. (*Crosses to* AD.) Think of it, he'll be back home again. We'll *bring* him home.

REG. You are going alone, Alexandra. (*Sits on sofa*).

AD. (ALEX. *has turned in surprise*). Going alone? Going by herself? A child that age! Mr. Horace ain't going to like Zan traipsing up there by herself.

REG. (*sharply*). Go upstairs and lay out Alexandra's things.

AD. He'd expect me to be along—

REG. I'll be up in a few minutes to tell you what to pack. (AD. *slowly begins to climb steps. To* ALEX.) I should think you'd like going alone. At your age it certainly would have delighted me. You're a strange girl, Alexandra. Addie has babied you so much.

ALEX. I only thought it would be more fun if Addie and I went together.

BIRD. (*timidly*). Maybe I could go with her, Regina. I'd really like to.

REG. She is going alone. She is getting old enough to take some responsibilities.

OSCAR. She'd better learn now. She's almost old enough to get married. (*Jovially, to* LEO, *slapping him on shoulder.*) Eh, son?

LEO. Huh?

OSCAR (*annoyed with* LEO *for not understanding*). Old enough to get married, you're thinking, eh?

LEO. Oh, yes, sir. (*Feebly.*) Lots of girls get married at Zan's age. Look at Mary Prester and Johanna and—

REG. Well, she's not getting married tomorrow. But she is going to Baltimore tomorrow, so let's talk about *that*. (*To* ALEX.) You will be glad to have Papa home again.

ALEX. I wanted to go before, Mama. You remember that. But you said *you* couldn't go, and that *I* couldn't go alone.

REG. I've changed my mind. (*Too casually.*) You're to tell Papa how much you missed him, and that he must come home now—for your sake. Tell him that you *need* him home.

ALEX. Need him home? I don't understand.

REG. There is nothing for you to understand. You are simply to say what I have told you.

BIRD. (*rises and makes a step toward* REG.). He may be too sick. She couldn't do that—

ALEX. Yes. He may be too sick to travel. I couldn't make him think he had to come home for me, if he is too sick to—

REG. (*looks at her, sharply, challengingly*). You *couldn't* do what I tell you to do, Alexandra?

ALEX. (*looks at her, quietly*). No. I couldn't. If I thought it would hurt him.

REG. (*after a second's silence, smiles pleasantly*). But you are doing this for Papa's own good. (*Takes* ALEXANDRA's *hand.*) You must let me be the judge of his condition. It's the best possible cure for him to come home and be taken care of here. He mustn't stay there any longer and listen to those alarmist doctors. You are doing this entirely for his sake. Tell your Papa that I want him to come home, that I miss him very much.

ALEX. (*slowly*). Yes, Mama.

REG. (*to the rest—rises*). I must go and start getting Alexandra ready now. (*Crosses to stairs.*) Why don't you all go home?

BEN (*rises*). I'll attend to the railroad ticket. One of the boys will bring it over. Good night, everybody. Have a nice trip, Alexandra. The food on the

train is very good. The celery is so crisp. Have a good time and act like a little lady. (*He exits.*)

REG. (*on landing*). Good night, Ben. Good night, Oscar— (*Playfully.*) Don't be so glum, Oscar. It makes you look as if you had chronic indigestion. (*He does not answer.*)

BIRD. Good night, Regina.

REG. Good night, Birdie. (*Exits upstairs.*)

OSCAR (*starts for hall, to* BIRD. *and* LEO). Come along.

LEO (*to* ALEX.). Imagine your not wanting to go! What a little fool you are. Wish it were me. What I could do in a place like Baltimore!

ALEX. (*angrily, looking away from him*). Mind your business. I can guess the kind of things *you* could do.

LEO (*laughs*). Oh, no, you couldn't. (*He exits.*)

REG. (*calling from top of stairs*). Come on, Alexandra.

BIRD. (*quickly, crossing downstage, left, to* ALEX., *softly*). Zan.

ALEX. (*quietly*). I don't understand about my going, Aunt Birdie. (*Shrugs.*) But anyway, Papa will be home again. (*Pats* BIRDIE'S *arm.*) Don't worry about me. I can take care of myself. Really I can.

BIRD. (*shakes her head, softly*). That's not what I'm worried about, Zan—

ALEX. (*comes close to her*). What's the matter?

BIRD. It's about Leo—

ALEX. (*whispering*). He beat the horses. That's why we were late getting back. We had to wait until they cooled off. He always beats the horses as if—

BIRD. (*whispering frantically, holding* ALEXANDRA'S *hands*). He's my son. My own son. But you are more to me—more to me than my own child. I love you more than anybody else—

ALEX. Don't worry about the horses. I'm sorry I told you.

BIRD. (*her voice rising*). *I am not worrying about the horses.* I am worrying about *you.* You are *not* going to marry Leo. I am not going to let them do that to you—

ALEX. Marry? To Leo? (*Laughs.*) I wouldn't marry, Aunt Birdie. I've never even thought about it—

BIRD. Hush! But they have thought about it. (*Wildly.*) Zan, I couldn't stand to think about such a thing. You and—

(OSCAR *has come into doorway on* ALEXANDRA'S *speech. He is standing quietly, listening.*)

ALEX. (*laughs*). But I'm not going to marry. And I'm certainly not going to marry Leo.

(OSCAR *takes one step into the room.*)

BIRD. Don't you understand? They'll make you. They'll make you—

ALEX. (*takes* BIRDIE'S *hands, quietly, firmly*). That's foolish, Aunt Birdie. I'm grown now. Nobody can make me do anything.

BIRD. I just couldn't stand—

OSCAR (*sharply*). Birdie. (BIRD. *looks up, draws quickly away from* ALEX. *She stands rigid, fearful. Quietly.*) Birdie, get your hat and coat.

AD. (*unseen, calls from upstairs hallway*). Come on, baby. Your Mama's waiting for you, and she ain't nobody to keep waiting.

ALEX. All right. (*Then softly, embracing* BIRD.) Good night, Aunt Birdie.

(*Crosses upstairs. As she passes* OSCAR.) Good night, Uncle Oscar. (BIRD. *begins to move slowly towards door as* ALEX. *climbs the stairs.* ALEX. *is almost out of view when* BIRD. *reaches* OSCAR *in doorway. As* BIRD. *quickly attempts to pass him, he slaps her hard, across the face.* BIRD. *cries out, puts her hand to her face. On the cry,* ALEX. *turns, begins to run down the stairs.*) Aunt Birdie! What happened? What happened? I—

BIRD. (*softly, without turning*). Nothing, darling. Nothing happened. (*Quickly, as if anxious to keep* ALEX. *from coming close.*) Now go to bed. (OSCAR *exits.*) Nothing happened. (*Turns to* ALEX., *who is holding her hand.*) I only—I only twisted my ankle. (*She goes out.* ALEX. *stands on stairs looking after her as if she were puzzled and frightened.*)

ACT II

SCENE. *Same as Act I. A week later, morning. At rise: The light comes from the open shutter of the right window; the other shutters are tightly closed.* AD. *is standing at window, looking out. Near the dining room doors are brooms, mops, rags, etc. After a second* OSCAR *comes into entrance hall, looks in the room, shivers, decides not to take his hat and coat off, comes into the room. At the sound of the door,* AD. *turns to see who has come in.*

AD. (*without interest*). Oh, it's you, Mr. Oscar. (AD. *turns back to window, closes windows.*)

OSCAR. What is this? It's not night. What's the matter here? (*Shivers.*) Fine thing at this time of the morning. Blinds all closed. (AD. *begins to open shutters. The room lights up.*) Where's Miss Regina? It's cold in here.

AD. Miss Regina ain't down yet.

OSCAR. She had any word?

AD. (*wearily picks up feather duster*). No sir.

OSCAR. Wouldn't you think a girl that age could get on a train at one place and have sense enough to get off at another? (*He sits on settee.*)

AD. Something must have happened. If Zan say she was coming last night, she's coming last night. Unless something happened. Sure-fire disgrace to let a baby like that go all that way alone to bring home a sick man without—

OSCAR. You do a lot of judging around here, Addie, eh? Judging of your white folks, I mean.

AD. (*looks at him, sighs*). I'm tired. I been up all night watching for them.

REG. (*who cannot be seen—speaking from upstairs hall*). Who's downstairs, Addie? (*She appears in a dressing gown, peers down from landing.* AD. *picks up carpet sweeper, dustpan, and brush and goes out.*) Oh, it's you, Oscar. What are you doing here so early? I haven't been down yet. I'm not finished dressing.

OSCAR (*speaking up to her*). You had any word from them?

REG. No.

OSCAR. Then something certainly has happened. People don't just say they are arriving on Thursday night, and they haven't come by Friday morning.

REG. Oh, nothing has happened. Alexandra just hasn't got sense enough to send a message.

OSCAR. If nothing's happened, then why aren't they here?

REG. You asked me that ten times last night. My, you do fret so, Oscar. Anything might have happened. They may have missed connections in Atlanta, the train may have been delayed—oh, a hundred things could have kept them.

OSCAR. Where's Ben?

REG. Where should he be? At home, probably. Really, Oscar, I don't tuck him in his bed and I don't take him out of it. Have some coffee and don't worry so much.

OSCAR. Have some coffee? There isn't any coffee. (*Looks at his watch, shakes his head. After a second* CAL *enters with a large silver tray, coffee urn, small cups, newspaper. He puts tray on table upstage, center, begins to set out cups.*) Oh, there you are. Is everything in this house always late?

CAL (*looks at him surprised*). You ain't out shooting this morning, Mr. Oscar?

OSCAR. First day I missed since I had a head cold. First day I missed in eight years. (*Sits on settee.*)

CAL. Yes, sir. I bet you. Simon he say you had a mighty good day yesterday morning. That's what Simon say. (*Brings* OSCAR *small coffee and newspaper.*)

OSCAR. Pretty good, pretty good. (*Opens newspaper.*)

CAL (*laughs, slyly, puts coffee cup on table left of settee, moves table toward* OSCAR). Bet you got enough bob-white and squirrel to give every nigger in town a Jesus-party. Most of 'em ain't had no meat since the cotton picking was over. Bet they'd give anything for a little piece of that meat—

OSCAR (*turns his head to look at* CAL). Cal, if I catch a nigger in this town going shooting, you know what's going to happen.

(LEO *enters.*)

CAL (*hastily steps back*). Yes sir, Mr. Oscar. I didn't say nothing about nothing. It was Simon who told me and— Morning, Mr. Leo. You gentlemen having your breakfast with us here?

LEO (*comes immediately to* OSCAR). The boys in the bank don't know a thing. They haven't had any message.

(CAL *waits for an answer, gets none, shrugs, moves to door left, looks back at them, exits.*)

OSCAR (*peers at* LEO). What you doing here, son?

LEO. You told me to find out if the boys at the bank had any message from Uncle Horace or Zan—

OSCAR. I told you if they had a message to bring it here. I told you that if they didn't have a message to stay at the bank and do your work.

LEO. Oh, I guess I misunderstood.

OSCAR. You didn't misunderstand. You just were looking for any excuse to take an hour off. (LEO *crosses to table upstage, center, pours coffee.*) You got to stop that kind of thing. You got to start settling down. You going to be a married man one of these days.

LEO. Yes, sir.

OSCAR. You also got to stop with that woman in Mobile. (*As* LEO *is about to speak, he puts up a hand.* LEO *turns back for sugar.*) You're young and I haven't got no objections to outside women. That is, I haven't got no objections so long as they don't interfere with serious things. Outside women are all right in their place, but *now* isn't their place! You got to realize that.

LEO (*nods*). Yes, sir. I'll tell her. She'll act all right about it. (*He drinks his coffee.*)

OSCAR. Also, you got to start working harder at the bank. You got to convince your Uncle Horace you going to make a fit husband for Alexandra.

LEO. What do you think has happened to them? Supposed to be here last night— (*Laughs.*) Bet you Uncle Ben's mighty worried. Seventy-five thousand dollars worried.

OSCAR (*smiles happily*). Ought to be worried. Damn well ought to be. First he don't answer the letters, then he don't come home— (*Giggles.*)

LEO. What will happen if Uncle Horace don't come home or don't—?

OSCAR. Or don't put up the money? Oh, we'll get it from outside. Easy enough.

LEO (*surprised*). But *you* don't want outsiders. (*Sits.*)

OSCAR. What do I care who gets my share? I been shaved already. Serve Ben right if he had to give away some of his.

LEO. Damn shame what they did to you.

OSCAR (*looking up the stairs*). Don't talk so loud. (LEO *starts to speak.*) Don't you worry. When I die, you'll have as much as the rest. You might have yours *and* Alexandra's. I'm not so easily licked.

LEO (*smoothly*). I wasn't thinking of myself, Papa—

OSCAR. Well, you should be, you should be. It's every man's duty to think of himself.

LEO (*turns to* OSCAR). You think Uncle Horace don't want to go in on this?

OSCAR (*giggles*). That's my hunch. He hasn't showed any signs of *loving* it yet.

LEO (*laughs*). But he hasn't listened to Aunt Regina yet, either. Oh, he'll go along. It's too good a thing. (*Rises.*) Why wouldn't he want to? (*Crosses to pour another coffee.*) He's got plenty and plenty to invest with. He don't even have to sell anything. Eighty-eight thousand worth of Union Pacific bonds sitting right in his safe deposit box. All he's got to do is open the box.

OSCAR (*after a pause—looks at his watch*). Mighty late breakfast in this fancy house. Yes, he's had those bonds for fifteen years. Bought them when they were low and just locked them up.

LEO (*nods*). Yeah. Just has to open the box and take them out. That's all. Easy as easy can be. (*Laughs.*) The things in that box! There's all those bonds, looking mighty fine. (OSCAR *slowly puts down his newspaper and turns to* LEO.) Then right next to them is a baby shoe of Zan's and a cheap old cameo on a string, and, *and*—nobody'd believe this—a piece of an old violin. Not even a whole violin. Just a piece of an old thing, a piece of a violin.

OSCAR (*very softly, as if he were trying to control his voice—looking at* LEO). A piece of a violin! What do you think of that!

LEO. Yes, siree. A lot of other crazy things, too. (*Turns to* OSCAR *who is staring at him.*) A poem, I guess it is, signed with his mother's name, and two old school books with notes and— (LEO *catches* OSCAR'S *look. His voice trails off. He turns his head away.*)

OSCAR (*very softly*). How do you know what's in the box, son?

LEO (*stops, draws back, frightened, realizing what he has said. Then after a second, he manages to speak*). Oh, well. Well—er. (*Crossing left to chair left center.*) Well, one of the boys, sir. It was one of the boys at the bank. He took old Mander's keys. It was Joe Horns. He just up and took Mander's keys and, and—well, took the box out. (*Quickly.*) Then they all asked me if I wanted to see, too. So I looked a little, I guess, but then I made them close up the box quick and I told them never—

OSCAR (*looks at him*). Joe Horns, you say? He opened it?

LEO. Yes, sir, yes he did. My word of honor. (*Very nervously looking away.*) I suppose that don't excuse *me* for looking (*looking at* OSCAR)—but I did make him close it up and put the keys back in Mander's drawer—

OSCAR (*leans forward, very softly*). Tell me the truth, Leo. I am not going to be angry with you. Did you open the box yourself?

LEO. *No sir, I didn't.* I told you I didn't. No, I—

OSCAR (*irritated, patient*). I am *not* going to be angry with you. Sometimes a young fellow deserves credit for looking round him to see what's going on. Sometimes that's a good sign in a fellow your age. (LEO *turns head to listen.* OSCAR *rises.*) Many great men have made their fortune with their eyes.—Did you open the box?

LEO (*very puzzled*). No. I—

OSCAR (*taking a step to him*). Did you open the box? It may have been—well, it may have been a good thing if you had.

LEO (*after a long pause*). I opened it.

OSCAR (*quickly*). Is that the truth? (LEO *nods.*) Does anybody also know that you opened it? Come, Leo, don't be afraid of speaking the truth to me.

LEO. No. Nobody knew. Nobody was in the bank when I did it. But—

OSCAR. Did your Uncle Horace ever know you opened it?

LEO (*shakes his head*). He only looks in it once every six months when he cuts the coupons, and sometimes Mander even does that for him. Uncle Horace don't even have the keys. Mander keeps them for him. Imagine not looking at all that. You can bet if I had the bonds, I'd watch 'em like—

OSCAR. If you had them. *If* you had them. Then you could have the share in the mill, you and me. (*Turns to* LEO.) A fine, big share, too. (*Pauses—shrugs.*) Well, a man can't be shot for wanting to see his son get on in the world, can he, boy?

(OSCAR *sits on sofa.*)

LEO (*looks up, begins to understand*). No, he can't! Natural enough. (*Laughs.*) But I haven't got the bonds and Uncle Horace has. And now we can just sit back and wait to be a millionaire.

OSCAR (*innocently*). You think your Uncle Horace likes you well enough to lend *you* the bonds if he decides not to use them himself?

LEO. Papa, it must be that you haven't had your breakfast! (*Laughs loudly.*) Lend me the bonds! My God—

OSCAR (*disappointed*). No, I suppose not. Just a fancy of mine. A loan for three months, maybe four, easy enough for us to pay it back then. Anyway, this is only April (*slowly counting the months on his fingers*)—and if he doesn't look at them until fall, he wouldn't even *miss* them out of the box.

LEO. That's it. He wouldn't even miss them. Ah, well—

OSCAR. No, sir. Wouldn't even miss them. How could he miss them if he never looks at them? (*Sighs as* LEO *stares at him.*) Well, here we are sitting around waiting for him to come home and invest his money in something he hasn't lifted his hand to get. But I can't help thinking he's acting strange. You laugh when I say he could lend you the bonds if he's not going to use them himself. But would it hurt him?

LEO (*slowly looking at* OSCAR). No. No, it wouldn't.

OSCAR. People *ought* to help other people. But that's not always the way it happens. (BEN *enters, hangs his coat and hat on hall tree. Very carefully.*) And so sometimes you got to think of yourself. (*As* LEO *stares at him,* BEN *appears in doorway.*) Morning, Ben.

BEN (*coming in, carrying his newspaper*). Fine, sunny morning. Any news from the runaways? (BEN *sits in chair right center.*)

REG. (*on landing*). There's no news or you would have heard it. (*Coming down stairs.*) Quite a convention so early in the morning, aren't you all? (*Goes to coffee urn.*)

OSCAR. You rising mighty late these days. Is that the way they do things in Chicago society?

BEN (*looking at his paper*). Old Carter died up in Senateville. Eighty-one is a good time for us all, eh? What do you think has really happened to Horace, Regina?

REG. Nothing.

BEN (*too casually, still reading*). You don't think maybe he never started from Baltimore and never intends to start?

REG. (*irritated*). Of course they've started. Didn't I have a letter from Alexandra? What is so strange about people arriving late? (*Crosses to table—pours coffee.*) He has that cousin in Savannah he's so fond of. He may have stopped to see him. They'll be along today some time, very flattered that you and Oscar are so worried about them.

BEN. I'm a natural worrier. Especially when I am getting ready to close a business deal and one of my partners remains silent *and* invisible.

REG. (*laughs*). Oh, is that it? I thought you were worried about Horace's *health.*

OSCAR. Oh, that too. Who could help but worry? *I'm* worried. This is the first day I haven't shot since my head cold.

REG. (*starts toward dining room*). Then you haven't had your breakfast. Come along.

(OSCAR *and* LEO *follow her.* BEN *remains seated.*)

BEN. Regina. (*She turns at dining room door.*) That cousin of Horace's

has been dead for years and, in any case, the train does not go through Savannah.

REG. (*laughs—then continues into dining room, seats herself, motions to* LEO *and* OSCAR). Did he die? You're always remembering about people dying. (BEN *rises, leaves newspaper on table, crosses upstage, left, to dining room.*) Now I intend to eat my breakfast in peace, and read my newspaper. (*Rings bell.*)

BEN (*goes toward dining room as he talks*). This is second breakfast for me. My first was bad. Celia ain't the cook she used to be. Too old to have taste any more. If she hadn't belonged to Mama, I'd send her off to the country.

(CAL *is putting two silver serving dishes on table.* OSCAR *and* LEO *start to eat.* BEN *seats himself.*)

LEO. Uncle Horace will have some tales to tell, I bet. Baltimore is a lively town.

REG. (*to* CAL). The grits isn't hot enough. Take it back.

CAL. Oh, yes'm. (*Calling into kitchen as he exits off dining room.*) Grits didn't hold the heat. Grits didn't hold the heat.

LEO. When I was at school three of the boys and myself took a train once and went over to Baltimore. It was so big we thought we were in Europe. I was just a kid then—

REG. (*looks up, helps herself from a dish*). I find it very pleasant to have breakfast alone. I hate chattering before I've had something hot. (CAL *has come back, closes dining room doors.*) Do be still, Leo.

(AD. *comes into the room, begins gathering up cups, carries them to the large tray, then quickly she runs into the hall. Outside there are the sounds of voices and people moving about. A few seconds later* AD. *appears again in the doorway, her arm around the shoulders of* HORACE GIDDENS, *supporting him.* HORACE *is a tall man of about forty-five. He has been good-looking, but now his face is tired and ill. He walks stiffly, as if it were an enormous effort, and carefully, as if he were unsure of his balance.* AD. *takes off his overcoat and hangs it on hall tree. She then helps him across to the chair left center.*)

HOR. (*as they are crossing*). How are you, Addie? How have you been?

AD. I'm all right, Mr. Horace. I've just been worried about you.

(HOR. *sits in chair.* ALEX. *enters. She is flushed and excited, her hat awry, her face dirty. Her arms are full of packages, but she comes quickly to* AD.)

ALEX. Now don't tell me how worried you were. We couldn't help it and there was no way to send a message.

AD. (*to* HOR., *begins to take packages from* ALEX.). Yes, sir, I was mighty worried.

ALEX. We had to stop in Mobile over night. Papa— (*Looks at him.*) Papa didn't feel well. The trip was too much for him, and I made him stop and rest— (*As* AD. *takes last package.*) No, don't take that. That's father's medicine. (*Crosses to table right center.* AD. *puts the packages on the chair left of table upstage, center, then crosses to* ALEX.) I'll hold it. It mustn't break. Now, about the stuff outside. Papa must have his wheel chair. I'll get that and the valises— (ALEX. *starts to go, but* AD. *stops her.*)

AD. (*very happy, holding* ALEXANDRA's *arms*). Since when you got to carry your own valises? Since when I ain't old enough to hold a bottle of medicine? (HOR. *coughs.*) You feel all right, Mr. Horace!

HOR. (*nods*). Glad to be sitting down.

ALEX. (*opening package of medicine on table*). He doesn't feel all right. He just says that. The trip was very hard on him, and now he must go right to bed.

AD. (*looking at him carefully*). Them fancy doctors, they give you help?

HOR. They did their best.

LEO (*in dining room*). Papa, can I have your part of the paper?

ALEX. (*has become conscious of the voices in dining-room*). I bet Mama was worried. I better tell her we're here now. (*She starts for door.*)

HOR. Zan. (*She stops.*) Not for a minute, dear.

ALEX. Oh, Papa, you feel bad again. I knew you did. Do you want your medicine?

HOR. No, I don't feel that way. I'm just tired, darling. Let me rest a little.

ALEX. Yes, but Mama will be mad if I don't tell her we're here.

AD. They're all in there eating breakfast.

ALEX. Oh, are they all here? Why do they *always* have to be here? I was hoping Papa wouldn't have to see anybody, that it would be nice for him and quiet.

AD. (*patting* ALEXANDRA's *arm*). Then let your Papa rest for a minute.

HOR. Addie, I bet your coffee's as good as ever. They don't have such good coffee up North. (*Looks hungrily at urn.*) Is it as good, Addie?

(AD. *starts for coffee urn.*)

ALEX. No. Dr. Reeves said not much coffee. Just now and then. (*Proudly to* AD.) I'm the nurse now, Addie.

AD. You'd be a better one if you didn't look so dirty. (*Taking* ALEX. *to stairs.*) Now go and take a bath, Miss Grownup. Change your linens, get out a fresh dress and give your hair a good brushing—go on—

ALEX. Will you be all right, Papa?

AD. (*slapping her backside*). Go on.

ALEX. (*on stairs, talks as she goes up*). The pills Papa must take once every four hours. (AD. *steps into room.*) And the bottle only when—only if he feels very bad. (*On landing.*) Now don't move until I come back and don't talk much and remember about his medicine, Addie—

AD. Ring for Belle and have her help you and then I'll make you a fresh breakfast.

ALEX. (*as she disappears up stairs*). How's Aunt Birdie? Is she here?

AD. It ain't right for you to have coffee? It will hurt you?

HOR. (*slowly*). Nothing can make much difference now. Get me a cup, Addie. (*She looks at him, crosses to urn, pours a cup.*) Funny. They can't make coffee up North. (AD. *brings him a cup.*) They don't like red pepper, either. (*He takes cup and gulps it greedily.*) God, that's good. You remember how I used to drink it? Ten, twelve cups a day. (*Slight laugh as he picks up cup again. He speaks more slowly.*) Addie, before I see anybody else, I want

to know why *Zan* came to fetch me home. She's tried to tell me, but she doesn't seem to know herself. (*Drinks.*)

AD. (*turns away*). I don't know. (*Crosses right to table.*) All I know is big things are going on. (*To* HOR.) Everybody going to be high-tone rich. Big rich. You too. (*Looks away—at table.*) All because smoke's going to start out of a building that ain't even up yet. (*She angrily creases the medicine bottle paper on the table.*)

HOR. I've heard about it.

AD. And er— (*Hesitates.*) And—well, Zan, she going to marry Mr. Leo in a little while.

HOR. (*looks at her, then very slowly*). What are you talking about?

AD. That's right. That's the talk, God help us.

HOR. (*angrily*). *What's* the talk?

AD. I'm telling you. There's going to be a wedding— (*Angrily clenches paper in her hand, turns head away.*) Over my dead body there is.

HOR. (*he hands cup to* AD., *not looking at her, after a second, quietly*). Go and tell them I'm home.

AD. (*hesitates*). Now you ain't to get excited. You're to be in your bed—

HOR. Go on, Addie. Go and say I'm back.

(AD. *takes cup and paper to tray, looking at him as he is rising, then crosses left and opens dining-room doors. He rises with difficulty, stands stiff as if he were in pain, facing the dining room.*)

AD. (*opens doors, then stands in corner upstage, left*). Miss Regina. They're home. They got here—

(*Everybody turns to look at her.*)

BEN. They are?

OSCAR. Good.

LEO. Just now?

REG. Horace.

(REG. *quickly rises, runs into the room. Others follow her.*)

REG. (*warmly*). Horace! You've finally arrived. (*As she kisses him, the others come forward, all talking together.*)

BEN (*in doorway, carrying a napkin*). Well, sir, you had us all mighty worried. (*He steps forward. They shake hands.* AD. *watches them, then exits.*)

OSCAR. You're a sight for sore eyes.

HOR. Hello, Ben.

(LEO *enters eating biscuit.*)

OSCAR. And how you feel? Tiptop, I bet, because that's the way you're looking.

HOR. (*coldly, irritated with* OSCAR's *lie*). Hello, Oscar. Hello, Leo. (LEO *extends hand.*) How are you?

LEO (*shaking hands*). I'm fine, sir. But a lot better now that you're back.

REG. (*steps to* HOR.). Now sit down. (LEO *backs away as* HOR. *sits.*) What did happen to you and where's Alexandra? I am so excited about seeing you that I almost forgot about her.

HOR. I didn't feel good, a little weak, I guess, and we stopped overnight to rest. Zan's upstairs washing off the train dirt.

REG. Oh, I am so sorry the trip was hard on you. I didn't think that—

HOR. (*sarcastically, looking around at them*). Well, it's just as if I had never been away. All of you here—

BEN. Waiting to welcome you home.

(BIRD. *bursts in. She is wearing a flannel kimono and her face is flushed and excited.* BEN *crosses to mantel.*)

BIRD. (*runs to him, kisses him*). Horace!

HOR. (*warmly pressing her arm*). I was just wondering where you were, Birdie.

BIRD. (*excited*). Oh, I would have been here. I didn't know you were back until Simon said he saw the buggy— (*She draws back to look at him. Her face sobers.*) Oh, you don't look well, Horace. No you don't.

REG. (*laughs*). Birdie, what a thing to say—

HOR. (*looking at* OSCAR). Oscar thinks I look very well.

OSCAR (*annoyed—turns on* LEO). Don't stand there holding that biscuit in your hand.

LEO. Oh. Well. I'll just finish my breakfast, Uncle Horace, and then I'll give you all the news about the bank— (*He exits into dining room, taking newspaper from settee.*)

OSCAR (*comes to* BIRD.). And what is that costume you have on?

BIRD. (*looking at* HOR.). Now that you're home, you'll feel better. Plenty of good rest and we'll take such fine care of you— (*Stops.*) But where is Zan (HOR. *motions to staircase.*) I missed her so much.

OSCAR. I asked you what is that strange costume you're parading around in

BIRD. (*nervously, backing toward stairs*). Me? (*Looks at costume—drops* HORACE'S *hand.*) Oh! It's my wrapper. I was so excited about Horace I just rushed out of the house—

OSCAR. Did you come across the square dressed that way? My dear Birdie, I—

HOR. (*to* REG., *wearily*). Yes, it's just like old times.

REG. (*quickly to* OSCAR). Now no fights. This is a holiday.

BIRD. (*runs quickly up stairs*). Zan! Zannie!

OSCAR. Birdie! (*She stops.*)

BIRD. Tell Zan I'll be back in a little while. (*Exits door on right.*)

REG. (*to* OSCAR *and* BEN). Why don't you go finish your breakfast—(*Looks at* OSCAR. *He looks at* BEN, *then crosses into dining room.*) and let Horace rest for a minute?

BEN. Never leave a meal unfinished. There are too many poor people who need the food. Mighty glad to see you home, Horace. Fine to have you back. Fine to have you back.

OSCAR (*to* LEO *as* BEN *is closing dining room doors*). Your mother has gone crazy. Running around the streets like a woman— (*The moment* REG. *and* HOR. *are alone, they become awkward and self-conscious.*)

REG. (*laughs awkwardly*). Well. Here we are. It's been a long time. (HOR. *smiles.*) Five months. You know, Horace, I wanted to come and be with you in the hospital, but I didn't know where my duty was. Here, or with you. But you know how much I *wanted* to come.

HOR. That's kind of you, Regina. There was no need to come.

REG. Oh, but there was. Five months lying there all by yourself, no kin-folk, no friends. Don't try to tell me you didn't have a bad time of it.

HOR. I didn't have a bad time. (*As she shakes her head, he becomes insistent.*) No, I didn't, Regina. Oh, at first when I—when I heard the news about myself—but after I got used to that, I liked it there.

REG. You *liked* it? (*Coldly.*) Isn't that strange! You liked it so well you didn't want to come home?

HOR. That's not the way to put it. (*Then, kindly, as he sees her turn her head away.*) But there I was and I got kind of used to it, kind of to like lying there and thinking. (*Smiles.*) I never had much time to think before. And time's become valuable to me.

REG. It sounds almost like a holiday.

HOR. (*laughs*). It was, sort of. The first holiday I've had since I was a little kid.

REG. And here I was thinking you were in pain and—

HOR. (*quietly*). I *was* in pain.

REG. And instead you were having a holiday! (*She sits.*) A holiday of thinking. Couldn't you have done that here?

HOR. I wanted to do it before I came here. I was thinking about us.

REG. About us? About you and me? Thinking about you and me after all these years? (*Unpleasantly. Rises, crosses downstage, right.*) You shall tell me everything you thought—some day.

HOR. (*there is silence for a minute*). Regina. (*She turns to him.*) Why did you send Zan to Baltimore?

REG. Why? Because I wanted you home. (*Crossing to him.*) You can't make anything suspicious out of that, can you?

HOR. I didn't mean to make anything suspicious about it. (*Hesitantly, taking her hand.*) Zan said you wanted me to come home. I was so pleased at that and touched, it made me feel good.

REG. (*taking away her hand, turns*). Touched that I should want you home?

HOR. (*sighs*). I'm saying all the wrong things, as usual. Let's try to get along better. There isn't so much more time. Regina, what's all this crazy talk I've been hearing about Zan and Leo? (*Slight laugh.*) Zan and Leo marrying?

REG. (*turning to him, sharply*). Who gossips so much around here?

HOR. (*shocked*). Regina!

REG. (*annoyed, anxious to quiet him*). It's some foolishness that Oscar thought up. I'll explain later. I have no intention of allowing any such arrangement. It was simply a way of keeping Oscar quiet in all this business I've been writing you about—

HOR. (*carefully*). What has Zan to do with any business of Oscar's? Whatever it is, you had better put it out of Oscar's head immediately. You know what I think of Leo.

REG. But there's no need to talk about it now.

HOR. There is no need to talk about it ever. Not as long as I live. (REG. *turns, crossing right.* HOR. *stops, slowly, turns to look at her.*) As long as I live. I've been in a hospital for five months. Yet since I've been here you have not once asked me about—about my health. (*Then gently.*) Well, I suppose they've written you. I can't live very long.

REG. (*coldly*). I've never understood why people have to talk about this kind of thing.

HOR. (*there is a silence—then he looks up at her, his face cold*). You misunderstand. I don't intend to gossip about my sickness. I thought it was only fair to tell you. I was not asking for your sympathy.

REG. (*sharply, turns to him*). What do the doctors think caused your bad heart?

HOR. What do you mean?

REG. They didn't think it possible, did they, that your fancy women may have—?

HOR. (*smiles, unpleasantly*). Caused my heart to be bad? I don't think that's the best scientific theory. You don't catch heart trouble in bed.

REG. (*angrily*). I didn't think you did. I only thought you might catch a bad conscience—in bed, as you say.

HOR. I didn't tell them about my bad conscience. Or about my *fancy women*. Nor did I tell them that my wife has not wanted me in bed with her for—(*Sharply.*) How long is it, Regina? (REG. *turns to him.*) Ten years? Did you bring me home for this, to make me feel guilty again? That means you want something. But you'll not make me feel guilty any more. My "thinking" has made a difference.

REG. I see that it has.

BEN (*in dining room*). Put down that paper, Leo.

REG. (*she looks toward dining room door—then comes to him, her manner warm and friendly*). It's foolish for us to fight this way. I didn't mean to be unpleasant. I was stupid.

HOR. (*wearily*). God knows I didn't either. I came home wanting so much not to fight, and then all of a sudden there we were. I got hurt and—

REG. (*hastily*). It's all my fault. I didn't ask about—your illness because I didn't want to remind you of it. Anyway I never believe doctors when they talk about—(*brightly*)—when they talk like that.

HOR. (*not looking at her*). Well, we'll try our best with each other. (*He rises, starts for stairs.* REG. *stops him.*)

REG. (*quickly, crossing with him*). I'll try. Honestly, I will. Horace (*He stops, turns to her.*)—Horace, I know you're tired but—but—couldn't you stay down here a few minutes longer? I want Ben to tell you something.

HOR. Tomorrow.

REG. I'd like to now. It's very important to me. It's very important to all of us. (*Gaily, as she moves toward dining room.*) Important to your beloved daughter. She'll be a very great heiress—

HOR. Will she? That's nice.

REG. (*opens doors*). Ben, are you finished breakfast?

HOR. Is this the mill business I've had so many letters about?

REG. (*to* BEN). Horace would like to talk to you now.

HOR. Horace would not like to talk to you now. I am very tired, Regina—(*He starts.*)

REG. (*comes to him and stops him*). Please. You've said we'll try our best with each other. I'll try. Really, I will. But please do this for me now. (*Urging*

him into chair.) You will see what I've done while you've been away. How I watched your interests. (*Laughs gaily.*) And I've done very well, too. But things can't be delayed any longer. Everything must be settled this week—(HOR. *crosses—sits on chair right, center.* REG. *crosses to* BEN *who is entering.* OSCAR *has stayed in the dining-room, his head turned to watch them.* LEO *is pretending to read newspaper.*) Now you must tell Horace all about it. Only be quick because he is very tired and must go to bed. (HOR. *is looking up at her as if he finally understood. His face hardens as she speaks.*) But I think your news will be better for him than all the medicine in the world.

BEN (*who is looking at* HOR.). It could wait. Horace may not feel like talking today.

REG. What an old faker you are! You know it can't wait. You know it must be finished this week. You've been just as anxious for Horace to get here as I've been.

BEN (*very jovial*). I suppose I have been. And why not? Horace has done Hubbard Sons many a good turn. Why shouldn't I be anxious to help him now?

REG. (*laughs*). Help him! Help him when you need him, that's what you mean. (*Sits on sofa.*)

BEN. What a woman you married, Horace! (*Laughs awkwardly when* HOR. *does not answer.*) Well, then I'll make it quick. You know what I've been telling you for years. How I've always said that every one of us little Southern business men had great things—(*extends his arm, moves his fingers*)—right beyond our finger-tips. It's been my dream: my dream to make those fingers grow longer. I'm a lucky man, Horace, a lucky man. To dream and to live to get what you've dreamed of. That's *my* idea of a lucky man. (*Looks at his fingers as his arm drops slowly.*) For thirty years I've cried, bring the cotton mills to the cotton! (HOR. *opens medicine bottle, pours dose into spoon.*) Well, finally I got up nerve to go to the Marshall Company in Chicago.

HOR. (*has finally taken his eyes from* REG.). I know all this. (*He takes medicine.* REG. *rises.*)

BEN. Can I get you something?

HOR. Some water, please.

REG. (*turns quickly*). Oh, I'm sorry. Let me. (*Crosses to tray on table upstage, center, brings him glass. He drinks as they wait in silence.*) You feel all right now?

HOR. Yes. You wrote me. I know all that. (OSCAR *rises—crosses to dining room doors.*)

REG. (*triumphantly*). But you don't know that in the last few days Ben has agreed to give us—you, I mean—a much larger share.

HOR. Really? That's very generous of him.

BEN (*laughs*). It wasn't so generous of me; it was smart of Regina.

REG. (*as if she were signalling* HOR.). I explained to Ben that perhaps you hadn't answered his letters because you didn't think he was offering you enough, and that the time was getting short and you could guess how much he needed you—

HOR. (*smiles at her—nods*). And I could guess that he wants to keep control in the family?

REG. (*to* BEN, *triumphantly*). Exactly. (*To* HOR.) So I did a little bargaining for you and convinced my brothers they weren't the only Hubbards who had a business sense.

HOR. Did you have to convince them of that? How little people know about each other! (OSCAR *laughs.*) But you'll know better about Regina next time, eh, Ben? (BEN, REG., HOR. *laugh together.* OSCAR'S *face is angry.*) Now let's see. We're getting a bigger share. (*Looking at* OSCAR.) Who's getting less?

BEN. Oscar.

HOR. Well, Oscar, you've grown very unselfish. What's happened to you?

(LEO *rises, crosses to dining room doors.*)

BEN (*quickly, before* OSCAR *can answer*). Oscar doesn't mind. Not worth fighting about now, eh, Oscar?

OSCAR (*angrily*). I'll get mine in the end. You can be sure of that. I've got my son's future to think about.

HOR. (*sharply*). Leo? Oh, I see. (*Puts his head back, laughs.* REG. *looks at him nervously.*) I am beginning to see. Everybody will get theirs.

BEN. I knew you'd see it. Seventy-five thousand, and that seventy-five thousand will make you a million.

REG. (*steps to table, leaning forward*). It will, Horace, it will.

HOR. I believe you. (REG. *steps back, sits on sofa. After a second.*) Now I can understand Oscar's self-sacrifice, but what did you have to promise Marshall Company besides the money you're putting up?

BEN. They wouldn't take promises. They wanted guarantees.

HOR. Of what?

BEN (*nods*). Water power. Free and plenty of it.

HOR. You got them that, of course?

BEN. Cheap. You'd think the governor of a great State would make his price a little higher. From pride, you know. (HOR. *smiles.* BEN *smiles.*) Cheap wages. (*Sits.*) What do you mean by cheap wages, I say to Marshall? Less than Massachusetts, he says to me, and that averages eight a week. (*Leans back.*) Eight a week! By God, I tell him, *I'd* work for eight a week myself. Why, there ain't a mountain white or a town nigger but wouldn't give his right arm for three silver dollars every week, eh, Horace?

HOR. Sure. And they'll take less than that when you get around to playing them off against each other. You can save a little money *that* way, Ben. (*Angrily.*) And make them hate each other just a little more than they do now.

REG. What's all this about?

BEN (*laughs*). There'll be no trouble from anybody, white or black. Marshall said that to me. "What about strikes? That's all we've had in Massachusetts for the last three years." I say to him, "What's a strike? I never heard of one. Come South, Marshall. We got good folks and we don't stand for any fancy fooling."

HOR. You're right. (*Slowly.*) Well, it looks like you made a good deal for yourselves, and for Marshall, too. (CAL *has come into dining room and closes*

doors. To BEN.) Your father used to say he made the thousands and you boys would make the millions. I think he was right. (*Rises.*)

REG. (*they are all looking at* HOR.; *she laughs, nervously, leans forward*). Millions for *us,* too.

HOR. Us? You and me? I don't think so. We've got enough money, Regina. We'll just sit by and watch the boys grow rich. (*Takes a step upstage, center, holding on to chair.* OSCAR *sits on piano stool. They watch him tensely, as he begins to move toward staircase. He passes* LEO, *looks at him for a second. Brightly.*) How's everything at the bank, Leo?

LEO. Fine, sir. Everything is fine.

HOR. How are all the ladies in Mobile? (LEO *draws back.* HOR. *turns, a step to* REG., *sharply.*) Whatever made you think I'd let Zan marry—?

REG. Do you mean that you are turning this down? Is it possible that's what you mean?

BEN (*nervously, but speaking with good nature—gesturing* REG. *to be quiet*). No, that's not what he means. Turning down a fortune! Horace is tired. He'd rather talk about it tomorrow—

REG. We can't keep putting it off this way. Oscar must be in Chicago by the end of the week with the money and contracts. (*Crosses to* HOR.)

OSCAR (*giggles, pleased*). Yes, sir. Got to be there end of the week. No sense going without the money.

REG. (*tensely*). I've waited long enough for your answer. I'm not going to wait any longer.

HOR. (*crossing to stairs, very deliberately*). I'm very tired now, Regina.

BEN (*hastily*). Now Horace probably has his reasons. Things he'd like explained. Tomorrow will do. I can—

REG. (*turns to* BEN, *sharply*). *I want to know his reasons now.*

HOR. (*as he climbs the steps*). I don't know them all myself. Let's leave it at that.

REG. (*crosses upstage to foot of stairs*). *We shall not leave it at that.* We have waited for you here like children. Waited for you to come home.

HOR. So that you could invest my money. So this is why you wanted me home? Well, I had hoped— (*Quietly.*) If you are disappointed, Regina, I'm sorry. But I must do what I think best. We'll talk about it another day.

REG. We'll talk about it now. Just you and me.

HOR. (*stops on landing, looks down at her; his voice is tense*). Please, Regina. It's been a hard trip. I don't feel well. Please leave me alone now.

REG. (*quietly*). I want to talk to you, Horace. I'm coming up. (*He looks at her for a moment, then moves on again out of sight. She begins to climb stairs.*)

BEN (*softly;* REG. *turns to him as he speaks*). Sometimes it is better to wait for the sun to rise again. (*She does not answer.*) And sometimes, as our mother used to tell you (REG. *starts up stairs.*), it's unwise for a good-looking woman to frown. (BEN *rises, crosses upstage to landing.*) Softness and a smile do more to the heart of men— (*She disappears.* BEN *stands looking up the stairs. A long silence. Then, suddenly,* OSCAR *giggles.*)

OSCAR. Let us hope she'll change his mind. Let us hope.

(*After a second* BEN *crosses to table, picks up his newspaper, continues to sofa, sits—begins to read.* OSCAR *looks at* BEN. *The silence makes* LEO *uncomfortable.*)

LEO. The paper says twenty-seven cases of Yellow Fever in New Orleans. Guess the flood waters caused it. (*Nobody pays attention.*) Thought they were building levees high enough. Like the niggers always say: a man born of woman can't build nothing high enough for the Mississippi. (*Gets no answer. Gives an embarrassed laugh.*)

(*Upstairs there is the sound of voices. The voices are not loud, but* BEN, OSCAR, LEO *become conscious of them.* LEO *crosses upstage to landing, looks up, listens.*)

REG. I can't understand what you mean. I can't believe that you mean to turn this down. This is what you've been waiting for, what all of us have been waiting for. You must be going crazy or you must have reasons that you are not telling us.

HOR. I don't know my reasons. I just don't want it.

REG. You don't want it. But I do want it.

OSCAR (*pointing up*). Now just suppose she don't change his mind? Just suppose he keeps on refusing?

BEN (*without conviction*). He's tired. It was a mistake to talk to him today. He's a sick man but he isn't a crazy one.

OSCAR (*giggles*). But just suppose he is crazy. What then?

(LEO *crosses slowly to back of sofa.*)

BEN (*puts down his paper, peers at* OSCAR). Then we'll go outside for the money. There's plenty who would give it.

OSCAR. And plenty who will want a lot for what they give. The ones who are rich enough to give will be smart enough to want. That means we'd be working for them, don't it, Ben?

BEN. You don't have to tell me the things I told you six months ago.

OSCAR. Oh, you're right not to worry. She'll change his mind. She always has.

(*There is a silence. Suddenly* REGINA'S *voice becomes louder and sharper. All of them begin to listen now. Slowly* BEN *rises, goes to listen by the staircase.* OSCAR, *watching him, smiles. As they listen* REGINA'S *voice becomes very loud.* HORACE'S *voice is no longer heard.*)

REG. People don't pass up chances like this. I won't let you pass up chances like this. I won't let you pass up this one just because you've gone crazy!

OSCAR. Maybe.

REG. And if you change your mind in a week, it will be too late. It's got to be done now.

HOR. I won't change my mind. I don't want it.

REG. You don't want it but I do want it. I'm your wife. I have a right to expect that you will take care of my future. Of your child's future.

OSCAR. But I don't believe it. I never did believe he was going in with us.

BEN (*turning on him*). What the hell do you expect me to do?

OSCAR (*mildly*). Nothing. You done your almighty best. Nobody could blame you if the whole thing just dripped away right through our fingers. (BEN *crosses to sofa for paper.*) You can't do a thing. But there may be something I could

do for us. (OSCAR *rises.* BEN *starts to pick up paper but is stopped by* OSCAR'S *words.*) Or, I might better say (*crossing to center*), Leo could do for us. (BEN *stops, turns, looks at* OSCAR. LEO *is staring at* OSCAR. *Turns to* LEO.) Ain't that true, son. (LEO *crosses downstage, left.*) Ain't it true you might be able to help your own kin-folks?

LEO (*nervously taking a step to him*). Papa, I—

BEN (*slowly*). How would he help us, Oscar?

OSCAR. Leo's got a friend. Leo's friend owns eighty-eight thousand dollars in Union Pacific bonds. (BEN *turns to look at* LEO.) Leo's friend don't look at the bonds much, not for five or six months at a time.

BEN (*after a pause*). Union Pacific. Uh, huh. Let me understand. Leo's friend would—would lend him these bonds and he—?

OSCAR (*nods*). Would be kind enough to lend them to us.

BEN. Leo.

LEO (*excited, comes to him*). Yes, sir?

BEN. When would your friend be wanting the bonds back?

LEO (*very nervous*). I don't know. I—well, I—

OSCAR (*sharply—steps toward him*). You told me he won't look at them until fall—

LEO. Oh. That's right. But I—not till fall. Uncle Horace never—

BEN (*sharply*). Be still.

OSCAR (*smiles at* LEO). Your Uncle doesn't wish to know your friend's name.

LEO (*starts to laugh*). That's a good one. Not know his name—

OSCAR. Shut up, Leo! (LEO *turns away slowly, moves to table on left.* BEN *turns to* OSCAR.) He won't look at them again until September. That gives us five months. Leo will return the bonds in three months. And we'll have no trouble raising the money once the mills are going up. Will Marshall accept bonds?

(BEN *stops to listen to sudden sharp voices from above. The voices are now very angry and very loud.*)

REG. I have a right to expect that.

HOR. Please go away and leave me alone.

REG. I won't leave you alone. I demand that you put up this money and I demand that you do it immediately.

BEN (*then smiling*). Why not? Why not? (*Laughs—to* OSCAR.) Good. We are lucky. We'll take the loan from Leo's friend—I think he will make a safer partner than our sister. (*Nods toward stairs. Turns to* LEO.) How soon can you get them?

LEO. Today. Right now. (*Steps to* BEN.) They're in the safe deposit box and—

BEN (*sharply*). I don't want to know where they are.

OSCAR (*laughs*). We will keep it secret from you. (*Pats* BEN'S *arm.*)

BEN (*smiles*). Good. Draw a check for our part. You can take the night train for Chicago. (*To* OSCAR.) Well, Oscar (*holds out his hand—*OSCAR *takes it, they shake hands*), good luck to us.

OSCAR (*turns to* BEN). Leo will be taken care of?

LEO. I'm entitled to Uncle Horace's share. I'd enjoy being a partner—

BEN (*turns to stare at him*). You would? You can go to hell, you little—(*Starts toward* LEO.)

OSCAR (*nervously, stopping* BEN). Now, now. He didn't mean that. I only want to be sure he'll get something out of all this.

BEN. Of course. We'll take care of him. We won't have any trouble about that. I'll see you at the store.

OSCAR (*nods*). That's settled then. Come on, son. (*Starts for door.*)

LEO (*puts out his hand—crosses to* BEN). I didn't mean just that. I was only going to say what a great day this was for me and—

(BEN *ignores his hand.*)

BEN. Go on.

(LEO *looks at him, turns, follows* OSCAR *out.* BEN *stands where he is, thinking. Again the voices upstairs can be heard.* REGINA'S *is high and furious.* BEN *looks up, smiles, winces at the noise.*)

REG. Nobody would turn this down. You must have your reasons. You must have reasons you won't talk about.

(*The noise of fists pounding against a door is heard, and* ALEXANDRA'S *voice.*)

ALEX. Mama—Mama—don't—

(*The noise of running footsteps is heard, and* ALEX. *comes running down the steps, speaking as she comes, together with the voices upstairs.*)

REG. What are they? What possible reasons could there be? I demand to know. All my life I've had to force you to make something out of yourself.

HOR. Let me alone.

REG. I won't let you alone. If I'd let you alone you'd still be working for somebody else.

HOR. So that's why you wanted me home?

REG. Yes, that's the reason.

HOR. Then it's a bad one. Because it won't work.

REG. Did you think I wanted you home for yourself? Is that what you thought?

ALEX. (*almost crying—on landing*). Uncle Ben! (*Coming down stairs.*) Uncle Ben! Please go up. Please make Mama stop. Uncle Ben, he's sick, he's so sick. How can Mama talk to him like that—please, make her stop. She'll—

BEN. Alexandra, you have a tender heart.

ALEX. Go on up, Uncle Ben, please—

(*Suddenly the noise from above stops, and a second later there is the sound of a door opening and then being slammed.*)

BEN. Now you see. Everything is over. Don't worry. (*He starts for door.*) Alexandra, I want you to tell your mother how sorry I am that I had to leave. And don't worry so, my dear. Married folk frequently raise their voices, unfortunately. (*He starts to put on his hat and coat as* REG. *appears on stairs. When she speaks to* BEN, *her voice is cold and calm.*)

ALEX. (*furiously*). How can you treat Papa like this! He's sick. He's very sick. Don't you know that! I won't let you.

REG. Mind your business, Alexandra. (ALEX. *turns. To* BEN.) How much longer can you wait for the money?

BEN. He has refused? My, that's too bad.

REG. He will change his mind. I'll find a way to make him. What's the longest you can wait now?

BEN. I could wait until next week. But I can't wait until next week. (*He giggles, pleased at the joke.*) I could but I can't. Could and can't. Well, I must go now. I'm very late— (*He starts.*)

REG. (*coming downstairs toward him*). You're not going. I want to talk to you.

BEN (*looks at her*). Oh, I was about to give Alexandra a message for you. I wanted to tell you that Oscar is going to Chicago tonight, so we can't be here for our usual Friday supper.

REG. (*tensely*). Oscar is going to Chi— (*Softly.*) What do you mean?

BEN. Just that. Everything is settled. He's going on to deliver to Marshall—

REG. (*taking a step to him*). I demand to know what—you are lying. You are trying to scare me. *You haven't got the money.* How could you have it? You can't have— (BEN *laughs.*) You will wait until I—

(HOR. *comes into view on landing.*)

BEN. You are getting out of hand. Since when do I take orders from you? (*He turns.*)

REG. Wait, you— (BEN *stops.*) How *can* he go to Chicago? Did a ghost arrive with the money? (BEN *starts for hall.*) I don't believe you. Come back here. (REG. *starts after him.*) Come back here, you—

(*The door slams. She stops in the doorway, staring, her fists clenched. After a pause she turns slowly and steps into the room.*)

HOR. (*standing on landing of the stairs, very quietly*). It's a great day when you and Ben cross swords. I've been waiting for it for years.

ALEX. Papa, Papa, please go back! You will—

HOR. And so they don't need you, and so you will not have your millions, after all?

REG. (*turns slowly*). You hate to see anybody live now, don't you? You hate to think that I'm going to be alive and have what I want. (*Comes toward stairs, looking up at him.*)

HOR. I should have known you'd think that was the reason.

REG. Because you're going to die and you know you're going to die.

ALEX. (*shrilly*). Mama! Don't—don't listen, Papa. Just don't listen. Go away—

HOR. Not to keep you from getting what you want. Not even partly that. (*Steps down one step, holding on to rail, leaning over to look down at her.*) I'm sick of you, sick of this house, sick of my life here. I'm sick of your brothers and their dirty tricks to make a dime. There must be better ways of getting rich than cheating niggers on a pound of bacon. Why should I give you the money? (*Very angrily.*) To pound the bones of this town to make dividends for you to spend? You wreck the town, you and your brothers, *you* wreck the town and live on it. Not me. Maybe it's easy for the dying to be honest. But it's not my fault I'm dying. (AD. *enters on left, stands at door quietly.*) I'll do no more harm now. I've done enough. I'll die my own way. And I'll do it without making the world any worse. I leave that to you.

REG. (*looks up at him slowly, calmly*). I hope you die. I hope you die soon. (*Smiles.*) I'll be waiting for you to die.

ALEX. (*shrieking*). Papa! Don't—don't listen—don't—

AD. Come here, Zan. Come out of this room. (ALEX. *runs quickly to* AD., *who holds her in her arms.* HOR. *turns slowly and starts upstairs.*)

ACT III

SCENE. *Same as Act I. Two weeks later. It is late afternoon and it is raining. At rise:* HOR. *is sitting near the window in a wheel chair. On the table next to him is a safe deposit box, and one small bottle of medicine and spoon.* BIRD. *and* ALEX. *are playing the piano. On the chair right of table upstage, center, is a large sewing-basket. (A phrase of the song is played before the curtain rises. As the curtain is going up the song is reaching its conclusion.)*

BIRD. (*counting for* ALEX.). One and two and three and four. One and two and three and four. (*They finish song and laugh.* ALEX. *repeats a phrase. Nods —turns to* HOR.) We used to play together, Horace. Remember?

HOR. (*has been looking out of window*). What, Birdie?

BIRD. We played together. You and me.

ALEX. (*stops playing, looks to* HOR., *then* BIRD.). *Papa* used to play?

BIRD. Indeed he did. (AD. *appears at door on left in a large kitchen apron. She is wiping her hands on a towel.*) He played the fiddle and very well, too. (*Turns to piano and starts playing.*)

ALEX. (*turns to smile at* HOR.). I never knew—

AD. Where's your Mama?

ALEX. Gone to Miss Safronia's to fit her dresses.

(AD. *nods, starts to exit.*)

HOR. Addie.

AD. Yes, Mr. Horace.

HOR. (*speaks as if he had made a sudden decision*). Tell Cal to get on his things. I want him to go an errand.

(AD. *nods, exits left.* HOR. *moves nervously in his chair, looks out of window.*)

ALEX. (*who has been watching him*). It's too bad it's been raining all day, Papa. But you can go out in the yard tomorrow. Don't be restless.

HOR. I'm not restless, darling.

(ALEX. *turns to piano and joins* BIRD. *in playing; after playing one measure together* BIRD. *stops and turns to* HOR. ALEX. *continues playing alone.*)

BIRD. I remember so well the time we played together (*To* ALEX.), your Papa and me. (*To* HOR.) It was the first time Oscar brought me here to supper. I had never seen all the Hubbards together before (*To* ALEX.), and you know what a ninny I am and how shy. (*Turns to look at* HOR.) You said you could play the fiddle (*rises and goes upstage, center*) and you'd be much obliged if I'd play with you. (*Pouring glass of water.*) *I* was obliged to *you,* all right, all right. (*Laughs when he does not answer her.*) Horace (*steps to him, holding glass*), you haven't heard a word I've said.

HOR. Birdie, when did Oscar get back from Chicago?

BIRD. Yesterday. Hasn't he been here yet?

ALEX. (*stops playing*). No. Neither has Uncle Ben since—since that day.

BIRD. Oh. (*To* ALEX.) I didn't know it was *that* bad. (*Turns to* HOR.) Oscar never tells *me* anything—

HOR. (*smiles, nods*). The Hubbards have had their great quarrel. I knew it would come some day. (*Laughs.*) It came.

ALEX. It came. It certainly came all right.

BIRD. (*amazed*). But Oscar was in such a good humor when he got home (AD. *enters.*), I didn't—

HOR. Yes, I can understand that.

(AD. *is carrying a large tray with three water glasses, a carafe of elderberry wine and a plate of cookies, which she puts on the table downstage, left.* BIRD. *hurries to* AD., *leaving water glass on table upstage, center.*)

ALEX. Addie! A party! What for?

AD. (*pouring wine into the three glasses*). Nothing for. I had the fresh butter so I made the cakes, and a little elderberry does the stomach good in the rain. (AD. *looks at* HOR., *then crosses to center, moves chair upstage, then crosses to him, moves him to center.*)

BIRD. (*takes her glass and puts* ALEXANDRA's *on piano*). Isn't this nice! A party just for us. Let's play *party* music, Zan.

(ALEX. *begins to play a gay piece.*)

AD. (*to* HOR., *wheeling his chair to center*). Come over here, Mr. Horace, and don't be thinking so much. (*She crosses to table for* HORACE's *glass, brings it to him.* ALEX. *stops playing, turns and watches him.*) A glass of elderberry will do more good.

(ALEX. *reaches for another cake,* BIRD. *pours herself another glass of wine.*)

ALEX. (*her mouth full*). Good cakes, Addie. It's nice here. Just us. Be nice if it could always be this way.

BIRD. (*nods, happily*). Quiet and restful. (*Drinks, then crosses to piano stool, sits.*)

AD. (*lights lamp on table upstage, center*). Well, it won't be that way long. Little while now, even sitting here, you'll hear the red bricks going into place. The next day the smoke'll be pushing out the chimneys (ALEX. *goes to chair at piano, sits.*) and by church time that Sunday every human born of woman will be living on chicken. (*Crossing right to mantel.*) That's how Mr. Ben's been telling the story.

HOR. (*looks at her*). They believe it that way?

AD. Believe it? (*Placing footstool so that she can reach upstage lamp on mantel.* BIRD. *crosses to table, pours another drink.*) They use to believing what Mr. Ben orders. There ain't been so much talk around here since Sherman's army didn't come near. (*Lights upper mantel lamp.*)

HOR. (*softly*). They are fools.

AD. (*nods*). You ain't born in the South unless you're a fool. (AD. *moves footstool to downstage end of mantel, and lights lower mantel lamp.*)

BIRD. (*has drunk another glass; she has been listening to the others*). But we didn't play together after that night. (*Goes to settee.*) Oscar said he didn't like me to play on the piano. (*Turns to* ALEX.) You know what he said that night?

(AD. *goes to chair upstage, center, gets sewing-basket, crosses to chair downstage, right, turns it to face them, sits.*)

ALEX. Who?

BIRD. Oscar. He said that music made him nervous. He said he just sat and waited for the next note. (ALEX. *laughs.*) He wasn't poking fun. He meant it. Ah, well— (*She finishes her glass, shakes her head.* HOR. *looks at her, smiles. Crossing to* HOR.) Your Papa don't like to admit it, but he's been mighty kind to me all these years. (*Running the back of her hand along his sleeve.*) Often he'd step in when somebody said something and once— (*She stops, turns away, her face still.*) Once he stopped Oscar from— (*She stops, turns, steps upstage. Quickly.*) I'm sorry I said that. (*Crossing back of settee.*) Why, here I am so happy and yet I think about bad things. (*Laughs nervously.*) That's not right, now is it? (*Goes to table left, pours drink, crosses to upper end of piano.*)

(CAL *appears in the door left. He has on an old coat and is carrying a torn umbrella.*)

ALEX. Have a cake, Cal.

CAL (*comes in, takes a cake*). Yes'm. You want me, Mr. Horace?

HOR. What time is it, Cal? (*Puts glass on table.*)

CAL. 'Bout ten minutes before it's five.

HOR. All right. Now you walk yourself down to the bank. (ALEX. *starts to play softly.*)

CAL. It'll be closed. Nobody'll be there but Mr. Mander, Mr. Joe Horns, Mr. Leo—

HOR. Go in the back way. They'll be at the table, going over the day's business. (*Points to deposit box.*) See that box?

CAL (*nods*). Yes, sir.

HOR. You tell Mander that Mr. Horace says he's much obliged to him for bringing the box; it arrived all right.

CAL (*bewildered*). He know you got the box. He bring it hisself Wednesday. I opened the door to him and he say, "Hello, Cal, coming on to summer weather"—

HOR. You say just what I tell you. Understand?

(BIRD. *crosses to table left, pours drink, stands at table.*)

CAL. No, sir. I ain't going to say I understand. I'm going down and tell a man he give you something he already know he give you, and you say "understand."

HOR. Now, Cal—

CAL. Yes, sir. I just going to say you obliged for the box coming all right. I ain't going to understand it, but I'm going to say it—

HOR. And tell him I want him to come over here after supper, and to bring Mr. Sol Fowler with him.

(ALEX. *playing.*)

CAL (*nods*). He's to come after supper and bring Mr. Sol Fowler, your attorney-*at*-law, with him.

HOR. (*smiles*). That's right. Just walk right in the back room and say your piece. (*Slowly.*) In front of everybody.

CAL. Yes, sir. (*Mumbles to himself as he exits on left.*)

ALEX. (*who has been watching* HOR.). Is anything the matter, Papa?

HOR. Oh, no. Nothing.

AD. (*watching* BIRD. *take another glass of wine*). Miss Birdie, that elderberry going to give you a headache spell.

BIRD. (*beginning to be drunk—gaily*). Oh, I don't think so. I don't think it will. (*Drinks.*)

ALEX. (*as* HOR. *puts his hand to his throat—rises, crosses to his left*). Do you want your medicine, Papa?

HOR. No, no. I'm all right, darling.

BIRD. Mama used to give me elderberry wine when I was a little girl. For hiccoughs. (*Laughs.*) You know, I don't think people get hiccoughs anymore. Isn't that funny? (BIRD. *laughs.* HOR. *and* ALEX. *laugh, too.*) I used to get hiccoughs just when I shouldn't have. (*Crosses to piano, sits, starts playing, drinks.*)

AD. (*nods*). And nobody get growing pains no more. That is funny. Just as if there was some style in what you get. One year an ailment's stylish (BIRD. *stops playing.*) and the next year, it ain't.

BIRD. (*turns to them*). I remember. It was my first big party, at Lionnet I mean, and I was so excited (*rises, crosses to table on left*)—and there I was with hiccoughs and Mama laughing. (*Softly. Looking at carafe.*) Mama always laughed. (*Picks up carafe.*) A big party, a lovely dress from Mr. Worth in Paris, France, and hiccoughs. (*Pours drink.*) My brother pounding me on the back and Mama with the elderberry bottle, laughing at me. Everybody was on their way to come, and I was such a ninny, hiccoughing away. (*Drinks. Pauses.*) You know, that was the first day I ever saw Oscar Hubbard. The Ballongs were selling their hosses and he was going there to buy. He passed and lifted his hat—we could see him from the window—and my brother, to tease Mama, said maybe we should have invited the Hubbards to the party. He said Mama didn't like them because they kept a store, and he said that was old-fashioned of her. (*Her face lights up—looking out.*) And then, and *then,* I saw Mama angry for the first time in my life. She said that wasn't the reason. She said she was old-fashioned, but not that way. She said she was old-fashioned enough not to like people who killed animals they couldn't use, and who made their money charging awful interest to poor, ignorant niggers and cheating them on what they bought. She was very angry, Mama was. I had never seen her face like that. And then suddenly she laughed and said, "Look, I've frightened Birdie out of the hiccoughs." (*Her head drops, then softly.*) And so she had. They were all gone. (*Moves up to sofa, sits.*)

AD. (*to her sewing*). Yeah, they got mighty well off cheating niggers. (*To them.*) Well, there are people who eat the earth and eat all the people on it like in the Bible with the locusts. Then, there are people who stand around and watch them eat it. (*Softly.*) Sometimes I think it ain't right to stand and watch them do it.

BIRD. (*thoughtfully*). Like I say, if we could only go back to Lionnet. Everybody'd be better there. They'd be good and kind. I like people to be kind. (*Pours drink.*) Don't you, Horace, don't you like people to be kind?

HOR. Yes, Birdie.

BIRD. (*very drunk now*). Yes, that was the first day I ever saw Oscar. Who would have thought—? (*Drinks quickly—caressing the glass.*) You all want to know something? Well, I don't like Leo. My very own son, and I don't like him. (*Laughs, gaily.*) My, I guess, I even like Oscar more. (*Drinks.*)

ALEX. Why did you marry Uncle Oscar?

AD. (*sharply*). That's no question for you to be asking.

HOR. (*sharply*). Why not? She's heard enough around here to ask anything.

ALEX. Aunt Birdie, why did you marry Uncle Oscar?

BIRD. (*places glass on table—pleasantly*). I don't know. I thought I liked him. He was so kind to me and I thought it was because he liked me, too. But that wasn't the reason— (*Wheels on* ALEX.) Ask why *he* married *me!* I can tell you that: he's told it to me often enough.

AD. (*leaning forward*). Miss Birdie, don't—

BIRD. (*speaking very rapidly, tensely*). My family was good and the cotton on Lionnet's fields was better. Ben Hubbard wanted the cotton and (*rises*) Oscar Hubbard married it for him. He was kind to me, then. He used to smile at me. He hasn't smiled at me since. Everybody knew that's what he married me for. (AD. *rises.*) Everybody but me. (*Turns away.*) Stupid, stupid me.

ALEX. (*to* HOR., *holding his hand, softly*). I see. (*Hesitates.*) Papa, I mean—when you feel better couldn't we go away? I mean, by ourselves. Couldn't we find a way to go—

HOR. (*placing his hand over hers*). Yes, I know what you mean. We'll try to find a way. I promise you, darling.

AD. (*looks at them for a second, then goes to* BIRD.). Rest a bit, Miss Birdie. You get talking like this you'll get a headache and—

BIRD. (*sharply turning to her*). I've never had a headache in my life. (*Begins to cry, hysterically.*) You know it as well as I do. (*Turns to* ALEX.) I never had a headache, Zan. That's a lie they tell for me. *I drink.* All by myself, in my own room, by myself, *I drink.* Then, when they want to hide it, they say "Birdie's got a headache again"—

ALEX. (*comes to her, quickly*). Aunt Birdie.

BIRD. (*turning away*). Even you won't like me now. You won't like me, any more.

ALEX. I love you. I'll always love you.

BIRD. (*furiously*). Well, don't. (*Turns to* ALEX.) Don't love me. Because in twenty years you'll just be like me. They'll do all the same things to you. (*Begins to laugh, hysterically.*) You know what? In twenty-two years I haven't had a whole day of happiness. Oh, a little, like today with you all. But never a single, whole day. I say to myself, if only I had one more *whole* day, then— (*The laugh stops.*) And that's the way you'll be. And you'll trail after them, just like me, hoping they won't be so mean that day or say something to make you feel so bad—only you'll be worse off because you haven't got my Mama to remember— (*Turns away, her head drops. She stands quietly, swaying a little, holding onto sofa.* ALEX. *leans down, puts her cheek on* BIRDIE's *arm.*)

ALEX. (*to* BIRD.). I guess we were all trying to make a happy day. You know, we sit around and try to pretend nothing's happened. We try to pretend we are not here. We make believe we are just by ourselves, some place else, and it doesn't seem to work. (*Kisses* BIRDIE's *hand, which she has been holding.*) Come now, Aunt Birdie, I'll walk you home. You and me. (*She takes* BIRDIE's *arm; they move slowly out. In the hallway* ALEX. *places a raincoat over* BIRDIE's *shoulders. They go out.* AD. *and* HOR. *are silent.*)

AD. Well. (*Sighs.*) First time I ever heard Miss Birdie say a word. Maybe it's good for her. (*Picks up glass.*) I'm just sorry Zan had to hear it. (*Takes glass to center table.* HOR. *moves his head as if he were uncomfortable.*) You feel bad, don't you? (*He shrugs.*)

HOR. So you didn't want Zan to hear? It would be nice to let her stay innocent, like Birdie at her age. Let her listen now. Let her see everything. How else is she going to know that she's got to get away? I'm trying to show her that. I'm trying, but I've only got a little time left. She can even hate me when I'm dead, if she'll only learn to hate and fear this.

AD. Mr. Horace—

HOR. Pretty soon there'll be nobody to help her but you.

AD. What can I do?

HOR. Take her away.

AD. How can I do that? Do you think they'd let me just go away with her—?

HOR. I'll fix it so they can't stop you when you're ready to go. You'll go, Addie?

AD. (*after a second, softly*). Yes sir, I promise. (*He touches her arm, nods.*)

HOR. (*after a second, quietly*). I'm going to have Sol Fowler make me a new will. They'll make trouble, but you make Zan stand firm and Fowler'll do the rest. Addie, I'd like to leave you something for yourself. I always wanted to.

AD. (*laughs*). Don't you do that, Mr. Horace. A nigger woman in a white man's will! I'd never get it nohow.

HOR. I know. But upstairs in the armoire drawer there's seventeen hundred-dollar bills. It's money left from my trip. It's in an envelope with your name. It's for you.

AD. Seventeen hundred-dollar bills! My God, Mr. Horace, I won't know how to count up that high. (*Shyly.*) It's mighty kind and good of you. I don't know what to *say* for thanks—

CAL (*appears in doorway*). I'm back. (*Stands umbrella in corner. No answer. Crossing to center.*) I'm back.

AD. (*crossing to chair downstage, right, sits*). So we see.

HOR. Well?

CAL. Nothing. I just went down and spoke my piece. Just like you told me, I say Mr. Horace he thank you mightily for the safe box arriving in good shape and he say you come right after supper to his house and bring Mr. Attorney-at-law Sol Fowler with you. Then I wipe my hands on my coat. Every time I ever told a lie in my whole life, I wipe my hands right after. Can't help doing it. Well, while I'm wiping my hands, Mr. Leo jump up and say to me "What box! What you talking about?"

HOR. (*smiles*). Did he?

CAL. And Mr. Leo say he got to leave a little early 'cause he got something to do. And then Mr. Mander say Mr. Leo should sit right down and finish up his work and stop acting like somebody made him Mr. President. So he sit down. Now, just like I told you, Mr. Mander was mighty surprised with the message because he knows right well he brought the box— (*Pointing to box. Sighs.*) But he took it all right. Some men take everything easy and some do not.

HOR. (*puts his head back, laughs*). Mr. Leo was telling the truth: he *has* got something to do. I hope Mander don't keep him too long. (*Outside there is the sound of voices.* CAL *exits.* AD. *crosses quickly to* HOR., *begins to wheel his chair toward the stairs. Sharply.*) No. Leave me where I am.

AD. But that's Miss Regina coming back.

HOR. (*nods, looking at door*). Go away, Addie.

AD. (*hesitates*). Mr. Horace. Don't talk no more today. You don't feel well and it won't do no good—

HOR. (*as he hears footsteps in hall*). Go on.

(*She looks at him for a second, then picks up her sewing from table and exits as* REG. *comes in from hall.* HORACE'S *chair is now so placed that he is in front of table with the medicine.* REG. *stands in the hall, shakes umbrella, stands it in corner, takes off her cloak and throws it over bannister. She stares at* HOR.)

REG. (*as she takes off her gloves*). We had agreed that you were to stay in your part of this house and I in mine. This room is *my* part of the house. Please don't come down here again.

HOR. I won't.

REG. (*crosses toward bell cord below mantel*). I'll get Cal to take you upstairs.

HOR. (*smiles*). Before you do I want to tell you that after all, we have invested our money in Hubbard Sons and Marshall, Cotton Manufacturers.

REG. (*stops, turns, stares at him*). What are you talking about? You haven't seen Ben— When did you change your mind?

HOR. I didn't change my mind. *I* didn't invest the money. (*Smiles at the expression on her face.*) It was invested for me.

REG. (*angrily*). What—?

HOR. I had eighty-eight thousand dollars' worth of Union Pacific bonds in that safe deposit box. They are not there now. Go and look. (*As she stares at him. Points to box.*) Go and look, Regina. (*She crosses quickly to box, opens it. He speaks when she is at table.*) Those bonds are as negotiable as money. (*She closes box.*)

REG. (*turns back to him*). What kind of joke are you playing now? Is this for my benefit?

HOR. I don't look in that box very often, but three days ago, on Wednesday it was, because I had made a decision—

REG. I want to know what you are talking about.

HOR. (*sharply*). Don't interrupt me again. (REG. *stiffens.*) Because I had made a decision, I sent for the box. The bonds were gone. Eighty-eight thousand dollars gone. (*He smiles at her.*)

REG. (*after a moment's silence*). Do you think I'm crazy enough to believe what you're saying?

HOR. (*shrugs*). Believe anything you like.

REG. (*stares at him, slowly*). Where did they go to?

HOR. They are in Chicago. With Mr. Marshall, I should guess.

REG. What did they do? Walk to Chicago? Have you really gone crazy?

HOR. Leo took the bonds.

REG. (*turns sharply then speaks softly, without conviction*). I don't believe it.

HOR. (*leans forward*). I wasn't there but I can guess what happened. (REG. *sits.*) This fine gentleman, to whom you were willing to marry your daughter, took the keys and opened the box. You remember that the day of the fight, Oscar went to Chicago? Well, he went with my bonds that his son Leo had stolen for him. (*Pleasantly.*) And for Ben, of course, too.

REG. (*slowly, nods*). When did you find out the bonds were gone?

HOR. Wednesday night.

REG. I thought that's what you said. Why have you waited three days to do anything? (*Suddenly laughs.*) This *will* make a fine story.

HOR. (*nods*). Couldn't it?

REG. (*still laughing—rises, crosses upstage left, takes off hat*). A fine story to hold over their heads. How could they be such fools? (*Turns to him back of settee.*)

HOR. But I'm not going to hold it over their heads.

REG. (*the laugh stops*). What?

HOR. (*turns his chair to face her*). I'm going to let them keep the bonds—as a loan from you. An eighty-eight thousand dollar loan; they should be grateful to you. They will be, I think.

REG. (*slowly, smiles*). I see. You are punishing me. But I won't let you punish me. If you won't do anything, I will. Now. (*She starts for door.*)

HOR. You won't do anything. Because you can't. (REG. *stops.*) It won't do you any good to make trouble because I shall simply say that I lent them the bonds.

REG. (*slowly*). You would do that?

HOR. Yes. For once in your life I am tying your hands. There is nothing for you to do. (*There is silence. Then she sits down.*)

REG. I see. You are going to lend them the bonds and let them keep all the profit they make on them, and there is nothing I can do about it. Is that right?

HOR. Yes.

REG. (*softly*). Why did you say that I was making this gift?

HOR. I was coming to that. I am going to make a new will, Regina, leaving you eighty-eight thousand dollars in Union Pacific bonds. The rest will go to Zan. It's true that your brothers have borrowed your share for a little while. After my death I advise you to talk to Ben and Oscar. They won't admit anything and Ben, I think, will be smart enough to see that he's *safe*. Because I knew about the theft and said nothing. Nor *will* I say anything as long as I live. Is that clear to you?

REG. (*nods, softly, without looking at him*). You will not say anything as long as you live.

HOR. That's right. And by that time they will probably have replaced your bonds, and then they'll belong to you and nobody but us will ever know what happened. (*Stops, smiles.*) They'll be around any minute to see what I am going to do. I took good care to see that word reached Leo. They'll be mighty relieved to know I'm going to do nothing and Ben will think it all a capital joke on you. And that will be the end of that. There's nothing you can do to them, nothing you can do to me.

REG. You hate me very much.

HOR. No.

REG. Oh, I think you do. (*Puts her head back, sighs.*) Well, we haven't been very good together. Anyway, I don't hate you either. I have only contempt for you. I've always had.

HOR. From the very first?

REG. I think so.

HOR. I was in love with *you.* But why did *you* marry *me?*

REG. I was lonely when I was young.

HOR. *You* were lonely?

REG. Not the way people usually mean. Lonely for all the things I wasn't going to get. Everything in this house was so busy and there was so little place for what I wanted. I wanted the world. Then, and then— (*Smiles.*) Papa died and left the money to Ben and Oscar.

HOR. And you married me?

REG. Yes, I thought—but I was wrong. You were a small-town clerk then. You haven't changed.

HOR. (*nods, smiles*). And that wasn't what you wanted.

REG. No. No, it wasn't what I wanted. (*Pauses, leans back, pleasantly.*) It took me a little while to find out I had made a mistake. As for you—I don't know. It was almost as if I couldn't stand the kind of man you were— (*Smiles, softly.*) I used to lie there at night, praying you wouldn't come near—

HOR. Really? It was as bad as that.

REG. (*nods*). Remember when I went to Doctor Sloan and I told you he said there was something the matter with me and that you shouldn't touch me any more?

HOR. I remember.

REG. But you believed it? I couldn't understand that. I couldn't understand that anybody could be such a soft fool. That was when I began to despise you.

HOR. (*puts his hand to his throat, glances around at bottle of medicine on table, then to her*). Why didn't you leave me?

REG. I told you I married you *for* something. It turned out it was only for this. (*Carefully.*) This wasn't what I wanted, but it was something. I never thought about it much, but if I had (HOR. *puts his hand to his throat*), I'd have known that you would die before I would. But I couldn't have known that you would get heart trouble so early and so bad. I'm lucky, Horace. I've always been lucky. (HOR. *turns slowly to medicine.*) I'll be lucky again.

(HOR. *looks at her. Then he puts his hand to his throat. Because he cannot reach the bottle he moves the chair closer. He reaches for medicine, takes out cork, picks up spoon, tries to pour some in the spoon, the bottle slips out of his shaking fingers, and crashes on the table. He draws in his breath, gasps.*)

HOR. Please. Tell Addie—the other bottle is upstairs.

(*She has not moved. She does not move now. He stares at her. Then, suddenly as if he understood, he raises his voice. It is a panic-stricken whisper, too small to be heard outside the room.*) Addie! Addie! Come— (*Stops as he hears the softness of his voice. He makes a sudden, furious spring from the chair to the stairs, taking the first few steps as if he were a desperate runner. On the fourth step he slips, gasps, grasps the rail, makes a great effort to reach the landing. When he reaches the landing, he is on his knees. His knees give*

way, he falls on the landing, out of view. REG. *has not turned during his climb up the stairs. Now she waits a second. Then she goes below the landing, speaks up.*)

REG. Horace. (*When there is no answer, she turns, crosses to the left door, opens it, calls.*) Addie! Cal! Come in here. (*Starts up the steps. When she is on first step,* AD. *appears, followed by* CAL. *Both run toward stairs.*) He's had an attack. Come up here. (*They run up steps quickly, passing* REG.)

CAL. My God! Mr. Horace—

REG. (*they cannot be seen now; her voice comes from the head of the stairs*). Be still, Cal. Bring him in here.

(*Before the footsteps and voices have completely died away,* ALEX. *appears in hall door, in her raincloak and hood. She comes into the room, begins to unfasten the cloak, suddenly looks around, sees the empty wheel chair, stares, begins to move swiftly as if to look in the dining room. At the same moment,* AD. *runs down the stairs.* ALEX. *turns and stares up at* AD.)

ALEX. Addie! What?

AD. (*takes* ALEX. *by the shoulders*). I'm going for the doctor. Go upstairs.

(ALEX. *looks at her, then quickly breaks away and runs up the steps.* AD. *goes out on the left. The stage is empty for a minute. Then the front door bell begins to ring. When there is no answer it rings again. A second later* LEO *appears in the hall, talking as he comes in.*)

LEO (*very nervous*). Hello. (*Irritably.*) Never saw any use ringing a bell when a door was open. If you are going to ring a bell, then somebody should answer it. (*Gets in the room, looks around, puzzled, listens, hears no sound.*) Aunt Regina. (*Puts hat on sofa. No answer. He moves around restlessly.*) Addie— Where the hell—? (*Crosses to bell cord, rings it impatiently, twice, waits and gets no answer; calls.*) Cal! (*Rings again, then calls.*) Cal— (*After a second* CAL *appears on stair landing.*)

CAL (*his voice is soft, shaken*). Mr. Leo. Miss Regina says you stop that screaming noise.

LEO (*angrily*). Where is everybody?

CAL. Mr. Horace he got an attack. He's bad. Miss Regina says you stop that noise.

LEO. Uncle Horace— What— What happened? (CAL *starts down stairs.* CAL *shakes his head, begins to move swiftly toward doorway.* LEO *looks around wildly.*) But when— You seen Mr. Oscar or Mr. Ben? (CAL *shakes his head. Moves on.* LEO *grabs him by the arm.*) Answer me, will you?

CAL. No ain't seen 'em. I ain't got time to answer you. (CAL *breaks* LEO's *hold.*) I got to get things. (CAL *exits.*)

LEO. But what's the matter with him? When did this happen—? (*Calling after* CAL.) You'd think Papa'd be some place where you could find him. I been chasing him all afternoon.

(OSCAR *and* BEN *come swiftly into the room, talking excitedly.*)

OSCAR. I hope it's not a bad attack.

BEN. It's the first one he's had since he come home.

(LEO *crosses to* OSCAR, *excitedly.*)

LEO. Papa, I've been looking all over town for you and Uncle Ben—

BEN. Where is he?

OSCAR. Addie said it was sudden.

BEN (*to* LEO). Where is he? When did it happen?

LEO. Upstairs. Will you listen to me, please? I been looking for you for—

OSCAR (*to* BEN). You think we should go up?

(BEN, *looking up the steps, shakes his head.*)

BEN. I don't know. I don't know.

OSCAR (*shakes his head*). But he was all right—

LEO (*almost yelling*). *Will you listen to me?*

OSCAR (*sharply to* LEO). What is the matter with you?

LEO (*coming to him*). I been trying to tell you. I been trying to find you for an hour—

OSCAR. Tell me what?

LEO. Uncle Horace knows about the bonds. He knows about them. He's had the box since Wednesday—

BEN (*sharply*). Stop shouting! What the hell are you talking about?

LEO (*furiously—crossing to* BEN). I'm telling you he knows about the bonds. Ain't that clear enough—?

OSCAR (*grabbing* LEO's *arm*). You God damn fool! Stop screaming!

BEN. Now what happened? Talk quietly.

LEO (*closes his eyes, angrily, attempting patience*). You heard me. Uncle Horace knows about the bonds. He's known since Wednesday.

BEN. How do you know that? (*After a second.* OSCAR *draws close to them.*)

LEO. Because Cal comes down to Mander and says the box came O.K. and—

OSCAR (*trembling, crosses to* BEN, *pushing* LEO *away*). That might not mean a thing—

LEO (*angrily*). No? It might not, huh? (*Takes* OSCAR's *arm.*) Then he says Mander should come here tonight and bring Sol Fowler with him. I guess that don't mean a thing either.

OSCAR (*panicky, to* BEN). Ben—What—Do you think he's seen the—

BEN (*motions to box*). There's the box. (*Both* OSCAR *and* LEO *turn sharply.* LEO *makes a leap to the box, picks it up.*) You ass. Put it down. What are you going to do with it, eat it?

LEO. I'm going to— (*Starts.*)

BEN (*furiously*). Put it down. Don't touch it again. Now sit down and shut up for a minute.

(LEO *puts box down on table.*)

OSCAR. Since Wednesday. (*To* LEO.) You said he had it since Wednesday. Why didn't he say something— (*To* BEN.) I don't understand—

LEO. I can put it back. I can put it back before anybody knows.

BEN (*softly*). He's had it since Wednesday. Yet he hasn't said a word to us.

OSCAR. *Why? Why?*

LEO. What's the difference why? He was getting ready to say plenty. He was going to say it to Fowler tonight—

OSCAR (*angrily*). Be still (*Turns to* BEN, *looks at him, waits.*)

BEN (*after a moment*). I don't believe that.

LEO (*wildly, leaning toward* BEN *over table*). *You* don't believe it? What do I care what *you* believe? I do the dirty work and then—

BEN (*turning his head sharply to* LEO). I'm remembering that. I'm remembering that, Leo.

OSCAR. What do you mean?

LEO. You—

BEN (*to* OSCAR). If you don't shut that little fool up, I'll show you what I mean. (OSCAR *makes a gesture at* LEO. LEO *crosses upstage, center.*) For some reason he knows, but he don't say a word.

OSCAR (*crossing to* BEN). Maybe he didn't know that *we.*

BEN (*quickly*). That *Leo—?* He's no fool. (*Crossing up to* LEO.) Does Mander know the bonds are missing?

LEO. How could I tell? I was half crazy. I don't think so. Because Mander seemed kind of puzzled and—

OSCAR. But we got to find out—

(*He breaks off as* CAL *comes into the room carrying a kettle of hot water and clean cloths, leaving door open. They turn to* CAL.)

BEN. How is he, Cal?

CAL. I don't know, Mr. Ben. He was bad. (*Going toward stairs.*)

OSCAR. But when did it happen?

CAL (*shrugs*). He wasn't feeling so bad early. (AD. *comes in quickly from hall.*) Then there he is next thing on the landing, fallen over, his eyes tight— (*He hurries toward stairs.*)

AD. (*to* CAL). Dr. Sloan's over at the Ballongs. Hitch the buggy and go get him. (*She takes kettle and cloths from him, pushes him, runs up stairs.*) Go on. (*She disappears.*)

(CAL *goes out on left, picking up his umbrella as he goes.*)

BEN (*takes off coat and hat, places them on chair*). Never seen Sloan anywhere when you need him.

OSCAR (*softly*). Sounds bad.

LEO (*taking a step to* BEN). He would have told *her* about it. Aunt Regina. He would have told his own wife—

BEN (*turning to* LEO). Yes, he might have told her. (*Crossing, to front wheel chair.*) But they weren't on such pretty terms and maybe he didn't. Maybe he didn't. (*Goes quickly to* LEO.) Now, listen to me. If she doesn't know, it may work out all right. (*Holding* LEO's *lapel.*) If she does know, you're to say he lent you the bonds.

LEO. Lent them to me! Who's going to believe that?

BEN. Nobody.

OSCAR (*to* LEO). Don't you understand? It can't do no harm to say it—

(BEN *releases grip on* LEO's *lapel.*)

LEO. Why should I say he lent them to me? Why not to you? (*Carefully.*) Why not to Uncle Ben?

BEN (*smiles*). Just because he didn't lend them to me. Remember that.

LEO. But all he has to do is say he didn't lend them to me—

BEN (*furiously*). But for some reason, he doesn't seem to be talking, does he?

(*There are footsteps above. They all stand looking at the stairs.* REG. *begins to come slowly down.*)

BEN (*moving toward* REG.). What happened?

REG. He's had a bad attack.

OSCAR. Too bad. I'm so sorry we weren't here when—when Horace needed us.

BEN. When *you* needed us.

REG. Yes.

BEN. How is he? Can we—can we go up?

REG. (*shakes her head*). He's not conscious.

OSCAR (*pacing around*). It's that—it's that bad? Wouldn't you think Sloan could be found quickly, just once, just once?

REG. I don't think there is much for him to do.

BEN (*crossing to* REG.). Oh, don't talk like that. He's come through attacks before. He will now.

(REG. *sits down. After a second she speaks softly.*)

REG. Well. We haven't seen each other since the day of our fight.

BEN (*tenderly*). That was nothing. Why, you and Oscar and I used to fight when we were kids.

OSCAR (*hurriedly*). Don't you think we should go up? Is there anything we can do for Horace—

BEN. You don't feel well. Ah—

REG. (*without looking at them*). No, I don't.—Horace told me about the bonds this afternoon.

(*There is an immediate shocked silence.*)

LEO (*taking several short steps*). The bonds. What do you mean? What bonds? What—?

OSCAR (*looks at him furiously—then to* REG.). The Union Pacific bonds? *Horace's* Union Pacific bonds?

REG. Yes.

OSCAR (*steps to her, very nervously*). Well. Well what—what about them? What—what could he say?

REG. He said that Leo had stolen the bonds and given them to you.

OSCAR (*aghast, very loudly*). That's ridiculous, Regina, absolutely—

LEO. I don't know what you're talking about. What would I—why—

REG. (*wearily to* BEN). Isn't it enough that he stole them from me? Do I have to listen to this in the bargain?

OSCAR. You are talking—

LEO. I didn't steal anything. I don't know why—

REG. (*to* BEN). Would you ask them to stop that, please?

(*There is silence for a minute.* BEN *glowers at* OSCAR *and* LEO, LEO *looks at* OSCAR.)

BEN. Aren't we starting at the wrong end, Regina? What did Horace tell you?

REG. (*smiles at him*). He told me that Leo had stolen the bonds.

LEO (*to* BEN). I didn't steal—

REG. Please. Let me finish. Then he told me that he was going to pretend that he had lent them to you (LEO *turns sharply to* REG., *then looks at* OSCAR, *then looks back at* REG.) as a present from me to my brothers. He said there was nothing I could do about it. He said the rest of his money would go to Alexandra. That is all.

(*There is a silence.* OSCAR *coughs,* LEO *smiles slyly.*)

LEO (*taking a step to her*). I told you he had lent them—I could have told you—

REG. (*ignores him, smiles sadly at* BEN). So I'm very badly off, you see. (*Carefully.*) But Horace said there was nothing I could do about it as long as he was alive to say he had lent you the bonds.

BEN. You shouldn't feel that way. It can all be explained, all be adjusted. It isn't as bad—

REG. So you, at least, are willing to admit that the bonds were stolen?

OSCAR (*laughs nervously*). I admit no such thing. It's possible that Horace made up that part of the story to tease you— (*Looks at her.*) Or perhaps to punish you. Punish you.

REG. (*sadly*). It's not a pleasant story. I feel bad, Ben, naturally. I hadn't thought—

BEN. Now you shall have the bonds safely back. That was the understanding, wasn't it, Oscar?

OSCAR. Yes.

REG. I'm glad to know that. (*Smiles.*) Ah, I had greater hopes—

BEN. Don't talk that way. That's foolish. (*Looks at his watch.*) I think we ought to drive out for Sloan ourselves. (*Looks at* OSCAR.) If we can't find him we'll go over to Senateville for Doctor Morris. (*Looks at her.* OSCAR *crosses for hat,* LEO *crosses back of sofa to hall, picking up hat.*) And don't think I'm dismissing this other business. I'm not. We'll have it all out on a more appropriate day. (BEN *crosses to chair for coat and hat.*)

REG. (*waits until they are near the door; looks up, quietly*). I don't think you had better go yet. I think you had better stay and sit down.

(OSCAR *crosses to hall.*)

BEN (*picking up coat and hat*). We'll be back with Sloan.

REG. Cal has gone for him. I don't want you to go.

(OSCAR *turns, looks at them.*)

BEN (*crossing upstage, center*). Now don't worry and—

REG. You will come back in this room and sit down. I have something more to say.

(LEO *steps back into view.*)

BEN (*turns, comes toward her*). Since when do I take orders from you?

REG. (*smiles*). You don't—yet. (OSCAR *takes a step in. Sharply.*) Come back, Oscar. You too, Leo.

OSCAR (*takes another step in—sure of himself laughs*). My dear Regina—

BEN (*crosses to her—softly, pats her hand*). Horace has already clipped your wings and very wittily. Do I have to clip them, too? (*Smiles at her.*) You'd get farther with a smile, Regina. I'm a soft man for a woman's smile.

REG. I'm smiling, Ben. I'm smiling because you are quite safe while Horace lives. But I don't think Horace will live. (LEO *looks at* OSCAR. *To* BEN.) And if he doesn't live I shall want seventy-five per cent in exchange for the bonds.

BEN (*steps back—whistles, laughs*). Greedy! What a greedy girl you are! You want so much of everything.

REG. Yes. And if I don't get what I want I am going to put all three of you in jail.

OSCAR (*furiously*). You're mighty crazy. Having just admitted—

BEN. And on what evidence would you put Oscar and Leo in jail?

REG. (*laughs, gaily*). Oscar, listen to him. He's getting ready to swear that it was you and Leo! What do you say to that? (*As* OSCAR *turns furiously toward* BEN.) Oh, don't be angry, Oscar. I'm going to see that he goes in with you.

BEN. Try anything you like, Regina. (*Sharply.*) And now we can stop all this and say goodbye to you. (ALEX. *comes into view on landing, moving slowly down steps.*) It's his money and he's obviously willing to let us borrow it. (*More pleasantly.*) Learn to make threats when you can carry them through: for how many years have I told you a good-looking woman gets more by being soft and appealing? Mama used to tell you that. (*Looks at his watch.*) Where the hell is Sloan? (*To* OSCAR.) Take the buggy and— (*As* BEN *turns to* OSCAR, *he sees* ALEX. *and stops.* OSCAR *turns to her.* ALEX. *has come slowly down the steps. She walks stiffly. She comes down as if she did not see any of them. She goes slowly to lower window, her head bent. They all turn to look at her.*)

OSCAR (*after a second, moving toward her above sofa*). What? Alexandra—

(*She does not answer. After a second* AD. *comes slowly down the stairs, moving as if she were very tired. At foot of steps, she looks at* ALEX., *then turns and slowly crosses to left door and exits.* REG. *rises. She sees* AD. BEN *looks nervously at* ALEX., *at* REG.)

OSCAR (*as* AD. *passes him, irritably to* ALEX.). Well, what is—(*turns into room —sees* AD. *at foot of steps*)—what's? (BEN *puts up a hand, shakes his head. His movements become nervous and fidgety, as if he were anxious to get out.* OSCAR *clears his throat, looks at* REG., *tries to fill the silence.* LEO *comes downstage.*) My God, I didn't know—who *could* have known—I didn't know he was that sick. Well, well—I—

(REG. *stands quietly, her back to them.*)

BEN (*softly, sincerely*). Seems like yesterday when he first came here. (*Places coat and hat on chair above wheel chair.*)

OSCAR (*sincerely, nervously*). Yes, that's true. (*Turns to* BEN.) The whole town loved him and respected him.

ALEX. (*turns and crosses to sofa*). Did you love him, Uncle Oscar?

OSCAR. Certainly, I— What a strange thing to ask? I—

ALEX. (*turns to look at* BEN). Did you love him, Uncle Ben?

BEN (*simply*). He had—

ALEX. (*suddenly starts to laugh very loudly*). And you, Mama, did you love him, too?

REG. I know what you feel, Alexandra, but please try to control yourself.

ALEX. (*still laughing*). I'm trying, Mama. I'm trying very hard.

BEN. Grief makes some people laugh and some people cry. It's better to cry, Alexandra.

ALEX. (*the laugh has stopped; tensely—moves toward* REG., *crossing to front sofa*). What was Papa doing on the staircase?

REG. (*crossing to* ALEX. BEN *turns to look at* ALEX. *with interest*). Please go and lie down, my dear. We all need time to get over shocks like this. (ALEX.

does not move. REGINA's *voice becomes softer, more insistent.*) Please go, Alexandra.

ALEX. No, Mama. I'll wait. I've got to talk to you.

REG. Later. Go and rest now.

ALEX. (*quietly*). I'll wait, Mama. I've plenty of time. (*Sits down on sofa.*) All my life.

REG. (*hesitates, stares, makes a half shrug, turns back to* BEN). As I was saying. Tomorrow morning I am going up to Judge Simmes. I shall tell him about Leo.

BEN (*motioning toward* ALEX.). Not in front of the child, Regina. I—

REG. (*turns to him—sharply*). I didn't ask her to stay. Tomorrow morning I go to Judge Simmes—

OSCAR. And what proof? What proof of all this—

REG. (*turns, crosses to center between* BEN *and* OSCAR; *to* OSCAR *sharply*). None. I won't need any. The bonds are missing and they are with Marshall. That will be enough. If it isn't, I'll add what's necessary.

BEN. I'm sure of that.

REG. You can be quite sure.

OSCAR. We'll deny—

REG. Deny your heads off. You couldn't find a jury that wouldn't weep for a woman whose brothers steal from her. *And* you couldn't find twelve men in this State you haven't cheated and hate you for it.

OSCAR. What kind of talk is this? You couldn't do anything like that! We're your own brothers. How can you talk that way when upstairs not five minutes ago— (*Points up stairs.*)

REG. (*slowly*). There are people who can never go back, who must finish what they start. I am one of these people, Oscar. (*After a slight pause, turns back to* BEN, *almost teasingly.*) Where was I? (*Smiles at* BEN.) Well, they'll convict you. But I won't care much if they don't. (*Leans forward, pleasantly.*) Because by that time you'll be ruined. I shall also tell my story to Mr. Marshall, who likes me, I think, and who will not want to be involved in your scandal. A respectable firm like Marshall & Company! The deal would be off in an hour. (*Turns to them angrily.*) And you know it. Now I don't want to hear any more from any of you. *You'll do no more bargaining in this house.* I'll take my seventy-five per cent and we'll forget the story forever. That's one way of doing it, and the way I prefer. (*Crosses to settee.*) You know me well enough to know that I don't mind taking the other way. (*Sits down on settee.*)

BEN (*after a second, slowly*). None of us have ever known you well enough, Regina.

REG. You're getting old, Ben. Your tricks aren't as smart as they used to be. (*There is no answer. She waits, then smiles.*) All right. I take it that's settled and I get what I asked for.

OSCAR (*furiously to* BEN). Are you going to let her do this—?

BEN (*turns to look at him, slowly*). You have a suggestion?

REG. (*puts her arms above her head, stretches, laughs*). No, he hasn't. All right. Now, Leo, I have forgotten that you ever saw the bonds. (*Archly, to* BEN *and* OSCAR.) And as long as you boys both behave yourselves, I've forgotten that

we ever talked about them. You can draw up the necessary papers tomorrow.

(BEN *laughs.* LEO *stares at him, starts for door. Exits.* OSCAR *moves toward door, angrily.* REG. *looks at* BEN, *nods, laughs with him. For a second,* OSCAR *stands in the door, looking back at them. Then he exits.*)

REG. You're a good loser, Ben. I like that.

BEN (*he picks up his coat, then turns to her*). Well, I say to myself, what's the good? You and I aren't like Oscar. We're not sour people. I think that comes from a good digestion. (*Putting on coat.*) Then, too, one loses today and wins tomorrow. I say to myself, years of planning and I get what I want. Then I don't get it. But I'm not discouraged. The century's turning, the world is open. Open for people like you and me. Ready for us, waiting for us. After all, this is just the beginning. There are hundreds of Hubbards sitting in rooms like this throughout the country. All their names aren't Hubbard, but they are all Hubbards and they will own this country some day. We'll get along.

REG. (*smiles*). I think so.

BEN. (*crosses to chair, picks up hat*). Then, too, I say to myself, things may change. (*Looks at* ALEX.) I agree with Alexandra. (*Looks up at landing.*) What is a man in a wheel chair doing on a staircase? I ask myself that.

REG. (*looks up at him*). And what do you answer?

BEN. I have no answer. But maybe some day I will. Maybe never, but maybe some day. (*Smiles. Patting her arm.*) When I do, I'll let you know. (*Starts toward hall.*)

REG. (*as he turns for door*). When you do, write me. I will be in Chicago. (*Gaily.*) Ah, Ben, if Papa had only left me his money.

BEN. I'll see you tomorrow.

REG. Oh, yes. Certainly. You'll be sort of working for me now.

BEN (*turns, crosses to sofa, looks at* ALEX., *smiles at her*). Alexandra, you're turning out to be a right interesting girl. (*Looks at* REG.) Well, good-night, all. (*He exits.*)

REG. (*sits quietly for a second, stretches, turns to look at* ALEX.). What do you want to talk to me about, Alexandra?

ALEX. (*slowly*). I've changed my mind. I don't want to talk. There's nothing to talk about now.

REG. You're acting very strange. Not like yourself. You've had a bad shock today. I know that. And you loved Papa, but you must have expected this to come someday. You knew how sick he was.

ALEX. I knew. We all knew.

REG. It will be good for you to get away from here. Good for me, too. Time heals most wounds, Alexandra. You're young, you shall have all the things I wanted. I'll make the world for you the way I wanted it to be for me. (*Uncomfortably.*) Don't sit there staring. You've been around Birdie so much you're getting just like her.

ALEX. (*nods*). Funny. That's what Aunt Birdie said today.

REG. (*nods*). Be good for you to get away from all this.

(AD. *enters.*)

AD. Cal is back, Miss Regina. He says Dr. Sloan will be coming in a few minutes.

REG. We'll go in a few weeks. A few weeks! That means two or three Saturdays, two or three Sundays. (*Sighs.*) Well, I'm very tired. I shall go to bed. I don't want any supper. Put the lights out and lock up. (AD. *moves to the piano lamp, turns it out.*) You go to your room, Alexandra. Addie will bring you something hot. You look very tired. (*Rises, crosses upstage center. To* AD.) Call me when Dr. Sloan gets here. I don't want to see anybody else. I don't want any condolence calls tonight. The whole town will be over.

ALEX. Mama, I'm not coming with you. I'm not going to Chicago.

REG. (*turns, to her*). You're very upset, Alexandra.

ALEX. (*quietly*). I mean what I say. With all my heart.

REG. (*quietly*). We'll talk about it tomorrow. The morning will make a difference.

ALEX. It won't make any difference. And there isn't anything to talk about. I am going away from you. Because I want to. Because I know Papa would want me to.

REG. (*puzzled, careful, polite*). You *know* your Papa wanted you to go away from me?

ALEX. Yes.

REG. (*softly*). And if I say no?

ALEX. (*looks at her, firmly*). Say it, Mama, say it. And see what happens.

REG. (*softly, after a pause*). And if I make you stay?

ALEX. That would be foolish. It wouldn't work in the end.

REG. You're very serious about it, aren't you? (*Crosses to steps—up two steps.*) Well, you'll change your mind in a few days.

ALEX. You only change your mind when you want to. And I won't want to.

REG. (*going up steps*). Alexandra, I've come to the end of my rope. (*On fifth step.*) Somewhere there has to be what I want, too. Life goes too fast. Do what you want; think what you want; go where you want. I'd like to keep you with me, but I won't make you stay. Too many people used to make me do too many things. No. (*Going up to landing.*) I won't make you stay.

ALEX. You couldn't, Mama, because I want to leave here. As I've never wanted anything in my life before. Because I understand what Papa was trying to tell me. (*Pause.*) All in one day: Addie said there were people who ate the earth and other people who stood around and watched them do it. And just now Uncle Ben said the same thing. Really, he said the same thing. (*Tensely.*) Well, tell him for me, Mama, I'm not going to stand around and watch you do it. Tell him I'll be fighting as hard as he'll be fighting (*rises*) someplace where people don't just stand around and watch.

REG. Well, you have spirit, after all. I used to think you were all sugar water. We don't have to be bad friends. I don't want us to be bad friends, Alexandra. (*Starts off, stops, turns to* ALEX.) Would you like to come and talk to me, Alexandra? Would you—would you like to sleep in my room tonight?

ALEX. (*takes a step toward her*). Are you afraid, Mama?

(REG. *does not answer, but moves slowly out of sight.* AD. *then comes to* ALEX., *squeezes her arm with affection and pride, then starts for the other lamp, as the curtain falls.*)

ANTON CHEKHOV

The Cherry Orchard

Translated by Jennie Covan

CHARACTERS

LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA RANEVSKAYA, *a landowner*
ANYA, *her daughter, aged seventeen*
VARYA, *her adopted daughter, aged twenty-seven*
LEONID ANDREIEVITCH GAIEFF, *Liuboff Andreievna's brother*
YERMOLAI ADLEXEIEVITCH LOPAKHIN, *a merchant*
PETER SERGEIEVITCH TROFIMOFF, *a student*
BORIS BORISOVITCH SEMYONOFF-PISHCHIK, *a landowner*
CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA, *a governess*
SEMYON PANTELEIEVITCH YEPIKHODOFF, *a clerk*
DUNYASHA (AVDOTYA FYODOROVNA), *a maidservant*
FIRCE, *an old footman, aged eighty-seven*
YASHA, *a young footman*
A TRAMP
A STATION-MASTER
POST OFFICE CLERK
GUESTS
A SERVANT

SCENE. *Mme. Ranevskaya's estate.*

ACT I

A room still called the nursery. One of the doors leads into Anya's room. It is almost sunrise of a day in May. The cherry-trees are in bloom, but the chill of early morning is in the garden. The windows are shut.

(DUNYASHA *enters with a candle, and* LOPAKHIN *with a book in his hand.*)

LOP. The train has arrived, thank God. What's the time?

DUN. It will soon be two. (*Blows out candle.*) It is already light.

LOP. How late was the train? At least two hours. (*Yawns and stretches himself.*) I certainly made a fool of myself! I came here on purpose to meet them

THE CHERRY ORCHARD by Anton Chekhov, translated by Jennie Covan. Copyright, 1923, 1933, by Coward-McCann, Inc.

at the station, and then overslept myself . . . in my chair. It's a pity. I wish you'd called me.

DUN. I thought you'd gone. (*Listening.*) I think I hear them coming.

LOP. (*listens*). No . . . They have to collect their baggage and so on. . . . (*Pause.*) Liuboff Andreievna has been living abroad for five years; I don't know what she'll be like now . . . She's a good sort—an easy, simple person. I remember when I was a boy of fifteen, my father, who is dead—he used to keep a shop in the village here—hit me with his fist, and my nose bled . . . We had gone into the yard for something or other, and he was a little drunk. Liuboff Andreievna, as I remember her now, was still young, and very slight, and she took me to the wash-stand here in this very room, the nursery. She said, "Don't cry, my small peasant, all wounds heal at last." (*Pause.*) . . . Small peasant! My father was a peasant, true, but here I am in a white vest and brown shoes . . . like a pearl in an oyster shell. I'm rich now, with lots of money, but just think about it and examine me, and you'll find I'm still a peasant to the core. (*Turns over the pages of his book.*) Here I've been reading this book, but I understand nothing. I read and fell asleep. (*Pause.*)

DUN. The dogs didn't sleep all night; they feel that their masters are coming.

LOP. What's the matter with you, Dunyasha. . . .

DUN. My hands are shaking. I am going to faint.

LOP. You're too sensitive, Dunyasha. You dress just like a lady, and you do your hair like one, too. You shouldn't. You must remember your place in life.

YEP. (*enters with a bouquet. He wears a short jacket and brilliantly polished boots which squeak audibly. He drops the bouquet as he enters, then picks it up*). The gardener sent these; says they're to go into the dining-room. (*Gives the bouquet to* DUNYASHA.)

LOP. And you'll bring me some kvass.

DUN. Yes, sir. (*Exit.*)

YEP. There's a frost this morning—three degrees, and the cherry-trees are all in flower. I can't approve of our climate. (*Sighs.*) I can't. Our climate refuses to favor us even this once. And, Yermolai Alexeievitch, allow me to say to you, in addition, that I bought myself a pair of boots two days ago, and I beg to assure you that they squeak in a perfectly intolerable manner. What shall I put on them?

LOP. Go away. You bore me.

YEP. Some misfortune happens to me every day. But I don't complain; I'm used to it, and I even smile at it. (DUNYASHA *comes in and brings* LOPAKHIN *a glass of kvass.*) I am going. (*Knocks over a chair.*) There. . . . (*Triumphantly.*) There, you see, if I may use the word, what circumstances I am in, so to speak. It is simply extraordinary. (*Exit.*)

DUN. Let me confess to you, Yermolai Alexeievitch, that Yepikhodoff has proposed to me.

LOP. Ah!

DUN. I don't know what to do about it. He's a nice young man, but every now and then, when he begins talking, you can't understand a word he says. It sounds sincere enough, only I can't understand it. I think I like him. He's

madly in love with me. He's an unlucky man; every day something happens to him. We tease him about it. They call him "Two-and-twenty troubles."

LOP. (*listens*). There they come, I think.

DUN. They're coming! What's the matter with me? I'm cold all over.

LOP. There they are, really. Let's go and meet them. Will she know me? We haven't seen each other for five years.

DUN. (*excited*). I shall faint in a minute. . . . Oh, I'm fainting!

(*Two carriages are heard driving up to the house.* LOPAKHIN *and* DUNYASHA *quickly go out. The stage is empty. There are noises in the adjoining rooms.* FIRCE, *leaning on a stick, walks quickly across the stage; he has just been to meet* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA. *He wears an old-fashioned livery and a tall hat. He is saying something to himself, but not a word can be made out. The noise back stage grows louder and louder. A voice is heard: "Let's go in there." Enter* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA, ANYA, *and* CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA *leading a little dog on a chain, all dressed in traveling clothes,* VARYA *in a long coat and with a kerchief on her head.* GAIEFF, SEMYONOFF-PISHCHIK, LOPAKHIN, DUNYASHA *with a parcel and an umbrella, and a servant with suitcases—all cross the room.*)

ANYA. Let's go through here. Do you remember this room, mother?

LIUB. (*joyfully, through her tears*). The nursery!

VARYA. How cold it is! My hands are quite numb. (*To* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA.) Your rooms, the white one and the violet one, are just as they used to be, mother.

LIUB. My dear, beautiful nursery . . . I used to sleep here when I was a baby. (*Kisses her brother, then* VARYA, *then her brother again.*) And Varya is just as she used to be, exactly like a nun. And I recognized Dunyasha. (*Kisses her.*)

GAI. The train was two hours late. There now; how's that for punctuality?

CHAR. (*to* PISHCHIK). My dog eats nuts, too.

PISH. (*astonished*). Just imagine!

(*All leave except* ANYA *and* DUNYASHA.)

DUN. We did have to wait for you! (*Takes off* ANYA's *cloak and hat.*)

ANYA. For four nights on the journey I didn't sleep . . . I'm awfully cold.

DUN. You left during Lent, when it was snowing and frosty, but now? Darling! (*Laughs and kisses her.*) We did have to wait for you, my darling pet! . . . I must tell you at once, I can't wait a minute.

ANYA (*listlessly*). Something else now . . . ?

DUN. The clerk, Yepikhodoff, proposed to me after Easter.

ANYA. Always the same . . . (*Puts her hair straight.*) I've lost all my hairpins . . . (*She is very tired, and even staggers as she walks.*)

DUN. I don't know what to think about it. He loves me, he loves me so much!

ANYA (*looks into her room; in a gentle voice*). My room, my windows, as if I'd never left! I'm at home! Tomorrow morning I'll get up and run out into the garden. . . . Oh, if I could only sleep! I didn't sleep the whole journey, I was so restless.

DUN. Peter Sergeievitch came two days ago.

ANYA (*joyfully*). Peter!

DUN. He sleeps in the bath-house, he lives there. He said he was afraid he'd be in the way. (*Looks at her watch.*) I should call him, but Varvara Mihkailovna told me not to. "Don't wake him," she said.

(*Enter* VARYA, *a bunch of keys hanging from her belt.*)

VARYA. Dunyasha, coffee, quick. Mother wishes some.

DUN. In a moment. (*Exit.*)

VARYA. Well, you've come, thank God. Home again. (*Caressing her.*) My darling is home again! My pretty one is back at last!

ANYA. I had an awful time, I tell you.

VARYA. I can just imagine it!

ANYA. I went away in Holy Week; it was very cold then. Charlotta talked the whole way and would go on performing her tricks. Why did you force her on me?

VARYA. You couldn't go alone, darling, at seventeen!

ANYA. We went to Paris; it's cold there and snowing. I talk French perfectly dreadfully. My mother lives on the fifth floor. I go to her, and find her there with several Frenchmen, women, an old abbé with a book, and everything wreathed in tobacco smoke and the whole place so uninviting. I suddenly became very sorry for mother—so sorry that I took her head in my arms and hugged her and wouldn't let her go. Then mother started hugging me and crying. . . .

VARYA (*weeping*). Don't say any more, don't say any more . . .

ANYA. She's already sold her villa near Mentone; she has nothing left, nothing. And I haven't a kopeck either; we only just managed to get here. And mother won't understand! We had dinner at a station; she asked for all the expensive things, and tipped the waiters one ruble each. And Charlotta too. Yasha demands a share, too— It is simply awful. Mother has a footman now, Yasha; we've brought him along.

ANYA. How's business? Has the interest been paid?

VARYA. Not much chance of that.

ANYA. Oh God, oh God . . .

VARYA. The place will be sold in August.

ANYA. Oh God . . .

LOP. (*looks in at the door and moos*). Moo! (*Exit.*)

VARYA (*through her tears*). I'd like to . . . (*Shakes her fist.*)

ANYA (*embraces* VARYA, *softly*). Varya, has he proposed to you? (VARYA *shakes her head.*) But he loves you. . . . Why don't you decide? Why do you keep on waiting?

VARYA. I'm afraid it will all come to nothing. He's a busy man. I'm not his sort . . . he pays no attention to me. Bless the man, I don't wish to see him. . . . But everybody talks about our marriage, everybody congratulates me, and there's nothing in it at all, it's all like a dream. (*A different voice.*) You have a brooch that looks like a bee.

ANYA (*wistfully*). Mother bought it. (*Goes into her room, and talks lightly, like a child.*) In Paris I went up in a balloon!

VARYA. My darling has come back, my pretty one is home again! (DUNYASHA *has already returned with the coffee-pot and is making coffee.*) I go about all

day, looking after the house, and I think all the time, if only you could marry a rich man, I'd be happy and would go away somewhere by myself, perhaps to Kieff . . . or to Moscow, and so on, from one holy place to another. I'd tramp and tramp. That would be splendid!

ANYA. The birds are singing in the garden. What time is it now?

VARYA. It must be getting on towards three. It's time you went to sleep, darling. (*Goes into* ANYA'S *room.*) Splendid!

(*Enter* YASHA *with a plaid shawl and a traveling bag.*)

YASHA (*crossing the stage; politely*). May I go this way?

DUN. I hardly recognized you, Yasha. You have changed abroad.

YASHA. Hm . . . and who are you?

DUN. When you went away I was only so high. (*Showing with her hand.*) I'm Dunyasha, the daughter of Fyodor Kozoyedoff. You don't remember?

YASHA. Oh, you small cucumber! (*Looks round and embraces her. She screams and drops a saucer.* YASHA *goes out quickly.*)

VARYA (*in the doorway, in an angry voice*). What's that?

DUN. (*through her tears*). I've broken a saucer.

VARYA. It may bring luck.

ANYA (*coming out of her room*). We must tell mother that Peter's here.

VARYA. I told them not to call him.

ANYA (*thoughtfully*). Father died six years ago, and a month later my brother Grisha was drowned in the river—such a dear little boy of seven! Mother couldn't bear it; she went away, away, without looking round. . . . (*Shudders.*) Now I understand her; if only she knew! (*Pause.*) And Peter Trofimoff was Grisha's tutor, he might remind her. . . .

(*Enter* FIRCE *in a short jacket and white vest. Goes to the coffee-pot.*)

FIRCE. Madame is going to have a bite here. (*He is preoccupied, putting on white gloves.*) Is the coffee ready? (*To* DUNYASHA, *severely.*) You!

DUN. Oh, dear me . . . ! (*Leaving hurriedly.*)

FIRCE (*fussing round the coffee-pot*). Oh, you bungler . . . (*Murmurs to himself.*) Back from Paris . . . the master went to Paris once . . . in a carriage . . . (*Laughs.*)

VARYA. What are you mumbling, Firce?

FIRCE. I beg your pardon? (*Joyfully.*) The mistress is home again. I've lived to see her! I don't care if I die now . . . (*Weeps with joy.*)

(*Enter* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA, GAIEFF, LOPAKHIN, *and* SEMYONOFF-PISHCHIK, *the latter in a long jacket of thin cloth and loose trousers.* GAIEFF, *coming in, moves his arms and body about as if he were playing billiards.*)

LIUB. Let me remember now. Red into the corner! Twice into the center!

GAI. Right into the pocket! Once upon a time you and I, sister, both slept in this room, and now I'm fifty-one; it does seem strange.

LOP. Yes, time does fly!

GAI. What?

LOP. I said that time does fly.

GAI. It smells of patchouli here.

ANYA. I'm going to bed. Good-night, mother. (*Kisses her.*)

LIUB. My dear little child. (*Kisses her hand.*) Glad to be at home? I can't get over it.

ANYA. Good-night, uncle.

GAI. (*kisses her face and hands*). God be with you. How you do resemble your mother! (*To his sister.*) You were just like her at her age, Liuba.

(ANYA *gives her hand to* LOPAKHIN *and* PISHCHIK *and goes out shutting the door behind her.*)

LIUB. She's awfully tired.

PISH. It's a very long journey.

VARYA (*to* LOPAKHIN *and* PISHCHIK). Well, gentlemen, it's getting on toward three. High time to retire.

LIUB. (*laughs*). You're just the same as ever, Varya. (*Draws her close and kisses her.*) I'll have some coffee now; then we'll all go. (FIRCE *lays a cushion under her feet.*) Thank you, dear. I'm used to coffee. I drink it day and night. Thank you, dear old man. (*Kisses* FIRCE.)

VARYA. I'll go and see whether they've brought in all the luggage. (*Exit.*)

LIUB. Is it really I who am sitting here? (*Laughs.*) I feel like jumping about and waving my arms. (*Covers her face with her hands.*) But suppose I'm dreaming! God knows I love my own country, I love it dearly; I couldn't look out of the railway carriage, I cried so much. (*Through her tears.*) Still, I must have my coffee. Thank you, Firce. Thank you, dear old man. I'm so glad you're still with us.

FIRCE. The day before yesterday.

GAI. He doesn't hear well.

LOP. I have to go to Kharkoff by the five o'clock train. I'm awfully sorry! I should like to have a look at you, to gossip a little. You're as fine-looking as ever.

PISH. (*breathes heavily*). Even finer-looking . . . dressed in Paris fashion . . . confound it all.

LOP. Your brother, Leonid Andreievitch, says I'm a snob, a usurer, but that is absolutely nothing to me. Let him talk. Only I do wish you would believe in me as you once did, that your wonderful, touching eyes would look at me as they used to. Merciful God! My father was the serf of your grandfather and your own father, but you—more than anybody else—did so much for me once upon a time that I've forgotten everything and love you as if you were one of my own family . . . and even more.

LIUB. I can't sit still, I can't! (*Jumps up and walks about in great excitement.*) I'll never survive this happiness. . . . You can laugh at me; I'm a silly woman . . . My dear little cupboard. (*Kisses cupboard.*) My little table.

GAI. Nurse died during your absence.

LIUB. (*sits and drinks coffee*). Yes, God rest her soul. I heard by letter.

GAI. And Anastasia died, too. Peter Kosoy has left me and now lives in town with the Commissioner of Police. (*Takes a box of candy out of his pocket and sucks a piece.*)

PISH. My daughter, Dashenka, sends her love.

LOP. I wish to say something very pleasant, very delightful, to you. (*Looks at his watch.*) I'm going away at once, I haven't much time . . . but I'll tell

you all about it in two or three words. As you already know, your cherry orchard is to be sold to pay your debts, and the sale is arranged for August 22; but you needn't be alarmed, dear madam, you may sleep in peace; there's a way out. Here's my plan. Please listen carefully! Your estate is only thirteen miles from town, the railway runs past it and if the cherry orchard and the land by the river are broken up into building parcels and are then leased as villa sites, you'll have at least twenty-five thousand rubles a year income.

GAI. How utterly absurd!

LIUB. I don't understand you at all, Yermolai Alexeievitch.

LOP. You will get twenty-five rubles a year for each dessiatine from the leaseholders at the very least, and if you advertise now, I'm willing to bet that you won't have a vacant parcel left by the autumn; they'll all go. In a word, you're saved. I congratulate you. Only, of course, you'll have to straighten things out carefully . . . For instance, you'll have to pull down all the old buildings, this house, which is of no use to anybody now, and cut down the old cherry orchard. . . .

LIUB. Cut it down? My dear man, you must forgive me, but you don't understand anything at all. If there's anything interesting or remarkable in the whole province, it's this cherry orchard of ours.

LOP. The only remarkable thing about the orchard is its great size. It bears fruit only every other year, and even then you don't know what to do with the cherries; nobody buys any.

GAI. This orchard is mentioned in the "Encyclopaedia."

LOP. (*looks at his watch*). If we can't think of anything and don't make up our minds, then on August 22 both the cherry orchard and the whole estate will be sold at auction. Make up your mind! I swear there's no other way out. You may believe me!

FIRCE. In the old days, forty or fifty years ago, they dried the cherries, soaked them and pickled them, and made jam, and it used to happen that . . .

GAI. Be quiet, Firce.

FIRCE. And then we'd send the dried cherries in carts to Moscow and Kharkoff. And money! And the dried cherries were soft, juicy, sweet, and fragrant. They knew the way. . . .

LIUB. How was it done?

FIRCE. They've forgotten. Nobody remembers.

PISH. (*to* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA). What about Paris? Eh? Did you eat frogs?

LIUB. I ate crocodiles.

PISH. Just imagine!

LOP. Formerly there were only the gentry and the laborers, in the villages, and now the people who live in villas have arrived. All towns now, even small ones, are surrounded by villas. And it's safe to say that in twenty years' time the villa residents will have increased tremendously. At present they sit on their balconies, and drink tea, but it may well happen that they'll commence to cultivate their patches of land, and then your cherry orchard will be happy, rich, glorious.

GAI. (*angry*). What nonsense!

(*Enter* VARYA *and* YASHA.)

VARYA. There are two telegrams for you, mother dear. (*Picks out a key and noisily unlocks an antique cupboard.*) Here they are.

LIUB. They're from Paris . . . (*Tears them up without reading them.*) I'm through with Paris.

GAI. And do you know, Liuba, how old this cupboard is? A week ago I pulled out the bottom drawer; I looked and saw numbers carved in it. That cupboard was made exactly a hundred years ago. What do you think of that? What? We could celebrate its jubilee. It hasn't a soul of its own, but still, say what you will, it's a fine piece of furniture.

PISH. (*astonished*). A hundred years . . . Just imagine!

GAI. Yes . . . it's a genuine thing. (*Examining it.*) My dear and honored cupboard! I congratulate you on your career, which has for more than a hundred years been devoted to the noble ideals of good and justice; your silent call to productive labor has not decreased in the hundred years (*Weeping.*) during which you have inspired in our generation virtue and courage and faith for a better future, holding before our eyes lofty ideals and the knowledge of a common consciousness. (*Pause.*)

LOP. Yes.

LIUB. You're just the same as ever, Leon.

GAI. (*a little confused*). Off the white on the right, into the corner pocket. Red ball goes into the center pocket!

LOP. (*looks at his watch*). It's time I went.

YASHA (*giving* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA *her medicine*). Will you take your pills now?

PISH. You shouldn't take medicines, dearest; they do you neither harm nor good . . . Give them to me, dearest. (*Takes the pills, turns them out into the palm of his hand, blows on them, puts them into his mouth, and drinks some kvass.*) There!

LIUB. (*frightened*). You're mad!

PISH. I've swallowed all the pills.

LOP. You greedy man! (*All laugh.*)

FIRCE. They were here in Easter week and ate half a pailful of cucumbers . . . (*Mumbles.*)

LIUB. What does he mean?

VARYA. He's been mumbling away for three years. We're used to that.

YASHA. Senile decay.

(CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA *crosses the stage, dressed in white; she is very thin and tightly laced; she has a lorgnette at her waist.*)

LOP. Excuse me, Charlotta Ivanovna, I haven't bidden you welcome yet. (*Tries to kiss her hand.*)

CHAR. (*takes her hand away*). If you let people kiss your hand, then they'll want your elbow, then your shoulder, and then . . .

LOP. I'm out of luck today! (*All laugh.*) Show us a trick, Charlotta Ivanovna!

LIUB. Charlotta, do a trick for us!

CHAR. It's not necessary. I must go to bed. (*Exit.*)

LOP. We shall see each other in three weeks. (*Kisses* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA'S *hand.*) Now, good-bye. It's time I went. (*To* GAIEFF.) See you again. (*Kisses*

PISHCHIK.) Au revoir. (*Gives his hand to* VARYA, *then to* FIRCE *and to* YASHA.) I don't want to go away. (*To* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA.) If you think about the villas and come to a decision, just let me know, and I'll raise a loan of 50,000 rubles at once. Think about it seriously.

VARYA (*angrily*). Do go, now!

LOP. I'm going, I'm going. . . . (*Exit.*)

GAI. Snob. Still, I beg pardon . . . Varya's going to marry him, he's Varya's young man.

VARYA. Don't talk too much, uncle.

LIUB. Why not, Varya? I should be glad of it. He's a good man.

PISH. To speak the honest truth . . . he's a worthy man . . . And my Dashenka . . . also says that . . . she says lots of things. (*Snores, but wakes up again at once.*) But still, dear madam, if you could lend me . . . 240 rubles . . . to pay the interest on my mortgage tomorrow . . .

VARYA (*frightened*). We haven't it, we haven't it!

LIUB. It's quite true. I've nothing at all.

PISH. You'll manage somehow. (*Laughs.*) I never lose hope. I used to think, "Everything's lost now. I'm a dead man," when, lo and behold, a railway was built across my land . . . and they paid me for it. And something else will happen today or tomorrow. Dashenka may win 20,000 rubles . . . she's got a lottery ticket.

LIUB. The coffee's all gone, we can go to bed.

FIRCE (*brushing* GAIEFF's *trousers; in an insistent tone*). You are wearing the wrong trousers again. What am I to do with you?

VARYA (*quietly*). Anya's asleep. (*Opens window quietly.*) The sun has risen already; it isn't cold. Look, mother, dear; what lovely trees! And the air! The starlings are singing!

GAI. (*opens the other window*). The whole garden is white. You haven't forgotten, Liuba? There's that long avenue going straight, straight, like an arrow; it shines on moonlight nights. Do you remember? You haven't forgotten?

LIUB. (*looks into the garden*). Oh, my childhood, days of my innocence! In this nursery I used to sleep; I used to look out from here into the orchard. Happiness used to wake with me every morning, and then it was just as it is now; nothing has changed. (*Laughs with joy.*) It's all, all white! Oh, my orchard! After the dreary autumns and the cold winters, you're young again, full of happiness, the angels of heaven haven't left you . . . If only I could take this strong burden from my breast and shoulders, if I could forget my past!

GAI. Yes, and they'll sell this orchard to pay off the debts. How strange it seems!

LIUB. Look, there's my dead mother walking in the orchard . . . dressed in white! (*Laughs with joy.*) That's she.

GAI. Where?

VARYA. God be with you, mother dear!

LIUB. Nobody is there; I thought I saw somebody. On the right, at the turning by the summer-house, a little white tree bent down, resembling a woman.

(*Enter* TROFIMOFF *in a worn student uniform and spectacles.*) What a marvelous garden! White masses of flowers, the blue sky. . . .

TROF. Liuboff Andreievna! (*She looks round at him.*) I only wish to pay my repects to you, and I'll go away. (*Kisses her hand warmly.*) I was told to wait till the morning, but I didn't have the patience. (LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA *looks surprised.*)

VARYA (*crying*). It's Peter Trofimoff.

TROF. Peter Trofimoff, once the tutor of your Grisha . . . Have I changed so much? (LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA *embraces him and cries softly.*)

GAI. (*confused*). That's enough, that's enough, Liuba.

VARYA (*weeps*). But I told you, Peter, to wait till tomorrow.

LIUB. My Grisha . . . my boy . . . Grisha . . . my son.

VARYA. What are we to do, dear mother? It's the will of God.

TROF. (*softly, through his tears*). It's all right, it's all right.

LIUB. (*still weeping*). My boy's dead; he was drowned. Why? Why, my friend? (*Softly*). Anya's asleep in there. I am speaking so loudly, making so much noise . . . Well, Peter? What's made you look so bad? Why have you grown so old?

TROF. In the train an old woman called me a decayed gentleman.

LIUB. You were quite a boy then, a jolly little student, and now your hair has grown thin and you wear spectacles. Are you really still a student? (*Goes to the door.*)

TROF. I suppose I shall always be a student.

LIUB. (*kisses her brother, then* VARYA). Well, let's go to bed . . . And you've grown older, Leonid.

PISH. (*follows her*). Yes, we must go to bed . . . Oh, my gout! I'll stay the night here. If only, Liuboff Andreievna, my dear, you could get me 240 rubles tomorrow morning—

GAI. Still the same story.

PISH. Two hundred and forty rubles . . . to pay the interest on the mortgage.

LIUB. I haven't any money, dear man.

PISH. I'll give it back . . . it's a small sum . . .

LIUB. Well then, Leonid will give it to you . . . Let him have it, Leonid.

GAI. By all means; hold out your hand.

LIUB. Why not? He wants it; he'll give it back.

(LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA, TROFIMOFF, PISHCHIK *and* FIRCE *go out.* GAIEFF, VARYA, *and* YASHA *remain.*)

GAI. My sister hasn't lost the habit of throwing money away. (*To* YASHA.) Don't come near me: you smell like a chicken-coop!

YASHA (*grins*). You are just the same as ever, Leonid Andreievitch.

GAI. Really? (*To* VARYA.) What's he saying?

VARYA (*to* YASHA). Your mother has come from the village; she's been sitting in the servants' room since yesterday, and wishes to see you . . .

YASHA. Bless the woman!

VARYA. Shameless man.

YASHA. A lot of use there is in her coming. She might just as well have come tomorrow. (*Exit.*)

VARYA. Mother hasn't altered a bit, she's just as she always was. She'd give away everything, if the idea only entered her head.

GAI. Yes . . . (*Pause.*) If there's any illness for which people have a remedy of remedies, you may be sure that particular illness is incurable. I work my brains as hard as I can. I've several remedies, very many, and that really means I've none at all. It would be nice to inherit a fortune from somebody, it would be nice to marry off our Anya to a rich man, it would be nice to go to Yaroslavl and try my luck with my aunt the Countess. My aunt is very, very rich.

VARYA (*weeps*). If only God would help us.

GAI. Don't cry. My aunt's very rich, but she doesn't like us. My sister, in the first place, married a lawyer, not an aristocrat . . . (ANYA *appears in the doorway.*) She not only married a man who was not an aristocrat, but she behaved in a way which cannot be described as proper. She's nice and kind and charming and I'm very fond of her, but say what you will in her favor and you still have to admit that she's bad; you can feel it in her slightest movements.

VARYA (*whispers*). Anya's in the doorway.

GAI. Really? (*Pause.*) It's curious, something's blown into my right eye . . . I can't see out of it properly. And on Thursday, when I was at the District Court . . .

(*Enter* ANYA.)

VARYA. Why aren't you in bed, Anya?

ANYA. I can't sleep. It's no use.

GAI. My darling. (*Kisses* ANYA's *face and hands.*) My child. (*Crying.*) You're not my niece, you're my angel, you're my all . . . Believe in me, believe . . .

ANYA. I do believe you, uncle. Everybody loves and respects you . . . but, uncle dear, you should say nothing, no more than that. What were you saying just now about my mother, about your own sister! Why did you say such things?

GAI. Yes, yes. (*Covers his face with her hand.*) Yes, really, it was terrible. Save me, my God! And only just now I made a speech before a cupboard . . . it's so silly! And only when I'd finished I knew how silly it was.

VARYA. Yes, uncle dear, you really should say less. Keep quiet, that's all.

ANYA. You'd be so much happier if you only kept quiet.

GAI. All right, I'll be quiet. (*Kisses their hands.*) I'll be quiet. But let's talk business. On Thursday I was in the District Court, and a lot of us met there and we began to talk of this, that, and the other, and now I think I can arrange a loan to pay the interest to the bank.

VARYA. If only God would help us!

GAI. I'll go on Tuesday. I'll talk to you about it again. (*To* VARYA.) Don't cry. (*To* ANYA.) Your mother will have a talk with Lopakhin; he, of course, won't refuse . . . And when you've rested you'll go to Yaroslavl to the Countess, your grandmother. So you see, we shall have three irons in the fire, and we shall be safe. We'll pay the interest. I'm certain. (*Puts some candy in*

his mouth.) I swear on my honor, on anything you wish, that the estate will not be sold! (*Excitedly.*) I swear on my happiness! Here's my hand on it! You may call me a dishonorable sinner if I let it be sold at auction! I swear by all I am!

ANYA (*calm again and happy*). How good and clever you are, uncle. (*Embraces him.*) I'm happy now! I'm happy! All's well!

(*Enter* FIRCE.)

FIRCE (*reproachfully*). Leonid Andreievitch, don't you fear God? When are you going to bed?

GAI. Soon, soon. You go away, Firce! I'll undress myself. Well, children, au revoir . . . ! I'll tell you the details tomorrow, but let's go to bed now. (*Kisses* ANYA *and* VARYA.) I'm a man of the eighties . . . People don't praise those years much, but I can still say that I've suffered for my beliefs. The peasants don't love me for nothing, I assure you. We have to learn how to understand the peasants! We should learn how . . .

ANYA. You're doing it again, uncle!

VARYA. Be quiet, uncle!

FIRCE (*angrily*). Leonid Andreievitch!

GAI. I'm coming, I'm coming . . . Go to bed now. Off two cushions into the center! I turn over a new leaf . . . (*Exit.* FIRCE *goes out after him.*)

ANYA. I'm more quiet now. I don't wish to go to Yaroslavl, I don't like grandmother; but I'm calm now, thanks to uncle. (*Sits down.*)

VARYA. It's time to go to sleep. I'll go. There have been amazing things happening here during your absence. In the old servants' quarter of the house, as you know, only the old people live—little old Yefim and Polya and Yevstigny, and Karp as well. They commenced letting tramps or the like spend the night there—I said nothing. Then I heard that they were saying I had ordered them to be fed on peas and nothing else; from meanness, you see . . . And it was all Yevstigny's doing. Very well, I thought, if that's what the matter is, just you wait. So I call Yevstigny . . . (*Yawns.*) He comes. "What's this," I say. "Yevstigny, you old fool" . . . (*Looks at* ANYA.) Anya dear! (*Pause.*) She's dozed off . . . (*Takes* ANYA's *arm.*) Let's go to bed . . . Come along! . . . (*Leads her.*) My darling's gone to sleep! Come on . . . (*They go. In the distance, the other side of the orchard, a shepherd plays his pipe.* TROFIMOFF *crosses the stage and stops when he sees* VARYA *and* ANYA.) Sh! She's asleep, asleep. Come on, dear.

ANYA (*quietly, half-asleep*). I'm so tired . . . I hear bells . . . uncle, dear! Mother and uncle!

VARYA. Come on, dear, come on! (*They go into* ANYA's *room.*)

TROF. (*deeply moved*). Sunshine! Springtime of my life!

ACT II

A field. An old, tumble-down shrine, which has been long abandoned; near it a well and large stones, which apparently are old tombstones, and an old garden seat. The road to Gaieff's estate is seen. On one side dark poplars rise,

behind them the cherry orchard begins. In the distance is a row of telegraph poles, and on the far horizon are the indistinct signs of a large town, which can be seen only on the finest and clearest days. It is near sunset.

(CHARLOTTA, YASHA, *and* DUNYASHA *are sitting on a bench.* YEPIKHODOFF *stands nearby playing on a guitar; all seem thoughtful.* CHARLOTTA *wears a man's old peaked cap; she has unslung a rifle from her shoulders and is straightening the strap-buckle.*)

CHAR. (*thoughtfully*). I haven't a real passport. I don't know how old I am, but I think I'm young. When I was a little girl my father and mother used to travel from fair to fair and give very good performances, and I used to do the somersault and various little things. And when papa and mamma died, a German lady took me to her home and brought me up. I liked it. I grew up and became a governess. And where I came from and who I am, I don't know. . . . Who my parents were—perhaps they weren't married—I don't know. (*Takes a cucumber from her pocket and eats.*) I don't know anything. (*Pause.*) I do wish to talk, but I haven't anybody to talk to. . . . I haven't anybody at all.

YEP. (*plays on the guitar and sings*).

"What do I care for this noisy earth?
What do I care for friend and foe?"

I like playing on the mandolin!

DUN. That's a guitar, not a mandolin. (*Looks at herself in a little pocket mirror and powders herself.*)

YEP. For a lovelorn lunatic, this constitutes a mandolin. (*Sings.*)

"Oh would the fire of love
Warm my pitiful heart!"

(YASHA *sings, too.*)

CHAR. These people sing so badly. . . . Bah! like jackals.

DUN. (*to* YASHA). Still it must be nice to live abroad.

YASHA. Yes, it is. I can't differ from you there. (*Yawns and lights a cigar.*)

YEP. That is perfectly natural. Abroad everything is in such complete harmony.

YASHA. That goes without saying.

YEP. I'm an educated man, I read various remarkable books, but I cannot understand where I want to go, myself—whether to keep on living or to shoot myself, as it were. So at any rate, I always carry a revolver about with me. Here it is. (*Shows a revolver.*)

CHAR. I've finished. Now I'll go. (*Slings the rifle over her shoulder.*) You, Yepikhodoff, are a very clever man and very frightful; women must be madly in love with you. Brrr! (*Going.*) These wise people are all so stupid. I've nobody to talk to. I'm always alone, alone; I've nobody at all . . . and I don't know who I am or why I live. (*Exit slowly.*)

YEP. As a matter of fact, independently of everything else, I must express my conviction, among other things, that fate has been as merciless in her dealings with me as a storm is to a small ship. Suppose, let us grant, I am

wrong; then why did I wake up this morning, for example, and behold an enormous spider on my chest as big as this? (*Shows with both hands.*) And if I do drink kvass, why must I always find in the glass such an unsociable animal as a cockroach! (*Pause.*) Have you read Buckle? (*Pause.*) May I have a few words with you, Avdotya Fyodorovna?

DUN. Go on!

YEP. I should prefer to be alone with you. (*Sighs.*)

DUN. (*shy*). Very well, only please bring me my cloak first. . . . It's by the cupboard. It's a little damp here.

YEP. Very well. . . . I'll bring it. . . . Now I know what to do with my revolver. (*Takes guitar and exit, strumming.*)

YASHA. Two-and-twenty troubles! A foolish man, between you and me and the gatepost. (*Yawns.*)

DUN. (*pause*). I hope to goodness he won't shoot himself. (*Pause.*) I'm so nervous, so worried. I entered service when I was quite a little girl, and now I'm not used to common life, and my hands are as white as a lady's. I'm so tender and so delicate now, respectable and afraid of everything. . . . I'm so frightened. And I don't know what will happen to my nerves if you deceive me, Yasha.

YASHA (*kisses her*). Tiny cucumber! Of course, every girl must respect herself; there's nothing I dislike more than a badly behaved girl.

DUN. I'm so much in love with you; you're educated, you can talk about everything. (*Pause.*)

YASHA (*yawns*). Yes, I think that if a girl loves anybody, it means she's immoral. (*Pause.*) It's nice to smoke a cigar out in the open air. . . . (*Listens.*) Somebody's coming. It's the mistress, and people with her. (DUNYASHA *embraces him suddenly.*) Go to the house, as if you'd been bathing in the river; go by this path, or they'll run across you and will think I've been meeting you. I can't stand that sort of thing.

DUN. (*coughs quietly*). Your cigar has given me a headache.

(*Exit.* YASHA *remains, sitting by the shrine. Enter* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA, GAIEFF, *and* LOPAKHIN.)

LOP. You must make up your mind definitely—there's no time to waste. The question is perfectly simple. Are you willing to let the land for villas or no? Just one word, yes or no? Just one word!

LIUB. Who's smoking bad cigars here? (*Sits.*)

GAI. They built that railway; that's made this place very convenient. (*Sits.*) Went to town and had lunch . . . red in the center! I'd like to go to the house now and have just one game.

LIUB. You'll have time.

LOP. Just one word! (*Imploringly.*) Give me an answer!

GAI. (*yawns*). Really!

LIUB. (*looks in her purse*). I had a lot of money yesterday, but there's very little left today. My poor Varya feeds everybody on milk soup to save money; in the kitchen the old people get peas only; and I spend recklessly. (*Drops the purse, scattering gold coins.*) There, money all over the place.

YASHA. Permit me to pick them up. (*Collects the coins.*)

LIUB. Please do, Yasha. And why did I go and lunch there? . . . A terrible restaurant with a band and tablecloths smelling of soap. . . . Why do you drink so much, Leon? Why do you eat so much? Why do you talk so much? You talked too much again today in the restaurant, and it wasn't at all to the point—about the seventies and about decadents. And to whom? Talking to the waiters about decadents! Imagine!

LOP. Yes.

GAI. (*waves his hand*). I can't be cured, that's obvious. . . . (*Irritably to* YASHA.) What's the matter? Why do you always manage to keep in front of me?

YASHA (*laughs*). I can't listen to your voice without laughing.

GAI. (*to his sister*). Either he or I . . .

LIUB. Go away, Yasha! Go!

YASHA (*gives purse to* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA). I'll go at once. (*Hardly able to keep from laughing.*) This minute. . . . (*Exit.*)

LOP. That rich man Deriganoff is preparing to buy your estate. They say he'll attend the sale in person.

LIUB. Where did you hear that?

LOP. They say so in town.

GAI. Our aunt in Yaroslavl promised to send something, but I don't know when or how much.

LOP. How much will she send? A hundred thousand rubles? Or two, perhaps?

LIUB. I'd be glad if we get ten or fifteen thousand.

LOP. You must excuse my saying so, but I've never met such frivolous people as you before, or anybody so unbusinesslike and peculiar. Here I am telling you in plain language that your estate will be sold, and you don't seem to understand.

LIUB. What are we to do? Tell us, what?

LOP. I tell you every day. Every day I say the same thing. Both the cherry orchard and the land must be leased for villas and at once,—the auction is staring you in the face: Understand! Once you definitely make up your minds to the villas, you'll have as much money as you wish and you'll be saved.

LIUB. Villas and villa residents—it's so vulgar, pardon me.

GAI. I agree with you entirely.

LOP. I must cry or yell or faint. I can't! You're too much for me! (*To* GAIEFF.) You old woman!

GAI. Really!

LOP. Old woman! (*Going out.*)

LIUB. (*frightened*). No, don't go away, stop; be a dear. Please. Perhaps we'll find some way out!

LOP. There is nothing to think about.

LIUB. Please don't go. It's nicer when you're here. . . . (*Pause.*) I keep on waiting for something to happen, as if the house were going to collapse over our heads.

GAI. (*thinking deeply*). Double in the corner . . . across the center.

LIUB. We have been too sinful. . . .

LOP. What sins have you been guilty of?

GAI. (*puts candy in his mouth*). They say that I've wasted all my money in buying candy. (*Laughs.*)

LIUB. Oh, my sins . . . I've always scattered money about without being able to control myself, like a madwoman, and I married a man who made nothing but debts. My husband died of champagne—he drank terribly—and to my misfortune, I fell in love with another man and went off with him, and just at that time—it was my first punishment, a blow that struck me squarely on the head—here, in the river . . . my boy was drowned, and I went away, abroad, never to return, never to see this river again. . . . I closed my eyes and ran without thinking, but he ran after me . . . without mercy, without respect. I bought a villa near Mentone because he fell ill there, and for three years I knew no rest, day or night; the sick man wore me out, and my soul dried up. And last year, when they had sold the villa to pay my debts, I went to Paris, and there he robbed me of all I had and threw me over and went off with another woman. I tried to poison myself. . . . It was so silly, so shameful . . . And suddenly I longed to go back to Russia, my own country, with my little daughter . . . (*Wipes her tears.*) Lord, Lord be merciful to me, forgive my sins! Punish me no more! (*Takes a telegram from her pocket.*) I had this today from Paris. . . . He begs my forgiveness, he implores me to return . . . (*Tears it up.*) Don't I hear music? (*Listens.*)

GAI. That is our famous Jewish band. You remember—four violins, a flute, and a double-bass.

LIUB. So it still exists? It would be nice if they came some evening.

LOP. (*listens*). I can't hear. . . . (*Sings quietly.*) "For money will the Germans make a Frenchman of a Russian." (*Laughs.*) I saw such an awfully funny thing at the theatre last night.

LIUB. I'm quite sure there wasn't anything funny at all. You shouldn't go and see plays, you ought to go and look at yourself. What a drab life you lead! What a lot of unnecessary things you say!

LOP. It's true. To speak the honest truth, we live a silly life. (*Pause.*) My father was a peasant, an idiot, he understood nothing, he didn't teach me, he was always drunk, and always beat me. As a matter of fact, I'm a fool and an idiot, too. I've never learned anything, my handwriting is bad, I write so that I'm quite ashamed before people, like a pig!

LIUB. You should marry, my friend.

LOP. Yes . . . that's true.

LIUB. Why not our Varya? She's a nice girl.

LOP. Yes.

LIUB. She's a simple, unaffected girl, works all day, and, what matters most, she's in love with you. And you've liked her for a long time.

LOP. Well? I don't mind . . . She's a nice girl. (*Pause.*)

GAI. I'm offered a place in a bank. Six thousand rubles a year . . . Did you hear?

LIUB. What's the matter with you! Stay where you are . . .

(*Enter* FIRCE *with an overcoat.*)

FIRCE (*to* GAIEFF). Please sir, put this on, it's damp.

GAI. (*putting it on*). You're a nuisance, old man.

FIRCE. It's all very well. . . . You went away this morning without telling me. (*Examining* GAIEFF.)

LIUB. How old you've grown, Firce!

FIRCE. I beg your pardon?

LOP. She says you've grown very old!

FIRCE. I've lived a long time. They were getting ready to marry me before your father was born . . . (*Laughs.*) And when the Emancipation came I was already first valet. Only I didn't agree with the Emancipation and remained with my masters . . . (*Pause.*) I remember everybody was happy, but they didn't know why.

LOP. It was very good for them in the old days. At any rate, they beat them formerly.

FIRCE (*not hearing*). Rather. The peasants kept their distance from the masters and the masters kept their distance from the peasants, but now everything is in a muddle, and you can't make head or tail of anything.

GAI. Be quiet, Firce. I have to go to town tomorrow. I have the promise of an introduction to a General who may lend me money on a note.

LOP. Nothing will come of it. And you won't pay your interest, don't you worry.

LIUB. He's out of his head. There's no General at all.

(*Enter* TROFIMOIF, ANYA, *and* VARYA.)

GAI. Here, come on, folks!

ANYA. Mother's sitting down here.

LIUB. (*tenderly*). Come, come, my dears . . . (*Embracing* ANYA *and* VARYA.) If you two only knew how much I love you. Sit down next to me, like that. (*All sit down.*)

LOP. Our eternal student is always with the ladies.

TROF. That's none of your business.

LOP. He'll soon be fifty, and he's still a student.

TROF. Stop your silly jokes!

LOP. Getting angry, eh, silly?

TROF. Shut up, can't you?

LOP. (*laughs*). I wonder what you think of me?

TROF. I think, Yermolai Alexeievitch, that you're rich, and you'll soon be a millionaire. Just as the wild beast which eats everything it finds is needed to make certain changes in cosmic matter, so you are needed too. (*All laugh.*)

VARYA. Better tell us something about the planets, Peter.

LIUB. No, let's continue yesterday's discussion.

TROF. What was it about?

GAI. About the proud man.

TROF. Yesterday we talked for a long time, but we arrived at no conclusion. In your opinion there's something mystic in pride. Perhaps you are right from your point of view, but if you look at the matter sanely, without complicating it, then what pride can there be, what logic in a man who is imperfectly made, physiologically speaking, and who in the vast majority of cases is coarse and

stupid and profoundly unhappy? We must stop admiring one another. We must work, nothing more.

GAI. You'll die, all the same.

TROF. Who knows? And what does it mean—you'll die? Perhaps a man has a hundred senses, and when he dies only the five known to us are destroyed and the remaining ninety-five are left alive.

LIUB. How clever of you, Peter!

LOP. (*ironically*). Oh, awfully!

TROF. The human race progresses, perfecting its powers. Everything that is unattainable now will some day be near and intelligible, but we must work, we must help with all our energy, those who seek to know the truth. Meanwhile in Russia only a very few of us work. The vast majority of those intellectuals whom I know seek for nothing, do nothing, and are at present incapable of hard work. They call themselves intellectuals, but they use "thou" and "thee" to their servants, they treat the peasants like animals, they learn slowly, they read nothing with discernment, they do absolutely nothing, they gabble on about science, about art they understand little. They are all serious, they all have severe faces. They all talk about important things. They philosophize, and at the same time, the vast majority of us, ninety-nine out of a hundred, live like savages, fighting and cursing on the slightest excuse, have filthy table manners, sleep in the dirt, in stuffiness among fleas, stinks, smells, moral stench, and so on. . . . And it's obvious that all our nice talk is only carried on to delude ourselves and others. Tell me, where are those crèches we hear so much of? And where are those reading-rooms? People only write novels about them; they don't really exist. Only dirt, coarseness, and Asiatic barbarism really exist. . . . I'm afraid; and I don't like serious faces at all. I don't like serious conversation. Let's say no more about it.

LOP. You know, I get up at five every morning, I work till evening, I am always dealing with money—my own and other people's—and I see what others are like. You have only to start doing anything at all, and you'll find out how few honest, honorable people there are. Sometimes, when I can't sleep, I think: "Oh Lord, you've given us huge forests, infinite fields, and endless horizons, and we, living here, ought really to be giants."

LIUB. You want giants, do you? . . . They're only good in stories, and even there they frighten one. (YEPIKHODOFF *enters at the back of the stage playing his guitar.* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA *speaks thoughtfully.*) Yepikhodoff has come.

ANYA (*thoughtfully*). Yepikhodoff has come.

GAI. The sun's set.

TROF. Yes.

GAI. (*not loudly, as if declaiming*). Oh, Nature, thou art wonderful, thou shinest with eternal radiance! Oh, beautiful and lofty one, thou whom we call mother, thou containest in thyself life and death, thou livest and destroyest. . . .

VARYA (*entreatingly*). Uncle, dear!

ANYA. Uncle, you're doing it again!

TROF. You'd better double the yellow into the center.

GAI. I'll be quiet, I'll be quiet.

(*They all sit thoughtfully. It is quiet. Only the mumbling of* FIRCE *is heard. Suddenly a distant sound comes as if from the sky, the sound of a breaking string, which dies away sadly.*)

LIUB. What's that?

LOP. I don't know. Perhaps a bucket fell, down a well somewhere. But it's a long way off.

GAI. Or perhaps it's some bird . . . like a heron.

TROF. Or an owl.

LIUB. (*shudders*). It's unpleasant, somehow. (*A pause.*)

FIRCE. Before the catastrophe the same thing happened. An owl screamed and the samovar hummed without stopping.

GAI. Before what catastrophe?

FIRCE. Before the Emancipation. (*A pause.*)

LIUB. You know, my friends, let's go in; it's evening now. (*To* ANYA.) You've tears in your eyes. . . . What is it, little girl? (*Embraces her.*)

ANYA. It's nothing, mother.

TROF. Some one's coming.

(*Enter a* TRAMP *in an old white peaked cap and overcoat. He is slightly drunk.*)

TRAMP. Excuse me, may I go this way straight through to the station?

GAI. You may. Go along this path. . . .

TRAMP. I thank you with all my heart. (*Hiccoughs.*) Lovely weather. . . . (*Declaims.*) My brother, my suffering brother. . . . Come out on the Volga, you whose groans . . . (*To* VARYA.) Mademoiselle, please give a hungry Russian thirty kopecks. . . .

(VARYA *screams, frightened.*)

LOP. (*angrily*). Everybody should have some sort of manners!

LIUB. (*with a start*). Take this . . . here you are . . . (*Feels in her purse.*) There's no silver . . . It doesn't matter, here's gold.

TRAMP. I am very grateful to you! (*Exit. Laughter.*)

VARYA (*frightened*). I'm going, I'm going. . . . Oh, mother dear, at home there's nothing for the servants to eat, and yet you gave him gold.

LIUB. What is to be done with such a fool as I am! At home, I'll give you everything I have. Yermolai Alexeievitch, lend me some more! . . .

LOP. Very well.

LIUB. Let's go, it's time. And Varya, we've settled your affairs; I congratulate you.

VARYA (*crying*). You shouldn't joke about this, mother.

LOP. Ophelia! Get thee to a nunnery.

GAI. My hands are trembling; I haven't played billiards for a long time.

LOP. Ophelia! Nymph! Remember me in thine orisons!

LIUB. Come along; it'll soon be suppertime.

VARYA. He frightened me. My heart is beating fast.

LOP. Let me remind you, ladies and gentlemen, on August 22nd, the cherry orchard will be sold. Think of that! . . . Think of that! . . . (*All go out except* TROFIMOFF *and* ANYA.)

ANYA (*laughs*). Thanks to the tramp who frightened Varya, we're alone now.

TROF. Varya's afraid that we may fall in love with each other and won't leave us alone for days on end. Her narrow mind won't permit her to understand that we are above love. To escape all the petty and deceptive things which prevent our being happy and free, such is the aim and object of our lives. Forward! We go irresistibly on to that bright star which burns there, in the distance! Don't lag behind, friends!

ANYA (*clapping her hands*). How beautifully you talk! (*Pause.*) It is glorious here today!

TROF. Yes, the weather is wonderful.

ANYA. What have you done to me, Peter? I don't love the cherry orchard as I used to. I loved it so tenderly, I thought there was no better place in the world than our orchard.

TROF. All Russia is our orchard. The land is great and beautiful, there are many glorious places in it. (*Pause.*) Think, Anya, your grandfather, your great-grandfather, and all your ancestors were serf-owners, they owned human beings; and now, doesn't something human look at you from every cherry in the orchard, every leaf and every branch? Don't you hear voices . . . ? Oh, it's awful, your orchard is frightful; and when in the evening or at night you walk through the orchard, then the old bark on the trees sheds a dim light and the old cherry-trees seem to dream of all that happened a hundred, two hundred years ago, and are burdened with their heavy visions. Still, we've left those two hundred years behind us. So far we've gained nothing at all—we don't yet know what the past will bring us—we only philosophize, we complain that we are dull, or we drink vodka. For it's so clear that to begin to live in the present we must first redeem the past, and that can be done only by suffering, by strenuous, uninterrupted work. Understand that, Anya.

ANYA. The house in which we live has long ceased to be our house; I shall go away, I give you my word.

TROF. If you have the keys of the household, throw them down the well and go away. Be as free as the wind.

ANYA (*enthusiastically*). How beautifully you said that!

TROF. Believe me, Anya, believe me! I'm not thirty yet, I'm young, I'm still a student, but I have gone through so much already! I'm as hungry as the winter, I'm ill, I shaken. I'm as poor as a beggar, and where haven't I been—fate has tossed me everywhere! But my soul is always my own; every minute of the day and the night it is filled with glorious and dim visions. I feel that happiness is coming, Anya, I see it already. . . .

ANYA (*thoughtful*). The moon is rising.

(YEPIKHODOFF *is heard playing the same sad song on his guitar. The moon rises. Somewhere near the poplars* VARYA *is looking for* ANYA *and calling,* "ANYA, *where are you?*")

TROF. Yes, the moon has risen. (*Pause.*) There is happiness, there it comes; it comes nearer and nearer; I hear its footsteps already. And if we do not see it, we shall not know it, but what does that matter? Others will see it!

VARYA'S VOICE. Anya! Where are you?

TROF. That's Varya again! (*Angry.*) Disgraceful!

ANYA. Never mind. Let's go to the river. It's nice there.
TROF. Let's go. (*They leave.*)
VARYA'S VOICE. Anya! Anya!

ACT III

A reception-room, separated by an arch from a drawing-room. Lighted chandelier. A Jewish band, the one referred to in Act II, is heard playing in another room. Evening. In the drawing-room the cotillion is being danced.

(*Voice of* SEMYONOFF PISHCHIK, *"Promenade à une paire!" Dancers come into the reception-room; the first pair are* PISCHIK *and* CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA; *the second* TROFIMOFF *and* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA; *the third* ANYA *and the* POST OFFICE CLERK; *the fourth* VARYA *and the* STATION-MASTER, *and so on.* VARYA *is crying gently and dries her eyes as she dances.* DUNYASHA *is in the last pair. They go off into the drawing-room, shouting, "Grand rond, balancez:" and "Les cavaliers à genoux et remerciez vos dames!"* FIRCE, *in a dress-coat, carries a tray with seltzer-water across the stage. Enter* PISHCHIK *and* TROFIMOFF *from the drawing-room.*)

PISH. I'm full-blooded and already I've had two strokes; it's hard for me to dance, but, as they say, if you're in Rome, you must do as the Romans do. I've the constitution of a horse. My late father, who liked a joke, peace to his ashes, used to say, talking of our ancestors, that the ancient stock of the Semyonoff Pishchiks was descended from the identical horse that Caligula appointed senator. . . . (*Sits.*) But the trouble is, I've no money! A hungry dog believes only in meat. (*Drops off to sleep and wakes up again immediately.*) So I . . . believe only in money. . . .

TROF. Yes. There is something horsy about your figure.

PISH. Well . . . a horse is a valuable animal . . . you can sell a horse.

(*The sound of billiard playing comes from the next room,* VARYA *appears under the arch.*)

TROF. (*teasing*). Madame Lopakhin! Madame Lopakhin!

VARYA (*angry*). Decayed gentleman!

TROF. Yes, I am a decayed gentleman, and I'm proud of it!

VARYA (*bitterly*). We've hired the musicians, but how are they to be paid? (*Exit.*)

TROF. (*to* PISHCHIK). If you would put to better use the energy which you are wasting day by day, in looking for money to pay interest, I believe you'd finally succeed in moving heaven and earth.

PISH. Nietzsche . . . a philosopher . . . a very great and famous man . . . a man of enormous brain, says in his books that you can forge bank-notes.

TROF. And have you read Nietzsche?

PISH. Well . . . Dashenka told me. Now I'm in such a position, I wouldn't mind making counterfeit money . . . I have to pay 310 rubles day after tomorrow . . . I've obtained 130 already . . . (*Feels his pockets, nervously.*) I've lost the money! The money's gone! (*Crying.*) Where's the money? (*Joyfully.*) He[illegible] lining. . . . Why I was in a cold sweat!

ANDREIEVNA *and* CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA.)

LIUB. (*humming a Caucasian dance song*). What is keeping Leonid so long? What's he doing in town? (*To* DUNYASHA.) Dunyasha, give the musicians some tea.

TROF. The business is off, I suppose.

LIUB. And the musicians needn't have come, and we needn't have arranged this ball. . . . Well, never mind. . . . (*Sits and sings softly.*)

CHAR. (*gives a pack of cards to* PISHCHIK). Here's a deck of cards, think of any card you like.

PISH. I've thought of one.

CHAR. Now shuffle. All right, now. Pass them over, my dear Mr. Pishchik. Eins, zwei, drei! Now look and you'll find it in your hind pocket.

PISH. (*takes a card out of his hind pocket*). Eight of spades, quite right! (*Surprised.*) Just imagine!

CHAR. (*holds the deck of cards in the palm of her hand. To* TROFIMOFF). Now tell me quickly. What's the top card?

TROF. Well, the queen of spades.

CHAR. Right! (*To* PISHCHIK.) And now? What card's on top?

PISH. Ace of hearts.

CHAR. Right! (*Clasps her hands, the deck of cards vanishes.*) How lovely the weather is today. (*A mysterious woman's voice answers her, as if from under the floor, "Oh yes, it's lovely weather, Madam."*) You are so beautiful, you are my ideal. (*Voice, "You, Madam, please me very much too."*)

STATION-MASTER (*applauds*). Madame the ventriloquist, bravo!

PISH. (*surprised*). Just imagine! Delightful, Charlotta Ivanovna . . . I'm simply in love. . . .

CHAR. In love? (*Shrugging her shoulders.*) Can you love? Guter Mensch aber schlechter Musikant.

TROF. (*slaps* PISHCHIK *on the shoulder*). Oh, you horse!

CHAR. Attention, please, here's another trick. (*Takes a shawl from a chair.*) Here's a very nice plaid shawl. I'm going to sell it. . . . (*Shakes it.*) Won't somebody buy it?

PISH. (*astonished*). Just imagine!

CHAR. Eins, zwei, drei. (*She quickly lifts up the shawl, which is hanging down.* ANYA *appears behind it, she bows and runs to her mother, hugs her and runs back to the drawing-room amid general applause.*)

LIUB. (*applauds*). Bravo, bravo!

CHAR. Once again! *Eins, zwei, drei!* (*Lifts the shawl.* VARYA *appears behind it and bows.*)

PISH. (*astonished*). Just imagine!

CHAR. The end! (*Throws the shawl at* PISHCHIK, *curtseys and runs into the drawing-room.*)

PISH. (*runs after her*). Little witch! . . . What? Would you? (*Exit.*)

LIUB. Leonid hasn't come yet. I don't understand what is keeping him so long in town! Everything must be over by now. The estate must be sold; or, if the sale never came off, then why does he stay away so long?

VARYA (*tries to soothe her*). Uncle has bought it. I'm certain of it.

TROF. (*sarcastically*). Oh, yes!

VARYA. Grandmother sent him her authority to buy it in her name and transfer the debt to her. She's doing it for Anya. And I'm certain that God will help us and that Uncle will buy it.

LIUB. Grandmother sent fifteen thousand rubles from Yaroslavl to buy the property in her name—she won't trust us—and that wasn't even enough to pay the interest. (*Covers her face with her hands.*) My fate will be settled today, my fate. . . .

TROF. (*teasing* VARYA). Madame Lopakhin!

VARYA (*angry*). Eternal student? He's been expelled from the university, twice already.

LIUB. Why are you growing angry, Varya? He's teasing you about Lopakhin. Well, what of it? You can marry Lopakhin if you wish. He's a good, interesting man. . . . You needn't if you don't wish to; nobody is going to force you against your will, my darling.

VARYA. I look at the matter seriously, mother dear, to be quite frank. He's a good man, and I like him.

LIUB. Then marry him. I don't understand what you're waiting for.

VARYA. I can't propose to him myself, mother dear. People have been talking about him to me for two years now, but he either says nothing, or jokes about it. I understand. He's getting rich, he's busy, he can't bother about me. If I had some money, even a little, even only a hundred rubles, I'd throw up everything and go away. I'd go into a convent.

TROF. What bliss!

VARYA (*to* TROFIMOFF). A student should have common sense! (*Gently, in tears.*) How ugly you are now, Peter, how old you've grown! (*To* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA, *no longer crying.*) But I can't go on without working, mother dear. I'm eager to be doing something every minute.

(*Enter* YASHA.)

YASHA (*nearly laughing*). Yepikhodoff's broken a billiard cue! (*Exit.*)

VARYA. Why is Yepikhodoff here? Who said he could play billiards? I don't understand these people. (*Exit.*)

LIUB. Don't tease her, Peter, you see that she's unhappy enough without it.

TROF. She undertakes too much herself; she is continually interfering in other people's business. The whole summer she gave Anya and me not a moment's peace. She's afraid we'll have a romance all to ourselves. What concern of hers is it? As if I'd ever given her grounds to believe I'd stoop to such vulgarity! We are above love.

LIUB. Then I suppose I must be beneath love. (*In agitation.*) Why isn't Leonid here? If I only knew whether the estate is sold or not! The catastrophe seems to me so unbelievable that I don't know what to think, I'm all at sea . . . I may scream . . . or do something foolish. Save me, Peter. Say something, say something.

TROF. Isn't it all the same whether the estate is sold today or not? For a long time it's been a foregone conclusion that it would be sold. There's no turning back, the path is obliterated. Be calm, dear, you shouldn't deceive yourself; for once in your life, at any rate, you must look the truth straight in the eyes.

LIUB. What truth? You see where truth is, and where falsehood is, but I

seem to have lost my sight and see nothing. You settle all important questions boldly, but tell me, dear, isn't it because you're young, because you have not as yet had time to suffer in settling any one of these questions? You look forward boldly, but isn't it because you neither feel nor expect anything terrible, because so far life has been hidden from your young eyes? You are bolder, more honest, deeper than we are, but only think, be just a little magnanimous, and have pity on me. I was born here, my father and mother lived here, my grandfather, too. I love this house. I couldn't understand my life without that cherry orchard, and if it really must be sold, sell me with it! (*Embraces* TROFIMOFF, *kisses his forehead.*) My son was drowned here . . . (*Weeps.*) Have pity on me, good, kind man.

TROF. You know that I sympathize with all my heart.

LIUB. Yes, but it should be said differently. . . . (*Takes another handkerchief, a telegram falls on the floor.*) I'm so sick at heart today, you can't imagine. Here it's so noisy, my soul trembles at every sound. I shake all over, and I can't go away by myself, I'm afraid of the silence. Don't judge me harshly, Peter. . . . I love you, as if you belonged to the family. I'd gladly let Anya marry you, I swear it, only dear, you ought to work to finish your studies. You don't do anything, only fate tosses you about from place to place, it's so strange. . . . Isn't it true? Yes? And you ought to do something to your beard to make it grow better. (*Laughs.*) You are funny!

TROF. (*picking up telegram*). I don't wish to be a Beau Brummell.

LIUB. This telegram's from Paris. I receive one every day. Yesterday and today: That wild man is ill again, he's bad again. . . . He begs for forgiveness, and implores me to come, and I really should go to Paris to be near him. You look severe, Peter, but what can I do, my dear, what can I do? He's ill, he's alone, unhappy, and who's to look after him, who's to keep him out of harm's way, to give him his medicine punctually? And why should I conceal it and say nothing about it? I love him, that's plain, I love him, I love him. . . . That love is a stone round my neck; I shall sink with it to the bottom, but I love that stone and can't live without it. (*Squeezes* TROFIMOFF'S *hand.*) Don't think harshly of me, Peter, don't say anything to me, don't say . . .

TROF. (*weeping*). For God's sake forgive my speaking candidly, but that man has robbed you!

LIUB. No, no, you should not say that! (*Stops her ears.*)

TROF. But he's a scoundrel, you alone don't know it! He's a petty thief, a nobody. . . .

LIUB. (*angry, but restrained*). You're twenty-six or twenty-seven, and still a school-boy of the second grade!

TROF. Why not?

LIUB. You should be a man, at your age you should be able to understand those who love. And you should be in love yourself, you must fall in love! (*Angry.*) Yes, yes! You aren't pure, you're just a freak, a queer fellow, a funny fungus.

TROF. (*in horror*). What is she saying?

LIUB. "I'm above love!" You're not above love, you're just what our Firce calls a bungler. Not to have a mistress at your age!

TROF. (*in horror*). This is terrible! What is she saying? (*Goes quickly into the drawing-room, seizing his head with both his hands.*) It's awful . . . I can't stand it, I'll go away. (*Exit, but returns at once.*) All is over between us! (*Exit.*)

LIUB. (*shouts after him*). Peter, wait! Silly boy, I was joking! Peter! (*Somebody is heard going out and falling downstairs noisily.* ANYA *and* VARYA *scream; laughter is heard immediately.*) What's that? (ANYA *comes running in, laughing.*)

ANYA. Peter's fallen downstairs. (*Runs out again.*)

LIUB. This Peter's a funny creature!

(*The* STATION-MASTER *stands in the middle of the drawing-room and recites "The Magdalen" by Tolstoy. They listen to him, but he has delivered only a few lines when a waltz is heard from the front room, and the recitation is stopped. Everybody dances.* TROFIMOFF, ANYA, VARYA, *and* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA *come in from the front room.*)

LIUB. Well, Peter . . . you pure soul . . . I beg your pardon. . . . Let's dance.

(*She dances with* PETER. ANYA *and* VARYA *dance.* FIRCE *enters and leans his stick against a side door.* YASHA *has also come in and watches the dance.*)

YASHA. Well, grandfather?

FIRCE. I'm not well. At our balls some time ago, generals and barons and admirals used to dance, and now we send for post-office clerks and the station-master, and even they come reluctantly. I'm very weak. The dead master, the grandfather, used to give everybody sealing-wax when anything was wrong. I've taken sealing-wax every day for twenty years, and more; possibly that's why I am still alive.

YASHA. I'm tired of you, grandfather. (*Yawns.*) If you'd only hurry up and kick the bucket.

FIRCE (*muttering*). Oh, you . . . bungler!

(TROFIMOFF *and* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA *dance in the reception-room, then into the sitting-room.*)

LIUB. Merci. I'll sit down. (*Sits.*) I'm tired.

(*Enter* ANYA.)

ANYA (*excited*). Somebody in the kitchen was saying just now that the cherry orchard was sold today.

LIUB. Sold to whom?

ANYA. He didn't say to whom. He went away. (*Dances out into the reception-room with* TROFIMOFF.)

YASHA. Some old man was chattering about it a long time ago. A stranger!

FIRCE. And Leonid Andreievitch isn't here yet, he hasn't come. He's wearing a light autumn overcoat. He'll catch cold. Oh, these young fellows.

LIUB. I'll die of this. Go and find out, Yasha, to whom it's sold.

YASHA. Oh, but he's been gone a long time, the old man. (*Laughs.*)

LIUB. (*slightly vexed*). Why do you laugh? What are you so happy about?

YASHA. Yepikhodoff's too funny. He's a foolish man. Two-and-twenty troubles.

LIUB. Firce, if the estate is sold, where will you go?

FIRCE. I'll go wherever you command me to go.

LIUB. Why do you look like that? Are you ill? I think you should go to bed. . . .

FIRCE. Yes . . . (*With a smile.*) I'll go to bed, and who'll hand things round and give orders without me? I've the whole house on my shoulders.

YASHA (*to* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA). Liuboff Andreievna! I wish to ask a favor of you, if you'll be so kind! If you go to Paris again, take me along. I beg of you! It's absolutely impossible for me to remain here. (*Looking round; in an undertone.*) What's the good of talking about it? You see for yourself that this is an uncivilized country, with an immoral population, and it's so dull. The food in the kitchen is wretched, and here's this Firce walking about mumbling all kinds of inappropriate things. Take me with you. Please!

(*Enter* PISHCHIK.)

PISH. May I have the pleasure of a little waltz, dear lady . . . ? (LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA *goes to him.*) But all the same, you wonderful woman, I must have 180 little rubles from you. . . . I must. . . . (*They dance.*) 180 little rubles. . . . (*They go through into the drawing-room.*)

YASHA (*sings softly*),

"Oh, will you understand
My soul's deep restlessness?"

(*In the drawing-room a figure in a gray top-hat and in baggy check trousers is waving its hands; and there are cries of "Bravo,* CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA!")

DUN. (*stops to powder her face*). The young mistress tells me to dance—there are lots of gentlemen, but few ladies—and my head whirls when I dance, and my heart beats, Firce Nikolaievitch; the Post office clerk told me something just now that almost took my breath away. (*The music grows faint.*)

FIRCE. What did he tell you?

DUN. He says, "You're like a little flower."

YASHA (*yawns*). Impolite. . . . (*Exit.*)

DUN. Like a little flower. I'm such a delicate girl; I simply love tender words.

FIRCE. You'll lose your head.

(*Enter* YEPIKHODOFF.)

YEP. You, Avdotya Fyodorovna, are about as anxious to see me as if I were some insect. (*Sighs.*) Oh, life!

DUN. What do you wish?

YEP. Perhaps, doubtless, you may be right. (*Sighs.*) But, certainly, if you consider the matter in that light, then you, if I may say so, and you must excuse my candidness, have absolutely reduced me to the state of mind in which I find myself. I know my fate. Every day something unfortunate happens to me, and I've grown used to it a long time ago. I never look at my fate with a smile. You gave me your word, and though I. . . .

DUN. Please, we'll talk later on, but leave me alone now. I'm thinking now. (*Fans herself.*)

YEP. Every day something unfortunate happens to me, and I, if I may so express myself, only smile, and even laugh.

(VARYA *enters from the drawing-room.*)

VARYA. Haven't you gone yet, Semyon? You really have no respect for anybody. (*To* DUNYASHA.) Go away, Dunyasha. (*To* YEPIKHODOFF.) You play billiards and break a cue, and stroll about the drawing-room as if you were a visitor!

YEP. You cannot, if I may say so, call me to order.

VARYA. I'm not calling you to order, I'm only telling you. You just walk about from place to place and never do your work. Goodness only knows why we keep a clerk.

YEP. (*offended*). Whether I work, or walk about, or eat, or play billiards, is only a matter to be settled by people of understanding and my elders.

VARYA. You dare talk to me like that! (*Furious.*) You dare? You mean to insinuate that I know nothing? Go away! This minute!

YEP. (*nervous*). I must ask you to express yourself more delicately.

VARYA (*beside herself*). Get out this minute. Get out! (*He goes to the door, she follows.*) Two-and-twenty troubles! Not another sign of you here! I don't wish to set eyes on you again! (YEPIKHODOFF *has gone out; his voice can be heard outside: "I'll make a complaint against you."*) What, coming back? (*Snatches up the stick left by* FIRCE *near the door.*) Go . . . go . . . go. I'll show you . . . Are you going? Are you going? Well, then take that. (*She lashes out with the stick as* LOPAKHIN *enters.*)

LOP. Much obliged.

VARYA (*angry but amused*). I'm sorry.

LOP. Never mind. I thank you for the pleasant reception you gave me!

VARYA. It isn't worthy of thanks. (*Walks away, then looks back and asks gently.*) I didn't hurt you, did I?

LOP. No, not at all. There'll be a huge bump, no more.

VOICES FROM THE DRAWING-ROOM. Lopakhin's returned! Yermolai Alexeievitch!

PISH. Now we'll see what there is to see and hear what there is to hear. . . . (*Kisses* LOPAKHIN.) You smell of brandy, my dashing soul. And we're all enjoying ourselves.

(*Enter* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA.)

LIUB. Is that you, Yermolai Alexeievitch? Why were you so long? Where's Leonid?

LOP. Leonid Andreievitch returned with me, he's coming. . . .

LIUB. (*excited*). Well, what? Is it sold? Tell me?

LOP. (*confused, afraid to show his pleasure*). The sale was over at four o'clock. . . . We missed the train, and had to wait till half-past nine. (*Sighs heavily*). Ooh! My head's swimming a little.

(*Enter* GAIEFF; *in his right hand he carries things that he has bought, with his left he dries his eyes.*)

LIUB. Leon, what's happened? Leon, well? (*Impatiently, in tears.*) Quick, for the love of God. . . .

GAI. (*says nothing to her, only waves his hand; to* FIRCE, *weeping*). Here, take this . . . Here are anchovies, herrings from Kertch. . . . I've had no food today. . . . I have had a time! (*The door from the billiard-room is open; the clicking of the balls is heard, and* YASHA'S *voice, "Seven, eighteen!"* GAIEFF'S

expression changes, he no longer cries.) I'm awfully tired. Let me change my clothes, Firce. (*Goes out through the drawing-room;* FIRCE *following him.*)

PISH. What happened? Come on, tell us!

LIUB. Is the cherry orchard sold?

LOP. It is sold.

LIUB. Who bought it?

LOP. I bought it. (*Pause.* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA *is overwhelmed; she would fall if she were not leaning against an armchair and a table.* VARYA *takes her keys off her belt, throws them on the floor into the middle of the room and goes out.*) I bought it! Wait, ladies and gentlemen, please, my head's going round, I can't talk. . . . (*Laughing.*) When we reached the sale, Deriganoff was there already. Leonid Andreievitch had only fifteen thousand rubles, and Deriganoff offered thirty thousand on top of the mortgage to begin with. I saw how matters stood, so I went right after him and bid forty. He raised his bid to forty-five, I offered fifty-five. That means he went up by fives and I went up by tens. . . . Well, it came to an end at last, I bid ninety more than the mortgage; and it stayed with me. The cherry orchard is mine now, mine! (*Roars with laughter.*) My God, my God, the cherry orchard's mine! Tell me I'm drunk, or crazy, or dreaming. . . . (*Stamps his feet.*) Don't laugh at me! If my father and grandfather rose from their graves and looked at the whole affair, and saw how their Yermolai, their whipped and illiterate Yermolai, who used to run barefoot in the winter, how that very Yermolai has bought an estate, the most beautiful spot in the world! I've bought the estate where my grandfather and my father were slaves, where they weren't even allowed to enter the kitchen. I'm asleep, it's only a dream, an illusion. . . . It's the fruit of imagination, wrapped in the fog of the unknown. . . . (*Picks up the keys, gaily smiling.*) She threw down the keys, she wished to show that she was no longer mistress here. . . . (*Jingles keys.*) Well, it's all one! (*Hears the band tuning up.*) Eh, musicians, play, I wish to hear you! Come and look at Yermolai Lopakhin swinging his ax against the cherry orchard, come and look at the trees falling! We'll build villas here, and our grandsons and great-grandsons will see a new life here. . . . Play on, music. (*The band plays.* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA *sinks into a chair and weeps bitterly.* LOPAKHIN *continues reproachfully.*) Why then, why didn't you take my advice? My poor, dear woman, you can't go back now. (*Weeps.*) Oh, if only the whole thing were finished, if only our uneven, unhappy lives were changed!

PISH. (*takes his arm; in an undertone*). She's crying. Let's go into the drawing-room and leave her by herself . . . come on . . . (*Takes his arm and leads him out.*)

LOP. What's that? Bandsmen, play up! Go on, do just as I wish you to! (*Ironically.*) The new owner, the owner of the cherry orchard is coming! (*He accidentally knocks up against a little table and nearly upsets the candelabra.*) I can pay for everything now! (*Exit with* PISHCHIK.)

(*In the reception-room and the drawing-room nobody remains except* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA, *who sits huddled up and weeping bitterly. The band plays softly.* ANYA *and* TROFIMOFF *come in quickly.* ANYA *goes up to her mother and kneels in front of her.* TROFIMOFF *stands at the drawing-room entrance.*)

ANYA. Mother! Mother, are you crying? My dear, kind, good mother, my

beautiful mother, I love you! Bless you! The cherry orchard is sold. We own it no longer, it's true. But don't cry, mother, you still have your life before you, you've still your beautiful pure soul. . . . Come with me, come, dear, away from here, come! We'll plant a new orchard more beautiful than this, and you'll see it, and you'll understand, and deep soothing joy will enfold your soul, like the evening sun, and you'll smile, mother! Come, dear, let's go!

ACT IV

Same as Act I. There are no curtains on the windows, no pictures; only a few pieces of furniture are left piled up in a corner as if for sale. The emptiness is apparent. There are bags and suitcases by the door that leads out of the house and at the back of the stage.

(*The door at the left is open; the voices of* VARYA *and* ANYA *can be heard through it.* LOPAKHIN *stands and waits.* YASHA *holds a tray with little glasses of champagne. Outside,* YEPIKHODOFF *is tying up a box. Voices are heard behind the stage. The peasants have come to say good-bye. The voice of* GAIEFF *is heard: "Thank you, brothers, thank you."*)

YASHA. The peasants have come to say good-bye. I am of the opinion, Yermolai Alexeievitch, that they're good people, but they don't understand very much.

(*The voices die away.* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA *and* GAIEFF *enter. She is not crying but is pale, and her face twitches; she can hardly speak.*)

GAI. You gave them your purse, Liuba. You can't go on like that, you can't!

LIUB. I couldn't help myself, I couldn't! (*They go out.*)

LOP. (*in the doorway, looking after them*). Please, I ask you most humbly! Just a little glass for farewell. I didn't remember to bring any from town and I found only one bottle at the station. Please, do! (*Pause.*) Won't you really have any? (*Goes away from the door.*) If I only knew—I wouldn't have bought any. Well, I shan't drink any, either. (YASHA *carefully puts the tray on a chair.*) You have a drink, Yasha, at any rate.

YASHA. To those departing! And good luck to those who stay behind! (*Drinks.*) I can assure you that this isn't real champagne.

LOP. Eight rubles a bottle. (*Pause.*) It's frightfully cold here.

YASHA. We made no fire today, since we're going away. (*Laughs.*)

LOP. What's the matter with you?

YASHA. I'm happy—that's all!

LOP. It's October, but it's as sunny and quiet as if it were summer. Good for building. (*Looking at his watch and speaking through the door.*) Ladies and gentlemen, please remember that it's only forty-seven minutes till train time! You must leave for the station in twenty minutes. Hurry up.

(TROFIMOFF, *in an overcoat, enters from the outside.*)

TROF. I think it's time we went. The carriages are waiting. Where the devil are my rubbers? They're lost. (*Through the door.*) Anya, I can't find my rub-

LOP. I have to go to Kharkoff. I'm going on the same train as you. I'm going to spend the whole winter in Kharkoff. I've been hanging around with you people. I am tired of doing nothing. I must have something to do with my hands; they seem to belong to a different person if I don't use them.

TROF. We'll go away now and then you'll start again on your useful occupations!

LOP. Have a glass?

TROF. No—thanks!

LOP. So you're off to Moscow now?

TROF. Yes. I'll see them into town and tomorrow I'm going to Moscow.

LOP. Yes . . . I suppose the professors aren't lecturing yet; they're waiting till you turn up!

TROF. That does not concern you.

LOP. How many years have you been going to the university?

TROF. Think of something new! This is old and trite! (*Looking for his rubbers.*) You know, we may not meet again, so just let me give you a parting bit of advice: Don't wave your hands about! Get rid of that habit of waving them about. And then, building villas and reckoning on their residents becoming freeholders in time—that's the same thing; it's all a matter of waving your hands . . . I like you in spite of everything . . . You've slender, delicate fingers, like those of an artist, and you've a gentle, refined soul. . . .

LOP. (*embraces him*). Good-bye, dear fellow. Thanks for all you've said. If you need money for the journey, let me give you some.

TROF. What for? I don't need any.

LOP. But you've nothing!

TROF. Yes, I have, thank you; I received some for a translation. Here it is in my pocket. (*Nervously.*) But I can't find my rubbers!

VARYA (*from the other room*). Take your rubbish away! (*Throws a pair of rubbers on stage.*)

TROF. Why are you angry, Varya? H'm! These aren't my rubbers!

LOP. In the spring I sowed three thousand acres of poppies, and now I've netted forty thousand rubles profit. Why turn up your nose at it? I'm just a simple peasant. . . . And when my poppies were in bloom, what a picture it was! So, as I was saying, I made forty thousand rubles, and I mean I'd like to lend you some, because I can afford it.

TROF. Your father was a peasant, mine was a druggist, and that means nothing at all. (LOPAKHIN *takes out his pocketbook.*) No, no . . . Even if you gave me twenty thousand I should refuse. I'm a free man. And everything that rich and poor alike value so highly carries no more weight with me than thistledown in a wind. I can do without you, I can pass you by. I'm strong and proud. Mankind goes on to the highest possible truths and happiness on earth, and I march in the front ranks!

LOP. Will you reach there?

TROF. I shall! (*Pause.*) I'll reach there and show the way to others. (*Axes cutting the trees are heard in the distance.*)

LOP. Well, good-bye, old man. It's time to go. Here we stand pulling one another's noses, but life goes its own way all the while. When I work for a

long stretch tirelessly, my thoughts become clearer and it seems to me that I understand the reasons for existence. But think, brother, how many people live in Russia without knowing why—? But all this is beside the point. Leonid Andreievitch, they say, has accepted a post in a bank; he will get six thousand rubles a year . . . But he won't stand it; he's very lazy.

ANYA (*at the door*). Mother asks if you will stop them cutting down the orchard until she has gone away.

TROF. Yes, really, you ought to have enough tact not to do that. (*Exit.*)

LOP. All right, all right . . . What funny people! (*Exit.*)

ANYA. Has Firce been sent to the hospital?

YASHA. I gave the order this morning. I suppose they've sent him.

ANYA (*to* YEPIKHODOFF, *who crosses the room*). Semyon Panteleievitch, please make inquiries if Firce has been sent to the hospital.

YASHA (*offended*). I told Yegor this morning. What's the use of asking ten times?

YEP. That old Firce, in my conclusive opinion, isn't worth mending; he had better join his ancestors. I only envy him. (*Puts a trunk on a hat-box and squashes it.*) Well, of course. I thought so! (*Exit.*)

YASHA (*grinning*). Two-and-twenty troubles.

VARYA (*behind the door*). Has Firce been taken away to the hospital?

ANYA. Yes.

VARYA. Why didn't they take the letter to the doctor?

ANYA. It'll have to be sent after him. (*Exit.*)

VARYA (*in the next room*). Where's Yasha? Tell him his mother has come and wishes to say good-bye to him.

YASHA (*waving his hand*). She'll make me lose all patience!

(DUNYASHA *meanwhile has been busying herself with the bags; now that* YASHA *is left alone, she goes to him.*)

DUN. If you would only look at me once, Yasha. You're going away, leaving me behind . . . (*Weeps and hugs him.*)

YASHA. What's the use of crying? (*Drinks champagne.*) In six days I'll be back again in Paris. Tomorrow we get into the express and off we go. I can hardly believe it. Vive la France! It doesn't suit me here, I can't live here . . . it's no good. Well, I've seen the uncivilized world; I have had enough of it. (*Drinks champagne.*) What are you crying for? Behave decently and then you'll have no cause for tears!

DUN. (*powders herself, looking in the mirror*). Write me from Paris! I loved you so much, Yasha, so much! I am a delicate girl, Yasha.

YASHA. Somebody's coming.

(*He bustles around the baggage, singing softly. Enter* LIUBOFF, ANDREIEVNA, GAIEFF, ANYA, *and* CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA.)

GAI. We'd better be off. There's no time to lose. (*Looks at* YASHA.) Somebody smells of herring!

LIUB. We needn't get into our carriages for ten minutes. (*Looks round the room.*) Good-bye, dear house, old grandfather. The winter will pass, the spring will come, and then you'll be here no more. You'll be pulled down. How much

these walls have seen! (*Passionately kisses her daughter.*) My treasure, you're radiant, your eyes flash like two jewels! Are you happy? Very?

ANYA. Very! A new life is beginning, mother!

GAI. (*gaily*). Yes, really, everything's all right now. Before the cherry orchard was sold we all were excited and worried, and then, when the question was solved once and for all, we all calmed down, and even became cheerful. I'm a bank official now, and a financier . . . red in the center; and you, Liuba, look better for some reason or other, there's no doubt about it.

LIUB. Yes. My nerves are better, it's true. (*She puts on her coat and hat.*) I sleep well. Take my baggage out, Yasha. It's time. (*To* ANYA.) My little girl, we'll soon see each other again . . . I'm off to Paris. I'll live there on the money your grandmother from Yaroslavl sent to buy the estate—bless her!—though it won't last long.

ANYA. You'll come back soon, soon, mother, won't you? I'll get ready, and pass the examination at the High School, and then I'll work and help you. We'll read all sorts of books together, won't we? (*Kisses her mother's hands.*) We'll read in the autumn evenings; we'll read many books, and a beautiful new world will open up before us . . . (*Thoughtfully.*) You'll come, mother. . . .

LIUB. I'll come, my darling. (*Embraces her.*)

(*Enter* LOPAKHIN. CHARLOTTA *is singing to herself.*)

GAI. Charlotta is happy; she's singing!

CHAR. (*takes a bundle, looking like a wrapped-up baby*). My little baby, bye-bye. (*The baby seems to answer, "Oua, oua!"*) Hush, my nice little boy. (*"Oua! Oua!"*) I'm so sorry for you! (*Throws the bundle back.*) So please find me a new place. I can't go on like this.

LOP. We'll find one, Charlotta Ivanovna, don't you be afraid.

GAI. Everybody's leaving us. Varya's going away . . . we've suddenly become unnecessary.

CHAR. I've nowhere to live in town. I must go away. (*Hums.*) Never mind.

(*Enter* PISHCHIK.)

LOP. The miracle of nature!

PISH. (*puffing*). Oh, let me get my breath again. I'm fagged . . . My honorable friends, give me some water . . .

GAI. Come for money did you? I'm your humble servant, and I'm going out of the way of temptation. (*Exit.*)

PISH. I haven't been here for ever so long . . . dear madam. (*To* LOPAKHIN.) You here? Glad to see you . . . man of tremendous brain . . . take this . . . take it . . . (*Gives* LOPAKHIN *money.*) Four hundred rubles . . . that leaves 841—

LOP. (*shrugs his shoulders in surprise*). It's like a dream. Where did you get this?

PISH. Stop . . . it's hot . . . A most unexpected thing happened. A group of Englishmen came along and found some white clay on my land. . . . (*To* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA.) And here's four hundred for you . . . beautiful lady . . . (*Gives her money.*) Give you the rest later . . . (*Drinks water.*) Just now a young man in the train was saying that some great philosopher advises

us all to jump from the roofs. "Jump!" he says, and that's all. (*Astonished.*) Just imagine! More water!

LOP. Who were these Englishmen?

PISH. I've leased the land with the clay to them for twenty-four years . . . Now, excuse me, I've no time. I must hurry or—I'll go to Gnoikoff—to Kardamanoff—I owe everybody— (*Drinks.*) Good-bye—I'll drop in Thursday.

LIUB. We're just starting off to town, and tomorrow I go abroad.

PISH. (*agitated*). What? Why to town? I see furniture . . . trunks . . . Well, never mind. (*Crying.*) Never mind. These Englishmen are men of tremendous intellect . . . Never mind . . . Be happy . . . God will help you . . . Never mind . . . Everything in this world comes to an end . . . (*Kisses* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA'S *hand.*) And if you should happen to hear that my end has come, just remember this old . . . horse and say: "There used to be a certain fellow called Semyonoff-Pishchik, God bless his soul. . . ." Wonderful weather . . . yes . . . (*Exit deeply moved, but returns at once and says in the door.*) Dashenka sent her love! (*Exit.*)

LIUB. Now we can go. I've two worries, though. The first is poor Firce. (*Looks at her watch.*) We've still five minutes . . .

ANYA. Mother, Firce has already been sent to the hospital. Yasha sent him off this morning.

LIUB. The second is Varya. She's used to getting up early and to work, and now she has no work to do, she's like a fish out of water. She's grown thin and pale, and she cries, poor thing. . . . (*Pause.*) You know very well, Yermolai Alexeievitch, that I hoped formerly to marry her to you, and I suppose you are going to marry somebody? (*Whispers to* ANYA, *who nods to* CHARLOTTA, *and they both go out.*) She loves you, she's your sort, and I don't understand, I really don't, why you seem to be keeping away from each other. I don't understand!

LOP. To tell the truth, I don't understand it myself. It's all so strange. . . . If there's still time, I'll be ready at once. Let's get it over, once and for all; I don't feel as if I could ever propose to her without you.

LIUB. Excellent. It'll take only a minute. I'll call her.

LOP. The champagne comes in very handy. (*Looking at the glass.*) They're empty, somebody's drunk them already. (YASHA *coughs.*) I call that licking it up. . . .

LIUB. (*animated*). Excellent. We'll go out. Yasha, *allez.* I'll call her . . . (*At the door.*) Varya, leave that and come here. Come! (*Exit with* YASHA.)

LOP. (*looks at his watch*). Yes . . . (*Pause.*)

(*There is a restrained laugh behind the door, a whisper, then* VARYA *comes in. She examines the luggage at length.*)

VARYA. I can't seem to find it . . .

LOP. What are you looking for?

VARYA. I packed it myself and I don't remember. (*Pause.*)

LOP. Where are you going now, Varvara Mikhailovna?

VARYA. I? To the Ragulins . . . I've accepted a position, to look after their household . . . housekeeper or something.

LOP. Is that at Yashnevo? It's about fifty miles. (*Pause.*) So life in this house is finished now. . . .

VARYA (*looking at the baggage*). Where is it? . . . perhaps I've put it away in the trunk . . . Yes, there'll be no more life in this house . . .

LOP. And I'm off to Kharkoff at once . . . by this train. I've a lot of business on hand. I'm leaving Yepikhodoff here . . . I've hired him.

VARYA. Well, well!

LOP. Last year at this time the snow was already falling, if you remember, and now it's nice and sunny. Only it's rather cold . . . There's three degrees of frost.

VARYA. I didn't look. (*Pause.*) And our thermometer's broken. . . . (*Pause.*)

VOICE AT THE DOOR. Yermolai Alexeievitch!

LOP. (*as if he has long been waiting to be called*). Just a minute. (*Exit quickly.* VARYA, *sitting on the floor, puts her face against a bundle of clothes and weeps gently. The door opens.* LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA *enters carefully.*)

LIUB. Well? (*Pause.*) We must go.

VARYA (*not crying now, wipes her eyes*). Yes, it's quite time, dear mother. I'll get to the Ragulins today, if I don't miss the train. . . .

LIUB. (*at the door*). Anya, put on your things. (*Enter* ANYA, *then* GAIEFF, *and* CHARLOTTA IVANOVNA. GAIEFF *wears a warm overcoat with a cape. A servant and drivers come in.* YEPIKHODOFF *bustles around the baggage.*) Now we can go away.

ANYA (*joyfully*). Away!

GAI. My friends, my dear friends! Can I be silent, in leaving this house forever?—can I restrain myself, in saying farewell, from expressing those feelings which now fill all my soul?

ANYA (*imploringly*). Uncle!

VARYA. Uncle, you shouldn't!

GAI. (*stupidly*). Double the red into the center . . . I'll be quiet.

(*Enter* TROFIMOFF, *then* LOPAKHIN.)

TROF. Well, it's time to go!

LOP. Yepikhodoff, my coat!

LIUB. I'll sit here one minute more. It's as if I'd never really noticed what the walls and ceilings of this house were like, and now I look at them greedily, with such tender love. . . .

GAI. I remember, when I was six years old, on Trinity Sunday, I sat at this window and looked and watched my father go to church. . . .

LIUB. Have all the things been taken away?

LOP. Yes, all, I think. (*To* YEPIKHODOFF, *putting on his coat.*) You see that everything's quite straight, Yepikhodoff.

YEP. (*hoarsely*). You may depend upon me, Yermolai Alexeievitch!

LOP. What's the matter with your voice?

YEP. I swallowed something just now; I was taking a drink of water.

YASHA (*suspiciously*). What manners . . .

LIUB. We go away, and not a soul remains behind.

LOP. Till the spring.

VARYA (*drags an umbrella out of a bundle, and seems to be waving it about.* LOPAKHIN *appears to be frightened*). What are you doing? . . . I never thought . . .

TROF. Come along, let's take our seats . . . it's time! The train will be in presently.

VARYA. Peter, here they are, your rubbers, by that trunk. (*In tears.*) And how old and dirty they are . . .

TROF. (*putting them on*). Come on!

GAI. (*deeply moved, nearly crying*). The train . . . the station . . . Cross in the center, a white double in the corner. . . .

LIUB. Let's go!

LOP. Are you all here? There's nobody else? (*Locks the side-door on the left.*) There's a lot of things in there. I must lock them up. Come!

ANYA. Good-bye, home! Good-bye, old life!

TROF. Welcome, new life. (*Exit with* ANYA. VARYA *looks round the room and goes out slowly.* YASHA *and* CHARLOTTA, *with her little dog, go out.*)

LOP. Till the spring then! Come on . . . till we meet again!

LIUBOFF ANDREIEVNA *and* GAIEFF *are left alone. They seem to have been waiting for this moment. They fall into each other's arms and sob restrainedly and quietly, fearing that somebody might hear them.*)

GAI. (*in despair*). My sister, my sister . . .

LIUB. My dear, my gentle, beautiful orchard! My life, my youth, my happiness, good-bye! Good-bye!

ANYA'S VOICE (*gaily*). Mother!

TROF.'S VOICE (*gaily, excited*). Coo-ee!

LIUB. To look at the walls and the windows for the last time . . . My late mother used to like to walk about this room . . .

GAI. My sister, my sister!

ANYA'S VOICE. Mother!

TROF.'S VOICE (*gaily, excited*). Coo-ee!

LIUB. We're coming! (*They go out. The stage is empty. The sound of keys turned in the locks is heard, and then the noise of the carriages driving off. It is quiet. Then the sound of an ax against the trees is heard in the silence sadly and staccato. Footsteps are heard.* FIRCE *comes in from the door on the right. He is dressed as usual, in a short jacket and white vest, with slippers on his feet. He is ill. He goes to the door and tries the handle.*)

FIRCE. It's locked. They've left. (*Sits on sofa.*) They've forgotten me. . . . Never mind, I'll sit here . . . And Leonid Andreievitch has probably gone in a light overcoat instead of putting on his fur coat . . . (*Sighs anxiously.*) I didn't see. . . . Oh, these young people! (*Mumbles something unintelligible.*) Life's gone on as if I'd never lived. (*Lying down.*) I'll lie down. . . . You've no strength left in you, nothing left at all. . . . Oh, you . . . bungler! (*He lies motionless. The distant sound is heard, as if from the sky, of a string breaking, dying away morosely. Silence follows it, and only the sound somewhere in the distance, of the ax falling on the trees, is audible.*)

POETRY

"THERE are more poems than there are islands in the Caribbean, or the Mediterranean; and they vary more in shape, size, color, contour, and human habitability." So writes Donald Stauffer in his essay on poetry which is reprinted on page 222. That rich variety is represented by the poems in this section. They offer the reader an exciting opportunity. His previous study of essays, stories, and plays will already have taught him much about the appreciation of poetry, but there remains the crucial question: What makes it poetry? When poets themselves are asked this question they give remarkably similar answers, even though their actual poems are quite dissimilar. They stress rhythm, metaphor, symbol, intuitive insight, intense feeling. They tell us that the poet has an intuitive understanding of the meaning of experience, that he embodies that understanding in a symbolic pattern of words which points to something beyond itself, and that his rhythmical language helps to relax our will and to make us sensitive to what the poem implies. Even down-to-earth poets like Carl Sandburg and Robert Frost talk in this fashion about poetry. "The figure a poem makes," says Frost, "begins in delight and ends in wisdom. The figure is the same as for love. . . . The line will have the more charm for not being mechanically straight. . . . Like a piece of ice on a hot stove the poem must ride on its own melting. A poem may be worked over once it is in being, but it may not be worried into being." (From *The Figure a Poem Makes.*) And Sandburg looks quizzically at those who think they have "explained away" the mystery of life and the creative imagination: "What is this borderland of dream and logic, of fantasy and reason, where the roots and tentacles of mind and personality float and drift into the sudden shaping of a flash resulting in a scheme, a form, a design, an invention, a machine, an image, a song, a symphony, a drama, a poem? There are those who believe they know—and those who hope they may yet know." (From *Notes to a Preface* in *Collected Poems.*)

All of this may make us wonder how we can consciously prepare ourselves to interpret a kind of writing that to some extent demands a surrender of conscious attention and analysis. The answer has two sides. In the first place, regardless of how sympathetically and uncritically we give ourselves to a poem, we cannot ever bring to it a mind that is completely free and unformed. Better, then, to clear the mind of wrong

expectations, and to store it with as many right ones as possible. In the second place, although no true poem can be "explained" or wholly translated into other terms than its own, still its effects, no matter how spontaneously composed, can be clarified and made more powerful by analysis. To put it another way, a poem needs at least three readings: one in which we let it work its will upon us, a second in which we try to discover how its effects are achieved and organized, and a third in which we return with a mind prepared by study—prepared not to read into the poem meanings that are not there, but to read out of it whatever we may have missed at first.

The initial reading itself may be more rewarding, as we have observed, if we prepare our minds by preliminary reflection about those qualities of language, like rhythm and metaphor, which assume a different or more concentrated form in poetry than in other kinds of literature. The fact that the rhythm of poetry is more regular than that of prose may lead us to expect wrongly, for example, that in the best poetry the rhythm will be perfectly regular. This wrong expectation will tend to keep us from hearing and liking unfamiliar rhythms, and from feeling how variations in rhythm help a poem do its work. Every poem has a metrical standard or norm which is established by the fact that a majority of the feet are of the same kind. (See page 1226 for definitions of metrical terms.) This prevailing pattern helps to bind the poem together and to control our attention. "The purpose of rhythm," suggested Yeats, "is to prolong the moment of contemplation, . . . to keep us in that state of perhaps real trance, in which the mind liberated from the pressure of the will is unfolded in symbols." Variations from the norm may be a pleasure in themselves; they may delight us as does any music that is more complex than the regular beat of a tom-tom. Also, since variations are a denial of the expectations set up by the metrical norm, they may be used to emphasize important words and phrases. A heavy accent has extra stress when it appears out of order unexpectedly. As an example, listen to "loud" in these lines from Frost's "The Oven Bird": "There is a singer everyone has heard, / Loud, a mid-summer and a mid-wood bird." Related to rhythm are the patterns of sound produced by rhyme and the counterplay of vowels and consonants. These patterns may also serve to diminish or accentuate other elements in the poem, to bind it together as a whole or in a series of formal parts, and to work like incantation and ritual on our deeper faculties. A candid discussion of rhythm and sound in poetry must admit that any

analysis of them is certain to be inexact at best. No system for noting rhythm does justice to the rich flexibility of the speaking voice. Ears vary in acuteness, too, so that there is likely to be debate about the scansion of many lines. Terms and concepts for the discussion of sound are inadequate. Despite these handicaps, however, we may read poetry more fully and accurately if we free our minds of any mistaken expectation that the best poetry is always the "prettiest" sounds in the most regular rhythm, and if we make an initially conscious investigation of the great variety of sounds and metrical effects that are organized by good poets. Some of the possibilities along this line are suggested in the study questions.

Metaphor is a subject with which we are already familiar from the essays on language by Mencken, Orwell, and Richards. We also know that a whole story or a play may be metaphoric in the sense that it is a symbol pointing to some general meaning beyond itself. Poems are likely to contain more metaphors than stories or plays, and as general symbols they are frequently more compressed and intense. The language of poetry, said Shelley, "is vitally metaphorical; that is, it marks the before unapprehended relations of things and perpetuates their apprehension." Sometimes the poet makes sure by a fairly explicit comment that we will understand that his word-picture is also a sign for something deeper. "The question that he frames in all but words," concludes Robert Frost about the oven bird, "Is what to make of a diminished thing." This assures us that we were right in sensing that the earlier lines describing the bird and the seasons were interesting not only for their concreteness but also for their power to suggest and define an attitude toward change and decay. Helpful to the reader, also, are the words (*like, as,* and so on) which announce that what follows is comparative rather than literal. A familiar illustration is Keats' sonnet "On First Looking into Chapman's Homer." Keats says that he felt *like* a traveler, an astronomer, and an explorer; and we understand at once that the poem is really about the excitement of discovery, which is not named in so many words but which is implied by the comparable experiences. Only a hasty reader, likewise, will conclude that Donne's "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" is about death. He will notice the first word, *As,* and see that the parting of the speaker and his mistress is being defined by comparing it with the imperceptible death of a virtuous man. And as he reads on he will continue to make use of the comparison, reflecting, for example, that the lovers can part without "tear-floods" because, like the virtuous

man, they prize what cannot be wholly lost by physical separation. Less easy to interpret, perhaps because we meet them less frequently in matter-of-fact prose, are unannounced comparisons or metaphors. "So let us melt and make no noise," continues Donne, and we may be puzzled at first by the word *melt* in place of the expected *part*. Then we see that *melt* is pointing, as do the other aspects of the poem, toward the implied subject: the silent parting of the lovers, which is not a break but merely a change of state, like a solid becoming liquid.

Hardest of all for many readers to understand are poems composed of elaborated metaphors which are connected psychologically but are not accompanied by explicit logical comment. Poems of this sort are the chief basis for the charge that much poetry, especially modern poetry, is obscure. Once again, however, the obscurity may be due in part to the fact that the reader comes to the poem with the wrong expectations. It is with this in mind that T. S. Eliot describes "the difficulty caused by the author's having left out something which the reader is used to finding; so that the reader, bewildered, gropes about for what is absent, and puzzles his head for a kind of 'meaning' which is not there, and is not meant to be there." Eliot observes that at the moment when such a reader needs to be most receptive and sensitive he becomes rigid with irritation and spectator-fright. Eliot counsels the reader to relax and not to bother about understanding immediately. To this good advice may be added the working principle that a useful approach to poems without a clear plot or argument is through their metaphors. What are the main images? How do they grow, change, and flow into each other? What are their major implications? An example is Yeats' "Sailing to Byzantium." The speaker is clearly enough an old man choosing between *"That . . .* country" of the first line and Byzantium, but this geography is not to be found on any globe or map. Only the images tell us where we are. The country that is not for old men is the summertime of love, of procreation, and so of mortal change and death. Its opposite, the only recourse for men who are too old for love and tired of flux, is the eternal artifice of art, represented by the mosaics of Byzantium and by the metallic birds singing on the golden trees in the Emperor's garden. Once these major images appear, others spring into sight and form meaningful relationships. We may now, for example, begin to see a structural pattern running through the mating birds of the second line, the scarecrow of stanza two which frightens away such birds and then arises to its own spiritual life, the spiral flight or gyre of stanza three, and the

golden birds of the last stanza. Is it surprising that anything so intense and concentrated as a poem of this kind should puzzle the casual spectator but should prove to be alive with meaning and pleasure for the devoted reader?

When we try in these different ways to discover how the effects of a poem are achieved and organized we may notice that we are constructing an imaginary set of choices or revisions behind the finished work. We are asking ourselves why the poet chose this word rather than that one, why he preferred one verbal pattern to another. Mr. Stauffer gives an example of this kind of approach to poetry in his interpretation of one of Housman's poems. We do something like this, too, whenever we contrast different poems on the same subject. That this is a natural and useful approach is further demonstrated by the manuscript of any poem which has been "worked over," as Frost puts it. A dramatic illustration is provided by the manuscript revisions of Keats' "The Eve of St. Agnes," of which sample stanzas are reprinted on page 1084. This is a poem that has been greatly admired for its verbal magic. The phrasing is so perfect that it gives the impression of having been composed in a flash of inspiration. As we watch Keats at work, however, we may be surprised at the extent to which the "meaning" or "beauty" of the poem turns out to be the result of the way many small prosaic problems are solved. The finding of the right words goes hand in hand with the poet's continual redefinition of his intention. One of the "magical" lines is 213 of stanza 24: "As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked wings." Here is how it was achieved:

~~As is the wing of evening tiger moths;~~
As is the tiger moths ~~rich~~ deep ~~sunset damasked~~ wings

The progress of the revision is clearly in the direction of more exact and suggestive phrasing (as "damasked" replaces "evening") and of richer sound effects (as the alliteration of "deep-damasked" is finally preferred to "deep sunset"). Even relatively prosaic or transitional lines often cost Keats a good deal of effort. Line 226, "Anon his heart revives: her vespers done," went through this pattern of revision.

~~But soon~~ his heart revives—her ~~prayers said~~
Anon ~~soon~~ ing done

Apparently Keats was dissatisfied with "prayers" because for the sake of the rhythm he wanted a word with two distinct syllables. This led finally to "vespers," which has the added advantage of being the more

exact word, since it tells the time of the day and has precise religious connotations. In general, as we try to unravel the order and reasons behind Keats' revisions we get a more vivid understanding of what is going on in the poem. During the time of analysis, the poetic magic is of course broken; but if we then return and give the whole poem an uninterrupted hearing the spell will be the stronger.

MICHAEL DRAYTON (1563-1631)

Since There's No Help, Come Let Us Kiss and Part

Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part;
Nay, I have done, you get no more of me,
And I am glad, yea glad with all my heart
That thus so cleanly I myself can free;
Shake hands forever, cancel all our vows,
And when we meet at any time again,
Be it not seen in either of our brows
That we one jot of former love retain.
Now at the last gasp of love's latest breath,
When, his pulse failing, passion speechless lies,
When faith is kneeling by his bed of death,
And innocence is closing up his eyes,
Now if thou wouldst, when all have given him over,
From death to life thou mightst him yet recover.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)

Sonnets

18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?
Thou art more lovely and more temperate.
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,
And summer's lease hath all too short a date.
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,
And often is his gold complexion dimmed.
And every fair from fair sometime declines,
By chance or nature's changing course untrimmed.

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,
Nor lose possession of that fair thou owest,
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st.
  So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
  So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

29

When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes
I all alone beweep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf Heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featured like him, like him with friends possessed,
Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least—
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at Heaven's gate.
  For thy sweet love remembered such wealth brings
  That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

30

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste.
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since cancèled woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanished sight.
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of forebemoanèd moan,
Which I new-pay as if not paid before.
  But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
  All losses are restored and sorrows end.

33

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountaintops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy,
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
With ugly rack on his celestial face
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace.
Even so my sun one early morn did shine
With all-triumphant splendor on my brow.

But out, alack! he was but one hour mine,
The region cloud hath masked him from me now.
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;
Suns of the world may stain when heaven's sun staineth.

66

Tired with all these, for restful death I cry,
As, to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimmed in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded honor shamefully misplaced,
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,
And strength by limping sway disabled,
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly, doctorlike, controlling skill,
And simple truth miscalled simplicity,
And captive good attending captain ill.
Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,
Save that, to die I leave my love alone.

73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the west,
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie
As the deathbed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourished by.
This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
Oh no! It is an ever-fixèd mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken.
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come.
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.

If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

129

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
Is lust in action, and till action, lust
Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust,
Enjoyed no sooner but despisèd straight,
Past reason hunted, and no sooner had,
Past reason hated, as a swallowed bait,
On purpose laid to make the taker mad.
Mad in pursuit, and in possession so,
Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme,
A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe.
Before, a joy proposed, behind, a dream.
All this the world well knows, yet none knows well
To shun the Heaven that leads men to this Hell.

130

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun,
Coral is far more red than her lips' red.
If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun,
If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
I have seen roses damasked, red and white,
But no such roses see I in her cheeks.
And in some perfumes is there more delight
Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
That music hath a far more pleasing sound.
I grant I never saw a goddess go,
My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground.
And yet, by Heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.

146

Poor soul, the center of my sinful earth,
My sinful earth, these rebel powers that thee array,
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,
Eat up thy charge? Is this thy body's end?
Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
And let that pine to aggravate thy store.
Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross,
Within be fed, without be rich no more.
So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
And Death once dead, there's no more dying then.

JOHN DONNE (1573?-1631)

A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning

As virtuous men pass mildly away,
  And whisper to their souls to go,
Whilst some of their sad friends do say,
  "The breath goes now," and some say,
    "No,"

So let us melt and make no noise,
  No tear-floods nor sigh-tempests move;
'Twere profanation of our joys
  To tell the laity our love.

Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears;
  Men reckon what it did and meant;
But trepidation of the spheres,
  Though greater far, is innocent.

Dull sublunary lovers' love,
  Whose soul is sense, cannot admit
Absence, because it doth remove
  Those things which elemented it.

But we by a love so much refin'd
  That ourselves know not what it is,
Interassurèd of the mind,
  Care less eyes, lips, and hands to miss.

Our two souls, therefore, which are one,
  Though I must go, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
  Like gold to airy thinness beat.

If they be two, they are two so
  As stiff twin compasses are two;
Thy soul, the fix'd foot, makes no show
  To move, but doth if th' other do.

And though it in the center sit,
  Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans and hearkens after it,
  And grows erect as that comes home.

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,
  Like th' other foot, obliquely run;
Thy firmness makes my circle just,
  And makes me end where I begun.

The Sun Rising

Busy old fool, unruly sun,
  Why dost thou thus
Through windows and through curtains call on us?
Must to thy motions lovers' seasons run?
  Saucy, pedantic wretch, go chide
  Late schoolboys and sour prentices,
Go tell court huntsmen that the king will ride,
Call country ants to harvest offices.
Love, all alike, no season knows nor clime,
Nor hours, days, months, which are the rags of time.

Thy beams, so reverend and strong
  Why shouldst thou think?
I could eclipse and cloud them with a wink,
But that I would not lose her sight so long.

If her eyes have not blinded thine,
Look, and tomorrow late tell me
Whether both th' Indias of spice and mine
Be where thou left'st them, or lie here with me;
Ask for those kings whom thou saw'st yesterday,
And thou shalt hear: All here in one bed lay.

She's all states, and all princes I;
Nothing else is.
Princes do but play us; compar'd to this,
All honor's mimic, all wealth alchemy.
Thou, sun, art half as happy's we,
In that the world's contracted thus;
Thine age asks ease, and since thy duties be
To warm the world, that's done in warming us.
Shine here to us, and thou art everywhere;
This bed thy center is, these walls thy sphere.

Break of Day

'Tis true, 'tis day. What though it be?
O, wilt thou therefore rise from me?
Why should we rise because 'tis light?
Did we lie down because 'twas night?
Love, which in spite of darkness brought us hither,
Should in despite of light keep us together.

Light hath no tongue, but is all eye;
If it could speak as well as spy,
This were the worst that it could say:
That being well I fain would stay,
And that I lov'd my heart and honor so,
That I would not from him that had them go.

Must business thee from hence remove?
O, that's the worst disease of love;
The poor, the foul, the false, love can
Admit, but not the busied man.
He which hath business and makes love, doth do
Such wrong as when a married man doth woo.

The Ecstasy

Where, like a pillow on a bed,
A pregnant bank swell'd up to rest
The violet's reclining head,
Sat we two, one another's best.

Our hands were firmly cemented
With a fast balm which thence did spring,
Our eye-beams twisted, and did thread
Our eyes upon one double string;

So t' intergraft our hands, as yet
Was all the means to make us one,
And pictures on our eyes to get
Was all our propagation.

As 'twixt two equal armies, fate
Suspends uncertain victory,
Our souls, which to advance their state
Were gone out, hung 'twixt her and me.

And whilst our souls negotiate there,
We like sepulchral statues lay;
All day the same our postures were,
And we said nothing all the day.

If any (so by love refin'd
That he soul's language understood,
And by good love were grown all mind)
Within convenient distance stood,

He (though he knew not which soul spake,
Because both meant, both spake the same)
Might thence a new concoction take,
And part far purer than he came.

This ecstasy doth unperplex,
We said, and tell us what we love;
We see by this it was not sex,
We see we saw not what did move;

But as all several souls contain
Mixture of things, they know not what,
Love these mix'd souls doth mix again,
And makes both one, each this and that.

A single violet transplant,
The strength, the color, and the size
(All which before was poor and scant)
Redoubles still and multiplies.

When love with one another so
Interanimates two souls,
That abler soul which thence doth flow
Defects of loneliness controls.

We then, who are this new soul, know
Of what we are compos'd and made,
For th' atomies of which we grow
Are souls, whom no change can invade.

But O, alas, so long, so far
Our bodies why do we forbear?
They're ours, though they're not we; we are
Th' intelligences, they the spheres;

We owe them thanks because they thus
Did us to us at first convey,
Yielded their forces, sense, to us,
Nor are dross to us, but allay.

On man heaven's influence works not so,
But that it first imprints the air;
So soul into the soul may flow
Though it to body first repair.

As our blood labors to beget
Spirits as like souls as it can,
Because such fingers need to knit
That subtile knot which makes us man,

So must pure lovers' souls descend
T' affections and to faculties
Which sense may reach and apprehend;
Else a great prince in prison lies.

T' our bodies turn we then, that so
Weak men on love reveal'd may look;
Love's mysteries in souls do grow,
But yet the body is his book.

And if some lover, such as we,
Have heard this dialogue of one,
Let him still mark us; he shall see
Small change when we're to bodies gone.

Holy Sonnets

7

At the round earth's imagin'd corners, blow
Your trumpets, angels, and arise, arise
From death, you numberless infinities
Of souls, and to your scatter'd bodies go,
All whom the flood did, and fire shall o'erthrow,
All whom war, dearth, age, agues, tyrannies,
Despair, law, chance hath slain, and you whose eyes
Shall behold God and never taste death's woe.
But let them sleep, Lord, and me mourn a space,
For if above all these my sins abound,
'Tis late to ask abundance of thy grace
When we are there. Here on this lowly ground
Teach me how to repent, for that's as good
As if thou'dst seal'd my pardon with thy blood.

9

If poisonous minerals, and if that tree
Whose fruit threw death on else immortal us,
If lecherous goats, if serpents envious
Cannot be damn'd, alas, why should I be?
Why should intent or reason, born in me,
Make sins, else equal, in me more heinous?
And mercy being easy and glorious
To God, in his stern wrath why threatens he?
But who am I that dare dispute with thee
O God? O! of thine only worthy blood
And my tears make a heavenly Lethean flood,
And drown in it my sins' black memory.
That thou remember them, some claim as debt;
I think it mercy if thou wilt forget.

10

Death, be not proud, though some have called thee
Mighty and dreadful, for thou art not so;
For those whom thou think'st thou dost overthrow
Die not, poor Death, nor yet canst thou kill me.
From rest and sleep, which but thy pictures be,
Much pleasure, then from thee much more must flow;
And soonest our best men with thee do go,
Rest of their bones and soul's delivery.
Thou'rt slave to fate, chance, kings, and desperate men,
And dost with poison, war, and sickness dwell;

And poppy or charms can make us sleep as well,
And better than thy stroke. Why swell'st thou then?
One short sleep pass'd, we wake eternally,
And death shall be no more. Death, thou shalt die.

GEORGE HERBERT (1593-1633)

Virtue

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky;
The dew shall weep thy fall tonight,
For thou must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye;
Thy root is ever in its grave,
And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie;
My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like seasoned timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to coal,
Then chiefly lives.

The Collar

I struck the board and cried, No more!
I will abroad.
What? Shall I ever sigh and pine?
My lines and life are free, free as the road,
Loose as the wind, as large as store.
Shall I be still in suit?
Have I no harvest but a thorn
To let me blood, and not restore
What I have lost with cordial fruit?
Sure there was wine
Before my sighs did dry it; there was corn
Before my tears did drown it.
Is the year only lost to me?
Have I no bays to crown it?
No flowers, no garlands gay? All blasted?
All wasted?
Not so, my heart! But there is fruit,
And thou hast hands.
Recover all thy sigh-blown age
On double pleasures. Leave thy cold dispute
Of what is fit and not. Forsake thy cage,
Thy rope of sands,
Which petty thoughts have made, and made to thee

Good cable, to enforce and draw,
And be thy law,
While thou didst wink and wouldst not see.
Away! Take heed!
I will abroad.
Call in thy death's head there. Tie up thy fears.
He that forbears
To suit and serve his need
Deserves his load.
But as I raved and grew more fierce and wild
At every word,
Me thoughts I heard one calling, Child!
And I replied, My Lord.

ANDREW MARVELL (1621-1678)

The Garden

How vainly men themselves amaze
To win the palm, the oak, or bays,
And their uncessant labors see
Crowned from some single herb or tree,
Whose short and narrow vergèd shade
Does prudently their toils upbraid;
While all flowers and all trees do close
To weave the garlands of repose.

Fair quiet, have I found thee here,
And innocence, thy sister dear!
Mistaken long, I sought you then
In busy companies of men;
Your sacred plants, if here below,
Only among the plants will grow.
Society is all but rude,
To this delicious solitude.

No white nor red was ever seen
So am'rous as this lovely green.
Fond lovers, cruel as their flame,
Cut in these trees their mistress' name;
Little, alas, they know or heed
How far these beauties hers exceed!
Fair trees! wheres' e'er your barks I wound,
No name shall but your own be found.

When we have run our passion's heat,
Love hither makes his best retreat.
The gods that mortal beauty chase,
Still in a tree did end their race:
Apollo hunted Daphne so,
Only that she might laurel grow;
And Pan did after Syrinx speed,
Not as a nymph, but for a reed.

What wond'rous life in this I lead!
Ripe apples drop about my head;
The luscious clusters of the vine
Upon my mouth do crush their wine;
The nectarine and curious peach
Into my hands themselves do reach;
Stumbling on melons as I pass,
Ensnared with flowers, I fall on grass.

Meanwhile the mind from pleasure less
Withdraws into its happiness;
The mind, that ocean where each kind
Does straight its own resemblance find,
Yet it creates, transcending these,
Far other worlds and other seas,
Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.

Here at the fountain's sliding foot,
Or at some fruit tree's mossy root,
Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide;

There like a bird it sits and sings,
Then whets, then combs its silver wings;
And till prepared for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.

Such was that happy garden-state,
While man there walked without a mate;
After a place so pure and sweet,
What other help could yet be meet!
But 'twas beyond a mortal's share
To wander solitary there;
Two paradises 'twere, in one,
To live in paradise alone.

How well the skillful gard'ner drew
Of flowers and herbs this dial new,
Where, from above, the milder sun
Does through a fragrant zodiac run;
And as it works, th' industrious bee
Computes its time as well as we.
How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckoned but with herbs and flowers?

To His Coy Mistress

Had we but world enough, and time,
This coyness, lady, were no crime.
We would sit down and think which way
To walk, and pass our long love's day;
Thou by the Indian Ganges' side
Shouldst rubies find; I by the tide
Of Humber would complain. I would
Love you ten years before the Flood;
And you should, if you please, refuse
Till the conversion of the Jews.
My vegetable love should grow
Vaster than empires, and more slow.
An hundred years should go to praise
Thine eyes, and on thy forehead gaze;
Two hundred to adore each breast,
But thirty thousand to the rest;
An age at least to every part,
And the last age should show your heart.
For, lady, you deserve this state,
Nor would I love at lower rate.
  But at my back I always hear
Time's wingèd chariot hurrying near;
And yonder all before us lie
Deserts of vast eternity.
Thy beauty shall no more be found,
Nor in thy marble vault shall sound
My echoing song; then worms shall try
That long preserved virginity,
And your quaint honor turn to dust,
And into ashes all my lust.
The grave's a fine and private place,
But none, I think, do there embrace.
  Now therefore, while the youthful hue
Sits on thy skin like morning glew,
And while thy willing soul transpires
At every pore with instant fires,
Now let us sport us while we may;
And now, like am'rous birds of prey,
Rather at once our time devour,
Than languish in his slow-chapped power.
Let us roll all our strength, and all
Our sweetness, up into one ball;
And tear our pleasures with rough strife
Through the iron gates of life.
Thus, though we cannot make our sun
Stand still, yet we will make him run.

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757-1827)

The Ecchoing Green

The Sun does arise,
And make happy the skies;
The merry bells ring
To welcome the Spring;
The skylark and thrush,
The birds of the bush,
Sing louder around
To the bells' cheerful sound,
While our sports shall be seen
On the Ecchoing Green.

Old John, with white hair,
Does laugh away care,
Sitting under the oak,
Among the old folk.
They laugh at our play,
And soon they all say:
"Such, such were the joys
"When we all, girls and boys,
"In our youth time were seen
"On the Ecchoing Green."

Till the little ones, weary,
No more can be merry;
The sun does descend,
And our sports have an end.
Round the laps of their mothers
Many sisters and brothers,
Like birds in their nest,
Are ready for rest,
And sport no more seen
On the darkening Green.

The Clod and the Pebble

"Love seeketh not itself to please,
  Nor for itself hath any care,
But for another gives its ease,
  And builds a heaven in hell's despair."

So sung a little clod of clay,
  Trodden with the cattle's feet,
But a pebble of the brook
  Warbled out these metres meet:

"Love seeketh only self to please,
  To bind another to its delight,
Joys in another's loss of ease,
  And builds a hell in heaven's despite."

The Tiger

Tiger, Tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, and what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand and what dread feet?

What the hammer? What the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? What dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And watered heaven with their tears,
Did He smile His work to see?
Did He who made the lamb make thee?

Tiger, Tiger, burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

Ah, Sunflower

Ah, Sunflower! weary of time,
Who countest the steps of the sun;
Seeking after that sweet golden clime
Where the traveller's journey is done:

Where the Youth pined away with desire,
And the pale Virgin shrouded in snow
Arise from their graves, and aspire
Where my Sunflower wishes to go.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850)

Lines

Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey, on Revisiting the Banks of the Wye During a Tour, July 13, 1798

Five years have past; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters! and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland murmur.—Once again
Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs,
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here, under this dark sycamore, and view
These plots of cottage-ground, these orchard-tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. Once again I see
These hedge-rows, hardly hedge-rows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild: these pastoral farms,
Green to the very door; and wreaths of smoke
Sent up, in silence, from among the trees!
With some uncertain notice, as might seem
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire
The Hermit sits alone.

These beauteous forms,
Through a long absence, have not been to me
As is a landscape to a blind man's eye:

But oft, in lonely rooms, and 'mid the din
Of towns and cities, I have owed to them,
In hours of weariness, sensations sweet,
Felt in the blood, and felt along the heart;
And passing even into my purer mind,
With tranquil restoration:—feelings too
Of unremembered pleasure: such, perhaps,
As have no slight or trivial influence
On that best portion of a good man's life,
His little, nameless, unremembered, acts
Of kindness and of love. Nor less, I trust,
To them I may have owed another gift,
Of aspect more sublime; that blessed mood,
In which the burthen of the mystery,
In which the heavy and the weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world,
Is lightened:—that serene and blessed mood,
In which the affections gently lead us on,—
Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
And even the motion of our human blood
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
In body, and become a living soul:
While with an eye made quiet by the power
Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
We see into the life of things.

If this
Be but a vain belief, yet, oh! how oft—
In darkness and amid the many shapes
Of joyless daylight; when the fretful stir
Unprofitable, and the fever of the world,
Have hung upon the beatings of my heart—
How oft, in spirit, have I turned to thee,
O sylvan Wye! thou wanderer thro' the woods,
How often has my spirit turned to thee!

And now, with gleams of half-extinguished thought
With many recognitions dim and faint,
And somewhat of a sad perplexity,
The picture of the mind revives again:
While here I stand, not only with the sense
Of present pleasure, but with pleasing thoughts
That in this moment there is life and food
For future years. And so I dare to hope,
Though changed, no doubt, from what I was when first
I came among these hills; when like a roe
I bounded o'er the mountains, by the sides
Of the deep rivers, and the lonely streams,
Wherever nature led: more like a man
Flying from something that he dreads than one
Who sought the thing he loved. For nature then

(The coarser pleasures of my boyish days,
And their glad animal movements all gone by)
To me was all in all.—I cannot paint
What then I was. The sounding cataract
Haunted me like a passion: the tall rock,
The mountain, and the deep and gloomy wood,
Their colours and their forms, were then to me
An appetite; a feeling and a love,
That had no need for a remoter charm,
By thought supplied, nor any interest
Unborrowed from the eye.—That time is past,
And all its aching joys are now no more,
And all its dizzy raptures. Not for this
Faint I, nor mourn nor murmur; other gifts
Have followed; for such loss, I would believe,
Abundant recompense. For I have learned
To look on nature, not as in the hour
Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
The still, sad music of humanity,
Nor harsh nor grating, though of ample power
To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
A presence that disturbs me with the joy
Of elevated thoughts; a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused,
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
A motion and a spirit, that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
And rolls through all things. Therefore am I still
A lover of the meadows and the woods,
And mountains; and of all that we behold
From this green earth; of all the mighty world
Of eye, and ear,—both what they half create,
And what perceive; well pleased to recognise
In nature and the language of the sense
The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse,
The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul
Of all my moral being.

Nor perchance,
If I were not thus taught, should I the more
Suffer my genial spirits to decay:
For thou art with me here upon the banks
Of this fair river; thou my dearest Friend,
My dear, dear Friend; and in thy voice I catch
The language of my former heart, and read
My former pleasures in the shooting lights
Of thy wild eyes. Oh! yet a little while
May I behold in thee what I was once,
My dear, dear Sister! and this prayer I make,

Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her; 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy: for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues,
Rash judgments, nor the sneers of selfish men,
Nor greetings where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings. Therefore let the moon
Shine on thee in thy solitary walk;
And let the misty mountain-winds be free
To blow against thee: and, in after years,
When these wild ecstasies shall be matured
Into a sober pleasure; when thy mind
Shall be a mansion for all lovely forms,
Thy memory be as a dwelling-place
For all sweet sounds and harmonies; oh! then,
If solitude, or fear, or pain, or grief
Should be thy portion, with what healing thoughts
Of tender joy wilt thou remember me,
And these my exhortations! Nor, perchance—
If I should be where I no more can hear
Thy voice, nor catch from thy wild eyes these gleams
Of past existence—wilt thou then forget
That on the banks of this delightful stream
We stood together; and that I, so long
A worshipper of Nature, hither came
Unwearied in that service: rather say
With warmer love—oh! with far deeper zeal
Of holier love. Nor wilt thou then forget
That after many wanderings, many years
Of absence, these steep woods and lofty cliffs,
And this green pastoral landscape, were to me
More dear, both for themselves and for thy sake!

The Solitary Reaper

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop here, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

No Nightingale did ever chaunt
More welcome notes to weary bands
Of travellers in some shady haunt,
Among Arabian sands:
A voice so thrilling ne'er was heard
In spring-time from the Cuckoo-bird,
Breaking the silence of the seas
Among the farthest Hebrides.

Will no one tell me what she sings?—
Perhaps the plaintive numbers flow
For old, unhappy, far-off things,
And battles long ago:
Or is it some more humble lay,
Familiar matter of today?
Some natural sorrow, loss, or pain,
That has been, and may be again?

Whate'er the theme, the Maiden sang
As if her song could have no ending;
I saw her singing at her work,
And o'er the sickle bending:—
I listened, motionless and still;
And, as I mounted up the hill,
The music in my heart I bore,
Long after it was heard no more.

The World Is Too Much with Us

The world is too much with us; late and soon,
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers:
Little we see in Nature that is ours;
We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon!
This Sea that bares her bosom to the moon;
The winds that will be howling at all hours,
And are up-gathered now like sleeping flowers;
For this, for everything, we are out of tune;
It moves us not —Great God! I'd rather be
A Pagan suckled in a creed outworn;
So might I, standing on this pleasant lea,
Have glimpses that would make me less forlorn;
Have sight of Proteus rising from the sea;
Or hear old Triton blow his wreathèd horn.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792-1822)

Ozymandias

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert . . . Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
And on the pedestal these words appear:
"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!"
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Ode to the West Wind

I

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
Pestilence-stricken multitudes. O thou,
Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
Each like a corpse within its grave, until
Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill
(Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air)
With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!

II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,
Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
On the blue surface of thine aery surge,
Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh, hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
Lulled by the coil of his crystàlline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O, Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

JOHN KEATS (1795-1821)

The Eve of St. Agnes

St. Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was!
The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;
The hare limped trembling through the frozen grass,
And silent was the flock in woolly fold:
Numb were the Beadsman's fingers, while he told
His rosary, and while his frosted breath,
Like pious incense from a censer old,
Seemed taking flight for heaven, without a death,
Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

His prayer he saith, this patient, holy man;
Then takes his lamp, and riseth from his knees,
And back returneth, meagre, barefoot, wan,
Along the chapel aisle by slow degrees:
The sculptured dead, on each side, seem to freeze,
Emprisoned in black, purgatorial rails:
Knights, ladies, praying in dumb orat'ries,
He passeth by; and his weak spirit fails
To think how they may ache in icy hoods and mails.

Northward he turneth through a little door,
And scarce three steps, ere Music's golden tongue
Flattered to tears this aged man and poor;
But no—already had his deathbell rung:
The joys of all his life were said and sung:
His was harsh penance on St. Agnes' Eve:
Another way he went, and soon among
Rough ashes sat he for his soul's reprieve,
And all night kept awake, for sinners' sake to grieve.

That ancient Beadsman heard the prelude soft;
And so it chanced, for many a door was wide,
From hurry to and fro. Soon, up aloft,
The silver, snarling trumpets 'gan to chide:
The level chambers, ready with their pride,
Were glowing to receive a thousand guests:
The carvèd angels, ever eager-eyed,
Stared, where upon their heads the cornice rests,
With hair blown back, and wings put cross-wise on their breasts.

At length burst in the argent revelry,
With plume, tiara, and all rich array,
Numerous as shadows haunting faerily
The brain, new stuffed, in youth, with triumphs gay
Of old romance. These let us wish away,

And turn, sole-thoughted, to one Lady there,
Whose heart had brooded, all that wintry day,
On love, and winged St. Agnes' saintly care,
As she had heard old dames full many times declare.

They told her how, upon St. Agnes' Eve,
Young virgins might have visions of delight,
And soft adorings from their loves receive
Upon the honeyed middle of the night,
If ceremonies due they did aright;
As, supperless to bed they must retire,
And couch supine their beauties, lily white;
Nor look behind, nor sideways, but require
Of Heaven with upward eyes for all that they desire.

Full of this whim was thoughtful Madeline:
The music, yearning like a God in pain,
She scarcely heard: her maiden eyes divine,
Fixed on the floor, saw many a sweeping train
Pass by—she heeded not at all: in vain
Came many a tiptoe, amorous cavalier,
And back retired; not cooled by high disdain,
But she saw not: her heart was otherwhere:
She sighed for Agnes' dreams, the sweetest of the year.

She danced along with vague, regardless eyes,
Anxious her lips, her breathing quick and short:
The hallowed hour was near at hand: she sighs
Amid the timbrels, and the thronged resort
Of whisperers in anger, or in sport;
'Mid looks of love, defiance, hate, and scorn,
Hoodwinked with faery fancy; all amort,
Save to St. Agnes and her lambs unshorn,
And all the bliss to be before tomorrow morn.

So, purposing each moment to retire,
She lingered still. Meantime, across the moors,
Had come young Porphyro, with heart on fire
For Madeline. Beside the portal doors,
Buttressed from moonlight, stands he, and implores
All saints to give him sight of Madeline,
But for one moment in the tedious hours,
That he might gaze and worship all unseen;
Perchance speak, kneel, touch, kiss—in sooth such things have been.

He ventures in: let no buzzed whisper tell:
All eyes be muffled, or a hundred swords
Will storm his heart, Love's fev'rous citadel:
For him, those chambers held barbarian hordes,
Hyena foemen, and hot-blooded lords,
Whose very dogs would execrations howl
Against his lineage: not one breast affords
Him any mercy, in that mansion foul,
Save one old beldame, weak in body and in soul.

Ah, happy chance! the agèd creature came,
Shuffling along with ivory-headed wand,
To where he stood, hid from the torch's flame,
Behind a broad hall-pillar, far beyond
The sound of merriment and chorus bland:
He startled her; but soon she knew his face,
And grasped his fingers in her palsied hand,
Saying, "Mercy, Porphyro! hie thee from this place:
"They are all here tonight, the whole blood-thirsty race!

"Get hence! get hence! there's dwarfish Hildebrand;
"He had a fever late, and in the fit
"He cursèd thee and thine, both house and land:
"Then there's that old Lord Maurice, not a whit
"More tame for his gray hairs—Alas me! flit!
"Flit like a ghost away."—"Ah, Gossip dear,
"We're safe enough; here in this arm-chair sit,
"And tell me how"—"Good Saints! not here, not here;
"Follow me, child, or else these stones will be thy bier."

He followed through a lowly archèd way,
Brushing the cobwebs with his lofty plume,
And as she mutter'd "Well-a—well-a-day!"
He found him in a little moonlight room,
Pale, latticed, chill, and silent as a tomb.
"Now tell me where is Madeline," said he,
"O tell me, Angela, by the holy loom
"Which none but secret sisterhood may see,
"When they St. Agnes' wool are weaving piously."

"St. Agnes! Ah! it is St. Agnes' Eve—
"Yet men will murder upon holy days:
"Thou must hold water in a witch's sieve,
"And be liege-lord of all the Elves and Fays,
"To venture so: it fills me with amaze
"To see thee, Porphyro!—St. Agnes' Eve!
"God's help! my lady fair the conjuror plays
"This very night: good angels her deceive!
"But let me laugh awhile, I've mickle time to grieve."

Feebly she laugheth in the languid moon,
While Porphyro upon her face doth look,
Like puzzled urchin on an agèd crone
Who keepeth closed a wond'rous riddle-book,
As spectacled she sits in chimney nook.
But soon his eyes grew brilliant, when she told
His lady's purpose; and he scarce could brook
Tears, at the thought of those enchantments cold,
And Madeline asleep in lap of legends old.

Sudden a thought came like a full-blown rose,
Flushing his brow, and in his painèd heart

Made purple riot: then doth he propose
A stratagem, that makes the beldame start:
"A cruel man and impious thou art:
"Sweet lady, let her pray, and sleep, and dream
"Alone with her good angels, far apart
"From wicked men like thee. Go, go!—I deem
"Thou canst not surely be the same that thou didst seem."

"I will not harm her, by all saints I swear,"
Quoth Porphyro: "O may I ne'er find grace
"When my weak voice shall whisper its last prayer,
"If one of her soft ringlets I displace,
"Or look with ruffian passion in her face:
"Good Angela, believe me by these tears;
"Or I will, even in a moment's space,
"Awake, with horrid shout, my foemen's ears,
"And beard them, though they be more fanged than wolves and bears."

"Ah! why wilt thou affright a feeble soul?
"A poor, weak, palsy-stricken, churchyard thing,
"Whose passing-bell may ere the midnight toll;
"Whose prayers for thee, each morn and evening,
"Were never missed."—Thus plaining, doth she bring
A gentler speech from burning Porphyro;
So woful, and of such deep sorrowing,
That Angela gives a promise she will do
Whatever he shall wish, betide her weal or woe.

Which was, to lead him, in close secrecy,
Even to Madeline's chamber, and there hide
Him in a closet, of such privacy
That he might see her beauty unespied,
And win perhaps that night a peerless bride,
While legioned faeries paced the coverlet,
And pale enchantment held her sleepy-eyed.
Never on such a night have lovers met,
Since Merlin paid his Demon all the monstrous debt.

"It shall be as thou wishest," said the Dame:
"All cates and dainties shall be storèd there
"Quickly on this feast-night: by the tambour frame
"Her own lute thou wilt see: no time to spare,
"For I am slow and feeble, and scarce dare
"On such a catering trust my dizzy head.
"Wait here, my child, with patience; kneel in prayer
"The while: Ah! thou must needs the lady wed,
"Or may I never leave my grave among the dead."

So saying, she hobbled off with busy fear.
The lover's endless minutes slowly passed;
The dame returned, and whispered in his ear
To follow her; with agèd eyes aghast
From fright of dim espial. Safe at last,

Through many a dusky gallery, they gain
The maiden's chamber, silken, hushed, and chaste;
Where Porphyro took covert, pleased amain.
His poor guide hurried back with agues in her brain.

Her falt'ring hand upon the balustrade,
Old Angela was feeling for the stair,
When Madeline, St. Agnes' charmèd maid,
Rose, like a missioned spirit, unaware:
With silver taper's light, and pious care,
She turned, and down the agèd gossip led
To a safe level matting. Now prepare,
Young Porphyro, for gazing on that bed;
She comes, she comes again, like ring-dove frayed and fled.

Out went the taper as she hurried in;
Its little smoke, in pallid moonshine, died:
She closed the door, she panted, all akin
To spirits of the air, and visions wide:
No uttered syllable, or, woe betide!
But to her heart, her heart was voluble,
Paining with eloquence her balmy side;
As though a tongueless nightingale should swell
Her throat in vain, and die, heart-stifled, in her dell.

A casement high and triple-arched there was,
All garlanded with carven imag'ries
Of fruits, and flowers, and bunches of knot-grass,
And diamonded with panes of quaint device,
Innumerable of stains and splendid dyes,
As are the tiger-moth's deep-damasked wings;
And in the midst, 'mong thousand heraldries,
And twilight saints, and dim emblazonings,
A shielded scutcheon blushed with blood of queens and kings.

Full on this casement shone the wintry moon,
And threw warm gules on Madeline's fair breast,
As down she knelt for heaven's grace and boon;
Rose-bloom fell on her hands, together prest,
And on her silver cross soft amethyst,
And on her hair a glory, like a saint:
She seemed a splendid angel, newly drest,
Save wings, for heaven:—Porphyro grew faint:
She knelt, so pure a thing, so free from mortal taint.

Anon his heart revives: her vespers done,
Of all its wreathèd pearls her hair she frees;
Unclasps her warmèd jewels one by one;
Loosens her fragrant bodice; by degrees
Her rich attire creeps rustling to her knees:

Half-hidden, like a mermaid in sea-weed,
Pensive awhile she dreams awake, and sees,
In fancy, fair St. Agnes in her bed,
But dares not look behind, or all the charm is fled.

Soon, trembling in her soft and chilly nest,
In sort of wakeful swoon, perplexed she lay,
Until the poppied warmth of sleep oppressed
Her soothèd limbs, and soul fatigued away;
Flown, like a thought, until the morrow-day;
Blissfully havened both from joy and pain;
Clasped like a missal where swart Paynims pray;
Blinded alike from sunshine and from rain,
As though a rose should shut, and be a bud again.

Stol'n to this paradise, and so entranced,
Porphyro gazed upon her empty dress,
And listened to her breathing, if it chanced
To wake into a slumberous tenderness;
Which when he heard, that minute did he bless,
And breathed himself: then from the closet crept,
Noiseless as fear in a wide wilderness,
And over the hushed carpet, silent, stept,
And 'tween the curtains peeped, where, lo!—how fast she slept.

Then by the bed-side, where the faded moon
Made a dim, silver twilight, soft he set
A table, and, half anguished, threw thereon
A cloth of woven crimson, gold, and jet:—
O for some drowsy Morphean amulet!
The boisterous, midnight, festive clarion,
The kettle-drum, and far-heard clarinet,
Affray his ears, though but in dying tone:—
The hall door shuts again, and all the noise is gone.

And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
In blanchèd linen, smooth, and lavendered,
While he from forth the closet brought a heap
Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
And lucent syrups, tinct with cinnamon;
Manna and dates, in argosy transferred
From Fez; and spicèd dainties, every one,
From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon.

These delicates he heaped with glowing hand
On golden dishes and in baskets bright
Of wreathèd silver: sumptuous they stand
In the retired quiet of the night,
Filling the chilly room with perfume light.—
"And now, my love, my seraph fair, awake!

"Thou art my heaven, and I thine eremite:
"Open thine eyes, for meek St. Agnes' sake,
"Or I shall drowse beside thee, so my soul doth ache."

Thus whispering, his warm, unnervèd arm
Sank in her pillow. Shaded was her dream
By the dusk curtains:—'twas a midnight charm
Impossible to melt as icèd stream:
The lustrous salvers in the moonlight gleam;
Broad golden fringe upon the carpet lies:
It seemed he never, never could redeem
From such a stedfast spell his lady's eyes;
So mused awhile, entoiled in woofèd phantasies.

Awakening up, he took her hollow lute,—
Tumultuous,—and, in chords that tenderest be,
He played an ancient ditty, long since mute,
In Provence called, "La belle dame sans merci:"
Close to her ear touching the melody;—
Wherewith disturbed, she utter'd a soft moan:
He ceased—she panted quick—and suddenly
Her blue affrayèd eyes wide open shone:
Upon his knees he sank, pale as smooth-sculptured stone.

Her eyes were open, but she still beheld,
Now wide awake, the vision of her sleep:
There was a painful change, that nigh expelled
The blisses of her dream so pure and deep
At which fair Madeline began to weep,
And moan forth witless words with many a sigh;
While still her gaze on Porphyro would keep;
Who knelt, with joinèd hands and piteous eye,
Fearing to move or speak, she looked so dreamingly.

"Ah, Porphyro!" said she, "but even now
"Thy voice was at sweet tremble in mine ear,
"Made tuneable with every sweetest vow;
"And those sad eyes were spiritual and clear:
"How changed thou art! how pallid, chill, and drear!
"Give me that voice again, my Porphyro,
"Those looks immortal, those complainings dear!
"Oh, leave me not in this eternal woe,
"For if thou diest, my Love, I know not where to go."

Beyond a mortal man impassioned far
At these voluptuous accents, he arose,
Ethereal, flushed, and like a throbbing star
Seen mid the sapphire heaven's deep repose;
Into her dream he melted, as the rose
Blendeth its odor with the violet,—
Solution sweet: meantime the frost wind blows
Like Love's alarum pattering the sharp sleet
Against the window panes; St. Agnes' moon hath set.

'Tis dark: quick pattereth the flaw-blown sleet:
"This is no dream, my bride, my Madeline!"
'Tis dark: the icèd gusts still rave and beat:
"No dream! alas! alas! and woe is mine!
"Porphyro will leave me here to fade and pine.—
"Cruel! what traitor could thee hither bring?
"I curse not, for my heart is lost in thine,
"Though thou forsakest a deceivèd thing;—
"A dove forlorn and lost with sick unprunèd wing."

"My Madeline! sweet dreamer! lovely bride!
"Say, may I be for aye thy vassal blest?
"Thy beauty's shield, heart-shaped and vermeil-dyed?
"Ah, silver shrine, here will I take my rest
"After so many hours of toil and quest,
"A famished pilgrim,—saved by miracle.
"Though I have found, I will not rob thy nest
"Saving of thy sweet self; if thou think'st well
"To trust, fair Madeline, to no rude infidel.

"Hark! 'tis an elfin storm from faery land,
"Of haggard seeming, but a boon indeed:
"Arise! arise! the morning is at hand;—
"The bloated wassaillers will never heed:—
"Let us away, my love, with happy speed;
"There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,—
"Drowned all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead:
"Awake! arise! my love, and fearless be,
"For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee."

She hurried at his words, beset with fears,
For there were sleeping dragons all around,
At glaring watch, perhaps, with ready spears—
Down the wide stairs a darkling way they found.—
In all the house was heard no human sound.
A chain-drooped lamp was flickering by each door;
The arras, rich with horseman, hawk, and hound,
Fluttered in the besieging wind's uproar;
And the long carpets rose along the gusty floor.

They glide, like phantoms, into the wide hall;
Like phantoms, to the iron porch, they glide;
Where lay the Porter, in uneasy sprawl,
With a huge empty flagon by his side:
The wakeful bloodhound rose, and shook his hide,
But his sagacious eye an inmate owns:
By one, and one, the bolts full easy slide;—
The chains lie silent on the footworn stones;—
The key turns, and the door upon its hinges groans.

And they are gone: aye, ages long ago
These lovers fled away into the storm.

That night the Baron dreamt of many a woe,
And all his warrior-guests, with shade and form
Of witch, and demon, and large coffin-worm,
Were long be-nightmared. Angela the old
Died palsy-twitched, with meagre face deform;
The Beadsman, after thousand avès told,
For aye unsought-for slept among his ashes cold.

From the manuscript of

The Eve of St. Agnes

[stanza 24, lines 208–216]

A 1 A Casement ~~ach'd~~ tripple archd and diamonded
2 With many coloured glass fronted the Moon
wereof
3 In midst ~~of which~~ a shilded scutcheon shed
4 High blushing gules: ~~upon she kneeled saintly~~ down
5 And inly prayed for grace and heavenly boon
6 The blood red gules fell on her silver cross
7 And ~~her~~ white(est) hands devout

There was
B 1 A Casement tipple archd and high
2 All garlanded with carven imageries
3 Of fruits & ~~trailing~~ flowers and sunny corn
ears parchd

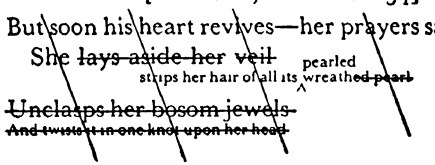
C 1 A Casement high and tripple archd there was
2 All gardneded with carven imageries
3 Of fruits and flowers and bunches of knot grass;
4 And diamonded with panes of quaint device
5 Innumerable of stains and splendid dies
sunset
As is the tger moths ~~rich~~ deep ~~damasked~~ wings
6 ~~As is the wing of evening tiger moths;~~
whereft thousand
7 ~~And~~ in ~~the~~ midst 'momg ~~man~~ heraldries
8 And ~~dim twilight~~ twilight saints and dim emblasonings
9 A shielded scutcheon blushd with Blood of Queens & Kings

[stanza 25, lines 217–225]

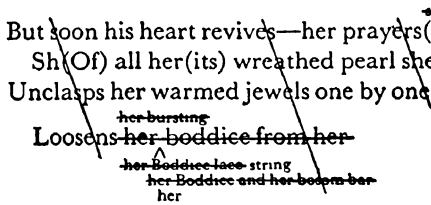
1 Full on this Casement shone the wintry moon
warm rich breast
2 And threw ~~red~~ gules on Madelines fair ~~face~~
3 As down she kneel'd for heavens grace and boon
fell
~~And~~ rose ~~with red~~ bloom on her hang togeth
4 ~~Tinging her pious~~ hands ~~together~~ prest

on her
5 And silver cross soft Amethyst
6 And on her hair a glory like a Saint's
7 Shee seem'd ~~like an immortal agel drest~~
silvery angel newly drest,
Lionel
8 Save wings, for heaven—~~Porphyro~~ grew faint
9 She knelt too pure a thing, too free from motal taint

[stanza 26, lines 226–234]



A 1 But soon his heart revives—her prayers said
2 She ~~lays aside her veil~~ strips her hair of all its pearled wreathed ~~pearl~~
3 ~~Unclasps her bosom jewels~~
~~And twists it in one knot upon her head~~



B 1 But soon his heart revives—her prayers ~~soon~~(ing) done,
2 Sh(Of) all her(its) wreathed pearl she strips her hair
3 Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one
4 Loosens ~~her boddice from her~~
~~her bursting~~
~~her Boddice lace~~ string
~~her Boddice and her bosom bar~~
her
[Here Keats begins a new sheet]
Loosens her fragrant ~~boddice~~ and doth bare
5 Her

26

Anon
C 1 ~~But soon~~ his heart revives—her praying done
frees
2 Of all its wreathéd pearl her hair she ~~strips~~
3 Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one
by degrees
~~to her knees~~
4 Loosens her fragrant boddice: ~~and down slips~~
5 Her sweet attire ~~falls light creeps down by~~
creeps rusteling to her knees
Mermaid in sea weed
6 Half hidden like a ~~Syren of the Sea~~
7 ~~And more melodious~~ dreaming
She stands awhile in thought, and sees
8 In fancy fair Saint Agnes in her bed
9 But dares not look behind or all the charm is ~~fled~~ dead

[stanza 27, lines 235–243]

1 ~~Then stepping forth she slips~~
nd
~~The charm fled not—she did not look behind,~~
But(Soon) trembling in her soft and chilly nest

a
~~She ly and had not seen her—~~
~~She lay, and as and till the poppied warmth of sleep~~
/She lay,/in sort of wakeful swoon perplext)
Util the poppied warmth of sleep opprest
Her soothed Limbs, and Soul fatigued away;
Flown like a thought until the morrow day;
Blisfully havend both from jory and pain
Clasped ~~shut clasped~~
~~Shut~~ like a Missal where swart paynims pray—
~~Dead to~~ Blinded alike from Sunshine and from rain
~~close~~ shut
As though a rose should ~~shut~~ and be a bud again

[stanza 28, lines 244–252]

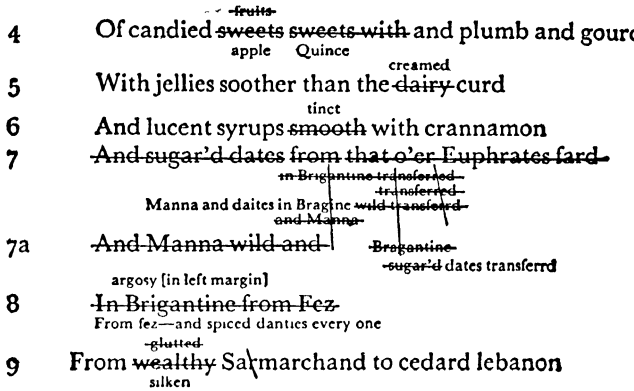
~~Her slumrous breathing~~
~~The listning Porphyro her breathing heard~~
~~And when~~
~~The entranced Porphyro stol'n to Paradise~~
Stol'n to this Paradize and so entrance'd
Porphyro
~~Porphyro~~ gazed upon her empty dress
And listen to her breathing, if it chanc'd
To wake into a slumbrous tenderness
Which when he heard ~~he breath'd himself~~
that minute did he bless
And breath'd himself: then from the closet crept
Silent
Noiseless ~~amid~~ in a wild(wide)
~~Silent~~ as Fear, ~~and ? not with~~ a wildeness
hush'd
And on(over) the ~~silent~~ carpet ~~hushing~~ silent stept
And 'tween the Curtains peep'd, and lo! how fast she slept

[stanza 29, lines 253–261]

Then ~~on~~ by the bed side where the fading Moon
Made an illumed twilight soft he set
and with anguish spread
A Table, ~~light, and stilly threw~~ theron
A Cloth of woven crimson gold and jet—
O for some drowy morphean amulet:
festive ~~Ball~~
The boisterous midnight Clarion\ of the ~~feast~~
~~Sounded though faint and far away~~
~~Came Sound in his ears~~
,And kettle drums and far heard clarinet
~~Reach'd his scar'd ears~~
in is
Affray'\ his ears though but ~~with~~ faintest tone\:
The Hall door shuts again and all the noise was(is) gone;

[stanza 30, lines 262–270]

~~But~~
~~And still she slept:~~
And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep
In blanched linen smooth and lavender'd;
While he from frorth the closet brought a heap



On First Looking into Chapman's Homer

Much have I travelled in the realms of gold,
And many goodly states and kingdoms seen;
Round many western islands have I been
Which bards in fealty to Apollo hold.
Oft of one wide expanse had I been told
That deep-browed Homer ruled as his demesne;
Yet did I never breathe its pure serene
Till I heard Chapman speak out loud and bold:
Then felt I like some watcher of the skies
When a new planet swims into his ken;
Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific—and all his men
Looked at each other with a wild surmise—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

Ode on Melancholy

I

No, no, go not to Lethe, neither twist
Wolf's bane, tight-rooted, for its poisonous wine;
Nor suffer thy pale forehead to be kissed
By nightshade, ruby grape of Proserpine;
Make not your rosary of yew-berries,
Nor let the beetle, nor the death-moth be
Your mournful Psyche, nor the downy owl

A partner in your sorrow's mysteries;
For shade to shade will come too drowsily,
And drown the wakeful anguish of the soul.

II

But when the melancholy fit shall fall
Sudden from heaven like a weeping cloud,
That fosters the droop-headed flowers all,
And hides the green hill in an April shroud;
Then glut thy sorrow on a morning rose,
Or on the rainbow of the salt sand-wave,
Or on the wealth of globèd peonies;
Or if thy mistress some rich anger shows,
Emprison her soft hand, and let her rave,
And feed deep, deep upon her peerless eyes.

III

She dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die;
And Joy, whose hand is ever at his lips
Bidding adieu; and aching Pleasure nigh,
Turning to Poison while the bee-mouth sips:
Ay, in the very temple of delight
Veiled Melancholy has her sovran shrine,
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine;
His soul shall taste the sadness of her might,
And be among her cloudy trophies hung.

To Autumn

I

Season of mists and mellow fruitfulness,
Close bosom-friend of the maturing sun;
Conspiring with him how to load and bless
With fruit the vines that round the thatch-eves run;
To bend with apples the mossed cottage-trees,
And fill all fruit with ripeness to the core;
To swell the gourd, and plump the hazel shells
With a sweet kernel; to set budding more,
And still more, later flowers for the bees,
Until they think warm days will never cease,
For Summer has o'er-brimmed their clammy cells.

II

Who hath not seen thee oft amid thy store?
Sometimes whoever seeks abroad may find

Thee sitting careless on a granary floor,
Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reaped furrow sound asleep,
Drows'd with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twinèd flowers:
And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook;
Or by a cyder-press, with patient look,
Thou watchest the last oozings hours by hours.

III

Where are the songs of Spring? Ay, where are they?
Think not of them, thou hast thy music too,—
While barrèd clouds bloom the soft-dying day,
And touch the stubble-plains with rosy hue;
Then in a wailful choir the small gnats mourn
Among the river sallows, borne aloft
Or sinking as the light wind lives or dies;
And full-grown lambs loud bleat from hilly bourn;
Hedge-crickets sing; and now with treble soft
The red-breast whistles from a garden-croft;
And gathering swallows twitter in the skies.

Ode on a Grecian Urn

I

Thou still unravished bride of quietness,
Thou foster-child of silence and slow time,
Sylvan historian, who canst thus express
A flowery tale more sweetly than our rhyme:
What leaf-fringed legend haunts about thy shape
Of deities or mortals, or of both,
In Tempe or the dales of Arcady?
What men or gods are these? What maidens loth?
What mad pursuit? What struggle to escape?
What pipes and timbrels? What wild ecstasy?

II

Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone:
Fair youth, beneath the trees, thou canst not leave
Thy song, nor ever can those trees be bare;
Bold Lover, never, never canst thou kiss,
Though winning near the goal—yet, do not grieve;
She cannot fade, though thou hast not thy bliss,
For ever wilt thou love, and she be fair!

III

Ah, happy, happy boughs! that cannot shed
  Your leaves, nor ever bid the Spring adieu;
And, happy melodist, unwearièd,
  For ever piping songs for ever new;
More happy love; more happy, happy love!
  For ever warm and still to be enjoyed,
    For ever panting, and for ever young;
All breathing human passion far above,
  That leaves a heart high-sorrowful and cloyed,
    A burning forehead, and a parching tongue.

IV

Who are these coming to the sacrifice?
  To what green altar, O mysterious priest,
Lead'st thou that heifer lowing at the skies,
  And all her silken flanks with garlands drest?
What little town by river or sea shore,
  Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,
    Is emptied of this folk, this pious morn?
And, little town, thy streets for evermore
  Will silent be; and not a soul to tell
    Why thou art desolate, can e'er return.

V

O Attic shape! Fair attitude! with brede
  Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
  Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
  When old age shall this generation waste,
    Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe
Than ours, a friend to man, to whom thou say'st,
  "Beauty is truth, truth beauty,"—that is all
    Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

Ode to a Nightingale

I

My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
  My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
Or emptied some dull opiate to the drains
  One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
  But being too happy in thine happiness,—
    That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees,
      In some melodious plot

Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singest of summer in full-throated ease.

II

O, for a draught of vintage! that hath been
Cooled a long age in the deep-delved earth,
Tasting of Flora and the country green,
Dance, and Provençal song, and sunburnt mirth!
O for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene,
With beaded bubbles winking at the brim,
And purple-stainèd mouth;
That I might drink, and leave the world unseen,
And with thee fade away into the forest dim:

III

Fade far away, dissolve, and quite forget
What thou among the leaves hast never known,
The weariness, the fever, and the fret
Here, where men sit and hear each other groan;
Where palsy shakes a few, sad, last gray hairs,
Where youth grows pale, and spectre-thin, and dies;
Where but to think is to be full of sorrow
And leaden-eyed despairs,
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes,
Or new Love pine at them beyond tomorrow.

IV

Away! away! for I will fly to thee,
Not chariotèd by Bacchus and his pards,
But on the viewless wings of Poesy,
Though the dull brain perplexes and retards:
Already with thee! tender is the night,
And haply the Queen-Moon is on her throne,
Cluster'd around by all her starry Fays;
But here there is no light,
Save what from heaven is with the breezes blown
Through verdurous glooms and winding mossy ways.

V

I cannot see what flowers are at my feet,
Nor what soft incense hangs upon the boughs,
But, in embalmèd darkness, guess each sweet
Wherewith the seasonable month endows
The grass, the thicket, and the fruit-tree wild;
White hawthorn, and the pastoral eglantine;
Fast fading violets covered up in leaves;
And mid-May's eldest child,
The coming musk-rose, full of dewy wine,
The murmurous haunt of flies on summer eves.

VI

Darkling I listen; and, for many a time
I have been half in love with easeful Death,
Call'd him soft names in many a mused rhyme,
To take into the air my quiet breath;
Now more than ever seems it rich to die,
To cease upon the midnight with no pain,
While thou art pouring forth thy soul abroad
In such an ecstasy!
Still wouldst thou sing, and I have ears in vain—
To thy high requiem become a sod.

VII

Thou wast not born for death, immortal Bird!
No hungry generations tread thee down;
The voice I hear this passing night was heard
In ancient days by emperor and clown:
Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for home,
She stood in tears amid the alien corn;
The same that oft-times hath
Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

VIII

Forlorn! the very word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self!
Adieu! the fancy cannot cheat so well
As she is fam'd to do, deceiving elf.
Adieu! adieu! thy plaintive anthem fades
Past the near meadows, over the still stream,
Up the hill-side; and now 'tis buried deep
In the next valley-glades:
Was it a vision, or a waking dream?
Fled is that music:—Do I wake or sleep?

Sonnet

Written on a Blank Page in Shakespeare's Poems facing "A Lover's Complaint"

Bright star, would I were stedfast as thou art—
Not in lone splendour hung aloft the night
And watching, with eternal lids apart,
Like nature's patient, sleepless Eremite,
The moving waters at their priestlike task
Of pure ablution round earth's human shores,

Or gazing on the new soft-fallen mask
Of snow upon the mountains and the moors—
No—yet still stedfast, still unchangeable,
Pillowed upon my fair love's ripening breast,
To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809-1892)

Ulysses

It little profits that an idle king,
By this still hearth, among these barren crags,
Matched with an aged wife, I mete and dole
Unequal laws unto a savage race,
That hoard, and sleep, and feed, and know not me.
I cannot rest from travel. I will drink
Life to the lees. All time I have enjoyed
Greatly, have suffered greatly, both with those
That loved me, and alone; on shore, and when
Through scudding drifts the rainy Hyades
Vext the dim sea. I am become a name;
For always roaming with a hungry heart
Much have I seen and known,—cities of men
And manners, climates, councils, governments,
Myself not least, but honored of them all,—
And drunk delight of battle with my peers,
Far on the ringing plains of windy Troy.
I am a part of all that I have met;
Yet all experience is an arch where-through
Gleams that untravelled world whose margin fades
Forever and forever when I move.
How dull it is to pause, to make an end,
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!
As though to breathe were life! Life piled on life
Were all too little, and of one to me
Little remains; but every hour is saved
From that eternal silence, something more,
A bringer of new things; and vile it were
For some three suns to store and hoard myself,
And this gray spirit yearning in desire
To follow knowledge like a sinking star,
Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.
This is my son, mine own Telemachus,
To whom I leave the sceptre and the isle—

Well-loved of me, discerning to fulfil
This labor, by slow prudence to make mild
A rugged people, and through soft degrees
Subdue them to the useful and the good.
Most blameless is he, centred in the sphere
Of common duties, decent not to fail
In offices of tenderness, and pay
Meet adoration to my household gods,
When I am gone. He works his work, I mine.
There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail;
There gloom the dark, broad seas. My mariners,
Souls that have toiled, and wrought, and thought with me,—
That ever with a frolic welcome took
The thunder and the sunshine, and opposed
Free hearts, free foreheads,—you and I are old;
Old age hath yet his honor and his toil.
Death closes all; but something ere the end,
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,
Not unbecoming men that strove with gods.
The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks;
The long day wanes; the slow moon climbs; the deep
Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends.
'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.
Push off, and sitting well in order smite
The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths
Of all the western stars, until I die.
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down;
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.
Though much is taken, much abides; and though
We are not now that strength which in old days
Moved earth and heaven, that which we are, we are,—
One equal temper of heroic hearts,
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.

Tithonus

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapors weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality
Consumes; I wither slowly in thine arms,
Here at the quiet limit of the world,
A white-haired shadow roaming like a dream
The ever-silent spaces of the East,
Far-folded mists, and gleaming halls of morn.

Alas! for this gray shadow, once a man—
So glorious in his beauty and thy choice,
Who madest him thy chosen, that he seemed
To his great heart none other than a god!
I asked thee, "Give me immortality."
Then didst thou grant mine asking with a smile,
Like wealthy men who care not how they give.
But thy strong Hours indignant worked their wills,
And beat me down and marred and wasted me,
And though they could not end me, left me maim'd
To dwell in presence of immortal youth,
Immortal age beside immortal youth,
And all I was, in ashes. Can thy love,
Thy beauty, make amends, though even now,
Close over us, the silver star, thy guide,
Shines in those tremulous eyes that fill with tears
To hear me? Let me go: take back thy gift:
Why should a man desire in any way
To vary from the kindly race of men,
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes
A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.
Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals
From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,
And bosom beating with a heart renewed.
Thy cheek begins to redden through the gloom,
Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,
Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team
Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,
And shake the darkness from their loosened manes,
And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful
In silence, then before thine answer given
Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.

Why wilt thou ever scare me with thy tears,
And make me tremble lest a saying learnt,
In days far-off, on that dark earth, be true?
"The gods themselves cannot recall their gifts."

Ay me! ay me! with what another heart
In days far-off, and with what other eyes
I used to watch—if I be he that watched—
The lucid outline forming round thee; saw
The dim curls kindle into sunny rings;
Changed with thy mystic change, and felt my blood
Glow with the glow that slowly crimsoned all
Thy presence and thy portals, while I lay,

Mouth, forehead, eyelids, growing dewy-warm
With kisses balmier than half-opening buds
Of April, and could hear the lips that kissed
Whispering I knew not what of wild and sweet,
Like that strange song I heard Apollo sing,
While Ilion like a mist rose into towers.

Yet hold me not for ever in thine East;
How can my nature longer mix with thine?
Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold
Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet
Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam
Floats up from those dim fields about the homes
Of happy men that have the power to die,
And grassy barrows of the happier dead.
Release me, and restore me to the ground;
Thou seëst all things, thou wilt see my grave:
Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn;
I earth in earth forget these empty courts,
And thee returning on thy silver wheels.

The Lotos-Eaters

"Courage!" he said, and pointed toward the land,
"This mounting wave will roll us shoreward soon."
In the afternoon they came unto a land,
In which it seemed always afternoon.
All round the coast the languid air did swoon,
Breathing like one that hath a weary dream.
Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;
And like a downward smoke, the slender stream
Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem.

A land of streams! some, like a downward smoke,
Slow-dropping veils of thinnest lawn, did go;
And some through wavering lights and shadows broke,
Rolling a slumbrous sheet of foam below.
They saw the gleaming river seaward flow
From the inner land: far off, three mountain-tops,
Three silent pinnacles of aged snow,
Stood sunset-flushed: and, dewed with showery drops,
Up-clomb the shadowy pine above the woven copse.

The charmèd sunset lingered low adown
In the red West: through mountain clefts the dale
Was seen far inland, and the yellow down
Bordered with palm, and many a winding vale
And meadow, set with slender galingale;

A land where all things always seem'd the same!
And round about the keel with faces pale,
Dark faces pale against that rosy flame,
The mild-eyed melancholy Lotos-eaters came.

Branches they bore of that enchanted stem,
Laden with flower and fruit, whereof they gave
To each, but whoso did receive of them,
And taste, to him the gushing of the wave
Far far away did seem to mourn and rave
On alien shores; and if his fellow spake,
His voice was thin, as voices from the grave;
And deep-asleep he seemed, yet all awake,
And music in his ears his beating heart did make.

They sat them down upon the yellow sand,
Between the sun and moon upon the shore;
And sweet it was to dream of Father-land,
Of child, and wife, and slave; but evermore
Most weary seemed the sea, weary the oar,
Weary the wandering fields of barren foam.
Then some one said, "We will return no more";
And all at once they sang, "Our island home
Is far beyond the wave; we will no longer roam."

CHORIC SONG

There is sweet music here that softer falls
Than petals from blown roses on the grass,
Or night-dews on still waters between walls
Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;
Music that gentlier on the spirit lies,
Than tired eyelids upon tired eyes;
Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.
Here are cool mosses deep,
And through the moss the ivies creep,
And in the stream the long-leaved flowers weep,
And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep.
Why are we weighed upon with heaviness,
And utterly consumed with sharp distress,
While all things else have rest from weariness?
All things have rest: why should we toil alone,
We only toil, who are the first of things,
And make perpetual moan,
Still from one sorrow to another thrown:
Nor ever fold our wings,
And cease from wanderings,
Nor steep our brows in slumber's holy balm;
Nor harken what the inner spirit sings,
"There is no joy but calm!"—
Why should we only toil, the roof and crown of things?

Lo! in the middle of the wood,
The folded leaf is wooed from out the bud
With winds upon the branch, and there
Grows green and broad, and takes no care,
Sun-steeped at noon, and in the moon
Nightly dew-fed; and turning yellow
Falls, and floats adown the air.
Lo! sweetened with the summer light,
The full-juiced apple, waxing over-mellow,
Drops in a silent autumn night.
All its allotted length of days,
The flower ripens in its place,
Ripens and fades, and falls, and hath no toil,
Fast-rooted in the fruitful soil.

Hateful is the dark-blue sky,
Vaulted o'er the dark-blue sea.
Death is the end of life; ah, why
Should life all labour be?
Let us alone. Time driveth onward fast,
And in a little while our lips are dumb.
Let us alone. What is it that will last?
All things are taken from us, and become
Portions and parcels of the dreadful Past.
Let us alone. What pleasure can we have
To war with evil? Is there any peace
In ever climbing up the climbing wave?
All things have rest, and ripen toward the grave
In silence; ripen, fall and cease:
Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease.

How sweet it were, hearing the downward stream,
With half-shut eyes ever to seem
Falling asleep in a half-dream!
To dream and dream, like yonder amber light,
Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height;
To hear each other's whispered speech;
Eating the Lotos day by day,
To watch the crisping ripples on the beach,
And tender curving lines of creamy spray;
To lend our hearts and spirits wholly
To the influence of mild-minded melancholy;
To muse and brood and live again in memory,
With those old faces of our infancy
Heaped over with a mound of grass,
Two handfuls of white dust, shut in an urn of brass!

Dear is the memory of our wedded lives,
And dear the last embraces of our wives
And their warm tears: but all hath suffered change;
For surely now our household hearths are cold:

Our sons inherit us: our looks are strange:
And we should come like ghosts to trouble joy.
Or else the island princes over-bold
Have eat our substance, and the minstrel sings
Before them of the ten years' war in Troy,
And our great deeds, as half-forgotten things.
Is there confusion in the little isle?
Let what is broken so remain.
The Gods are hard to reconcile:
'Tis hard to settle order once again.
There *is* confusion worse than death,
Trouble on trouble, pain on pain,
Long labour unto agèd breath,
Sore task to hearts worn out with many wars
And eyes grown dim with gazing on the pilot-stars.

But, propt on beds of amaranth and moly,
How sweet (while warm airs lull us, blowing lowly)
With half-dropt eyelids still,
Beneath a heaven dark and holy,
To watch the long bright river drawing slowly
His waters from the purple hill—
To hear the dewy echoes calling
From cave to cave through the thick-twinèd vine—
To watch the emerald-coloured water falling
Through many a woven acanthus-wreath divine!
Only to hear and see the far-off sparkling brine,
Only to hear were sweet, stretched out beneath the pine.

The Lotos blooms below the barren peak:
The Lotos blows by every winding creek:
All day the wind breathes low with mellower tone:
Through every hollow cave and alley lone
Round and round the spicy downs the yellow Lotos-dust is blown,
We have had enough of action, and of motion we,
Rolled to starboard, rolled to larboard, when the surge was seething free,
Where the wallowing monster spouted his foam-fountains in the sea.
Let us swear an oath, and keep it with an equal mind,
In the hollow Lotos-land to live and lie reclined
On the hills like gods together, careless of mankind.
For they lie beside their nectar, and the bolts are hurled
Far below them in the valleys, and the clouds are lightly curled
Round their golden houses, girdled with the gleaming world:
Where they smile in secret, looking over wasted lands,
Blight and famine, plague and earthquake, roaring deeps and fiery sands,
Clanging fights, and flaming towns, and sinking ships, and praying hands.
But they smile, they find a music centred in a doleful song
Steaming up, a lamentation and an ancient tale of wrong,
Like a tale of little meaning though the words are strong;
Chanted from an ill-used race of men that cleave the soil,
Sow the seed, and reap the harvest with enduring toil,

Storing yearly little dues of wheat, and wine and oil;
Till they perish and they suffer—some, 'tis whispered—down in hell
Suffer endless anguish, others in Elysian valleys dwell,
Resting weary limbs at last on beds of asphodel.
Surely, surely, slumber is more sweet than toil, the shore
Than labour in the deep mid-ocean, wind and wave and oar;
O rest ye, brother mariners, we will not wander more.

ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889)

Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister

Gr-r-r—there go, my hearts abhorrence!
Water your damned flower-pots, do!
If hate killed men, Brother Lawrence,
God's blood, would not mine kill you!
What? your myrtle-bush wants trimming?
Oh, that rose has prior claims—
Needs its leaden vase filled brimming?
Hell dry you up with its flames!

At the meal we sit together:
Salve tibi! I must hear
Wise talk of the kind of weather,
Sort of season, time of year:
Not a plenteous cork-crop: scarcely
Dare we hope oak-galls, I doubt:
What's the Latin name for "parsley"?
What's the Greek name for Swine's Snout?

Whew! We'll have our platter burnished,
Laid with care on our own shelf!
With a fire-new spoon we're furnished,
And a goblet for ourself,
Rinsed like something sacrificial
Ere 'tis fit to touch our chaps—
Marked with L for our initial!
(He-he! There his lily snaps!)

Saint, forsooth! While brown Dolores
Squats outside the Convent bank
With Sanchicha, telling stories,
Steeping tresses in the tank,
Blue-black lustrous, thick like horse-hairs,
—Can't I see his dead eye glow,
Bright as 'twere a Barbary corsair's?
(That is, if he'd let it show!)

When he finishes refection,
Knife and fork he never lays
Cross-wise, to my recollection,
As do I, in Jesu's praise.
I the Trinity illustrate,
Drinking watered orange-pulp
In three sips the Arian frustrate;
While he drains his at one gulp.

Oh, those melons! If he's able
We're to have a feast! so nice!
One goes to the Abbot's table,
All of us get each a slice.
How go on your flowers? None double?
Not one fruit-sort can you spy?
Strange!—And I, too, at such trouble
Keep them close-nipped on the sly!

There's a great text in Galatians,
Once you trip on it, entails
Twenty-nine distinct damnations,
One sure, if another fails:
If I trip him just a-dying,
Sure of heaven as sure can be,
Spin him round and send him flying
Off to hell, a Manichee!

Or, my scrofulous French novel
On gray paper with blunt type!
Simply glance at it, you grovel
Hand and foot in Belial's gripe:
If I double down its pages
At the woeful sixteenth print,
When he gathers his greengages,
Ope a sieve and slip it in't?

Or, there's Satan! one might venture
  Pledge one's soul to him, yet leave
Such a flaw in the indenture
  As he'd miss till, past retrieve,
Blasted lay that rose-acacia
  We're so proud of! *Hy, Zy, Hine* . . .
'St, there's Vespers! *Plena gratiâ,*
  Ave, Virgo! Gr-r-r—you swine!

My Last Duchess

FERRARA

That's my last Duchess painted on the wall,
Looking as if she were alive. I call
That piece a wonder, now: Frà Pandolf's hands
Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
Will 't please you sit and look at her? I said
"Frà Pandolf" by design, for never read
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
But to myself they turned (since none puts by
The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
How such a glance came there; so, not the first
Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
Her husband's presence only, called that spot
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps
Frà Pandolf chanced to say, "Her mantle laps
Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
Must never hope to reproduce the faint
Half-flush that dies along her throat:" such stuff
Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
For calling up that spot of joy. She had
A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad,
Too easily impressed; she liked whate'er
She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
Sir, 'twas all one! My favour at her breast,
The dropping of the daylight in the West,
The bough of cherries some officious fool
Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
She rode with round the terrace—all and each
Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good! but thanked
Somehow—I know not how—as if she ranked
My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set

Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
—E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,
Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
As if alive. Will 't please you rise? We'll meet
The company below, then. I repeat,
The Count your master's known munificence
Is ample warrant that no just pretence
Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

The Bishop Orders His Tomb at Saint Praxed's Church

ROME, 15—

Vanity, saith the preacher, vanity!
Draw round my bed: is Anselm keeping back?
Nephews—sons mine . . . ah God, I know not! Well—
She, men would have to be your mother once,
Old Gandolf envied me, so fair she was!
What's done is done, and she is dead beside,
Dead long ago, and I am Bishop since,
And as she died so must we die ourselves,
And thence ye may perceive the world's a dream.
Life, how and what is it? As here I lie
In this state-chamber, dying by degrees,
Hours and long hours in the dead night, I ask
"Do I live, am I dead?" Peace, peace seems all.
Saint Praxed's ever was the church for peace;
And so, about this tomb of mine. I fought
With tooth and nail to save my niche, ye know:
—Old Gandolf cozened me, despite my care;
Shrewd was that snatch from out the corner south
He graced his carrion with, God curse the same!
Yet still my niche is not so cramped but thence
One sees the pulpit o' the epistle-side,
And somewhat of the choir, those silent seats,
And up into the aëry dome where live
The angels, and a sunbeam's sure to lurk.
And I shall fill my slab of basalt there,

And 'neath my tabernacle take my rest,
With those nine columns round me, two and two,
The odd one at my feet where Anselm stands,
Peach-blossom marble all, the rare, the ripe,
As fresh-poured red wine of a mighty pulse.
—Old Gandolf with his paltry onion-stone,
Put me where I may look at him! True peach,
Rosy and flawless; how I earned the prize!
Draw close. That conflagration of my church
—What then? So much was saved if aught were missed!
My sons, ye would not be my death? Go dig
The white-grape vineyard where the oil-press stood,
Drop water gently till the surface sinks,
And if ye find . . . ah God, I know not, I! . . .
Bedded in store of rotten fig-leaves soft,
And corded up in a tight olive-frail,
Some lump, ah God, of *lapis lazuli,*
Big as a Jew's head cut off at the nape,
Blue as a vein o'er the Madonna's breast—
Sons, all have I bequeathed you, villas, all,
That brave Frascati villa with its bath—
So, let the blue lump poise between my knees,
Like God the Father's globe on both his hands
Ye worship in the Jesu Church so gay,
For Gandolf shall not choose but see and burst!
Swift as a weaver's shuttle fleet our years;
Man goeth to the grave, and where is he?
Did I say basalt for my slab, sons? Black—
'Twas ever antique-black I meant! How else
Shall ye contrast my frieze to come beneath?
The bas-relief in bronze ye promised me,
Those Pans and Nymphs ye wot of, and perchance
Some tripod, thyrsus, with a vase or so,
The Saviour at his sermon on the mount,
St. Praxed in a glory, and one Pan
Ready to twitch the Nymph's last garment off,
And Moses with the tables . . . but I know
Ye marked me not! What do they whisper thee,
Child of my bowels, Anselm? Ah, ye hope
To revel down my villas while I gasp
Bricked o'er with beggar's moldy travertine
Which Gandolf from his tomb-top chuckles at!
Nay, boys, ye love me—all of jasper, then!
'Tis jasper ye stand pledged to, lest I grieve
My bath must needs be left behind, alas!
One block, pure green as a pistachio-nut,
There's plenty jasper somewhere in the world—
And have I not St. Praxed's ear to pray
Horses for ye, and brown Greek manuscripts,
And mistresses with great smooth marbly limbs?
—That's if ye carve my epitaph aright,

Choice Latin, picked phrase, Tully's every word,
No gaudy ware like Gandolf's second line—
Tully, my masters? Ulpian serves his need!
And then how I shall lie through centuries,
And hear the blessed mutter of the Mass,
And see God made and eaten all day long,
And feel the steady candle-flame, and taste
Good strong, thick, stupefying incense-smoke!
For as I lie here, hours of the dead night,
Dying in state and by such slow degrees,
I fold my arms as if they clasped a crook,
And stretch my feet forth straight as stone can point,
And let the bedclothes for a mort-cloth drop
Into great laps and folds of sculptor's-work.
And as yon tapers dwindle, and strange thoughts
Grow, with a certain humming in my ears,
About the life before I lived this life,
And this life too, popes, cardinals, and priests,
St. Praxed at his sermon on the mount,
Your tall pale mother with her talking eyes,
And new-found agate urns as fresh as day,
And marble's language, Latin pure, discreet,
—Aha, ELUCESCEBAT quoth our friend?
No Tully, said I, Ulpian at the best!
Evil and brief hath been my pilgrimage.
All *lapis,* all, sons! Else I give the Pope
My villas. Will ye ever eat my heart?
Ever your eyes were as a lizard's quick;
They glitter like your mother's for my soul,
Or ye would heighten my impoverished frieze,
Piece out its starved design, and fill my vase
With grapes, and add a vizor and a term,
And to the tripod ye would tie a lynx
That in his struggle throws the thyrsus down,
To comfort me on my entablature
Whereon I am to lie till I must ask
"Do I live, am I dead?" There, leave me, there!
For ye have stabbed me with ingratitude
To death—ye wish it—God, ye wish it! Stone—
Gritstone, a-crumble! Clammy squares which sweat
As if the corpse they keep were oozing through—
And no more *lapis* to delight the world!
Well, go! I bless ye. Fewer tapers there,
But in a row. And, going, turn your backs
—Aye, like departing altar-ministrants,
And leave me in my church, the church for peace,
That I may watch at leisure if he leers—
Old Gandolf—at me, from his onion-stone,
As still he envied me, so fair she was.

Fra Lippo Lippi

I am poor brother Lippo, by your leave!
You need not clap your torches to my face.
Zooks, what's to blame? you think you see a monk!
What, 'tis past midnight, and you go the rounds,
And here you catch me at an alley's end
Where sportive ladies leave their doors ajar?
The Carmine's my cloister; hunt it up,
Do—harry out, if you must show your zeal,
Whatever rat, there, haps on his wrong hole,
And nip each softling of a wee white mouse,
Weke, weke, that's crept to keep him company!
Aha, you know your betters? Then, you'll take
Your hand away that's fiddling on my throat,
And please to know me likewise. Who am I?
Why, one, sir, who is lodging with a friend
Three streets off—he's a certain . . . how d' ye call?
Master—a . . . Cosimo of the Medici,
I' the house that caps the corner. Boh! you were best!
Remember and tell me, the day you're hanged,
How you affected such a gullet's-gripe!
But you, sir, it concerns you that your knaves
Pick up a manner nor discredit you:
Zooks, are we pilchards, that they sweep the streets
And count fair prize what comes into their net?
He's Judas to a tittle, that man is!
Just such a face! Why, sir, you make amends.
Lord, I'm not angry! Bid your hangdogs go
Drink out this quarter-florin to the health
Of the munificent House that harbors me
(And many more beside, lads! more beside!)
And all's come square again. I'd like his face—
His, elbowing on his comrade in the door
With the pike and lantern,—for the slave that holds
John Baptist's head a-dangle by the hair
With one hand ("Look you, now," as who should say)
And his weapon in the other, yet unwiped!
It's not your chance to have a bit of chalk,
A wood-coal or the like? or you should see!
Yes, I'm the painter, since you style me so.
What, brother Lippo's doings, up and down,
You know them and they take you? like enough!
I saw the proper twinkle in your eye—
'Tell you, I liked your looks at very first.
Let's sit and set things straight now, hip to haunch.
Here's spring come, and the nights one makes up bands
To roam the town and sing out carnival,

And I've been three weeks shut within my mew,
A-painting for the great man, saints and saints
And saints again. I could not paint all night—
Ouf! I leaned out of window for fresh air.
There came a hurry of feet and little feet,
A sweep of lute-strings, laughs, and whifts of song,—
Flower o' the broom,
Take away love, and our earth is a tomb!
Flower o' the quince,
I let Lisa go, and what good in life since?
Flower o' the thyme—and so on. Round they went.
Scarce had they turned the corner when a titter
Like the skipping of rabbits by moonlight,—three slim shapes—
And a face that looked up . . . zooks, sir, flesh, and blood,
That's all I'm made of! Into shreds it went,
Curtain and counterpane and coverlet,
All the bed-furniture—a dozen knots,
There was a ladder! Down I let myself,
Hands and feet, scrambling somehow, and so dropped,
And after them. I came up with the fun
Hard by Saint Laurence, hail fellow, well met,—
Flower o' the rose,
If I've been merry, what matter who knows?
And so as I was stealing back again
To get to bed and have a bit of sleep
Ere I rise up tomorrow and go work
On Jerome knocking at his poor old breast
With his great round stone to subdue the flesh,
You snap me of the sudden. Ah, I see!
Though your eye twinkles still, you shake your head—
Mine's shaved,—a monk, you say—the sting's in that!
If Master Cosimo announced himself,
Mum's the word naturally; but a monk!
Come, what am I a beast for? tell us, now!
I was a baby when my mother died
And father died and left me in the street.
I starved there, God knows how, a year or two
On fig skins, melon-parings, rinds and shucks,
Refuse and rubbish. One fine frosty day,
My stomach being empty as your hat,
The wind doubled me up and down I went.
Old Aunt Lapaccia trussed me with one hand,
(Its fellow was a stinger as I knew)
And so along the wall, over the bridge,
By the straight cut to the convent. Six words there,
While I stood munching my first bread that month:
"So, boy, you're minded," quoth the good fat father
Wiping his own mouth, 'twas refection-time,—
"To quit this very miserable world?
Will you renounce" . . . "the mouthful of bread?" thought I;
By no means! Brief, they made a monk of me;

I did renounce the world, its pride and greed,
Palace, farm, villa, shop, and banking-house,
Trash, such as these poor devils of Medici
Have given their hearts to—all at eight years old.
Well, sir, I found in time, you may be sure,
'Twas not for nothing—the good bellyful,
The warm serge and the rope that goes all round,
And day-long blessed idleness beside!
"Let's see what the urchin's fit for"—that came next.
Not overmuch their way, I must confess.
Such a to-do! They tried me with their books;
Lord, they'd have taught me Latin in pure waste!
Flower o' the clove,
All the Latin I construe is, "amo" I love!
But, mind you, when a boy starves in the streets
Eight years together, as my fortune was,
Watching folk's faces to know who will fling
The bit of half-stripped grape-bunch he desires,
And who will curse or kick him for his pains,—
Which gentleman processional and fine,
Holding a candle to the Sacrament
Will wink and let him lift a plate and catch
The droppings of the wax to sell again,
Or holla for the Eight and have him whipped,—
How say I?—nay, which dog bites, which lets drop
His bone from the heap of offal in the street,—
Why, soul and sense of him grow sharp alike,
He learns the look of things, and none the less
For admonition from the hunger-pinch.
I had a store of such remarks, be sure,
Which, after I found leisure, turned to use.
I drew men's faces on my copy-books,
Scrawled them within the antiphonary's marge,
Joined legs and arms to the long music-notes,
Found eyes and nose and chin for A's and B's,
And made a string of pictures of the world
Betwixt the ins and outs of verb and noun,
On the wall, the bench, the door. The monks looked black.
"Nay," quoth the prior, "turn him out, d' ye say?
In no wise. Lose a crow and catch a lark.
What if at last we get our man of parts,
We Carmelites, like those Camaldolese
And Preaching Friars, to do our church up fine
And put the front on it that ought to be!"
And hereupon he bade me daub away.
Thank you! my head being crammed, the walls a blank,
Never was such prompt disemburdening.
First, every sort of monk, the black and white,
I drew them, fat and lean: then, folk at church,
From good old gossips waiting to confess
Their cribs of barrel-droppings, candle-ends,—

To the breathless fellow at the altar-foot,
Fresh from his murder, safe and sitting there
With the little children round him in a row
Of admiration, half for his beard and half
For that white anger of his victim's son
Shaking a fist at him with one fierce arm,
Signing himself with the other because of Christ
(Whose sad face on the cross sees only this
After the passion of a thousand years)
Till some poor girl, her apron o'er her head
(Which the intense eyes looked through,) came at eve
On tiptoe, said a word, dropped in a loaf,
Her pair of earrings and a bunch of flowers
(The brute took growling), prayed, and so was gone.
I painted all, then cried, "'Tis ask and have—
Choose, for more's ready!"—laid the ladder-flat,
And showed my covered bit of cloister-wall.
The monks closed in a circle and praised loud
Till checked, taught what to see and not to see,
Being simple bodies,—"That's the very man!
Look at the boy who stoops to pat the dog!
That woman's like the prior's niece who comes
To care about his asthma: it's the life!"
But there my triumph's straw-fire flared and funked;
Their betters took their turn to see and say:
The prior and the learnèd pulled a face
And stopped all that in no time. "How? what's here?
Quite from the mark of painting, bless us all!
Faces, arms, legs, and bodies like the true
As much as pea and pea! it's devil's-game!
Your business is not to catch men with show,
With homage to the perishable clay,
But lift them over it, ignore it all,
Make them forget there's such a thing as flesh.
Your business is to paint the souls of men—
Man's soul, and it's a fire, smoke . . . no it's not . . .
It's vapor done up like a new-born babe—
(In that shape when you die it leaves your mouth)
It's . . . well, what matters talking, it's the soul!
Give us no more of body than shows soul!
Here's Giotto, with his saint a-praising God,
That sets us praising,—why not stop with him?
Why put all thoughts of praise out of our head
With wonder at lines, colors, and what not?
Paint the soul, never mind the legs and arms!
Rub all out, try at it a second time.
Oh, that white smallish female with the breasts,
She's just my niece . . . Herodias, I would say,—
Who went and danced and got men's heads cut off!
Have it all out!" Now, is this sense, I ask?
A fine way to paint soul, by painting body

So ill, the eye can't stop there, must go further
And can't fare worse! Thus, yellow does for white
When what you put for yellow's simply black,
And any sort of meaning looks intense
When all beside itself means and looks naught.
Why can't a painter lift each foot in turn,
Left foot and right foot, go a double step,
Make his flesh liker and his soul more like,
Both in their order? Take the prettiest face,
The prior's niece . . . patron-saint—is it so pretty
You can't discover if it means hope, fear,
Sorrow, or joy? won't beauty go with these?
Suppose I've made her eyes all right and blue,
Can't I take breath and try to add life's flash,
And then add soul and heighten them three-fold?
Or say there's beauty with no soul at all—
(I never saw it—put the case the same—)
If you get simple beauty and naught else,
You get about the best thing God invents:
That's somewhat; and you'll find the soul you have missed,
Within yourself when you return him thanks,
"Rub all out!" Well, well, there's my life, in short,
And so the thing has gone on ever since.
I'm grown a man no doubt; I've broken bounds—
You should not take a fellow eight years old
And make him swear to never kiss the girls.
I'm my own master, paint now as I please—
Having a friend, you see, in the corner-house!
Lord, it's fast holding by the rings in front—
Those great rings serve more purposes than just
To plant a flag in, or tie up a horse!
And yet the old schooling sticks, the old grave eyes
Are peeping o'er my shoulder as I work,
The heads shake still—"It's art's decline, my son!
You're not of the true painters, great and old;
Brother Angelico's the man, you'll find;
Brother Lorenzo stands his single peer:
Fag on at flesh, you'll never make the third!"
Flower o' the pine,
You keep your mistr . . . manners, and I'll stick to mine!
I'm not the third, then: bless us, they must know!
Don't you think they're the likeliest to know,
They with their Latin? So, I swallow my rage,
Clench my teeth, suck my lips in tight, and paint
To please them—sometimes do, and sometimes don't;
For, doing most, there's pretty sure to come
A turn, some warm eve finds me at my saints—
A laugh, a cry, the business of the world—
(*Flower o' the peach,*
Death for us all, and his own life for each!)
And my whole soul revolves, the cup runs over,

The world and life's too big to pass for a dream,
And I do these wild things in sheer despite,
And play the fooleries you catch me at,
In pure rage! The old mill-horse, out at grass
After hard years, throws up his stiff heels so,
Although the miller does not preach to him
The only good of grass is to make chaff.
What would men have? Do they like grass or no—
May they or mayn't they? all I want's the thing
Settled for ever one way. As it is,
You tell too many lies and hurt yourself;
You don't like what you only like too much,
You do like what, if given you at your word,
You find abundantly detestable.
For me, I think I speak as I was taught;
I always see the garden and God there
A-making man's wife: and, my lesson learned,
The value and significance of flesh,
I can't unlearn ten minutes afterwards.
You understand me: I'm a beast, I know.
But see, now—why, I see as certainly
As that the morning-star's about to shine,
What will hap some day. We've a youngster here
Comes to our convent, studies what I do,
Slouches and stares and lets no atom drop:
His name is Guidi—he'll not mind the monks—
They call him Hulking Tom, he lets them talk—
He picks my practice up—he'll paint apace,
I hope so—though I never live so long,
I know what's sure to follow. You be judge!
You speak no Latin more than I, belike;
However, you're my man, you've seen the world—
The beauty and the wonder and the power,
The shapes of things, their colors, lights and shades,
Changes, surprises,—and God made it all!
—For what? do you feel thankful, ay or no,
For this fair town's face, yonder river's line,
The mountain round it and the sky above,
Much more the figures of man, woman, child,
These are the frame to? What's it all about?
To be passed over, despised? or dwelt upon,
Wondered at? oh, this last of course!—you say.
But why not do as well as say,—paint these
Just as they are, careless what comes of it?
God's works—paint any one, and count it crime
To let a truth slip. Don't object, "His works
Are here already—nature is complete:
Suppose you reproduce her—(which you can't)
There's no advantage! you must beat her, then."
For, don't you mark, we're made so that we love
First when we see them painted, things we have passed

Perhaps a hundred times nor cared to see;
And so they are better, painted—better to us,
Which is the same thing. Art was given for that;
God uses us to help each other so,
Lending our minds out. Have you noticed, now,
Your cullion's hanging face? A bit of chalk,
And trust me but you should, though! How much more,
If I drew higher things with the same truth!
That were to take the prior's pulpit-place,
Interpret God to all of you! Oh, oh,
It makes me mad to see what men shall do
And we in our graves! This world's no blot for us,
Nor blank: it means intensely, and means good:
To find its meaning is my meat and drink
"Ay, but you don't so instigate to prayer!"
Strikes in the prior; "when your meaning's plain
It does not say to folk—remember matins,
Or, mind you fast next Friday." Why, for this
What need of art at all? A skull and bones,
Two bits of stick nailed crosswise, or, what's best,
A bell to chime the hour with, does as well.
I painted a Saint Laurence six months since
At Prato, splashed the fresco in fine style:
"How looks my painting, now the scaffold's down?"
I ask a brother: "Hugely," he returns—
"Already not one phiz of your three slaves
Who turn the deacon off his toasted side,
But's scratched and prodded to our heart's content,
The pious people have so eased their own
With coming to say prayers there in a rage:
We get on fast to see the bricks beneath.
Expect another job this time next year,
For pity and religion grow i' the crowd—
Your painting serves its purpose!" Hang the fools!

—That is—you'll not mistake an idle word
Spoke in a huff by a poor monk, God wot,
Tasting the air this spicy night which turns
The unaccustomed head like Chianti wine!
Oh, the church knows! don't misreport me, now!
It's natural a poor monk out of bounds
Should have his apt word to excuse himself:
And hearken how I plot to make amends.
I have bethought me: I shall paint a piece
. . . There's for you! Give me six months, then go, see
Something in Sant' Ambrogio's! Bless the nuns!
They want a cast o' my office. I shall paint
God in the midst, Madonna and her babe,
Ringed by a bowery, flowery angel-brood,
Lilies and vestments and white faces, sweet
As puff on puff of grated orris-root

When ladies crowd to church at midsummer.
And then i' the front, of course a saint or two—
Saint John, because he saves the Florentines,
Saint Ambrose, who puts down in black and white
The convent's friends and gives them a long day,
And Job, I must have him there past mistake,
The man of Uz (and Us without the z,
Painters who need his patience). Well, all these
Secured at their devotion, up shall come
Out of a corner when you least expect,
As one by a dark stair into a great light,
Music and talking, who but Lippo! I!—
Mazed, motionless, and moon-struck—I'm the man!
Back I shrink—what is this I see and hear?
I, caught up with my monk's things by mistake,
My old serge gown and rope that goes all round,
I, in this presence, this pure company!
Where's a hole, where's a corner for escape?
Then steps a sweet angelic slip of a thing
Forward, puts out a soft palm—"Not so fast!"
—Addresses the celestial presence, "nay—
He made you and devised you, after all,
Though he's none of you! Could Saint John there, draw—
His camel-hair make up a painting-brush?
We come to brother Lippo for all that,
Iste perfecit opus!" So, all smile—
I shuffle sideways with my blushing face
Under the cover of a hundred wings
Thrown like a spread of kirtles when you're gay
And play hot cockles, all the doors being shut,
Till, wholly unexpected, in there pops
The hothead husband! Thus I scuttle off
To some safe bench behind, not letting go
The palm of her, the little lily thing
That spoke the good word for me in the nick,
Like the prior's niece . . . Saint Lucy, I would say.
And so all's saved for me, and for the church
A pretty picture gained. Go, six months hence!
Your hand, sir, and good-bye: no lights, no lights!
The street's hushed, and I know my own way back,
Don't fear me! There's the grey beginning. Zooks!

Andrea del Sarto

CALLED "THE FAULTLESS PAINTER"

But do not let us quarrel any more,
No, my Lucrezia! bear with me for once:
Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.

You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?
I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,
Treat his own subject after his own way,
Fix his own time, accept too his own price,
And shut the money into this small hand
When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?
Oh, I'll content him,—but tomorrow, Love!
I often am much wearier than you think,
This evening more than usual: and it seems
As if—forgive now—should you let me sit
Here by the window, with your hand in mine,
And look a half hour forth on Fiesole,
Both of one mind, as married people use,
Quietly, quietly the evening through,
I might get up tomorrow to my work
Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.
Tomorrow, how you shall be glad for this!
Your soft hand is a woman of itself,
And mine, the man's bared breast she curls inside.
Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve
For each of the five pictures we require:
It saves a model. So! keep looking so—
My serpentining beauty, rounds on rounds!
—How could you ever prick those perfect ears,
Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet—
My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,
Which everybody looks on and calls his,
And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,
While she looks—no one's: very dear, no less.
You smile? why, there's my picture ready made,
There's what we painters call our harmony!
A common grayness silvers everything,—
All in a twilight, you and I alike
—You, at the point of your first pride in me
(That's gone you know),—but I, at every point;
My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down
To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole.
There's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;
That length of convent-wall across the way
Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;
The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,
And autumn grows, autumn in everything.
Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape
As if I saw alike my work and self
And all that I was born to be and do,
A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.
How strange now looks the life he makes us lead;
So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!
I feel he laid the fetter: let it lie!
This chamber for example—turn your head—
All that's behind us! You don't understand,

Nor care to understand, about my art,
But you can hear at least when people speak:
And that cartoon, the second from the door
—It is the thing, Love! so such thing should be—
Behold Madonna!—I am bold to say.
I can do with my pencil what I know,
What I see, what at bottom of my heart
I wish for, if I ever wish so deep—
Do easily, too—when I say, perfectly,
I do not boast, perhaps: yourself are judge,
Who listened to the Legate's talk last week,
And just as much they used to say in France.
At any rate, 'tis easy, all of it!
No sketches first, no studies, that's long past:
I do what many dream of all their lives,
—Dream? strive to do, and agonize to do,
And fail in doing. I could count twenty such
On twice your fingers, and not leave this town,
Who strive—you don't know how the others strive
To paint a little thing like that you smeared
Carelessly passing with your robes afloat,—
Yet do much less, so much less, Someone says,
(I know his name, no matter)—so much less!
Well, less is more, Lucrezia: I am judged.
There burns a truer light of God in them,
In their vexed, beating, stuffed, and stopped-up brain,
Heart, or what'er else, than goes on to prompt
This low-pulsed forthright craftsman's hand of mine.
Their works drop groundward, but themselves, I know,
Reach many a time a heaven that's shut to me,
Enter and take their place there sure enough,
Though they come back and cannot tell the world.
My works are nearer heaven, but I sit here.
The sudden blood of these men! at a word—
Praise them, it boils, or blame them, it boils; too.
I, painting from myself and to myself,
Know what I do, am unmoved by men's blame
Or their praise either. Somebody remarks
Morello's outline there is wrongly traced,
His hue mistaken; what of that? or else,
Rightly traced and well ordered; what of that?
Speak as they please, what does the mountain care?
Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for? All is silver-gray,
Placid and perfect with my art: the worse!
I know both what I want and what might gain;
And yet how profitless to know, to sigh
"Had I been two, another and myself,
Our head would have o'erlooked the world!" No doubt.
Yonder's a work now, of that famous youth
The Urbinate who died five years ago.

('Tis copied, George Vasari sent it me.)
Well, I can fancy how he did it all,
Pouring his soul, with kings and popes to see,
Reaching, that heaven might so replenish him,
Above and through his art—for it gives way;
That arm is wrongly put—and there again—
A fault to pardon in the drawing's lines,
Its body, so to speak: its soul is right,
He means right—that, a child may understand.
Still, what an arm! and I could alter it;
But all the play, the insight and the stretch—
Out of me, out of me! And wherefore out?
Had you enjoined them on me, given me soul,
We might have risen to Rafael, I and you.
Nay, Love, you did give all I asked, I think—
More than I merit, yes, by many times.
But had you—oh, with the same perfect brow,
And perfect eyes, and more than perfect mouth,
And the low voice my soul hears, as a bird
The fowler's pipe, and follows to the snare—
Had you, with these the same, but brought a mind!
Some women do so. Had the mouth there urged
"God and the glory! never care for gain.
The present by the future, what is that?
Live for fame, side by side with Agnolo!
Rafael is waiting: up to God, all three!"
I might have done it for you. So it seems:
Perhaps not. All is as God overrules.
Beside, incentives come from the soul's self;
The rest avail not. Why do I need you?
What wife had Rafael, or has Agnolo?
In this world, who can do a thing, will not;
And who would do it, cannot, I perceive:
Yet the will's somewhat—somewhat, too, the power—
And thus we half-men struggle. At the end,
God, I conclude, compensates, punishes.
'Tis safer for me, if the award be strict,
That I am something underrated here,
Poor this long while, despised, to speak the truth.
I dared not, do you know, leave home all day,
For fear of chancing on the Paris lords.
The best is when they pass and look aside;
But they speak sometimes; I must bear it all.
Well may they speak! That Francis, that first time,
And that long festal year at Fontainebleau!
I surely then could sometimes leave the ground,
Put on the glory, Rafael's daily wear,
In that humane great monarch's golden look,—
One finger in his beard or twisted curl
Over his mouth's good mark that made the smile,
One arm about my shoulder, round my neck,
The jingle of his gold chain in my ear,

I painting proudly with his breath on me,
All his court round him, seeing with his eyes,
Such frank French eyes, and such a fire of souls
Profuse, my hand kept plying by those hearts,—
And, best of all, this, this, this face beyond,
This in the background, waiting on my work,
To crown the issue with a last reward!
A good time, was it not, my kingly days?
And had you not grown restless . . . but I know—
'Tis done and past; 'twas right, my instinct said;
Too live the life grew, golden and not gray,
And I'm the weak-eyed bat no sun should tempt
Out of his grange whose four walls make his world.
How could it end in any other way?
You called me, and I came home to your heart.
The triumph was—to reach and stay there; since
I reached it ere the triumph, what is lost?
Let my hands frame your face in your hair's gold,
You beautiful Lucrezia that are mine!
"Rafael did this, Andrea painted that;
The Roman's is the better when you pray,
But still the other's Virgin was his wife—"
Men will excuse me. I am glad to judge
Both pictures in your presence; clearer grows
My better fortune, I resolve to think.
For, do you know, Lucrezia, as God lives,
Said one day Agnolo, his very self,
To Rafael . . . I have known it all these years . . .
(When the young man was flaming out his thoughts
Upon a palace-wall for Rome to see,
Too lifted up in heart because of it)
"Friend, there's a certain sorry little scrub
Goes up and down our Florence, none cares how,
Who, were he set to plan and execute
As you are, pricked on by your popes and kings,
Would bring the sweat into that brow of yours!"
To Rafael's!—And indeed the arm is wrong.
I hardly dare . . . yet, only you to see,
Give the chalk here—quick, thus the line should go!
Ay, but the soul! he's Rafael! rub it out!
Still, all I care for, if he spoke the truth,
(What he? why, who but Michel Agnolo?
Do you forget already words like those?)
If really there was such a chance so lost,—
Is, whether you're—not grateful—but more pleased
Well, let me think so. And you smile indeed!
This hour has been an hour! Another smile?
If you would sit thus by me every night
I should work better, do you comprehend?
I mean that I should earn more, give you more.
See, it is settled dusk now; there's a star;
Morello's gone, the watch-lights show the wall,

The cue-owls speak the name we call them by.
Come from the window, love,—come in, at last,
Inside the melancholy little house
We built to be so gay with. God is just.
King Francis may forgive me: oft at nights
When I look up from painting, eyes tired out,
The walls become illumined, brick from brick
Distinct, instead of mortar, fierce bright gold,
That gold of his I did cement them with!
Let us but love each other. Must you go?
That cousin here again? he waits outside?
Must see you—you, and not with me? Those loans?
More gaming debts to pay? you smiled for that?
Well, let smiles buy me! have you more to spend?
While hand and eye and something of a heart
Are left me, work's my ware, and what's it worth?
I'll pay my fancy. Only let me sit
The grey remainder of the evening out,
Idle, you call it, and muse perfectly
How I could paint, were I but back in France,
One picture, just one more—the Virgin's face,
Not yours this time! I want you at my side
To hear them—that is, Michel Agnolo—
Judge all I do and tell you of its worth.
Will you? Tomorrow, satisfy your friend.
I take the subjects for his corridor,
Finish the portrait out of hand—there, there,
And throw him in another thing or two
If he demurs; the whole should prove enough
To pay for this same cousin's freak. Beside,
What's better and what's all I care about,
Get you the thirteen scudi for the ruff!
Love, does that please you? Ah, but what does he,
The cousin! what does he to please you more?
  I am grown peaceful as old age tonight.
I regret little, I would change still less.
Since there my past life lies, why alter it?
The very wrong to Francis!—it is true
I took his coin, was tempted and complied,
And built this house and sinned, and all is said.
My father and my mother died of want.
Well, had I riches of my own? you see
How one gets rich! Let each one bear his lot.
They were born poor, lived poor, and poor they died:
And I have labored somewhat in my time
And not been paid profusely. Some good son
Paint my two hundred pictures—let him try!
No doubt, there's something strikes a balance. Yes,
You loved me quite enough, it seems tonight.
This must suffice me here. What would one have?
In heaven, perhaps, new chances, one more chance—
Four great walls in the New Jerusalem

Meted on each side by the angel's reed,
For Leonard, Rafael, Agnolo and me
To cover—the three first without a wife,
While I have mine! So—still they overcome
Because there's still Lucrezia,—as I choose.
Again the cousin's whistle! Go, my Love.

A Grammarian's Funeral

SHORTLY AFTER THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING IN EUROPE

Let us begin and carry up this corpse,
Singing together.
Leave we the common crofts, the vulgar thorpes
Each in its tether
Sleeping safe on the bosom of the plain,
Cared-for till cock-crow:
Look out if yonder be not day again
Rimming the rock-row!
That's the appropriate country; there, men's thought,
Rarer, intenser,
Self-gathered for an outbreak, as it ought,
Chafes in the censer.
Leave we the unlettered plain its herd and crop;
Seek we sepulture
On a tall mountain, citied to the top,
Crowded with culture!
All the peaks soar, but one the rest excels:
Clouds overcome it;
No! yonder sparkle is the citadel's
Circling its summit.
Thither our path lies; wind we up the heights;
Wait ye the warning?
Our low life was the level's and the night's;
He's for the morning.
Step to a tune, square chests, erect each head,
'Ware the beholders!
This is our master, famous, calm and dead
Borne on our shoulders.

Sleep, crop and herd! sleep, darkling thorpe and croft,
Safe from the weather!
He, whom we convoy to his grave aloft,
Singing together,
He was a man born with thy face and throat,
Lyric Apollo!
Long he lived nameless: how should Spring take note
Winter would follow?
Till lo, the little touch, and youth was gone!
Cramped and diminished,
Moaned he, "New measures, other feet anon!
My dance is finished"?
No, that's the world's way: (keep the mountain-side,
Make for the city!)
He knew the signal, and stepped on with pride
Over men's pity;
Left play for work, and grappled with the world
Bent on escaping:
"What's in the scroll," quoth he, "thou keepest furled?
Show me their shaping,
Theirs who most studied man, the bard and sage,—
Give!"—So, he gowned him,
Straight got by heart that book to its last page:
Learned, we found him.
Yea, but we found him bald too, eyes like lead,
Accents uncertain:
"Time to taste life," another would have said,
"Up with the curtain!"
This man said rather, "Actual life comes next?
Patience a moment!
Grant I have mastered learning's crabbed text,
Still there's the comment.
Let me know all! Prate not of most or least,
Painful or easy!

Even to the crumbs I'd fain eat up the feast,
Aye, nor feel queasy."
Oh, such a life as he resolved to live,
When he had learned it,
When he had gathered all books had to give!
Sooner, he spurned it.
Image the whole, then execute the parts—
Fancy the fabric
Quite, ere you build, ere steel strike fire from quartz,
Ere mortar dab brick!

(Here's the town-gate reached, there's the market-place
Gaping before us.)
Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace
(Hearten our chorus!)
That before living he'd learn how to live—
No end to learning:
Earn the means first—God surely will contrive
Use for our earning.
Others mistrust and say, "But time escapes:
Live now or never!"
He said, "What's time? Leave Now for dogs and apes!
Man has Forever."
Back to his book then: deeper drooped his head:
Calculus racked him:
Leaden before, his eyes grew dross of lead:
Tussis attacked him.
"Now, master, take a little rest!"—not he!
(Caution redoubled,
Step two abreast, the way winds narrowly!)
Not a whit troubled,
Back to his studies, fresher than at first,
Fierce as a dragon
He (soul hydroptic with a sacred thirst)
Sucked at the flagon.
Oh, if we draw a circle premature,
Heedless of far gain,
Greedy for quick returns of profit, sure
Bad is our bargain!
Was it not great? did not he throw on God,
(He loves the burthen)—
God's task to make the heavenly period
Perfect the earthen?
Did not he magnify the mind, show clear
Just what it all meant?
He would not discount life, as fools do here,
Paid by installment.

He ventured neck or nothing—heaven's success
Found, or earth's failure:
"Wilt thou trust death or not?" He answered "Yes!
Hence with life's pale lure!"
That low man seeks a little thing to do,
Sees it and does it:
This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
Dies ere he knows it.
That low man goes on adding one to one,
His hundred's soon hit:
This high man, aiming at a million,
Misses an unit.
That, has the world here—should he need the next,
Let the world mind him!
This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed
Seeking shall find him.
So, with the throttling hands of death at strife,
Ground he at grammar;
Still, through the rattle, parts of speech were rife:
While he could stammer
He settled *Hoti's* business—let it be!—
Properly based *Oun*—
Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *De*,
Dead from the waist down.
Well, here's the platform, here's the proper place:
Hail to your purlieus,
All ye highfliers of the feathered race,
Swallows and curlews!
Here's the top-peak; the multitude below
Live, for they can, there:
This man decided not to Live but Know—
Bury this man there?
Here—here's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds form,
Lightnings are loosened,
Stars come and go! Let joy break with the storm,
Peace let the dew send!
Lofty designs must close in like effects:
Loftily lying,
Leave him—still loftier than the world suspects,
Living and dying.

Rabbi Ben Ezra

Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be,
The last of life, for which the first was made:
Our times are in His hand
Who saith, "A whole I planned,
Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid!"

Not that, amassing flowers,
Youth sighed, "Which rose make ours,
Which lily leave and then as best recall?"
Not that, admiring stars,
It yearned, "Nor Jove, nor Mars;
Mine be some figured flame which blends, transcends them all!"

Not for such hopes and fears
Annulling youth's brief years,
Do I remonstrate: folly wide the mark!
Rather I prize the doubt
Low kinds exist without,
Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark.

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
Were man but formed to feed
On joy, to solely seek and find and feast;
Such feasting ended, then
As sure an end to men;
Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-crammed beast?

Rejoice we are allied
To that which doth provide
And not partake, effect and not receive!
A spark disturbs our clod;
Nearer we hold of God
Who gives, than of his tribes that take, I must believe.

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three-parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

For thence,—a paradox
Which comforts while it mocks,—
Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me:
A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the scale.

What is he but a brute
Whose flesh has soul to suit,
Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play?
To man, propose this test—
Thy body at its best,
How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?

Yet gifts should prove their use:
I own the Past profuse
Of power each side, perfection every turn:
Eyes, ears took in their dole,
Brain treasured up the whole;
Should not the heart beat once, "How good to live and learn?"

Not once beat, "Praise be thine!
I see the whole design,
I, who saw power, see now Love perfect too;
Perfect I call thy plan:
Thanks that I was a man!
Maker, remake, complete,—I trust what thou shalt do!"

For pleasant in this flesh;
Our soul, in its rose-mesh
Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest:
Would we some prize might hold
To match those manifold
Possessions of the brute,—gain most, as we did best!

Let us not always say,
"Spite of this flesh today
I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!"
As the bird wings and sings,
Let us cry, "All good things

Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!"

Therefore I summon age
To grant youth's heritage,
Life's struggle having so far reached its term:
Thence shall I pass, approved
A man, for aye removed
From the developed brute; a God though in the germ.

And I shall thereupon
Take rest, ere I be gone
Once more on my adventure brave and new:
Fearless and unperplexed,
When I wage battle next,
What weapons to select, what armor to indue.

Youth ended, I shall try
My gain or loss thereby;
Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold:
And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame:
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being old.

For note, when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off, calls the glory from the gray:
A whisper from the west
Shoots—"Add this to the rest,
Take it and try its worth: here dies another day."

So, still within this life,
Though lifted o'er its strife,
Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,
"This rage was right i' the main,
That acquiescence vain:
The Future I may face now I have proved the Past."

For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved
To act tomorrow what he learns today:
Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

As it was better, youth
Should strive, through acts uncouth,
Toward making, than repose on aught found made:
So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedst age: wait death nor be afraid!

Enough now, if the Right
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine own,
With knowledge absolute,
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel alone.

Be there, for once and all,
Severed great minds from small,
Announced to each his station in the Past!
Was I, the world arraigned,
Were they, my soul disdained,
Right? Let age speak the truth and give us peace at last!

Now, who shall arbitrate?
Ten men love what I hate,
Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;
Ten, who in ears and eyes
Match me: we all surmise,
They this thing, and I that: whom shall my soul believe?

Not on the vulgar mass
Called "work," must sentence pass,
Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
O'er which, from level stand,
The low world laid its hand,
Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

But all the world's coarse thumb
And finger failed to plumb,
So passed in making up the main account;
All instincts immature,
All purposes unsure,
That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount:

Thoughts hardly to be packed
Into a narrow act,
Fancies that broke through language and escaped;
All I could never be,
All, men ignored in me,
This I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

Aye, note that Potter's wheel,
That metaphor! and feel
Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay,—
Thou, to whom fools propound,
When the wine makes its round,
"Since life fleets, all is change; the past gone, seize today!"

Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What entered into thee,
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay endure.

He fixed thee 'mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou, forsooth, wouldst fain arrest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

What though the earlier grooves,
Which ran the laughing loves
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What though, about thy rim,
Skull-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

Look not thou down but up!
To uses of a cup,
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips aglow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what needst thou with earth's wheel?

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who moldest men;
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I—to the wheel of life
With shapes and colors rife,
Bound dizzily—mistake my end, to slake thy thirst:

So, take and use thy work,
Amend what flaws may lurk,
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim!
My times be in thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same!

Up at a Villa—Down in the City

AS DISTINGUISHED BY AN ITALIAN PERSON OF QUALITY

Had I but plenty of money, money enough and to spare,
The house for me, no doubt, were a house in the city-square;
Ah, such a life, such a life, as one leads at the window there!

Something to see, by Bacchus, something to hear, at least!
There, the whole day long, one's life is a perfect feast;
While up at a villa one lives, I maintain it, no more than a beast.

Well now, look at our villa! stuck like the horn of a bull
Just on a mountain-edge as bare as the creature's skull,

Save a mere shag of a bush with hardly a leaf to pull!
—I scratch my own, sometimes, to see if the hair's turned wool.

But the city, oh the city—the square with the houses! Why?
They are stone-faced, white as a curd, there's something to take the eye!
Houses in four straight lines, not a single front awry;
You watch who crosses and gossips, who saunters, who hurries by;
Green blinds, as a matter of course, to draw when the sun gets high;
And the shops with fanciful signs which are painted properly.

What of a villa? Though winter be over in March by rights,
'Tis May perhaps ere the snow shall have withered well off the heights:
You've the brown plowed land before, where the oxen steam and wheeze,
And the hills over-smoked behind by the faint gray olive-trees.

Is it better in May, I ask you? You've summer all at once;
In a day he leaps complete with a few strong April suns.
'Mid the sharp short emerald wheat, scarce risen three fingers well,
The wild tulip, at end of its tube, blows out its great red bell
Like a thin clear bubble of blood, for the children to pick and sell.

Is it ever hot in the square? There's a fountain to spout and splash!
In the shade it sings and sprngs; in the shine such foam-bows flash
On the horses with curling fish-tails, that prance and paddle and pash
Round the lady atop in her conch—fifty gazers do not abash,
Though all that she wears is some weeds round her waist in a sort of sash.

All the year long at the villa, nothing to see though you linger,
Except yon cypress that points like death's lean lifted forefinger.
Some think fireflies pretty, when they mix i' the corn and mingle,
Or thrid the stinking hemp till the stalks of it seem atingle.
Late August or early September, the stunning cicala is shrill,
And the bees keep their tiresome whine round the resinous firs on the hill.
Enough of the seasons,—I spare you the months of the fever and chill.

Ere you open your eyes in the city, the blessed church-bells begin:
No sooner the bells leave off than the diligence rattles in:
You get the pick of the news, and it costs you never a pin.
By and by there's the traveling doctor gives pills, lets blood, draws teeth;
Or the Pulcinello-trumpet breaks up the market beneath.
At the post-office such a scene-picture—the new play, piping hot!
And a notice how, only this morning, three liberal thieves were shot.
Above it, behold the Archbishop's most fatherly of rebukes,
And beneath, with his crown and his lion, some little new law of the Duke's!
Or a sonnet with flowery marge, to the Reverend Don So-and-so,
Who is Dante, Boccaccio, Petrarca, Saint Jerome, and Cicero,
"And moreover," (the sonnet goes rhyming,) "the skirts of Saint Paul has reached,
Having preached us those six Lent-lectures more unctuous than ever he preached."
Noon strikes,—here sweeps the procession! our Lady borne smiling and smart
With a pink gauze gown all spangles, and seven swords stuck in her heart!

Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife;
No keeping one's haunches still: it's the greatest pleasure in life.
But bless you, it's dear—it's dear! fowls, wine, at double the rate.
They have clapped a new tax upon salt, and what oil pays passing the gate
It's a horror to think of. And so, the villa for me, not the city!
Beggars can scarcely be choosers: but still—ah, the pity, the pity!
Look, two and two go the priests, then the monks with cowls and sandals,
And the penitents dressed in white shirts, a-holding the yellow candles;
One, he carries a flag up straight, and another a cross with handles,
And the Duke's guard brings up the rear, for the better prevention of scandals:
Bang-whang-whang goes the drum, *tootle-te-tootle* the fife.
Oh, a day in the city-square, there is no such pleasure in life!

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888)

Dover Beach

The sea is calm tonight,
The tide is full, the moon lies fair
Upon the Straits;—on the French coast, the light
Gleams, and is gone; the cliffs of England stand,
Glimmering and vast, out in the tranquil bay.
Come to the window, sweet is the night air!
Only, from the long line of spray
Where the sea meets the moon-blanched sand,
Listen! you hear the grating roar
Of pebbles which the waves suck back, and fling,
At their return, up the high strand,
Begin, and cease, and then again begin,
With tremulous cadence slow, and bring
The eternal note of sadness in.

Sophocles long ago
Heard it on the Ægean, and it brought
Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
Of human misery; we
Find also in the sound a thought,
Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

The sea of faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furled;
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating to the breath
Of the night-wind down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

To Marguerite

Yes: in the sea of life enisled,
With echoing straits between us thrown.
Dotting the shoreless watery wild,
We mortal millions live *alone*.
The islands feel the enclasping flow,
And then their endless bounds they know.

But when the moon their hollows lights,
And they are swept by balms of spring,
And in their glens, on starry nights,
The nightingales divinely sing;
And lovely notes, from shore to shore,
Across the sounds and channels pour;

O then a longing like despair
Is to their farthest caverns sent!
For surely once, they feel, we were
Parts of a single continent
Now round us spreads the watery plain—
O might our marges meet again!

Who ordered that their longing's fire
Should be, as soon as kindled, cooled?
Who renders vain their deep desire?—
A god, a god their severance ruled;
And bade betwixt their shores to be
The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea.

EMILY DICKINSON (1830-1886)

The Soul Selects

The soul selects her own society,
Then shuts the door;
On her divine majority
Obtrude no more.

Unmoved, she notes the chariots pausing
At her low gate;
Unmoved, an emperor is kneeling
Upon her mat.

I've known her from an ample nation
Choose one;
Then close the valves of her attention
Like stone.

THE SOUL SELECTS, THE TINT I CANNOT TAKE IS BEST, "AFTER GREAT PAIN . . . ," BECAUSE I COULD NOT STOP FOR DEATH From *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, by permission of Little, Brown & Co. Copyright, 1914, by Martha Dickinson Bianchi.

The Tint I Cannot Take Is Best

The tint I cannot take is best,
The color too remote
That I could show it in bazaar
A guinea at a sight—

The fine impalpable array
That swaggers on the eye
Like Cleopatra's company
Repeated in the sky—

The moments of dominion
That happen on the Soul
And leave it with a discontent
Too exquisite to tell—

The eager look on landscapes
As if they just repressed
Some secret that was pushing,
Like chariots, in the breast—

The pleading of the Summer,
That other prank of snow
That covers mystery with tulle
For fear the squirrels know—

Their graspless manners mock us,
Until the cheated eye
Shuts arrogantly in the grave,
Another way to see.

"After Great Pain . . ."

After great pain a formal feeling comes—
The nerves sit ceremonious like tombs;
The stiff Heart questions—was it He that bore?
And yesterday—or centuries before?

The feet mechanical
Go round a wooden way
Of ground or air or Ought, regardless grown,
A quartz contentment like a stone.

This is the hour of lead
Remembered if outlived,
As freezing persons recollect the snow—
First chill, then stupor, then the letting go.

Because I Could Not Stop for Death

Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me;
The carriage held but just ourselves
And Immortality.

We slowly drove, he knew no haste,
And I had put away
My labor, and my leisure too,
For his civility.

We passed the school where children played
At wrestling in a ring;
We passed the fields of gazing grain,
We passed the setting sun;

We paused before a house that seemed
A swelling of the ground;
The roof was scarcely visible,
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries; but each
Feels shorter than the day
I first surmised the horses' heads
Were toward eternity.

A. E. HOUSMAN (1859-1936)

With Rue My Heart Is Laden

With rue my heart is laden
For golden friends I had,
For many a rose-lipt maiden
And many a lightfoot lad.

By brooks too broad for leaping
The lightfoot boys are laid;
The rose-lipt girls are sleeping
In fields where roses fade.

When I Was One-and-Twenty

When I was one-and-twenty
I heard a wise man say,
"Give crowns and pounds and guineas
But not your heart away;
Give pearls away and rubies
But keep your fancy free."
But I was one-and-twenty,
No use to talk to me.

When I was one-and-twenty
I heard him say again,
"The heart out of the bosom
Was never given in vain;
'Tis paid with sighs a-plenty
And sold for endless rue."
And I am two-and-twenty,
And oh, 'tis true, 'tis true.

To an Athlete Dying Young

The time you won your town the race
We chaired you through the market-place;
Man and boy stood cheering by,
And home we brought you shoulder-high.

Today, the road all runners come,
Shoulder-high we bring you home,
And set you at your threshold down,
Townsman of a stiller town.

Smart lad, to slip betimes away
From fields where glory does not stay,
And early though the laurel grows
It withers quicker than the rose.

Eyes the shady night has shut
Cannot see the record cut,
And silence sounds no worse than cheers
After earth has stopped the ears:

Now you will not swell the rout
Of lads that wore their honors out,
Runners whom renown outran
And the name died before the man.

So set, before its echoes fade,
The fleet foot on the sill of shade,
And hold to the low lintel up
The still-defended challenge-cup.

And round that early-laureled head
Will flock to gaze the strengthless dead,
And find unwithered on its curls
The garland briefer than a girl's.

WITH RUE MY HEART IS LADEN, WHEN I WAS ONE-AND-TWENTY, TO AN ATHLETE DYING YOUNG, ON WENLOCK EDGE From *A Shropshire Lad* by A. E. Housman. Reproduced by permission of Henry Holt and Company, Inc., and of The Society of Authors as the Literary Representative of the Trustees of the Estate of the late A. E. Housman, and Messrs. Jonathan Cape Ltd., publishers of A. E. Housman's Collected Poems.

On Wenlock Edge

On Wenlock Edge the wood's in trouble;
His forest fleece the Wrekin heaves;
The gale, it plies the saplings double,
And thick on Severn snow the leaves.

'Twould blow like this through holt and hanger
When Uricon the city stood:
'Tis the old wind in the old anger,
But then it threshed another wood.

Then, 'twas before my time, the Roman
At yonder heaving hill would stare:
The blood that warms an English yeoman,
The thoughts that hurt him, they were there.

There, like the wind through woods in riot,
Through him the gale of life blew high;
The tree of man was never quiet:
Then 'twas the Roman, now 'tis I.

The gale, it plies the saplings double,
It blows so hard, 'twill soon be gone:
Today the Roman and his trouble
Are ashes under Uricon.

The Chestnut Casts His Flambeaux

The chestnut casts his flambeaux, and the flowers
Stream from the hawthorn on the wind away,
The doors clap to, the pane is blind with showers.
Pass me the can, lad; there's an end of May.

There's one spoilt spring to scant our mortal lot,
One season ruined of our little store.
May will be fine next year as like as not:
Oh ay, but then we shall be twenty-four.

We for a certainty are not the first
Have sat in taverns while the tempest hurled
Their hopeful plans to emptiness, and cursed
Whatever brute and blackguard made the world.

It is in truth iniquity on high
To cheat our sentenced souls of aught they crave,
And mar the merriment as you and I
Fare on our long fool's-errand to the grave.

Iniquity it is; but pass the can.
My lad, no pair of kings our mothers bore;
Our only portion is the estate of man:
We want the moon, but we shall get no more.

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If here today the cloud of thunder lours
  Tomorrow it will hie on far behests;
The flesh will grieve on other bones than ours
  Soon, and the soul will mourn in other breasts.

The troubles of our proud and angry dust
  Are from eternity, and shall not fail.
Bear them we can, and if we can we must.
  Shoulder the sky, my lad, and drink your ale.

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865-1939)

Among School Children

I

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

II

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

III

And thinking of that fit of grief or rage
I look upon one child or t'other there
And wonder if she stood so at that age—
For even daughters of the swan can share
Something of every paddler's heritage—
And had that colour upon cheek or hair,
And thereupon my heart is driven wild:
She stands before me as a living child.

IV

Her present image floats into the mind—
Did Quattrocento finger fashion it
Hollow of cheek as though it drank the wind
And took a mess of shadows for its meat?
And I though never of Ledaean kind
Had pretty plumage once—enough of that,
Better to smile on all that smile, and show
There is a comfortable kind of old scarecrow.

V

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

VI

Plato thought nature but a spume that plays
Upon a ghostly paradigm of things;

AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN From *The Tower*, copyright, 1928, by The Macmillan Company and used with their permission. Also from *Collected Poems*, used with the permission of Mrs. W. B. Yeats and The Macmillan Company of Canada.

Solider Aristotle played the taws
Upon the bottom of a king of kings;
World-famous golden-thighed Pythagoras
Fingered upon a fiddle stick or strings
What a star sang and careless Muses heard:
Old clothes upon old sticks to scare a bird.

VII

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

VIII

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

A Prayer for My Daughter

Once more the storm is howling, and half hid
Under this cradle-hood and coverlid
My child sleeps on. There is no obstacle
But Gregory's wood and one bare hill
Whereby the haystack- and roof-leveling wind,
Bred on the Atlantic, can be stayed;
And for an hour I have walked and prayed
Because of the great gloom that is in my mind.

I have walked and prayed for this young child an hour
And heard the sea-wind scream upon the tower,
And under the arches of the bridge, and scream
In the elms above the flooded stream;
Imagining in excited reverie
That the future years had come,
Dancing to a frenzied drum,
Out of the murderous innocence of the sea.

May she be granted beauty, and yet not
Beauty to make a stranger's eye distraught,
Or hers before a looking-glass, for such,
Being made beautiful overmuch,
Consider beauty a sufficient end,
Lose natural kindness and maybe
The heart-revealing intimacy
That chooses right, and never find a friend.

Helen being chosen found life flat and dull
And later had much trouble from a fool,
While that great Queen, that rose out of the spray,
Being fatherless could have her way
Yet chose a bandy-legged smith for man.
It's certain that fine women eat
A crazy salad with their meat
Whereby the Horn of Plenty is undone.

In courtesy I'd have her chiefly learned;
Hearts are not had as a gift but hearts are earned
By those that are not entirely beautiful;
Yet many, that have played the fool
For beauty's very self, has charm made wise,
And many a poor man that has roved,
Loved and thought himself beloved,
From a glad kindness cannot take his eyes.

May she become a flourishing hidden tree
That all her thoughts may like the linnet be,

A PRAYER FOR MY DAUGHTER From *Later Poems*, copyright, 1924, by The Macmillan Company and used with their permission. Also from *Collected Poems*, used with the permission of Mrs. W. B. Yeats and The Macmillan Company of Canada.

And have no business but dispensing round
Their magnanimities of sound,
Nor but in merriment begin a chase,
Nor but in merriment begin a quarrel.
Oh, may she live like some green laurel
Rooted in one dear perpetual place.

My mind, because the minds that I have loved,
The sort of beauty that I have approved,
Prosper but little, has dried up of late,
Yet knows that to be choked with hate
May well be of all evil chances chief.
If there's no hatred in a mind
Assault and battery of the wind
Can never tear the linnet from the leaf.

An intellectual hatred is the worst,
So let her think opinions are accursed.
Have I not seen the loveliest woman born
Out of the mouth of Plenty's horn,
Because of her opinionated mind
Barter that horn and every good
By quiet natures understood
For an old bellows full of angry wind?

Considering that, all hatred driven hence,
The soul recovers radical innocence
And learns at last that it is self-delighting,
Self-appeasing, self-affrighting,
And that its own sweet will is Heaven's will;
She can, though every face should scowl
And every windy quarter howl
Or every bellows burst, be happy still.

And may her bridegroom bring her to a house
Where all's accustomed, ceremonious;
For arrogance and hatred are the wares
Peddled in the thoroughfares.
How but in custom and in ceremony
Are innocence and beauty born?
Ceremony's a name for the rich horn,
And custom for the spreading laurel tree.

John Kinseela's Lament for Mrs. Mary Moore

A bloody and a sudden end,
Gunshot or a noose,
For death who takes what man would keep,
Leaves what man would lose.
He might have had my sister,
My cousins by the score,
But nothing satisfied the fool
But my dear Mary Moore,
None other knows what pleasures man
At table or in bed.
What shall I do for pretty girls
Now my old bawd is dead?

Though stiff to strike a bargain,
Like an old Jew man,
Her bargain struck we laughed and talked
And emptied many a can;
And O! but she had stories,
Though not for the priest's ear,
To keep the soul of man alive,
Banish age and care,
And being old she put a skin
On everything she said.
What shall I do for pretty girls
Now my old bawd is dead?

The priests have got a book that says
But for Adam's sin
Eden's Garden would be there,
No pleasing habit ends,
No man grows old, no girl grows cold,
But friends walk by friends.
Who quarrels over halfpennies
That plucks the trees for bread?
What shall I do for pretty girls
Now that my old bawd is dead?

JOHN KINSEELA'S LAMENT FOR MRS MARY MOORE From *Last Poems and Plays*, copyright, 1940, by Georgie Yeats Used with the permission of The Macmillan Company, Mrs. W. B. Yeats, and The Macmillan Company of Canada.

For Anne Gregory

"Never shall a young man,
Thrown into despair
By those great honey-coloured
Ramparts at your ear,
Love you for yourself alone
And not your yellow hair."

"But I can get a hair-dye
And set such colour there,
Brown, or black, or carrot,
That young men in despair
May love me for myself alone
And not my yellow hair."

"I heard an old religious man
But yesternight declare
That he had found a text to prove
That only God, my dear,
Could love you for yourself alone
And not your yellow hair."

The Wild Swans at Coole

The trees are in their autumn beauty,
The woodland paths are dry,
Under the October twilight the water
Mirrors a still sky;
Upon the brimming water among the stones
Are nine-and-fifty swans.

The nineteenth autumn has come upon me
Since I first made my count;
I saw, before I had well finished,
All suddenly mount
And scatter wheeling in great broken rings
Upon their clamorous wings.

I have looked upon those brilliant creatures,
And now my heart is sore.
All's changed since I, hearing at twilight,
The first time on this shore,
The bell-beat of their wings above my head,
Trod with a lighter tread.

Unwearied still, lover by lover,
They paddle in the cold
Companionable streams or climb the air;
Their hearts have not grown old;
Passion or conquest, wander where they will,
Attend upon them still.

But now they drift on the still water
Mysterious, beautiful;
Among what rushes will they build,
By what lake's edge or pool
Delight men's eyes when I awake some day
To find they have flown away?

FOR ANNE GREGORY From *The Winding Stair*, copyright, 1933, by The Macmillan Company and used with their permission. Also from *Collected Poems*, used with the permission of Mrs W. B. Yeats and The Macmillan Company of Canada.

From THE WILD SWANS AT COOLE, copyright, 1918, 1919, by The Macmillan Company and used with their permission. Also from *Collected Poems*, used with the permission of Mrs. W. B. Yeats and The Macmillan Company of Canada.

Leda and the Swan

A sudden blow: the great wings beating still
Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,
He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.

How can those terrified vague fingers push
The feathered glory from her loosening thighs?
And how can body, laid in that white rush,
But feel the strange heart beating where it lies?

A shudder in the loins engenders there
The broken wall, the burning roof and tower
And Agamemnon dead.

Being so caught up,
So mastered by the brute blood of the air,
Did she put on his knowledge with his power
Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?

The Second Coming

Turning and turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned;
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

Surely some revelation is at hand;
Surely the Second Coming is at hand.
The Second Coming! Hardly are those words out
When a vast image out of *Spiritus Mundi*
Troubles my sight: somewhere in sands of the desert
A shape with lion body and the head of a man,
A gaze blank and pitiless as the sun,
Is moving its slow thighs, while all about it
Reel shadows of the indignant desert birds.
The darkness drops again; but now I know
That twenty centuries of stony sleep
Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,
And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,
Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?

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THE SECOND COMING From *Later Poems*, copyright, 1924, by The Macmillan Company and used with their permission. Also from *Collected Poems*, used with the permission of Mrs W. B. Yeats and The Macmillan Company of Canada.

Sailing to Byzantium

I

That is no country for old men. The young
In one another's arms, birds in the trees,
—Those dying generations—at their song,
The salmon-falls, the mackerel-crowded seas,
Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long
Whatever is begotten, born, and dies.
Caught in that sensual music all neglect
Monuments of unageing intellect.

II

An agèd man is but a paltry thing,
A tattered coat upon a stick, unless
Soul clap its hands and sing, and louder sing
For every tatter in its mortal dress,
Nor is there singing school but studying
Monuments of its own magnificence;
And therefore I have sailed the seas and come
To the holy city of Byzantium.

III

O sages standing in God's holy fire
As in the gold mosaic of a wall,
Come from the holy fire, perne in a gyre,
And be the singing-masters of my soul.
Consume my heart away; sick with desire
And fastened to a dying animal
It knows not what it is; and gather me
Into the artifice of eternity.

IV

Once out of nature I shall never take
My bodily form from any natural thing,
But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
Of hammered gold and gold enamelling
To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
Or set upon a golden bough to sing
To lords and ladies of Byzantium
Of what is past, or passing, or to come.

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON (1869-1935)

Miniver Cheevy

Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn,
  Grew lean while he assailed the seasons;
He wept that he was ever born,
  And he had reasons.

Miniver loved the days of old
  When swords were bright and steeds were prancing;
The vision of a warrior bold
  Would set him dancing.

Miniver sighed for what was not,
  And dreamed, and rested from his labors;
He dreamed of Thebes and Camelot,
  And Priam's neighbors.

Miniver mourned the ripe renown
  That made so many a name so fragrant;
He mourned Romance, now on the town,
  And Art, a vagrant.

Miniver loved the Medici,
  Albeit he had never seen one;
He would have sinned incessantly
  Could he have been one.

SAILING TO BYZANTIUM From *The Tower*, copyright, 1928, by The Macmillan Company and used with their permission Also from *Collected Poems*, used with the permission of Mrs. W. B. Yeats and The Macmillan Company of Canada

MINIVER CHEEVY Reprinted from *The Town Down the River* by Edwin Arlington Robinson; copyright, 1910, by Charles Scribner's Sons, 1938, by Ruth Nivison; used by permission of the publishers.

Miniver cursed the commonplace
And eyed a khaki suit with loathing;
He missed the medieval grace
Of iron clothing.

Miniver scorned the gold he sought,
But sore annoyed was he without it;
Miniver thought, and thought, and thought
And thought about it.

Miniver Cheevy, born too late,
Scratched his head and kept on thinking;
Miniver coughed, and called it fate,
And kept on drinking.

Richard Cory

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich—yes, richer than a king—
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

Mr. Flood's Party

Old Eben Flood, climbing alone one night
Over the hill between the town below
And the forsaken upland hermitage
That held as much as he should ever know
On earth again of home, paused warily.
The road was his with not a native near;
And Eben, having leisure, said aloud,
For no man else in Tilbury Town to hear:

"Well, Mr. Flood, we have the harvest moon
Again, and we may not have many more;
The bird is on the wing, the poet says,
And you and I have said it here before.
Drink to the bird." He raised up to the light
The jug that he had gone so far to fill,
And answered huskily: "Well, Mr. Flood,
Since you propose it, I believe I will."

Alone, as if enduring to the end
A valiant armor of scarred hopes outworn,
He stood there in the middle of the road
Like Roland's ghost winding a silent horn.
Below him, in the town among the trees,
Where friends of other days had honored him,
A phantom salutation of the dead
Rang thinly till old Eben's eyes were dim.

Then, as a mother lays her sleeping child
Down tenderly, fearing it may awake,
He set the jug down slowly at his feet
With trembling care, knowing that most things break;
And only when assured that on firm earth
It stood, as the uncertain lives of men
Assuredly did not, he paced away,
And with his hand extended paused again:

"Well, Mr. Flood, we have not met like this
In a long time; and many a change has come

RICHARD CORY Reprinted from *The Children of the Night* by Edwin Arlington Robinson; used by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

MR. FLOOD'S PARTY From Edwin Arlington Robinson's *Collected Poems*. Copyright, 1921, 1949, by Edwin Arlington Robinson, and used with the permission of The Macmillan Company.

To both of us, I fear, since last it was
We had a drop together. Welcome home!"
Convivially returning with himself,
Again he raised the jug up to the light;
And with an acquiescent quaver said:
"Well, Mr. Flood, if you insist, I might.

"Only a very little, Mr. Flood—
For auld lang syne. No more, sir; that will do."
So, for the time, apparently it did,
And Eben evidently thought so too;
For soon amid the silver loneliness
Of night he lifted up his voice and sang,
Secure, with only two moons listening,
Until the whole harmonious landscape rang—

"For auld lang syne." The weary throat gave out,
The last word wavered; and the song being done,
He raised again the jug regretfully
And shook his head, and was again alone.
There was not much that was ahead of him,
And there was nothing in the town below—
Where strangers would have shut the many doors
That many friends had opened long ago.

Flammonde

The man Flammonde, from God knows where,
With firm address and foreign air,
With news of nations in his talk
And something royal in his walk,
With glint of iron in his eyes,
But never doubt, nor yet surprise,
Appeared, and stayed, and held his head
As one by kings accredited.

Erect, with his alert repose
About him, and about his clothes,
He pictured all tradition hears
Of what we owe to fifty years.
His cleansing heritage of taste
Paraded neither want nor waste;
And what he needed for his fee
To live, he borrowed graciously.

He never told us what he was,
Or what mischance, or other cause,
Had banished him from better days
To play the Prince of Castaways.
Meanwhile he played surpassing well
A part, for most, unplayable;
In fine, one pauses, half afraid
To say for certain that he played.

For that, one may as well forego
Conviction as to yes or no;
Nor can I say just how intense
Would then have been the difference
To several, who, having striven
In vain to get what he was given,
Would see the stranger taken on
By friends not easy to be won.

Moreover, many a malcontent
He soothed and found munificent;
His courtesy beguiled and foiled
Suspicion that his years were soiled;
His mien distinguished any crowd,
His credit strengthened when he bowed;
And women, young and old, were fond
Of looking at the man Flammonde.

There was a woman in our town
On whom the fashion was to frown;
But while our talk renewed the tinge
Of a long-faded scarlet fringe,
The man Flammonde saw none of that,
And what he saw we wondered at—
That none of us, in her distress,
Could hide or find our littleness.

There was a boy that all agreed
Had shut within him the rare seed
Of learning. We could understand,
But none of us could lift a hand.

FLAMMONDE From Edwin Arlington Robinson's *Man Against the Sky*. Copyright, 1944, by Edwin Arlington Robinson, and used with the permission of The Macmillan Company.

The man Flammonde appraised the youth,
And told a few of us the truth;
And thereby, for a little gold,
A flowered future was unrolled.

There were two citizens who fought
For years and years, and over nought;
They made life awkward for their friends,
And shortened their own dividends.
The man Flammonde said what was wrong
Should be made right; nor was it long
Before they were again in line,
And had each other in to dine.

And these I mention are but four
Of many out of many more.
So much for them. But what of him—
So firm in every look and limb?
What small satanic sort of kink
Was in his brain? What broken link
Withheld him from the destinies
That came so near to being his?

What was he, when we came to sift
His meaning, and to note the drift
Of incommunicable ways
That make us ponder while we praise?
Why was it that his charm revealed
Somehow the surface of a shield?
What was it that we never caught?
What was he, and what was he not?

How much it was of him we met
We cannot ever know; nor yet
Shall all he gave us quite atone
For what was his, and his alone;
Nor need we now, since he knew best,
Nourish an ethical unrest:
Rarely at once will nature give
The power to be Flammonde and live.

We cannot know how much we learn
From those who never will return,
Until a flash of unforeseen
Remembrance falls on what has been.
We've each a darkening hill to climb;
And this is why, from time to time
In Tilbury Town, we look beyond
Horizons for the man Flammonde.

CARL SANDBURG (1878-)

Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind

"The past is a bucket of ashes."

I

The woman named Tomorrow
sits with a hairpin in her teeth
and takes her time
and does her hair the way she wants it
and fastens at last the last braid and coil
and puts the hairpin where it belongs
and turns and drawls: Well, what of it?
My grandmother, Yesterday, is gone.
What of it? Let the dead be dead.

2

The doors were cedar
and the panels strips of gold

FOUR PRELUDES ON PLAYTHINGS OF THE WIND From *Smoke and Steel* by Carl Sandburg, copyright, 1920, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc

and the girls were golden girls
and the panels read and the girls chanted:
We are the greatest city,
the greatest nation:
nothing like us ever was.
The doors are twisted on broken hinges.
Sheets of rain swish through on the wind
where the golden girls ran and the panels read:
We are the greatest city,
the greatest nation,
nothing like us ever was.

3

It has happened before.
Strong men put up a city and got
a nation together,
And paid singers to sing and women
to warble: We are the greatest city,
the greatest nation,
nothing like us ever was.

And while the singers sang
and the strong men listened
and paid the singers well
and felt good about it all,
there were rats and lizards who listened
. . . and the only listeners left now
. . . are . . . the rats . . . and the lizards.

And there are black crows
crying, "Caw, caw,"
bringing mud and sticks
building a nest
over the words carved
on the doors where the panels were cedar
and the strips on the panels were gold
and the golden girls came singing:
We are the greatest city,
the greatest nation:
nothing like us ever was.

The only singers now are crows crying, "Caw, caw,"
And the sheets of rain whine in the wind and doorways.
And the only listeners now are . . . the rats . . . and the lizards.

4

The feet of the rats
scribble on the doorsills;
the hieroglyphs of the rat footprints
chatter the pedigrees of the rats
and babble of the blood

and gabble of the breed
of the grandfathers and the great-grandfathers
of the rats.

And the wind shifts
and the dust on a doorsill shifts
and even the writing of the rat footprints
tells us nothing, nothing at all
about the greatest city, the greatest nation
where the strong men listened
and the women warbled: Nothing like us ever was.

The People Will Live On

The people will live on.
The learning and blundering people will live on.
They will be tricked and sold and again sold
And go back to the nourishing earth for rootholds,
The people so peculiar in renewal and comeback,
You can't laugh off their capacity to take it.
The mammoth rests between his cyclonic dramas.

The people so often sleepy, weary, enigmatic,
is a vast huddle with many units saying:
"I earn my living.
I make enough to get by
and it takes all my time.
If I had more time
I could do more for myself
and maybe for others.
I could read and study
and talk things over
and find out about things.
It takes time.
I wish I had the time."

The people is a tragic and comic two-face:
hero and hoodlum: phantom and gorilla twisting to moan with a gargoyle mouth: "They buy me and sell me . . . it's a game . . . sometime I'll break loose . . ."

Once having marched
Over the margins of animal necessity,
Over the grim line of sheer subsistence
Then man came
To the deeper rituals of his bones,

THE PEOPLE WILL LIVE ON From *The People, Yes*, by Carl Sandburg, copyright, 1936, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

To the lights lighter than any bones,
To the time for thinking things over,
To the dance, the song, the story,
Or the hours given over to dreaming,
Once having so marched.

Between the finite limitations of the five senses
and the endless yearnings of man for the beyond
the people hold to the humdrum bidding of work and food
while reaching out when it comes their way
for lights beyond the prison of the five senses,
for keepsakes lasting beyond any hunger or death.
This reaching is alive.
The panderers and liars have violated and smutted it.
Yet this reaching is alive yet
for lights and keepsakes.

The people know the salt of the sea
and the strength of the winds
lashing the corners of the earth.
The people take the earth
as a tomb of rest and a cradle of hope.
Who else speaks for the Family of Man?
They are in tune and step
with constellations of universal law.

The people is a polychrome,
a spectrum and a prism
held in a moving monolith,
a console organ of changing themes,
a clavilux of color poems
wherein the sea offers fog
and the fog moves off in rain
and the labrador sunset shortens
to a nocturne of clear stars
serene over the shot spray
of northern lights.

The steel mill sky is alive.
The fire breaks white and zigzag
shot on a gun-metal gloaming.
Man is a long time coming.
Man will yet win.
Brother may yet line up with brother:

This old anvil laughs at many broken hammers.
There are men who can't be bought.
The fireborn are at home in fire.
The stars make no noise.
You can't hinder the wind from blowing.
Time is a great teacher.
Who can live without hope?

In the darkness with a great bundle of grief
the people march.
In the night, and overhead a shovel of stars for keeps, the people march:
"Where to? what next?"

The Long Shadow of Lincoln: A Litany

(We can succeed only by concert. . . . The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty, and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new so we must think anew and act anew. We must disenthrall ourselves. . . . December 1, 1862. *The President's Message to Congress.*)

Be sad, be cool, be kind,
remembering those now dreamdust
hallowed in the ruts and gullies,
solemn bones under the smooth blue sea,
faces warblown in a falling rain.

Be a brother, if so can be,
to those beyond battle fatigue
each in his own corner of earth
or forty fathoms undersea
beyond all boom of guns,
beyond any bong of a great bell,
each with a bosom and number,
each with a pack of secrets,
each with a personal dream and doorway
and over them now the long endless winds
with the low healing song of time,
the hush and sleep murmur of time.

Make your wit a guard and cover.
Sing low, sing high, sing wide.
Let your laughter come free
remembering looking toward peace:
"We must disenthrall ourselves."

Be a brother, if so can be,
to those thrown forward
for taking hardwon lines,
for holding hardwon points
and their reward so-so,
little they care to talk about,
their pay held in a mute calm,
highspot memories going unspoken,
what they did being past words,
what they took being hardwon.
Be sad, be kind, be cool.
Weep if you must
And weep open and shameless
before these altars.

There are wounds past words.
There are cripples less broken
than many who walk whole.
There are dead youths
with wrists of silence
who keep a vast music
under their shut lips,
what they did being past words,
their dreams like their deaths
beyond any smooth and easy telling,
having given till no more to give.

There is dust alive
with dreams of The Republic,
with dreams of the Family of Man
flung wide on a shrinking globe
with old timetables,
old maps, old guide-posts
torn into shreds,

THE LONG SHADOW OF LINCOLN: A LITANY From *Complete Poems*, copyright, 1950, by Carl Sandburg. Reprinted by permission of Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

shot into tatters,
burnt in a firewind,
lost in the shambles,
faded in rubble and ashes.
There is dust alive.
Out of a granite tomb,
Out of a bronze sarcophagus,
Loose from the stone and copper
Steps a whitesmoke ghost
Lifting an authoritative hand
In the name of dreams worth dying for,
In the name of men whose dust breathes
of those dreams so worth dying for,
what they did being past words,
beyond all smooth and easy telling.

Be sad, be kind, be cool,
remembering, under God, a dreamdust
hallowed in the ruts and gullies,
solemn bones under the smooth blue sea,
faces warblown in a falling rain.

Sing low, sing high, sing wide.
Make your wit a guard and cover.
Let your laughter come free
like a help and a brace of comfort.

The earth laughs, the sun laughs
over every wise harvest of man,
over man looking toward peace
by the light of the hard old teaching:
"We must disenthrall ourselves."

ROBERT FROST (1875-)

The Oven Bird

There is a singer everyone has heard,
Loud, a mid-summer and a mid-wood bird,
Who makes the solid tree trunks sound again.
He says that leaves are old and that for
flowers
Mid-summer is to spring as one to ten.
He says the early petal-fall is past
When pear and cherry bloom went down in
showers
On sunny days a moment overcast;
And comes that other fall we name the fall.
He says the highway dust is over all.
The bird would cease and be as other birds
But that he knows in singing not to sing.
The question that he frames in all but words
Is what to make of a diminished thing.

Revelation

We make ourselves a place apart
Behind light words that tease and flout,
But oh, the agitated heart
Till someone find us really out.

'Tis pity if the case require
(Or so we say) that in the end
We speak the literal to inspire
The understanding of a friend.

But so with all, from babes that play
At hide-and-seek to God afar,
So all who hide too well away
Must speak and tell us where they are.

THE OVEN BIRD, REVELATION, THE TUFT OF FLOWERS, AFTER APPLE-PICKING, THE WOOD-PILE, DUST OF SNOW, NOTHING GOLD CAN STAY, STOPPING BY WOODS ON A SNOWY EVENING, SPRING POOLS, ACQUAINTED WITH THE NIGHT, DESERT PLACES, THE DEATH OF THE HIRED MAN From *Complete Poems of Robert Frost*. Copyright, 1930, 1939, 1949, by Henry Holt and Company, Inc. Copyright, 1936, by Robert Frost. Reproduced by permission of the publishers.

The Tuft of Flowers

I went to turn the grass once after one
Who mowed it in the dew before the sun.

The dew was gone that made his blade so keen
Before I came to view the levelled scene.

I looked for him behind an isle of trees;
I listened for his whetstone on the breeze.

But he had gone his way, the grass all mown,
And I must be, as he had been,—alone,

"As all must be," I said within my heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

But as I said it, swift there passed me by
On noiseless wing a bewildered butterfly,

Seeking with memories grown dim o'er night
Some resting flower of yesterday's delight.

And once I marked his flight go round and round,
As where some flower lay withering on the ground.

And then he flew as far as eye could see,
And then on tremulous wing came back to me.

I thought of questions that have no reply,
And would have turned to toss the grass to dry;

But he turned first, and led my eye to look
At a tall tuft of flowers beside a brook,

A leaping tongue of bloom the scythe had spared
Beside a reedy brook the scythe had bared.

I left my place to know them by their name,
Finding them butterfly-weed when I came.

The mower in the dew had loved them thus,
By leaving them to flourish, not for us,

Nor yet to draw one thought of ours to him,
But from sheer morning gladness at the brim.

The butterfly and I had lit upon,
Nevertheless, a message from the dawn,

That made me hear the wakening birds around,
And hear his long scythe whispering to the ground,

And feel a spirit kindred to my own;
So that henceforth I worked no more alone;

But glad with him, I worked as with his aid,
And weary, sought at noon with him the shade;

And dreaming, as it were, held brotherly speech
With one whose thought I had not hoped to reach.

"Men work together," I told him from the heart,
"Whether they work together or apart."

After Apple-Picking

My long two-pointed ladder's sticking through a tree
Toward heaven still,
And there's a barrel that I didn't fill
Beside it, and there may be two or three
Apples I didn't pick upon some bough.
But I am done with apple-picking now.
Essence of winter sleep is on the night,
The scent of apples: I am drowsing off.
I cannot rub the strangeness from my sight
I got from looking through a pane of glass
I skimmed this morning from the drinking trough
And held against the world of hoary grass.
It melted, and I let it fall and break.
But I was well
Upon my way to sleep before it fell,
And I could tell
What form my dreaming was about to take.
Magnified apples appear and disappear,
Stem end and blossom end,
And every fleck of russet showing clear.
My instep arch not only keeps the ache,
It keeps the pressure of a ladder-round.
I feel the ladder sway as the boughs bend.
And I keep hearing from the cellar bin
The rumbling sound
Of load on load of apples coming in.
For I have had too much
Of apple-picking: I am overtired
Of the great harvest I myself desired.
There were ten thousand thousand fruit to touch,
Cherish in hand, lift down, and not let fall.
For all
That struck the earth,
No matter if not bruised or spiked with stubble,
Went surely to the cider-apple heap
As of no worth.
One can see what will trouble
This sleep of mine, whatever sleep it is.
Were he not gone,
The woodchuck could say whether it's like his
Long sleep, as I describe its coming on,
Or just some human sleep.

The Wood-Pile

Out walking in the frozen swamp one grey day,
I paused and said, "I will turn back from here.
No, I will go on farther—and we shall see."
The hard snow held me, save where now and then

One foot went through. The view was all in lines
Straight up and down of tall slim trees
Too much alike to mark or name a place by
So as to say for certain I was here
Or somewhere else: I was just far from home.
A small bird flew before me. He was careful
To put a tree between us when he lighted,
And say no word to tell me who he was
Who was so foolish as to think what *he* thought.
He thought that I was after him for a feather—
The white one in his tail; like one who takes
Everything said as personal to himself.
One flight out sideways would have undeceived him.
And then there was a pile of wood for which
I forgot him and let his little fear
Carry him off the way I might have gone,
Without so much as wishing him good-night.
He went behind it to make his last stand.
It was a cord of maple, cut and split
And piled—and measured, four by four by eight.
And not another like it could I see.
No runner tracks in this year's snow looped near it.
And it was older sure than this year's cutting,
Or even last year's or the year's before.
The wood was grey and the bark warping off it
And the pile somewhat sunken. Clematis
Had wound strings round and round it like a bundle.
What held it though on one side was a tree
Still growing, and on one a stake and prop,
These latter about to fall. I thought that only
Someone who lived in turning to fresh tasks
Could so forget his handiwork on which
He spent himself, the labour of his axe,
And leave it there far from a useful fireplace
To warm the frozen swamp as best it could
With the slow smokeless burning of decay.

Dust of Snow

The way a crow
Shook down on me
The dust of snow
From a hemlock tree

Has given my heart
A change of mood
And saved some part
Of a day I had rued.

Nothing Gold Can Stay

Nature's first green is gold,
Her hardest hue to hold.
Her early leaf's a flower;
But only so an hour.

Then leaf subsides to leaf.
So Eden sank to grief,
So dawn goes down to day.
Nothing gold can stay.

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

Whose woods these are I think I know.
His house is in the village though;
He will not see me stopping here
To watch his woods fill up with snow.

My little horse must think it queer
To stop without a farmhouse near
Between the woods and frozen lake
The darkest evening of the year.

He gives his harness bells a shake
To ask if there is some mistake.
The only other sound's the sweep
Of easy wind and downy flake.

The woods are lovely, dark and deep.
But I have promises to keep,
And miles to go before I sleep,
And miles to go before I sleep.

Spring Pools

These pools that, though in forests, still reflect
The total sky almost without defect,
And like the flowers beside them, chill and shiver,
Will like the flowers beside them soon be gone,
And yet not out by any brook or river,
But up by roots to bring dark foliage on.

The trees that have it in their pent-up buds
To darken nature and be summer woods—
Let them think twice before they use their powers
To blot out and drink up and sweep away
These flowery waters and these watery flowers
From snow that melted only yesterday.

Acquainted with the Night

I have been one acquainted with the night.
I have walked out in rain—and back in rain.
I have outwalked the furthest city light.

I have looked down the saddest city lane.
I have passed by the watchman on his beat
And dropped my eyes, unwilling to explain.

I have stood still and stopped the sound of feet
When far away an interrupted cry
Came over houses from another street,

But not to call me back or say good-bye;
And further still at an unearthly height,
One luminary clock against the sky

Proclaimed the time was neither wrong nor right.
I have been one acquainted with the night.

Desert Places

Snow falling and night falling fast oh fast
In a field I looked into going past,
And the ground almost covered smooth in snow,
But a few weeds and stubble showing last.

The woods around it have it—it is theirs.
All animals are smothered in their lairs.
I am too absent-spirited to count;
The loneliness includes me unawares.

And lonely as it is that loneliness
Will be more lonely ere it will be less—
A blanker whiteness of benighted snow
With no expression, nothing to express.

They cannot scare me with their empty spaces
Between stars—on stars where no human race is.
I have it in me so much nearer home
To scare myself with my own desert places.

The Death of the Hired Man

Mary sat musing on the lamp-flame at the table
Waiting for Warren. When she heard his step,
She ran on tip-toe down the darkened passage
To meet him in the doorway with the news
And put him on his guard. "Silas is back."
She pushed him outward with her through the door
And shut it after her. "Be kind," she said.
She took the market things from Warren's arms
And set them on the porch, then drew him down
To sit beside her on the wooden steps.

"When was I ever anything but kind to him?
But I'll not have the fellow back," he said.
"I told him so last haying, didn't I?
'If he left then,' I said, 'that ended it.'
What good is he? Who else will harbor him
At his age for the little he can do?
What help he is there's no depending on.
Off he goes always when I need him most.
'He thinks he ought to earn a little pay,
Enough at least to buy tobacco with,
So he won't have to beg and be beholden.'
'All right,' I say, 'I can't afford to pay
Any fixed wages, though I wish I could.'
'Some one else can.' 'Then some one else will have to.'
I shouldn't mind his bettering himself
If that was what it was. You can be certain,
When he begins like that, there's some one at him
Trying to coax him off with pocket-money,—
In haying time, when any help is scarce.
In winter he comes back to us. I'm done."

"Sh! not so loud: he'll hear you," Mary said.

"I want him to: he'll have to soon or late."

"He's worn out. He's asleep beside the stove.
When I came up from Rowe's I found him here,
Huddled against the barn-door fast asleep,
A miserable sight, and frightening, too—
You needn't smile—I didn't recognize him—
I wasn't looking for him—and he's changed.
Wait till you see."

"Where did you say he'd been?"

"He didn't say. I dragged him to the house,
And gave him tea and tried to make him smoke.
I tried to make him talk about his travels.
Nothing would do: he just kept nodding off."

"What did he say? Did he say anything?"

"But little."

"Anything? Mary, confess
He said he'd come to ditch the meadow for me."

"Warren!"

"But did he? I just want to know."

"Of course he did. What would you have him say?
Surely you wouldn't grudge the poor old man
Some humble way to save his self-respect.
He added, if you really care to know,
He meant to clear the upper pasture, too.
That sounds like something you have heard before?
Warren, I wish you could have heard the way
He jumbled everything. I stopped to look
Two or three times—he made me feel so queer—
To see if he was talking in his sleep.
He ran on Harold Wilson—you remember—
The boy you had in haying four years since.
He's finished school, and teaching in his college.
Silas declares you'll have to get him back.
He says they two will make a team for work:
Between them they will lay this farm as smooth!
The way he mixed that in with other things.
He thinks young Wilson a likely lad, though daft
On education—you know how they fought
All through July under the blazing sun,
Silas up on the cart to build the load,
Harold along beside to pitch it on."

"Yes, I took care to keep well out of earshot."

"Well, those days trouble Silas like a dream.
You wouldn't think they would. How some things linger!
Harold's young college boy's assurance piqued him.
After so many years he still keeps finding
Good arguments he sees he might have used.
I sympathize. I know just how it feels
To think of the right thing to say too late.
Harold's associated in his mind with Latin.
He asked me what I thought of Harold's saying
He studied Latin like the violin
Because he liked it—that an argument!
He said he couldn't make the boy believe
He could find water with a hazel prong—
Which showed how much good school had ever done him.
He wanted to go over that. But most of all
He thinks if he could have another chance
To teach him how to build a load of hay—"

"I know, that's Silas' one accomplishment.
He bundles every forkful in its place,
And tags and numbers it for future reference,
So he can find and easily dislodge it
In the unloading. Silas does that well.
He takes it out in bunches like big birds' nests.
You never see him standing on the hay
He's trying to lift, straining to lift himself."

"He thinks if he could teach him that, he'd be
Some good perhaps to some one in the world.
He hates to see a boy the fool of books.
Poor Silas, so concerned for other folk,
And nothing to look backward to with pride,
And nothing to look forward to with hope,
So now and never any different."

Part of a moon was falling down the west,
Dragging the whole sky with it to the hills.
Its light poured softly in her lap. She saw
And spread her apron to it. She put out her hand
Among the harp-like morning-glory strings,
Taut with the dew from garden bed to eaves,
As if she played unheard the tenderness
That wrought on him beside her in the night.
"Warren," she said, "he has come home to die:
You needn't be afraid he'll leave you this time."

"Home," he mocked gently.

"Yes, what else but home?
It all depends on what you mean by home.

Of course he's nothing to us, any more
Than was the hound that came a stranger to us
Out of the woods, worn out upon the trail."

"Home is the place where, when you have to go there,
They have to take you in."

"I should have called it
Something you somehow haven't to deserve."

Warren leaned out and took a step or two,
Picked up a little stick, and brought it back
And broke it in his hand and tossed it by.
"Silas has better claim on us you think
Than on his brother? Thirteen little miles
As the road winds would bring him to his door.
Silas has walked that far no doubt today.
Why didn't he go there? His brother's rich,
A somebody—director in the bank."

"He never told us that."

"We know it though."

"I think his brother ought to help, of course.
I'll see to that if there is need. He ought of right
To take him in, and might be willing to—
He may be better than appearances.
But have some pity on Silas. Do you think
If he'd had any pride in claiming kin
Or anything he looked for from his brother,
He'd keep so still about him all this time?"

"I wonder what's between them."

"I can tell you.
Silas is what he is—we wouldn't mind him—
But just the kind that kinsfolk can't abide.
He never did a thing so very bad.
He don't know why he isn't quite as good
As any one. He won't be made ashamed
To please his brother, worthless though he is."

"I can't think Si ever hurt any one."

"No, but he hurt my heart the way he lay
And rolled his old head on that sharp-edged chair-back.
He wouldn't let me put him on the lounge.
You must go in and see what you can do.
I made the bed up for him there tonight.
You'll be surprised at him—how much he's broken.
His working days are done; I'm sure of it."

"I'd not be in a hurry to say that."

"I haven't been. Go, look, see for yourself.
But, Warren, please remember how it is:
He's come to help you ditch the meadow.
He has a plan. You mustn't laugh at him.
He may not speak of it, and then he may.
I'll sit and see if that small sailing cloud
Will hit or miss the moon."

It hit the moon.
Then there were three there, making a dim row,
The moon, the little silver cloud, and she.
Warren returned—too soon, it seemed to her,
Slipped to her side, caught up her hand and waited.

"Warren?" she questioned.

"Dead," was all he answered.

T. S. ELIOT (1888-)

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock

S'io credesse che mia risposta fosse
A persona che mai tornasse al mondo,
Questa fiamma staria senza piu scosse.
Ma perciocche giammai di questo fondo
Non torno vivo alcun, s'i'odo il vero,
Senza tema d'infamia ti rispondo.

Let us go then, you and I,
When the evening is spread out against the sky
Like a patient etherised upon a table;
Let us go, through certain half-deserted streets,
The muttering retreats
Of restless nights in one-night cheap hotels
And sawdust restaurants with oyster-shells:
Streets that follow like a tedious argument
Of insidious intent
To lead you to an overwhelming question . . .
Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"
Let us go and make our visit.

THE LOVE SONG OF J. ALFRED PRUFROCK, PRELUDES, THE HOLLOW MEN, JOURNEY OF THE MAGI, SWEENEY AMONG THE NIGHTINGALES From *Collected Poems, 1909-1935,* by T. S. Eliot, copyright, 1936, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc. Reprinted with the permission of Faber and Faber Limited.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes
Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,
Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,
Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,
Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,
And seeing that it was a soft October night,
Curled once about the house, and fell asleep.

And indeed there will be time
For the yellow smoke that slides along the street,
Rubbing its back upon the window-panes;
There will be time, there will be time
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet;
There will be time to murder and create,
And time for all the works and days of hands
That lift and drop a question on your plate;
Time for you and time for me,
And time yet for a hundred indecisions,
And for a hundred visions and revisions,
Before the taking of a toast and tea.

In the room the women come and go
Talking of Michelangelo.

And indeed there will be time
To wonder, "Do I dare?" and, "Do I dare?"
Time to turn back and descend the stair,
With a bald spot in the middle of my hair—
(They will say: "How his hair is growing thin!")
My morning coat, my collar mounting firmly to the chin,
My necktie rich and modest, but asserted by a simple pin—
(They will say: "But how his arms and legs are thin!")
Do I dare
Disturb the universe?
In a minute there is time
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.
For I have known them all already, known them all:
Have known the evenings, mornings, afternoons,
I have measured out my life with coffee spoons;
I know the voices dying with a dying fall
Beneath the music from a farther room.
  So how should I presume?
And I have known the eyes already, known them all—
The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin,
When I am pinned and wriggling on the wall,
Then how should I begin

To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?
  And how should I presume?

And I have known the arms already, known them all—
Arms that are braceleted and white and bare
(But in the lamplight, downed with light brown hair!)
Is it perfume from a dress
That makes me so digress?
Arms that lie along a table, or wrap about a shawl.
  And should I then presume?
  And how should I begin?
  . . . . . .

Shall I say, I have gone at dusk through narrow streets
And watched the smoke that rises from the pipes
Of lonely men in shirt-sleeves, leaning out of windows? . . .

I should have been a pair of ragged claws
Scuttling across the floors of silent seas.
  . . . . . .

And the afternoon, the evening, sleeps so peacefully!
Smoothed by long fingers,
Asleep . . . tired . . . or it malingers,
Stretched on the floor, here beside you and me.
Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis?
But though I have wept and fasted, wept and prayed,
Though I have seen my head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon
    a platter,
I am no prophet—and here's no great matter;
I have seen the moment of my greatness flicker,
And I have seen the eternal Footman hold my coat, and snicker,
And in short, I was afraid.

And would it have been worth it, after all,
After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,
Among the porcelain, among some talk of you and me,
Would it have been worth while,
To have bitten off the matter with a smile,
To have squeezed the universe into a ball
To roll it toward some overwhelming question,
To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead,
Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"—
If one, settling a pillow by her head,
  Should say: "That is not what I meant at all;
  That is not it, at all."

And would it have been worth it, after all,
Would it have been worth while,
After the sunsets and the dooryards and the sprinkled streets,

After the novels, after the teacups, after the skirts that trail along
the floor—
And this, and so much more?—
It is impossible to say just what I mean!
But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen:
Would it have been worth while
If one, settling a pillow or throwing off a shawl,
And turning toward the window, should say:
"That is not it at all,
That is not what I meant, at all."
. . . .

No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be;
Am an attendant lord, one that will do
To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,
Deferential, glad to be of use,
Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;
At times, indeed, almost ridiculous—
Almost, at times, the Fool.

I grow old . . . I grow old . . .
I shall wear the bottoms of my trousers rolled.

Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach?
I shall wear white flannel trousers, and walk upon the beach.
I have heard the mermaids singing, each to each.

I do not think that they will sing to me.

I have seen them riding seaward on the waves
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
When the wind blows the water white and black.

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.

Preludes

I

The winter evening settles down
With smell of steaks in passageways.
Six o'clock.
The burnt-out ends of smoky days.
And now a gusty shower wraps
The grimy scraps
Of withered leaves about your feet
And newspapers from vacant lots;
The showers beat
On broken blinds and chimney-pots,
And at the corner of the street
A lonely cab-horse steams and stamps.
And then the lighting of the lamps.

2

The morning comes to consciousness
Of faint stale smells of beer
From the sawdust-trampled street
With all its muddy feet that press
To early coffee-stands.
With the other masquerades
That time resumes,
One thinks of all the hands
That are raising dingy shades
In a thousand furnished rooms.

3

You tossed a blanket from the bed,
You lay upon your back, and waited;
You dozed, and watched the night revealing
The thousand sordid images
Of which your soul was constituted;
They flickered against the ceiling.
And when all the world came back
And the light crept up between the shutters
And you heard the sparrows in the gutters,
You had such a vision of the street
As the street hardly understands;
Sitting along the bed's edge, where
You curled the papers from your hair,
Or clasped the yellow soles of feet
In the palms of both soiled hands.

4

His soul stretched tight across the skies
That fade behind a city block,
Or trampled by insistent feet
At four and five and six o'clock;
And short square fingers stuffing pipes,
And evening newspapers, and eyes
Assured of certain certainties,
The conscience of a blackened street
Impatient to assume the world.

I am moved by fancies that are curled
Around these images, and cling.
The notion of some infinitely gentle
Infinitely suffering thing.

Wipe your hand across your mouth, and laugh;
The worlds revolve like ancient women
Gathering fuel in vacant lots.

The Hollow Men

Mistah Kurtz—he dead.
A penny for the Old Guy

I

We are the hollow men
We are the stuffed men
Leaning together
Headpiece filled with straw. Alas!
Our dried voices, when
We whisper together
Are quiet and meaningless
As wind in dry grass
Or rats' feet over broken glass
In our dry cellar
Shape without form, shade without colour,
Paralysed force, gesture without motion;

Those who have crossed
With direct eyes, to death's other Kingdom
Remember us—if at all—not as lost
Violent souls, but only
As the hollow men
The stuffed men.

II

Eyes I dare not meet in dreams
In death's dream kingdom
These do not appear:
There, the eyes are
Sunlight on a broken column
There, is a tree swinging
And voices are
In the wind's singing
More distant and more solemn
Than a fading star.
Let me be no nearer
In death's dream kingdom
Let me also wear
Such deliberate disguises
Rat's coat, crowskin, crossed staves

In a field
Behaving as the wind behaves
No nearer—

Not that final meeting
In the twilight kingdom

III

This is the dead land
This is cactus land
Here the stone images
Are raised, here they receive
The supplication of a dead man's hand
Under the twinkle of a fading star.

Is it like this
In death's other kingdom
Waking alone
At the hour when we are
Trembling with tenderness
Lips that would kiss
Form prayers to broken stone

IV

The eyes are not here
There are no eyes here
In this valley of dying stars
In this hollow valley
This broken jaw of our lost kingdoms.

In this last of meeting places
We grope together
And avoid speech
Gathered on this beach of the tumid river.

Sightless, unless
The eyes reappear
As the perpetual star
Multifoliate rose
Of death's twilight kingdom
The hope only
Of empty men.

V

Here we go round the prickly pear
Prickly pear prickly pear
Here we go round the prickly pear
At five o'clock in the morning.

Between the idea
And the reality
Between the motion
And the act
Falls the Shadow
For Thine is the Kingdom

Between the conception
And the creation
Between the emotion
And the response
Falls the Shadow
Life is very long

Between the desire
And the spasm
Between the potency
And the existence
Between the essence
And the descent
Falls the Shadow
For Thine is the Kingdom

For Thine is
Life is
For thine is the

This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.

Journey of the Magi

"A cold coming we had of it,
Just the worst time of the year
For a journey, and such a long journey:
The ways deep and the weather sharp,
The very dead of winter."
And the camels galled, sore-footed, refractory,
Lying down in the melting snow.

There were times we regretted
The summer palaces on slopes, the terraces,
And the silken girls bringing sherbet.
Then the camel men cursing and grumbling
And running away, and wanting their liquor and women,
And the night-fires going out, and the lack of shelters,
And the cities hostile and the towns unfriendly
And the villages dirty and charging high prices:
A hard time we had of it.
At the end we preferred to travel all night,
Sleeping in snatches,
With the voices singing in our ears, saying
That this was all folly.

Then at dawn we came down to a temperate valley,
Wet, below the snow line, smelling of vegetation;
With a running stream and a water-mill beating the darkness,
And three trees on the low sky,
And an old white horse galloped away in the meadow.
Then we came to a tavern with vine-leaves over the lintel,
Six hands at an open door dicing for pieces of silver,
And feet kicking the empty wine-skins.
But there was no information, and so we continued
And arrived at evening, not a moment too soon
Finding the place; it was (you may say) satisfactory.

All this was a long time ago, I remember,
And I would do it again, but set down
This set down
This: were we led all that way for
Birth or Death? There was a Birth, certainly,
We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death,
But had thought they were different; this Birth was
Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death.
We returned to our places, these Kingdoms,
But no longer at ease here, in the old dispensation,
With an alien people clutching their gods.
I should be glad of another death.

Sweeney Among the Nightingales

ὤμοι, πέπληγμαι καιρίαν πλὴγὴν ἔσω.

Apeneck Sweeney spreads his knees
Letting his arms hang down to laugh,
The zebra stripes along his jaw
Swelling to maculate giraffe.

The circles of the stormy moon
Slide westward toward the River Plate,
Death and the Raven drift above
And Sweeney guards the hornèd gate.

Gloomy Orion and the Dog
Are veiled; and hushed the shrunken seas;
The person in the Spanish cape
Tries to sit on Sweeney's knees

Slips and pulls the table cloth
Overturns a coffee-cup,

Reorganised upon the floor
She yawns and draws a stocking up;

The silent man in mocha brown
Sprawls at the window-sill and gapes;
The waiter brings in oranges
Bananas figs and hothouse grapes;

The silent vertebrate in brown
Contracts and concentrates, withdraws;
Rachel *née* Rabinovitch
Tears at the grapes with murderous paws;

She and the lady in the cape
Are suspect, thought to be in league;

Therefore the man with heavy eyes
Declines the gambit, shows fatigue,

Leaves the room and reappears
Outside the window, leaning in,
Branches of wistaria
Circumscribe a golden grin;

The host with someone indistinct
Converses at the door apart,
The nightingales are singing near
The Convent of the Sacred Heart,

And sang within the bloody wood
When Agamemnon cried aloud,
And let their liquid siftings fall
To stain the stiff dishonoured shroud.

WALLACE STEVENS (1879-)

Peter Quince at the Clavier

I

Just as my fingers on these keys
Make music, so the selfsame sounds
On my spirit make a music, too.

Music is feeling, then, not sound;
And thus it is that what I feel,
Here in this room, desiring you,

Thinking of your blue-shadowed silk,
Is music. It is like the strain
Waked in the elders by Susanna.

Of a green evening, clear and warm,
She bathed in her still garden, while
The red-eyed elders watching, felt

The basses of their beings throb
In witching chords, and their thin blood
Pulse pizzicati of Hosanna.

II

In the green water, clear and warm,
Susanna lay.

She searched
The touch of springs,
And found
Concealed imaginings.
She sighed,
For so much melody.

Upon the bank, she stood
In the cool
Of spent emotions.
She felt, among the leaves,
The dew
Of old devotions.

She walked upon the grass,
Still quavering.
The winds were like her maids,
On timid feet,
Fetching her woven scarves,
Yet wavering.

A breath upon her hand
Muted the night.
She turned—

PETER QUINCE AT THE CLAVIER Reprinted from *Harmonium*, by Wallace Stevens, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., copyright, 1923, 1931, by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

A cymbal crashed,
And roaring horns.

III

Soon, with a noise like tambourines,
Came her attendant Byzantines.

They wondered why Susanna cried
Against the elders by her side:

And as they whispered, the refrain
Was like a willow swept by rain.

Anon their lamps' uplifted flame
Revealed Susanna and her shame.

And then the simpering Byzantines,
Fled, with a noise like tambourines.

IV

Beauty is momentary in the mind—
The fitful tracing of a portal;
But in the flesh it is immortal.

The body dies; the body's beauty lives.
So evenings die, in their green going,
A wave, interminably flowing.
So gardens die, their meek breath scenting
The cowl of Winter, done repenting.
So maidens die to the auroral
Celebration of a maiden's choral.

Susanna's music touched the bawdy strings
Of those white elders; but, escaping,
Left only Death's ironic scraping.
Now in its immortality, it plays
On the clear viol of her memory,
And makes a constant sacrament of praise.

JOHN CROWE RANSOM (1888-)

Spectral Lovers

By night they haunted a thicket of April mist,
As out of the rich ground strangely come to birth,
Else two immaculate angels fallen on earth.
Lovers they knew they were, but why unclasped, unkissed?
Why should two lovers go frozen asunder in fear?
And yet they were, they were.

Over the shredding of an April blossom
Her thrilling fingers touched him quick with care;
Of many delicate postures she cast a snare;
But for all the red heart beating in the pale bosom,
Her face as of cunningly tinctured ivory
Was hard with an agony.

Stormed by the little batteries of an April night,
Passionate being the essences of the field,
Should the penetrable walls of the crumbling prison yield
And open her treasure to the first clamorous knight?
"This is the mad moon, and must I surrender all?
If he but ask it, I shall."

SPECTRAL LOVERS, BELLS FOR JOHN WHITESIDE'S DAUGHTER Reprinted from *Selected Poems*, by John Crowe Ransom, by permission of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., copyright, 1924, 1945, by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.

And gesturing largely to the very moon of Easter,
Mincing his steps, and swishing the jubilant grass,
And beheading some field-flowers that had come to pass,
He had reduced his tributaries faster,
Had not considerations pinched his heart
Unfitly for his art.

"Am I reeling with the sap of April like a drunkard?
Blessed is he that taketh this richest of cities;
But it is so stainless, the sack were a thousand pities;
This is that marble fortress not to be conquered,
Lest its white peace in the black flame turn to tinder
And an unutterable cinder."

They passed me once in April, in the mist.
No other season is it, when one walks and discovers
Two clad in the shapes of angels, being spectral lovers,
Trailing a glory of moon-gold and amethyst,
Who touched their quick fingers fluttering like a bird
Whose songs shall never be heard.

Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter

There was such speed in her little body,
And such lightness in her footfall,
It is no wonder that her brown study
Astonishes us all.

Her wars were bruited in our high window.
We looked among orchard trees and beyond,
Where she took arms against her shadow,
Or harried unto the pond

The lazy geese, like a snow cloud
Dripping their snow on the green grass,
Tricking and stopping, sleepy and proud,
Who cried in goose, Alas,

For the tireless heart within the little
Lady with rod that made them rise
From their noon apple-dreams, and scuttle
Goose-fashion under the skies!

But now go the bells, and we are ready;
In one house we are sternly stopped
To say we are vexed at her brown study,
Lying so primly propped.

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH (1892-)

You, Andrew Marvell

And here face down beneath the sun
And here upon earth's noonward height
To feel the always coming on
The always rising of the night
To feel creep up the curving east
The earthly chill of dusk and slow
Upon those under lands the vast
And ever-climbing shadow grow

YOU, ANDREW MARVELL, THE END OF THE WORLD From *Poems, 1924-1933,* by Archibald MacLeish Reprinted by permission of and arrangement with Houghton-Mifflin Company, the authorized publishers.

And strange at Ecbatan the trees
Take leaf by leaf the evening strange
The flooding dark about their knees
The mountains over Persia change

And now at Kermanshah the gate
Dark empty and the withered grass
And through the twilight now the late
Few travelers in the westward pass

And Baghdad darken and the bridge
Across the silent river gone
And through Arabia the edge
Of evening widen and steal on

And deepen on Palmyra's street
The wheel rut in the ruined stone

And Lebanon fade out and Crete
High through the clouds and overblown

And over Sicily the air
Still flashing with the landward gulls
And loom and slowly disappear
The sails above the shadowy hulls

And Spain go under and the shore
Of Africa the gilded sand
And evening vanish and no more
The low pale light across that land

Nor now the long light on the sea—

And here face downward in the sun
To feel how swift how secretly
The shadow of the night comes on . . .

The End of the World

Quite unexpectedly, as Vasserot
The armless ambidextrian was lighting
A match between his great and second toe,
And Ralph the lion was engaged in biting
The neck of Madame Sossman while the drum
Pointed, and Teeny was about to cough
In waltz-time swinging Jocko by the thumb—
Quite unexpectedly the top blew off:

And there, there overhead, there, there hung over
Those thousands of white faces, those dazed eyes,
There in the starless dark the poise, the hover,
There with vast wings across the cancelled skies,
There in the sudden blackness the black pall
Of nothing, nothing, nothing—nothing at all.

C. DAY LEWIS (1904-)

Nearing Again the Legendary Isle

Nearing again the legendary isle
Where sirens sang and mariners were skinned,
We wonder now what was there to beguile
That such stout fellows left their bones behind.

NEARING AGAIN THE LEGENDARY ISLE, NEWSREEL From *Collected Poems,* by C. Day Lewis, Hogarth Press, Ltd.

Those chorus-girls are surely past their prime,
Voices grow shrill and paint is wearing thin,
Lips that sealed up the sense from gnawing time
Now beg the favor with a graveyard grin.

We have no flesh to spare and they can't bite,
Hunger and sweat have stripped us to the bone;
A skeleton crew we toil upon the tide
And mock the theme-song meant to lure us on:

No need to stop the ears, avert the eyes
From purple rhetoric of evening skies.

Newsreel

Enter the dream-house, brothers and sisters, leaving
Your debts asleep, your history at the door:
This is the home for heroes, and this loving
Darkness a fur you can afford.

Fish in their tank electrically heated
Nose without envy the glass wall: for them
Clerk, spy, nurse, killer, prince, the great and the defeated,
Move in a mute day-dream.

Bathed in this common source, you gape incurious
At what your active hours have willed—
Sleep-walking on that silver wall, the furious
Sick shapes and pregnant fancies of your world.

There is the mayor opening the oyster season:
A society wedding: the autumn hats look swell:
An old crocks' race, and a politician
In fishing-waders to prove that all is well.

Oh, look at the warplanes! Screaming hysteric treble
In the long power-dive, like gannets they fall steep.
But what are they to trouble—
These silver shadows to trouble your watery, womb-deep sleep?

See the big guns, rising, groping, erected
To plant death in your world's soft womb.
Fire-bud, smoke-blossom, iron seed projected—
Are these exotics? They will grow nearer home:

Grow nearer home—and out of the dream-house stumbling
One night into a strangling air and the flung
Rags of children and thunder of stone niagaras tumbling,
You'll know you slept too long.

W. H. AUDEN (1907-)

Lay Your Sleeping Head, My Love

Lay your sleeping head, my love,
Human on my faithless arm;
Time and fevers burn away
Individual beauty from
Thoughtful children, and the grave
Proves the child ephemeral:
But in my arms till break of day
Let the living creature lie,
Mortal, guilty, but to me
The entirely beautiful.

Soul and body have no bounds:
To lovers as they lie upon
Her tolerant enchanted slope
In their ordinary swoon,
Grave the vision Venus sends
Of supernatural sympathy,
Universal love and hope;
While an abstract insight wakes
Among the glaciers and the rocks
The hermit's sensual ecstasy.

Certainty, fidelity
On the stroke of midnight pass
Like vibrations of a bell,
And fashionable madmen raise
Their pedantic boring cry:
Every farthing of the cost,
All the dreaded cards foretell,
Shall be paid, but from this night
Not a whisper, not a thought,
Not a kiss nor look be lost.

Beauty, midnight, vision dies:
Let the winds of dawn that blow
Softly round your dreaming head
Such a day of sweetness show
Eye and knocking heart may bless,
Find the mortal world enough;
Noons of dryness see you fed
By the involuntary powers,
Nights of insult let you pass
Watched by every human love.

Law Like Love

Law, say the gardeners, is the sun,
Law is the one
All gardeners obey
Tomorrow, yesterday, today.

Law is the wisdom of the old
The impotent grandfathers shrilly scold;
The grandchildren put out a treble tongue,
Law is the senses of the young.

Law, says the priest with a priestly look,
Expounding to an unpriestly people,
Law is the words in my priestly book,
Law is my pulpit and my steeple.

Law, says the judge as he looks down his nose,
Speaking clearly and most severely,
Law is as I've told you before,
Law is as you know I suppose,
Law is but let me explain it once more,
Law is The Law.

Yet law-abiding scholars write;
Law is neither wrong nor right,

LAY YOUR SLEEPING HEAD, MY LOVE, LAW LIKE LOVE, CASINO, "O WHAT IS THAT SOUND WHICH SO THRILLS THE EAR," IN MEMORY OF W. B. YEATS, SEPTEMBER 1, 1939, AS I WALKED OUT ONE EVENING, MUSÉE DES BEAUX ARTS, THE UNKNOWN CITIZEN Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.
Copyright, 1945, by W. H. Auden.

Law is only crimes
Punished by places and by times,
Law is the clothes men wear
Anytime, anywhere,
Law is Good-morning and Good-night.

Others say, Law is our Fate;
Others say, Law is our State;
Others say, others say
Law is no more
Law has gone away.

And always the loud angry crowd
Very angry and very loud
Law is We,
And always the soft idiot softly Me.

If we, dear, know we know no more
Than they about the law,
If I no more than you
Know what we should and should not do
Except that all agree
Gladly or miserably
That the law is
And that all know this,
If therefore thinking it absurd
To identify Law with some other word,
Unlike so many men
I cannot say Law is again,
No more than they can we suppress
The universal wish to guess
Or slip out of our own position
Into an unconcerned condition.
Although I can at least confine
Your vanity and mine
To stating timidly
A timid similarity,
We shall boast anyway:
Like love I say.

Like love we don't know where or why
Like love we can't compel or fly
Like love we often weep
Like love we seldom keep.

Casino

Only the hands are living; to the wheel attracted,
Are moved as deer trek desperately towards a creek
  Through the dust and scrub of the desert, or gently
  As sunflowers turn to the light.

And, as the night takes up the cries of feverish children,
The cravings of lions in dens, the loves of dons,
  Gathers them all and remains the night, the
  Great room is full of their prayers.

To the last feast of isolation self-invited
They flock, and in the rite of disbelief are joined;
  From numbers all their stars are recreated,
  The enchanted, the world, the sad.

Without, the rivers flow among the wholly living,
Quite near their trysts; and the mountains part them; and the bird
  Deep in the greens and moistures of summer
  Sings towards their work.

But here no nymph comes naked to the youngest shepherd;
The fountain is deserted; the laurel will not grow;
  The labyrinth is safe but endless, and broken
  Is Ariadne's thread.

As deeper in these hands is grooved their fortune: "Lucky
Were few, and it is possible that none was loved;
And what was godlike in this generation
Was never to be born."

"O What Is That Sound Which So Thrills the Ear"

O what is that sound which so thrills the ear
Down in the valley drumming, drumming?
Only the scarlet soldiers, dear,
The soldiers coming.

O what is that light I see flashing so clear
Over the distance brightly, brightly?
Only the sun on their weapons, dear,
As they step lightly.

O what are they doing with all that gear;
What are they doing this morning, this morning?
Only the usual manoeuvres, dear,
Or perhaps a warning.

O why have they left the road down there;
Why are they suddenly wheeling, wheeling?
Perhaps a change in the orders, dear;
Why are you kneeling?

O haven't they stopped for the doctor's care;
Haven't they reined their horses, their horses?
Why, they are none of them wounded, dear,
None of these forces.

O is it the parson they want with white hair;
Is it the parson, is it, is it?
No, they are passing his gateway, dear,
Without a visit.

O it must be the farmer who lives so near;
It must be the farmer so cunning, so cunning?
They have passed the farm already, dear,
And now they are running.

O where are you going? stay with me here!
Were the vows you swore me deceiving, deceiving?
No, I promised to love you, dear,
But I must be leaving.

O it's broken the lock and splintered the door,
O it's the gate where they're turning, turning;
Their feet are heavy on the floor
And their eyes are burning.

In Memory of W. B. Yeats

(*d. Jan. 1939*)

I

He disappeared in the dead of winter:
The brooks were frozen, the airports almost deserted,
And snow disfigured the public statues;
The mercury sank in the mouth of the dying day.
O all the instruments agree
The day of his death was a dark cold day.

Far from his illness
The wolves ran on through the evergreen forests,
The peasant river was untempted by the fashionable quays;
By mourning tongues
The death of the poet was kept from his poems.

But for him it was his last afternoon as himself,
An afternoon of nurses and rumours;
The provinces of his body revolted,
The squares of his mind were empty,
Silence invaded the suburbs,
The current of his feeling failed: he became his admirers.

Now he is scattered among a hundred cities
And wholly given over to unfamiliar affections;
To find his happiness in another kind of wood
And be punished under a foreign code of conscience.
The words of a dead man
Are modified in the guts of the living.

But in the importance and noise of tomorrow
When the brokers are roaring like beasts on the floor of the Bourse,
And the poor have the sufferings to which they are fairly accustomed,
And each in the cell of himself is almost convinced of his freedom;
A few thousand will think of this day
As one thinks of a day when one did something slightly unusual.
O all the instruments agree
The day of his death was a dark cold day.

2

You were silly like us: your gift survived it all;
The parish of rich women, physical decay,

Yourself; mad Ireland hurt you into poetry.
Now Ireland has her madness and her weather still,
For poetry makes nothing happen: it survives
In the valley of its saying where executives
Would never want to tamper; it flows south
From ranches of isolation and the busy griefs,
Raw towns that we believe and die in; it survives,
A way of happening, a mouth.

3

Earth, receive an honoured guest;
William Yeats is laid to rest:
Let the Irish vessel lie
Emptied of its poetry.

Time that is intolerant
Of the brave and innocent,
And indifferent in a week
To a beautiful physique,

Worships language and forgives
Everyone by whom it lives;
Pardons cowardice, conceit,
Lays its honours at their feet.

Time that with this strange excuse
Pardoned Kipling and his views,
And will pardon Paul Claudel,
Pardons him for writing well.

In the nightmare of the dark
All the dogs of Europe bark,
And the living nations wait,
Each sequestered in its hate;

Intellectual disgrace
Stares from every human face,
And the seas of pity lie
Locked and frozen in each eye.

Follow, poet, follow right
To the bottom of the night,
With your unconstraining voice
Still persuade us to rejoice;

With the farming of a verse
Make a vineyard of the curse,
Sing of human unsuccess
In a rapture of distress;

In the deserts of the heart
Let the healing fountain start,
In the prison of his days
Teach the free man how to praise.

September 1, 1939

I sit in one of the dives
On Fifty-Second Street
Uncertain and afraid
As the clever hopes expire
Of a low dishonest decade:
Waves of anger and fear
Circulate over the bright
And darkened lands of the earth,
Obsessing our private lives;
The unmentionable odour of death
Offends the September night.

Accurate scholarship can
Unearth the whole offence
From Luther until now
That has driven a culture mad,
Find what occurred at Linz,
What huge imago made
A psychopathic god:
I and the public know
What all schoolchildren learn,
Those to whom evil is done
Do evil in return.

Exiled Thucydides knew
All that a speech can say
About Democracy,
And what dictators do,
The elderly rubbish they talk
To an apathetic grave;
Analysed all in his book,
The enlightenment driven away,
The habit-forming pain,
Mismanagement and grief:
We must suffer them all again.

Into this neutral air
Where blind skyscrapers use
Their full height to proclaim
The strength of Collective Man,
Each language pours its vain
Competitive excuse:
But who can live for long
In an euphoric dream:
Out of the mirror they stare,
Imperialism's face
And the international wrong.

Faces along the bar
Cling to their average day:
The lights must never go out,
The music must always play,
All the conventions conspire
To make this fort assume
The furniture of home;
Lest we should see where we are,
Lost in a haunted wood,
Children afraid of the night
Who have never been happy or good.

The windiest militant trash
Important Persons shout
Is not so crude as our wish:
What mad Nijinsky wrote
About Diaghilev
Is true of the normal heart;
For the error bred in the bone
Of each woman and each man
Craves what it cannot have,
Not universal love
But to be loved alone.

From the conservative dark
Into the ethical life
The dense commuters come,
Repeating their morning vow;
"I *will* be true to the wife,
I'll concentrate more on my work,"
And helpless governors wake
To resume their compulsory game:
Who can release them now,
Who can reach the deaf,
Who can speak for the dumb?

All I have is a voice
To undo the folded lie,
The romantic lie in the brain
Of the sensual man-in-the-street
And the lie of Authority
Whose buildings grope the sky:
There is no such thing as the State
And no one exists alone;
Hunger allows no choice
To the citizen or the police;
We must love one another or die.

Defenceless under the night
Our world in stupor lies;
Yet, dotted everywhere,
Ironic points of light
Flash out wherever the Just
Exchange their messages:

May I, composed like them
Of Eros and of dust,
Beleaguered by the same
Negation and despair,
Show an affirming flame.

As I Walked Out One Evening

As I walked out one evening,
Walking down Bristol Street,
The crowds upon the pavement
Were fields of harvest wheat.

And down by the brimming river
I heard a lover sing
Under an arch of the railway:
"Love has no ending.

I'll love you, dear, I'll love you
Till China and Africa meet,
And the river jumps over the mountain
And the salmon sing in the street.

I'll love you till the ocean
Is folded and hung up to dry,
And the seven stars go squawking
Like geese about the sky.

The years shall run like rabbits,
For in my arms I hold
The Flower of the Ages,
And the first love of the world."

But all the clocks in the city
Began to whirr and chime:
"O let not Time deceive you,
You cannot conquer Time.

In the burrows of the Nightmare
Where Justice naked is,
Time watches from the shadow
And coughs when you would kiss.

In headaches and in worry
Vaguely life leaks away,
And Time will have his fancy
Tomorrow or today.

Into many a green valley
Drifts the appalling snow;
Time breaks the threaded dances
And the diver's brilliant bow.

O plunge your hands in water,
Plunge them in up to the wrist;
Stare, stare in the basin
And wonder what you've missed.

The glacier knocks in the cupboard,
The desert sighs in the bed,
And the crack in the tea-cup opens
A lane to the land of the dead.

Where the beggars raffle the banknotes
And the Giant is enchanting to Jack,
And the Lily-white Boy is a Roarer,
And Jill goes down on her back.

O look, look in the mirror,
O look in your distress;
Life remains a blessing
Although you cannot bless.

O stand, stand at the window
As the tears scald and start;
You shall love your crooked neighbor
With your crooked heart."

It was late, late in the evening,
The lovers they were gone;
The clocks had ceased their chiming,
And the deep river ran on.

Musée des Beaux Arts

About suffering they were never wrong,
The Old Masters: how well they understood
Its human position; how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along;
How, when the aged are reverently, passionately waiting
For the miraculous birth, there always must be
Children who did not specially want it to happen, skating
On a pond at the edge of the wood:
They never forgot
That even the dreadful martyrdom must run its course
Anyhow in a corner, some untidy spot
Where the dogs go on with their doggy life and the torturer's horse
Scratches its innocent behind on a tree.

In Brueghel's *Icarus,* for instance: how everything turns away
Quite leisurely from the disaster; the ploughman may
Have heard the splash, the forsaken cry,
But for him it was not an important failure; the sun shone
As it had to on the white legs disappearing into the green
Water; and the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
Something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on.

The Unknown Citizen

(To JS/07/M/378
This Marble Monument
Is Erected by the State)

He was found by the Bureau of Statistics to be
One against whom there was no official complaint,
And all the reports on his conduct agree
That, in the modern sense of an old-fashioned word, he was a saint,
For in everything he did he served the Greater Community.
Except for the War till the day he retired
He worked in a factory and never got fired,
But satisfied his employers, Fudge Motors Inc.
Yet he wasn't a scab or odd in his views,
For his Union reports that he paid his dues,
(Our report on his Union shows it was sound)
And our Social Psychology workers found
That he was popular with his mates and liked a drink.
The Press are convinced that he bought a paper every day
And that his reactions to advertisements were normal in every way.

Policies taken out in his name prove that he was fully insured,
And his Health-card shows he was once in hospital but left it cured.
Both Producers Research and High-Grade Living declare
He was fully sensible to the advantages of the Instalment Plan
And had everything necessary to the Modern Man,
A phonograph, a radio, a car and a frigidaire.
Our researchers into Public Opinion are content
That he held the proper opinions for the time of year;
When there was peace, he was for peace; when there was war, he went.
He was married and added five children to the population,
Which our Eugenist says was the right number for a parent of his generation,
And our teachers report that he never interfered with their education.
Was he free? Was he happy? The question is absurd:
Had anything been wrong, we should certainly have heard.

DYLAN THOMAS (1914-)

Fern Hill

Now as I was young and easy under the apple boughs
About the lilting house and happy as the grass was green,
The night above the dingle starry,
Time let me hail and climb
Golden in the heydays of his eyes,
And honoured among wagons I was prince of the apple towns
And once below a time I lordly had the trees and leaves
Trail with daisies and barley
Down the rivers of the windfall light.

And as I was green and carefree, famous among the barns
About the happy yard and singing as the farm was home,
In the sun that is young once only,
Time let me play and be
Golden in the mercy of his means,
And green and golden I was huntsman and herdsman, the calves
Sang to my horn, the foxes on the hills barked clear and cold,
And the sabbath rang slowly
In the pebbles of the holy streams.

All the sun long it was running, it was lovely, the hay-
Fields high as the house, the tunes from the chimneys, it was air,
And playing, lovely and watery
And fire green as grass.
And nightly under the simple stars

FERN HILL From *The Selected Writings of Dylan Thomas,* copyright, 1946, New Directions. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

As I rode to sleep the owls were bearing the farm away,
All the moon long I heard, blessed among stables, the nightjars
Flying with the ricks, and the horses
Flashing into the dark.

And then to awake, and the farm, like a wanderer white
With the dew, come back, the cock on his shoulder: it was all
Shining, it was Adam and maiden,
The sky gathered again
And the sun grew round that very day.
So it must have been after the birth of the simple light
In the first, spinning place, the spellbound horses walking warm
Out of the whinnying green stable
On to the fields of praise.

And honoured among foxes and pheasants by the gay house
Under the new made clouds and happy as the heart was long,
In the sun born over and over,
I ran my heedless ways,
My wishes raced through the house high hay
And nothing I cared, at my sky blue trades, that time allows
In all his tuneful turning so few and such morning songs
Before the children green and golden
Follow him out of grace,

Nothing I cared, in the lamb white days, that time would take me
Up to the swallow thronged loft by the shadow of my hand,
In the moon that is always rising,
Nor that riding to sleep
I should hear him fly with the high fields
And wake to the farm forever fled from the childless land.
Oh as I was young and easy in the mercy of his means,
Time held me green and dying
Though I sang in my chains like the sea.

DELMORE SCHWARTZ (1914-)

The Heavy Bear

"the withness of the body"

—WHITEHEAD

The heavy bear who goes with me,
A manifold honey to smear his face,
Clumsy and lumbering here and there,
The central ton of every place,

THE HEAVY BEAR From *In Dreams Begin Responsibilities*, by Delmore Schwartz, copyright, 1938, New Directions. Reprinted by permission of the publishers.

The hungry beating brutish one
In love with candy, anger, and sleep,
Crazy factotum, dishevelling all,
Climbs the building, kicks the football,
Boxes his brother in the hate-ridden city.

Breathing at my side, that heavy animal,
That heavy bear who sleeps with me,
Howls in his sleep for a world of sugar,
A sweetness intimate as the water's clasp,
Howls in his sleep because the tight-rope
Trembles and shows the darkness beneath.
—The strutting show-off is terrified,
Dressed in his dress-suit, bulging his pants,
Trembles to think that his quivering meat
Must finally wince to nothing at all.

That inescapable animal walks with me,
Has followed me since the black womb held,
Moves where I move, distorting my gesture,
A caricature, a swollen shadow,
A stupid clown of the spirit's motive,
Perplexes and affronts with his own darkness,
The secret life of belly and bone,
Opaque, too near, my private, yet unknown,
Stretches to embrace the very dear
With whom I would walk without him near,
Touches her grossly, although a word
Would bare my heart and make me clear,
Stumbles, flounders, and strives to be fed
Dragging me with him in his mouthing care,
Amid the hundred million of his kind,
The scrimmage of appetite everywhere.

ROBERT PENN WARREN (1905-)

Bearded Oaks

The oaks, how subtle and marine,
Bearded, and all the layered light
Above them swims; and thus the scene,
Recessed, awaits the positive night.

So, waiting, we in the grass now lie
Beneath the languorous tread of light:
The grasses, kelp-like, satisfy
The nameless motions of the air.

Upon the floor of light, and time,
Unmurmuring, of polyp made,
We rest; we are, as light withdraws,
Twin atolls on a shelf of shade.

BEARDED OAKS From *Selected Poems, 1923-1943,* by Robert Penn Warren, copyright, 1944, by Harcourt, Brace and Company, Inc.

Ages to our construction went,
Dim architecture, hour by hour:
And violence, forgot now, lent
The present stillness all its power.

The storm of noon above us rolled,
Of light the fury, furious gold,
The long drag troubling us, the depth:
Dark is unrocking, unrippling, still.

Passion and slaughter, ruth, decay
Descend, minutely whispering down,
Silted through swaying streams, to lay
Foundation for our voicelessness.

All our debate is voiceless here,
As all our rage, the rage of stone;
If hope is hopeless, then fearless fear,
And history is thus undone.

Our feet once wrought the hollow street
With echo when the lamps were dead
At windows; once our headlight glare
Disturbed the doe that, leaping, fled.

I do not love you less that now
The caged heart makes iron stroke,
Or less that all that light once gave
The graduate dark should now revoke.

We live in time so little time
And we learn all so painfully,
That we may spare this hour's term
To practice for eternity.

PETER VIERECK (1916-)

Kilroy

(for John H. Finley, Jr.)

(Author's note: An example of an unfaked epic spirit emerging from the war was the expression "Kilroy was here," scribbled everywhere by American soldiers and implying that nothing was too adventurous or remote.)

1

Also Ulysses once—that other war.
(Is it because we find his scrawl
Today on every privy door
That we forget his ancient role?)
Also was there—he did it for the wages—
When a Cathay-drunk Genoese set sail.
Whenever "longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,"
Kilroy is there;
he tells The Miller's Tale.

2

At times he seems a paranoiac king
Who stamps his crest on walls and says, "My own!"
But in the end he fades like a lost tune,
Tossed here and there, whom all the breezes sing.
"Kilroy was here"; these words sound wanly gay,
Haughty yet tired with long marching.

KILROY, POET Reprinted from *Terror and Decorum*, by Peter Viereck; copyright, 1948, by Peter Viereck; used by permission of the publishers, Charles Scribner's Sons.

He is Orestes—guilty of what crime?—
For whom the Furies still are searching;
When they arrive, they find their prey
(Leaving his name to mock them) went away.
Sometimes he does not flee from them in time:
"Kilroy was—"
(with his blood a dying man
Wrote half the phrase out in Bataan.)

3

Kilroy, beware. "HOME" is the final trap
That lurks for you in many a wily shape:
In pipe-and-slippers plus a Loyal Hound
Or fooling around, just fooling around.
Kind to the old (their warm Penelope)
But fierce to boys,
thus "home" becomes that sea,
Horribly disguised, where you were always drowned,—
(How could suburban Crete condone
The yarns you would have V-mailed from the sun?)—
And folksy fishes sip Icarian tea.

One stab of hopeless wings imprinted your
Exultant Kilroy-signature
Upon sheer sky for all the world to stare:
"I was there! I was there! I was there!"

4

God is like Kilroy; He, too, sees it all;
That's how He knows of every sparrow's fall;
That's why we prayed each time the tightropes cracked
On which our loveliest clowns contrived their act.
The G. I. Faustus who was
everywhere
Strolled home again. "What was it like outside?"
Asked Can't, with his good neighbors Ought and But
And pale Perhaps and grave-eyed Better Not;
For "Kilroy" means: the world is very wide.
He was there, he was there, he was there!

And in the suburbs Can't sat down and cried.

Poet

Toute forme créée, même par l'homme, est immortelle. Car la forme est indépendante de la matière, et ce ne sont pas les molecules qui constituent la forme.
—BAUDELAIRE, *Mon Cœur Mis à Nu*

I

The night he died, earth's images all came
To gloat in liberation round his tomb.
Now vengeful colors, stones, and faces dare
  To argue with his metaphor;
And stars his fancy painted on the skies
Drop down like swords
  to pierce his too wide eyes.

2

Words that begged favor at his court in vain—
Lush adverbs, senile rhymes in tattered gowns—
  Send notes to certain exiled nouns
And mutter openly against his reign.
While rouged clichés hang out red lights again,
Hoarse refugees report from far-flung towns
That exclamation-marks are running wild
And prowling half-truths carried off a child.

3

But he lives on in Form, and Form shall shatter
  This tuneless mutiny of Matter.
His bones are dead; his voice is horribly strong.
Those famed vibrations of life's dancing dust,
Whose thrice-named pangs are "birth" and "death" and "lust,"
Are but the spilt iambics of his song.
Scansion of flesh in endless ebb and flow,
The drums of duty and renown's great gong—
Mere grace-notes of that living thousand-year
Tyrannic metronome whose every gear
Is some shy craftsman buried long ago.
What terror crowns the sweetness of all song?

4

What hardness leaps at us from each soft tune
And hammers us to shapes we never planned?
This was a different dying from our own.
  Call every wizard in the land—
Bell, book, and test tube; let the dark be rife
With every exorcism we command.
Till midnight blazes like a rich black gown

Decked with bright amulets against the banned.
In vain. This death is stronger than our life.

5

In vain we drive our stakes through such a haunter
Or woo with spiced applaudings such a heart.
His news of April do but mock our Winter
Like maps of heaven breathed on window-frost
By cruel clowns in codes whose key is lost.
Yet some sereneness in our rage has guessed
That we are being blessed and blessed and blessed
When least we know it and when coldest art
  Seems hostile,
    useless,
      or apart.

6

  Not worms, not worms in such a skull
But rhythms, rhythms writhe and sting and crawl.
He sings the seasons round, from bud to snow.
And all things are because he willed them so.

Which of Us Two

When both are strong with tenderness, too wild
With oneness to be severance-reconciled;
When even the touch of fingertips can shock
Both to such seesaw mutuality
Of hot-pressed opposites as smelts a tree
Tighter to its dryad than to its own tight bark;
When neither jokes or mopes or hates alone
Or wakes untangled from the other; when
More-warm-than-soul, more-deep-than-flesh are one
In marriage of the very skeleton;—

When, then, soil peels mere flesh off half this love
And locks it from the unstripped half above,
Who's ever sure which side of soil he's on?
Have I lain seconds here, or years like this?
I'm sure of nothing else but loneliness
And darkness. Here's such black as stuffs a tomb,
Or merely midnight in an unshared room.
Holding my breath for fear my breath is gone,
Unmoving and afraid to try to move,
Knowing only you have somehow left my side,

I lie here, wondering which of us has died.

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES AND SELECTION ANALYSES

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES AND SELECTION ANALYSES with an account of the MS of *Victory* by H. T. Webster

The Boys' Ambition (4)

MARK TWAIN, the pen name of Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835-1910), famous for *Tom Sawyer* (1875) and *Huckleberry Finn* (1884), was born at Florida, Missouri, and when he was four moved with his family to Hannibal, a town of less than 500, on the Mississippi River. After his father's death in 1847, Sam worked in his older brother's printing office, and from 1853 to 1856 he was a journeyman printer in several big cities. In the spring of 1857 he persuaded Horace Bixby, the pilot of the old Mississippi paddle-wheeler *Paul Jones,* which he was riding to New Orleans, to accept him as an apprentice, and he was licensed in 1859. His experiences are described in *Life on the Mississippi,* of which "The Boys' Ambition" is Chapter IV. The book was completed in 1883. By then the railroads had ended the golden days of river traffic, so Mark Twain (the pseudonym is the leadsman's cry meaning two fathoms—safe water) was writing at a critical and, at the same time, a nostalgic distance from his boyhood home and ambition.

Notes: 1. Our village, p. 4: Hannibal. 2. texas, p. 5: from the name of the officers' cabin, which was the largest.

1. What things are smiled at in "if we lived and were good, God would permit us to be pirates"? 2. What effects are achieved by these phrases: "what broke them down," "doing a good business," "fragrant," "a husbanded grandeur"? 3. How is the second paragraph organized? Is the style deliberately exaggerated? 4. How do paragraphs 3-5 develop the basic theme or conflict in the essay? What is the relationship to that conflict of "This thing shook the bottom out of all my Sunday-school teachings"? 5. In what sense is it true that, for Twain, Hannibal has become a symbol rather than an actual place, that he is not simply describing it but using it to understand himself thirty years later? How does this symbolic quality increase the significance of the essay for a variety of readers?

That's What Happened to Me (7)

MICHAEL FESSIER, a native of California, has written movie scenarios as well as fiction. Many of his earlier stories appeared in *Esquire* and in *Story Magazine,* where this one was first printed.

1. What age and character are immediately suggested by the language and structure of the opening sentences? 2. Is the satire focused only on Barton? Explain. 3. Can you justify the fact that Fessier does not try to make "what happened" completely credible? Is the departure from lifelikeness related to his general intention? 4. How are we meant to take the last sentence?

Reveries (12)

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865-1939) was born at Sandymount, near Dublin, the son of the artist John B. Yeats, and his childhood summers were spent in the wilds of County Sligo. Although he lived off and on in London, where during the nineties he was a friend of William Morris, Oscar Wilde, and other writers, and although he became an internationally famous poet (winning the Nobel Prize in 1923), Ireland was always his real home. He graduated from high school in Dublin, spent most of his summers after 1896 near Coole, the home of Lady Gregory in Galway, helped to found the Abbey Theatre in Dublin (1900), served six years in the Senate of the Irish Free State, and wrote

many of his poems in Thoor Ballylee, an old Norman tower on the Gregory estate. In a short Preface (dated Christmas Day, 1914) to his *Autobiographies,* from which the sketch of his boyhood is taken, Yeats wrote: "I have changed nothing to my knowledge; and yet it must be that I have changed many things without my knowledge; for I am writing after many years and have consulted neither friend, nor letter, nor old newspaper, and describe what comes oftenest into my memory. I say this fearing that some surviving friend of my youth may remember something in a different shape and be offended with my book."

1. What do we learn from Yeats' account of his early reading? 2. What are the implications in the first sentence of paragraph 2, especially in the phrase "before I had found myself"? 3. What is Yeats' attitude toward his boyhood interest in monsters and marvels? 4. What is the character of Yeats' father? How is it established and what purposes does it serve in the narrative? 5. Contrast the accounts of boyhood daydreams by Yeats and Fessier. How is the difference in point of view related to the contrast? 6. What does Yeats remember as being most vivid and valuable in his boyhood? Do his memories have anything in common with Twain's? 7. How might one guess that this prose sketch and the poem "Among School Children" (page 1129) were by the same author?

The Silver Horn (22)

THOMAS SANCTON, a journalist and a former contributing editor of *The New Republic,* now lives and works in his native New Orleans.

1. What is implied by the statement near the end of section I: "He did not remember about the hat"? 2. How are we meant to understand, in the next section, "Already a dark, subjective understanding of Louisiana's history was in our blood and bones"? How has this statement been prepared for? 3. Are the descriptions of nature merely background or do they contribute something more important? Explain. 4. What details throughout the narrative are organized and given deeper significance by the concluding account of Paolo and his silver horn? 5. How are the sketches by Sancton and Yeats like and unlike each other? How like and unlike were the two boys?

The Mulberry Tree (30)

ELIZABETH BOWEN (1899-) was born in Dublin, but went to England at the age of seven for her formal education, and now divides her time between London and Bowen's Court, the family home in County Cork. She is married to Alan Charles Cameron. Much of her life has been spent in travel, including three visits to the United States. She has written widely in a variety of forms, notably, six books of short stories and seven novels. "The Mulberry Tree" is one of the essays in the volume, *Collected Impressions,* which she herself selected to represent her best work in nonfiction.

1. What point of view begins to appear in paragraph 2 with such a sentence as "We girls were for ever masticating some foreign substance . . ."? 2. Why is "like damp through a wall" an effective and appropriate comparison? 3. What literary devices sharpen the comedy in the paragraphs (6 and 7) on the war? 4. What evidence is there that the tone and the topics discussed were in part a result of a determination not to write the "usual" account of schooldays?

Statement of Arthur James Wentworth (37)

H. F. ELLIS (1907-) was born in Lincolnshire, England, was educated at Tonbridge School and Oxford, and was for a short time Assistant Master at Marlborough School. In 1935 he joined the staff of *Punch,* of which he is now the Literary Editor. Mr. Ellis gives the following account of the book from which Wentworth's "Statement" is taken: "The genesis of the book was what was intended to be an isolated article in

Punch, called 'The Algebra Case,' purporting to be a statement to the public made by Mr. Wentworth after he had slaughtered a boy in his class by hurling an algebra book at his head. I afterwards supported the justice of this action in a series of articles designed to show the intolerable stresses and strains on assistant masters. Later, when arranging the articles in book form, I reduced the killing of the boy, not without regret, to an everyday case of stunning—in the interest of verisimilitude."

1. What tone and bearing are implied by the legal style of the "Statement"? What hints appear at once to suggest a decidedly different character beneath the legal-sounding surface? 2. What do we laugh at in the phrase "of course ridiculous" in paragraph 9? Where else is the same kind or principle of comedy exemplified? 3. What does Ellis gain by having Wentworth unwittingly describe himself rather than by portraying him directly?

University Days (39)

JAMES THURBER (1894-) was born in Columbus, Ohio, and was educated at Ohio State University. Since 1926 he has been a regular contributor to *The New Yorker.* He is perhaps most widely known for his play *The Male Animal,* which he wrote with Elliot Nugent, and for his short story "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty," which was made into a movie starring Danny Kaye. Both have things in common with "University Days," which appeared first in *The New Yorker* and was reprinted in *My Life and Hard Times* (1933).

1. What are the tone and implications of "This used to enrage my instructor"? "and, so I am told, interesting"? "flars"? "bright-eyed"? 2. What is gained by the generous emphasis on the instructor's patience? By the comparison of the instructor to Lionel Barrymore? 3. What serious criticisms of college and society are implied by the comic treatment? Why is the character "I" a useful one for this purpose?

The Nature of Slang (45)

H. L. MENCKEN (1880-) is famous for his satiric and individualistic comment on literature and middle-class society, much of which appeared in the *Baltimore Sun,* in the magazine *Smart Set,* in the old *American Mercury,* which he edited from 1924 to 1933 with George Jean Nathan, and in six series of *Prejudices* (1919-27). He is now equally well known for *The American Language,* which since 1919 has gone through four editions and two supplements.

1. Describe the method of Mencken's definition of slang. 2. How does his attitude toward slang differ from others with which you are acquainted or have been taught to accept? 3. Do the footnotes serve more than one purpose? Explain. 4. What does this selection tell about Mencken's philosophy of correctness and usage? about his general feeling for language? 5. To what extent does he use slang himself? 6. What additions and corrections can you suggest to Mencken's survey, which was first published in 1936? See his own latest revision.

Politics and the English Language (56)

GEORGE ORWELL (1903-50) was born in India and attended Eton on a scholarship. After serving with the Indian Imperial Police in Burma (1922-27), where his health was permanently impaired, he returned to Paris and England and tried to earn a living by writing. He married in 1936 and served four months in the Spanish Civil War, in which he was badly wounded. Until his death of tuberculosis last year, he lived on a country place in Hertfordshire, England, writing essays and novels, of which the best-known are *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four.* They reflect what he called his horror of politics, of the bureaucratic and fascistic kind, and the acknowledged influence of Maugham.

1. Do all metaphors have as their sole aim the calling up of visual images? Are there other objections to mixed metaphors? 2. Is Orwell's chief concern with language or with political morality? What evidence supports

your answer? 3. How well does Orwell practice what he preaches? Illustrate. 4. What is Orwell's attitude toward "correctness" in writing and speaking? 5. On what points would Mencken and Orwell probably agree?

Some Criteria of Words (65)

I. A. RICHARDS was born in Cheshire, England, in 1893 and took honors at Cambridge, where he was later a fellow and lecturer. In 1930 and 1931 he was a visiting professor at Peking and then at Harvard, to which he returned permanently in 1939. At first interested mainly in psychology, he is best known for his influential work in semantics, esthetics, literary criticism, and general education, in which he is now engaged at Harvard.

This essay was delivered at Bryn Mawr College as one of six lectures, under the title *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*. In the introductory lecture Richards states that it is his general aim to revive the study of rhetoric, which has come to be "the dreariest and least profitable waste that the unfortunate travel through in freshman English. Rhetoric, I shall urge, should be a study of misunderstanding and its remedies."

1. What sentences from the first five paragraphs best state Richards' topic and thesis? What is the function of the other material in those paragraphs? 2. Do you rebel against his assertion that we should not resist shifts in meaning but should learn to follow them? Why do you? 3. What example from your own experience might replace "book" in paragraph 6? 4. Why is it otherwise hard to justify "advanced verbal education"? 5. What is meant by "Being themselves the very fountain-heads of usage they knew better than to trust it"? 6. Why does Richards believe that the Club Spirit variety of the usage doctrine is no longer useful and valid? What evidence can you add to his? 7. What are some other words that will illustrate his last point as well as "colorful"? 8. Does this essay support, oppose, or extend Orwell's?

Authors, Speakers, Readers, and Mock Readers (72)

WALKER GIBSON teaches writing at Amherst College and publishes poems in *The New Yorker* and elsewhere.

1. What are the meanings of "successful" and of "the likes of me" in the sentence about readers who have not heard of O'Brien and O'Faolain? 2. Examine an editorial, book review, or advertisement to find what kind of "person" or "mock reader" it is asking you to become. Try the same thing with Thurber's "University Days." 3. What ideas and attitudes does Gibson have in common with Orwell and Richards?

The Iron String (79)

HOWARD MUMFORD JONES was born in 1892 in Saginaw, Michigan, and was graduated from the University of Wisconsin. He has taught English and American literature at the Universities of Texas (1919-25), North Carolina (1927-30), and Michigan (1930-36). He is now teaching at Harvard, where the Leverett House mentioned in this essay is one of the groups of undergraduate dormitories.

1. How is the first paragraph constructed? For what effect? 2. How are we meant to respond to the refrain-like sentence at the conclusion of paragraphs 3, 4, and 6? 3. Which of Jones' "four examples of the drive for conformity" do you think is the strongest and most pertinent? Which the weakest? Explain. What other examples can you add? 4. Describe the "mock listeners" or "persons" that Jones hopes his audience will become. 5. How would Orwell analyze and judge Jones' speech?

Self-Reliance (86)

RALPH WALDO EMERSON (1803-82), the son of a Boston Unitarian minister, entered Harvard at the age of fourteen (not unusually young then) and graduated as class poet (after seven others had declined the honor). He became minister of the Second

(Unitarian) Church in Boston in 1829, and married in the same year, but his wife died eighteen months later. He resigned his pastorate in 1832, dissatisfied with what he considered the dull narrowness of churchly thought and practices. After traveling a year abroad, where he met Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Carlyle, he remarried, settled in Concord, and devoted himself to working out his own ideas in lecturing and writing. Among his leading ideas are four that run through essays like "Self-Reliance": Everyone has intuitive access to divine wisdom; he should therefore value his own thought; be independent of custom and stock ideas; and have an optimistic faith in human ability. "Self-Reliance" was published in 1841 but incorporates themes from earlier essays and lectures, such as the Harvard Divinity School Address of 1838 which, as Jones states, was thought by some dignitaries to be dangerously unconventional.

Note: 1. Barbadoes, p. 87: slavery was legally abolished there in 1834.

1. What qualities do childhood and youth symbolize for Emerson? Is there any evidence against him? 2. What does Emerson mean by *Whim?* 3. What do you think of Emerson's denunciation of popular charities and reforms? What does or would Jones think? 4. In what sense are the cultivated classes vulnerable? 5. When, according to Emerson, is consistency *foolish?* 6. Can the halves of Emerson's last sentence be reversed without changing the meaning? 7. Is there anything in Emerson's essay, aside from the lack of modern illustrations, that might make it less effective than Jones' as a speech to present-day American undergraduates? 8. Does Jones give a just impression of Emerson's ideas? Discuss.

Areopagitica (90)

JOHN MILTON (1608-74) was born in London to cultivated, well-to-do Puritan parents, and was educated at Cambridge (1625-32). He studied privately for another six years at his father's country home near Horton, and then toured Italy for fifteen months before returning to London, where he was caught up in the rising conflict between Anglicans and Puritans over theology and church government. The *Areopagitica* (1644) was one of Milton's essays for individual liberty. It urges Parliament to repeal an act requiring all books to be licensed by an official censor. Its title comes from a speech by Isocrates to the Athenian Court of the Areopagus. From 1649 to 1660 Milton served his country by defending the execution of Charles I and by acting as Latin Secretary under the Commonwealth and Cromwell. His last years were devoted to composing and dictating his great poems.

1. What assumptions about man underlie Milton's argument? Do they differ in any respects from Emerson's? from those widely held today? 2. Are there any arguments against which Milton is vulnerable? 3. To what extent is Milton's persuasive force the result of carefully chosen metaphors, like "slink," "scout," etc.?

The Apology of Socrates (91)

PLATO (428?-347 B.C.) was a student and admirer of Socrates (469?-399 B.C.), who was tried and executed in their native Athens. Little more is known about Socrates' life than is revealed in the *Apology.* He lives as the protagonist of Plato's *Dialogues,* in which he leads the dramatic discussion of moral and philosophical problems.

1. Is there any irony in Socrates' assertion that he has no skill as a speaker? 2. What is implied in paragraph 5 by "and what its nature is I am by no means unaware"? What hints have we already had about the "nature" of Socrates' task? 3. What is the tone of voice in paragraph 7? 4. Is there any affected naiveté in Socrates' account of his examination of supposedly wise men? If so, what is its effect? 5. Who today are more likely than poets or workers to feel that they are wise in all fields because they are talented or expert in one? 6. Does anything contradict Socrates' conclusion that his own "knowledge is worth nothing"? Does he give the impression of really believing that himself? 7.

What is a modern illustration of the practice of making vague general charges when specific ones cannot be proved? 8. Why does Meletus have to answer that all men except Socrates improve young people? Why could he easily answer otherwise about the training of animals? If Meletus has not been seriously interested in the education of young people, what has he been interested in? What would Meletus think of Milton's arguments? What kinds of people today are like Meletus? 9. Does Socrates' sudden seriousness after the cross-examination of Meletus come as a real surprise? How have we been prepared for it? 10. In what sense can no harm come to Socrates, or to any better man by one who is worse? 11. How does Socrates prove that he is a friend rather than an enemy of society? that he is wiser not to enter politics or hold public office? 12. What reaction are we meant to have to Socrates' statement that he could have won the judges over if he had had more time? 13. What would Emerson have thought about Socrates' guardian spirit? 14. If you had been Socrates' counsel, what would you have added to his defence or altered in it? 15. How would you contend with the "psychological" explanation that Socrates was simply a maladjusted person who avoided real responsibilities and who built up his ego by criticizing others?

The Prince (111)

NICCOLÒ MACHIAVELLI (1469-1527) was born in Florence, Italy. After 1498 he held important secretaryships in the city government, from where he observed the techniques of powerful princes like Cesare Borgia and Pope Julius II. With the return of the Medici to power in 1512, Machiavelli lost his position and retired to his villa where he wrote *The Prince* and other works on history and politics. He succeeded in re-entering government service just before the Medici were overthrown, and just before his own death in May 1527. *The Prince,* not published until 1532, was dedicated to Lorenzo de Medici, who ruled Florence from 1513 to 1519. Machiavelli concluded his book with the hope that it would help Lorenzo to bring freedom and security to Italy.

1. What basic assumptions about man and society are made in the first three paragraphs? How do they compare with the basic assumptions of Jones, Emerson, Milton, and Socrates? 2. What kind of "person" or "mock reader" (in Gibson's sense) is Machiavelli asking us to become? 3. What adjectives best describe Machiavelli's tone? How is it produced? How does it differ from that of Emerson, Milton, and Socrates? 4. For what ends does Machiavelli advocate means or qualities (like stinginess and cruelty) that are not ordinarily advised? Has his attitude on this problem any modern counterparts? Discuss. 5. What light on Machiavelli's social philosophy is shed by his choice of Hannibal and Scipio as illustrations of the need for cruelty? 6. All five of the writers in this section are in effect talking about "heroes" and "great actions." Describe their conceptions and explain how they compare and differ.

How Does It All Add Up? (117)

HAROLD C. UREY was born in 1893 in Walkerton, Indiana, and educated at the Universities of Montana and California. In 1934 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for his discovery of heavy hydrogen. During World War II he was a member of the Uranium Committee; he directed the work on the separation of U-235 at Columbia University. He is now a professor of chemistry at the University of Chicago and a member of the Institute for Nuclear Studies.

1. What is the tone of the opening paragraph? What signs of a change in tone appear in paragraph 8 ("This thesis assumes . . .")? How is the change related to the development of the thesis? 2. What effects or points, aside from the obvious, logical ones, are made in paragraph 12 by the argument concerning killing people twice? 3. What connection is made between the atomic bomb and the personal freedom of Americans? What other freedoms are endangered? 4. By what steps does Urey reach the conclusion that world domination by the United States would be "the most impossible of all" solutions to the bomb? 5. What solution to this "most dangerous situation" does Urey

suggest? 6. What seems to be Urey's attitude toward the responsibility of science for creating the situation?

The Ivory Lab (124)

JACQUES BARZUN was born in Paris in 1907. He came to the United States in 1919, was naturalized in 1933, and took his A.B. and Ph D. in history at Columbia University, where he now teaches. He has written many articles and several books on nineteenth-century cultural and intellectual history.

1. From what instances is it apparent that some of Barzun's persuasive force comes from a calculated choice of words, comparisons, control of sentence structure, and use of suspense and surprise in general organization? 2. How, up to paragraph 9 (which asserts that science is one of the humanities), is the argument organized? 3. How accurately does Barzun describe the situation in your own college? 4. In what ways, after paragraph 9, does Barzun's argument relate to Urey's and to the situation which Urey describes? 5. What passages did you find to be most novel and provocative in Barzun's discussion of science, the way it is and should be taught, and its place in society? 6. How and to what extent does Barzun's style or argumentative strategy enforce the novelty of his ideas?

The Scientific Education of the Layman (133)

JAMES BRYANT CONANT was born in 1893 in Boston and educated at Harvard, where he later taught chemistry and became chairman of the department. In 1933 he was made president of Harvard. He was a major in the Chemical Warfare Service during World War I, and in the last war he was a member of the Military Policy Committee on the atomic bomb and chairman of the National Defense Research Committee. He has lectured and published widely on scientific and educational subjects.

This essay is from a volume based on lectures given at Yale on the Terry Foundation, whose "cardinal principles . . . are loyalty to the truth, lead where it will, and devotion to human welfare." In his Preface, Conant asserts that "The natural tendency of many people to recoil with horror from all thoughts of further scientific advance because of the implications of the atomic bomb is to my mind based on a misapprehension of the nature of the universe. As I watched the secret development of the atomic bomb . . . I often thought of the work being done at the same time . . . on penicillin, on DDT . . . of Emerson's famous essay on the Law of Compensation. . . . It is with such thoughts in mind that I venture . . . to discuss science as neither a benign nor a malignant activity of man, but as a process of unveiling many things, all of which have 'cracks' " (flaws or costs—Emerson's word).

1. What is the line of argument from paragraph 2 which justifies "Therefore . . ." of paragraph 8? 2. In what ways, in paragraphs 9 and 10, does Conant alter Pearson's claims for science? 3. Does Conant's definition of science differ from others you have heard? How many kinds of "science" does it include? 4. What element in the definition is emphasized and clarified by the last paragraph? 5. In what respects does Conant's essay reinforce or rebut Barzun's argument? 6. Does Conant himself avoid the use of "rhetoric" and "invective," which he criticizes in paragraph 4?

The Scientific Attitude (137)

CHARLES S. PEIRCE (1839-1914) was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts, the son of a professor of mathematics at Harvard, where his grandfather had been librarian. After graduating from Harvard in 1859, he began a lifetime career with the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. This aroused his interest in science and led him to take graduate degrees at Harvard in chemistry, while continuing to read in philosophy. In 1869 and 1870 he lectured on philosophy with Emerson and others; a little later he and William James formed the Metaphysical Club, and he saw much of Henry James in Paris. His studies had branched into other sciences, but

logic became his abiding interest, and he is now recognized as one of the great American philosophers.

1. Is Peirce's definition of science as broad as Conant's? 2. What would Barzun say about paragraph 3? about the last paragraph of Peirce's essay? 3. What is the connection that Peirce suggests between "magic and incantation" and science? 4. Would Conant agree with Peirce's statements about scientific imagination? 5. Outline Peirce's discussion of the relation between science and morality. What points are particularly shocking or novel? What would be the content of an imaginary dialogue between Peirce and Socrates on social morality and conformity? 6. What composite definition of the true scientist and of the responsibility of science for the present "most dangerous situation" would Urey, Barzun, Conant, and Peirce agree to?

A Modest Proposal (142)

JONATHAN SWIFT (1667-1745) was born of English parents in Dublin and was educated there, at Trinity College. After serving as secretary to Sir William Temple, he took orders and in 1713 was made Dean of St. Patrick's in Dublin. Until the Tory party fell from power in 1714, Swift was active in English literary and political circles. Thereafter he lived in Dublin, embittered by thwarted ambition, illness, and the mistreatment of the Irish people to which he tried to attract attention by such essays as "A Modest Proposal" (1729).

Notes: 1. Pretender, p. 142: King James II's Catholic son, who was exiled after the Revolution of 1688, following which the English throne became Protestant. 2. Psalmanazar, p. 145: actually a Frenchman who posed as a Formosan and published an account of island life in 1704. 3. absentees, p. 147: English landlords. 4. Topinamboo, p. 147: in Brazil. 5. a country, p. 147: England.

1. What kind of character or person has Swift invented as the "I" or writer? What kinds of actual people is this character designed to typify? What do we learn about him that he does not understand about himself? 2. What is the significance of "Modest" in the title? What is the relation between it and the general tone of the essay? 3. The disproportion between the style, or tone, and the content represents what disproportion in the behavior of society? Why would Swift's criticism have been less accurate if his "I" were consciously vicious? 4. For what reasons is an indirect treatment of social morality, such as this, likely to be more absorbing and effective than a direct treatment? 5. What places today might be substituted for England and Ireland?

Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist (148)

CHARLES LAMB (1775-1834) was born in London and educated until he was fifteen at Christ's Hospital, where he became a friend of Coleridge. For thirty-three years he was an accountant at East India House, and much of his scant leisure was devoted to caring for his sister Mary ("Bridget"), who had killed her mother in a fit of insanity. Despite this humdrum, care-filled life, he read widely and wrote much besides the personal *Essays of Elia.*

1. What details in the first paragraph tell us that this is to be something more than a factual report of a notable cardplayer? What deeper theme is implied through the series of contrasts? 2. From what evidence in paragraph 5 and elsewhere do we infer that although the speaker admires Mrs. Battle, he is also amused and slightly satiric? What does he show us that she does not know about herself? 3. How has the last paragraph, with its reference to time and mortal change, been prepared for? How is it related to Mrs. Battle's insistence on "gentility" and on doing things in the proper style? 4. How do the tone and underlying theme of this essay compare and contrast with those of Stephen Potter's "Gamesmanship" (page 190)?

Pulvis et Umbra (152)

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (1850-94) was born in Edinburgh. He was educated as an engineer and a lawyer, but privately trained himself as a writer. He traveled

widely in search of relief from tuberculosis. He met and married his wife in California; "Pulvis et Umbra" was written in 1888 when he was a patient at Saranac Lake, New York. It was first published in *Scribner's Magazine* of the same year. *Treasure Island* (1883) had already brought him fame, which was increased by his well-known stories, essays, and children's verse. He spent his last years in the South Seas and died in Samoa.

Notes: 1. title: from Horace: *Pulvis et umbra sumus:* we are dust and shade. 2. NH_3, p. 153: ammonia.

1. What is meant by "canting," and by "a municipal fitness" in paragraph 1? 2. What has been "trimmed" from our religions and moralities? 3. What are the major steps or sections of the argument? 4. Does Stevenson finally deny the scientific view of life, or does he simply find it incomplete? 5. The central argument or thesis of the essay can be stated very briefly. What, then, makes up the bulk of the essay? How can the bulk be shown to be more than mere decoration?

A Point to Be Remembered by Very Eminent Men (156)

MAX BEERBOHM was born in London in 1872 and educated at Oxford, which he satirized in his novel *Zuleika Dobson.* He has long been famous for his satiric essays and drawings, which first appeared in *The Yellow Book,* a magazine that symbolized the end-of-the-century, the Yellow Nineties.

1. How are we helped to understand and to interpret the tone of the opening paragraphs by such expressions as: "Most of them, indeed, are rather short"; "I must try to be less narrow"; "At least, I suppose so"? 2. Why is "envisagement" an appropriate and effective word here? 3. What evidence in the sample account of a meeting with Carlyle suggests that it is a parody? How is the suggestion confirmed in the second sample, about Browning? 4. What is accomplished by "Heroes tend to live a little way out of London"? 5. How do the style and content of the sample autobiographies criticize the profession that they are reports of vivid and unique personal experiences? 6. What is the tone of "Honourably concerned with large high issues . . ."? 7. What is accomplished by "with a toss of his grey beard"? 8. What are the two major parts of the essay? How are they related?

A Defence of Nonsense (161)

GILBERT KEITH CHESTERTON (1874-1936) was born in London and educated at St. Paul's School and King's College. He was a prolific writer of essays (including ones on Browning, Dickens, and Shaw, as well as on ethics and religion), of poetry, and of fiction (such as the Father Brown detective stories). A paradoxical champion of many causes, including what he called "high living and plain thinking," he was converted to Catholicism in 1922, and wrote many essays thereafter explaining his faith.

1. How would you answer the criticism that the first paragraph is too serious for what follows? 2. What point is clarified by the illustration of the Kaiser's moustaches? 3. What distinction is made between Carroll and Lear? 4. What is the element of truth in the paradox that "mankind in the main has always regarded reason as a bit of a joke"? 5. What is effective about "effrontery," "stunned," "genial" in paragraph 4? 6. In what sense can existence be summed up in the word "ghosts"? 7. What is the serious turn that Chesterton gives in paragraph 5 to his discussion or defence of nonsense? By what hints has it been prepared for? What is gained by Chesterton's indirect approach to his serious subject? 8. Are there any relationships between this essay and those on science? between it and Stevenson's "Pulvis et Umbra" (page 152)?

The Archer-Shee Case (164)

ALEXANDER WOOLLCOTT (1887-1943) was born in Phalanx, New Jersey, and educated at Hamilton College. He was dramatic critic for the New York *Times* and the *Herald Tribune,* was a famous New York wit, and was widely known as the radio

Town Crier, as well as the real-life hero of the comedy *The Man Who Came to Dinner.*

1. What notion of the writer's character do you form from the first three paragraphs? 2. What is the relationship of the tone and substance of those paragraphs to the serious statement of purpose in the last sentence of paragraph 4? What effect was sought by that relationship? 3. How is our reaction being controlled in paragraph 5 by "proudly"; "Out of such damaged and unpromising material the Admiralty could scarcely be expected . . ."; "bewildered"? Point out successive uses of this technique. 4. What would be lost by rearranging the order of the sentences in paragraph 7? 5. Have the reactions of the public any present-day counterparts? 6. What working principle can be found in Woollcott's decisions about when to quote and when to summarize the official documents of the case? 7. What is the usefulness of the seeming interruption which describes "other current topics" that attracted attention after the conclusion of the case? 8. What does Woollcott consider the significant thing about the end of young Archer-Shee's career and life? Why does he call it ironic?

Movies (172)

E. B. WHITE was born in Mt. Vernon, New York, in 1899 and graduated from Cornell in 1921. For many years he has written regularly for *The New Yorker.* Among his books are *One Man's Meat,* originally a column in *Harper's Magazine; The Wild Flag,* a collection of *New Yorker* editorials on world affairs; and *Subtreasury of American Humor,* edited with Mrs. White.

1. What kind of character does White assume as the speaker in this essay? For what purposes is it a useful one? Through what details is it immediately projected? 2. What is implied by the novel idea of studying trees in the movies? What light does it throw on the way the speaker "watches" movies, or on what he thinks of their worth? 3. The ideas in paragraph 4 are often discussed very seriously. How does White establish a different tone? Is it effective and appropriate for this essay? 4. How is this essay like and unlike "A Modest Proposal" (page 142)? Consider among other things the first sentence of the paragraph next to the last.

Sex and Achievement (175)

MARGARET MEAD was born in Philadelphia in 1901, the daughter of a professor of sociology. She took her A.B. at Barnard and her Ph.D. in anthropology at Columbia. Her first book, *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1928), a study of the adolescent girl, has been followed by many others based on first-hand experience with primitive societies.

1. What tone is established in the first two paragraphs? How does it contrast with the tone usually found in discussions of these topics? Wherein is it the result of unusual diction? of choice of information? What kind of "person" is the writer? What kind are *we* being asked to become? How does this "person" differ from the one implied by Twain's essay on the boys' ambition? 2. What points are illustrated by the reference to the paper route? 3 How are we to understand "fairy tales" at the end of paragraph 3? 4. What contrasts between male and female are developed from paragraph 4 onward? Toward what main points are the argument and evidence directed? How well do the illustrations square with your own experience? 5. Does the method of this essay do justice, in your opinion, to all human motives and qualities? Which, if any, are undervalued? 6. What would Peirce, Socrates, and Machiavelli think of this essay's implications and conclusions about human nature and society?

Making Coeducation Co- (184)

LYNN WHITE, JR., was born in San Francisco in 1907. He was educated at Stanford University, the Union Theological Seminary, and Harvard. In 1943 he left Stanford, where he was a professor of history, to become president of a girls' school, Mills College in Oakland, California. He has three daughters.

1. How are we to understand "uniform and standardized" in paragraph 3? 2. What spe-

cific courses may be implied by "fundamental" and "frills"? 3. What evidence is there that White has read and used studies like Mead's? 4. For what purposes is the historical review of education introduced? Does it modify ideas that are similar to Mead's? 5. Does White's account square with your own experience? If not, do you think the reason is bias or different evidence?

Gamesmanship (190)

STEPHEN POTTER was born in England in 1900 and was educated at Oxford. In 1938 he joined the staff of the British Broadcasting Company as a writer-producer. He has created many series of programs and is now director of special features. His books include studies of D. H. Lawrence and Coleridge.

1. What is going on, what do we laugh at in such lines as "There had been a great deal of hard thinking on both sides . . ." (paragraph 3); "How well we know this fact, yet how often we forget to make use of it"; "That night I thought hard and long"? 2. What is gained by the use of footnotes, coined technical words, and the elaborate diagrams? 3. Is gamesmanship related in any way to what Mead describes as typical American male behavior? to Lamb's account of Mrs. Battle? 4. What happens to the conventional idea of sportsmanship in the course of the essay? 5. What is the essential difference between the expert gamesman and other players? 6. Is the unusual organization of the essay defensible?

The Art of Biography (201)

VIRGINIA WOOLF (1882-1941) was born in London, the daughter of Sir Leslie Stephen, a notable man of letters. She was educated at home, where she had the run of his remarkable library and was a favorite of his literary friends—Hardy, Stevenson, Lowell, Meredith, and others. In 1912 she married Leonard Woolf, a brilliant young essayist and economist. They established the private Hogarth Press and printed the early works of Katherine Mansfield, T. S. Eliot, and of Mrs. Woolf herself. She is best known for her fiction, particularly the symbolic novels *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and *To the Lighthouse* (1927), but also is respected for her critical and biographical essays. While suffering from a nervous breakdown, she drowned herself in 1941 off the coast of Sussex.

NOTE: For brief biographies of James (206), Maugham (210), and Conrad (212) see pages 1194 and 1199.

Comedy and The Importance of Being Earnest (218)

ERIC BENTLEY was born in England in 1916 and was educated at Oxford and at Yale. He teaches English at the University of Minnesota, and has written widely on modern drama.

The Nature of Poetry (222)

DONALD A. STAUFFER was born in Denver, Colorado, in 1902. He was educated at Princeton and, as a Rhodes Scholar, at Oxford. Except for three years with the Marines in World War II, he has, since 1927, taught English at Princeton where he is now chairman of the department. His books of criticism range from English biography to Yeats and Shakespeare.

Shakespeare's Audience (231)

ALFRED HARBAGE was born in Philadelphia in 1901 and took his A.B. and Ph.D. at the University of Pennsylvania. After teaching there for some years he was appointed professor of English at Columbia University. He is the author of another book on Shakespeare, *As They Liked It,* and of several studies of Elizabethan and Restoration drama.

English money: 4 farthings = 1 penny (d.), 12 pence = 1 shilling (s.), 5 shillings = 1 crown, 20 shillings = 1 pound (£), 21 shillings = 1 guinea. Note that the money values in this essay are as of 1940.

1. How many things are accomplished in the first paragraph? 2. What illustrations are there of Harbage's care to test evidence, to refuse to generalize on inadequate evidence, to safeguard the reader from wrong or hasty inferences? 3. To what extent does Harbage have to generalize from human nature rather than from specific evidence? Does this affect the soundness of his argument? 4. What kinds of readers does Harbage have in mind? What evidence supports your answer? 5. Has this essay altered your conception of Shakespeare's audience? of the relationship between a writer and his public? What evidence is there that Harbage is conscious of presenting a new picture of Shakespeare's audience?

Queen Victoria (258)

LYTTON STRACHEY (1880-1932) was born into one of the notable aristocratic and literary families of England. After graduating from Cambridge University, he lived in the country, reading, walking, and writing occasional literary criticism. His essays in biography began with *Eminent Victorians* (1918), sketches of Cardinal Manning, Thomas Arnold, Florence Nightingale, and General Gordon. After *Queen Victoria* (1921) came *Alexander Pope* (1925) and *Elizabeth and Essex* (1928), among others. Strachey never married, but his home in Bloomsbury was for years the center of a group of well-known writers and critics, including Virginia Woolf, to whom he dedicated *Queen Victoria.*

I. ANTECEDENTS (258)

Chapter 1

1. How precise and varied are the adjectives used to describe Charlotte, her family, and her suitors? 2. What intentions seem to lie behind the choice of scenes presented as close-ups, such as the one of Charlotte standing before her husband "like a rebellious boy in petticoats"? Are these close-ups specific or typical and conventional? 3. From your answers to 1 and 2, how much emphasis do you infer Strachey wished to place on this material?

Chapter 2

1. What is the purpose of this chapter? 2. What kind of "person" in Gibson's sense are we expected to be in our reactions to the descriptions of the Dukes?

Chapter 3

1. What sort of reader does Strachey assume in his remarks on English political parties and on Robert Owen? What do you need to know, if anything, to become such a reader? 2. What is Strachey's attitude toward the Duke of Kent? How is it conveyed? 3. What is gained by knowing that the Duke of Wellington was having his bladder sounded when he heard of Kent's plans?

Chapter 4

1. What kinds of information are excluded from this chapter? in order to focus attention on what points?

II. CHILDHOOD (266)

Chapter 1

1. What kind of excitement is produced by the first paragraph? What part is played by the fact that we know the outcome? 2. What effects are made possible by the reference to the fortune-teller?

Chapter 2

1. Do the close-ups of Victoria distinguish her clearly from other little girls? 2. To what extent does the description of the meeting between Victoria and George IV clarify and support the generalization "two ages touched"?

Chapter 3

1. What do you suspect is the most important sentence in the first paragraph for the purpose of the whole book? 2. What is implied by the priority of "Christian gentleman" over "intellectual refinements"? 3. Explain in your own words Strachey's comment on Victoria's "I will be good." 4. Toward what main points is the account of her girlhood organized?

Chapter 4

1. In what ways is the dramatic conflict between two ages and social classes developed in this chapter? 2. Which scenes could be easily adapted for the stage?

Chapter 5

1. Discuss the plan and effects of the last paragraph. 2. What is the point of view in

the description of Victoria's first Council? Why might Strachey have chosen it rather than what others?

III. LORD MELBOURNE (282)

1. What are the plan and chief points in the characterization of Melbourne? What readers with what interests would not be satisfied with Strachey's selection of information about Melbourne? 2. What, do you infer, may have been Melbourne's private attitude toward his association with Victoria? Does Strachey wish to emphasize any difference between Melbourne's private and public attitudes? 3. How are the episodes in this section focused on Victoria's personality and its development? 4. How is Albert brought back on the stage?

IV. MARRIAGE (303)

1. In what ways is this a pivotal section in the whole biography? 2. What evidence is there that the account of Albert's adjustment to his new position is based to a large extent on Stockmar's papers and letters? 3. What effect is produced by the introduction of Charlotte Bronte and her comment on Victoria? Why didn't Strachey make more use of comment like this from people outside the government and royal circle? 4. What is the justification for the long account of the management of the royal household? 5. What things are symbolized by the Great Exhibition?

V. LORD PALMERSTON (328)

1. In what ways is the unusually large amount of political material in this section clarified and dramatized? 2. Is Strachey continuously impartial or does he show sympathies with one person or group in this section?

VI. LAST YEARS OF PRINCE CONSORT (345)

1. In what respects does the home life of Victoria and Albert in England and Scotland represent a natural development of their characters? 2. What is implied about Victoria's mind in the paragraph describing her reaction to news of the Duke's death? 3. What kinds of information would be needed for a rounded account of the Crimean War? Is Strachey's incompleteness justifiable?

VII. WIDOWHOOD (360)

1. How does Strachey show that the death of Albert is a turning-point in the biography, and that the subsequent account must be different not simply because much less biographical evidence is available? 2. What do you infer about Strachey's ideas concerning biography from his account of the official biographies of Albert? 3. Why is so much space devoted to the Albert Memorial? In how many ways does it serve Strachey as a symbol?

VIII. MR. GLADSTONE AND LORD BEACONSFIELD (371)

1. What is typical of Strachey's methods in the opening paragraph? 2. What attitudes toward Victoria, Albert, and Disraeli are we subtly asked to take in the second paragraph describing Disraeli's behavior after Albert's death? 3. To what extent is it fair to say that through the portrayal of Disraeli, Strachey found expression for his own private opinion of Victoria? 4. Does this section end logically as well as dramatically?

IX. OLD AGE (384)

1. How are we asked to judge Victoria in her relationship with John Brown? 2. By what scenes and devices does Strachey attempt to do justice to the "imperial matriarch"? 3. In what respects is Strachey's handling of Victoria's "collection" particularly successful? 4. Why only at the end of the biography does Strachey discuss in detail the extent to which Victoria represented England? In what ways and to what extent do his general judgments of Victoria seem to be a just conclusion?

X. THE END (403)

1. What would be lost by the omission of the last paragraph? 2 Looking back over the whole biography, what parts do you imagine Strachey found most interesting to write? What kind of evidence supports your answer? What light does your answer throw on Strachey's strengths and weaknesses as a biographer? 3. What relationships are apparent between the societies described by Strachey and by Margaret Mead (page 175)?

Before the Party (409)

W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM was born in 1874 in Paris, where his father was in the British Embassy. He read at the University of Heidelberg, studied painting in Paris, and then took a medical degree at St. Thomas Hospital in London. While there he wrote his first novel, the realistic *Liza of Lambeth,* but this part of his life is most vividly reflected in what is usually considered his best novel, *Of Human Bondage* (1915). During the next fifteen years he traveled in the South Seas and the Orient, where he found material for some of his most popular stories and novels, and at the same time produced a series of satiric comedies, including *The Circle* and *Rain.* Subsequent essays, autobiographies, stories, and novels have been international best-sellers. He is still writing, and a number of his stories have recently been made into plays and motion pictures.

1. How are we given more knowledge and a different opinion of Mrs. Skinner than she has of herself? 2. What contrast is introduced between Kathleen and Millicent? 3. What details are meant to introduce suspense about the development of the plot? 4. What are we meant to understand from the casual mixing of religion, missions, golf, garden parties, and details of dress? 5. What definition of "good form" do the Skinners unknowingly provide by their speech and actions? 6. By what means is Millicent distinguished from her family? 7. In what ways does an acquaintance with Strachey's *Queen Victoria* help a reader to understand the larger social purpose of this story? 8. How does the counterpointing of East and West help Maugham to revitalize Mr. Skinner's cliché: "What can they know of England who only England know"?

The Open Boat (427)

STEPHEN CRANE (1871-1900) was born in Newark, New Jersey, the son of a Methodist minister. He attended Lafayette College and Syracuse University (where he was a star baseball player), but left to write for the New York *Tribune.* He had to print his first novel, *Maggie, A Girl of the Streets* (1892) privately, but *The Red Badge of Courage* (1893, 1895) was an international success, receiving praise from Conrad and others. It led Hearst to hire him as a correspondent to cover the revolutionary fighting in Cuba in 1896. Crane's ship was wrecked off the Florida coast, and he and three members of the crew rowed for thirty hours in a lifeboat before reaching Daytona—an experience reflected in "The Open Boat." He married while covering the Greco-Turkish war, and spent most of the last few years of his life in England.

1. What qualities in nature are emphasized? How are they defined and emphasized by the descriptions of the waves, the gulls, the shark, the wind tower, and the figures on the shore? To what extent are those qualities made explicit in Sections VI and VII? 2. What instances of humor are there in the story? What are their quality and function? 3. In what respects and for what purpose is the correspondent set off from the other men? What is implied by his recollection of the dying soldier in Algiers? 4. What is the relationship between the "subtle brotherhood" of men and the last two paragraphs?

Where I Come From People Are Polite (444)

WILLIAM SAROYAN was born in Fresno, California, in 1908, the son of Armenian parents, and attended the public schools there. He first won recognition as a writer for *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze* (1934), a collection of short stories. *The Saroyan Special* is a selection of stories from nine volumes published from 1934 to 1944. He has also written plays since 1939, when *The Time of Your Life* won the Drama Critics' Circle Award and the Pulitzer Prize, which he refused.

1. What is suggested by the nature of Mr. Wylie's business and by his ignorance of motorcycles? What is implied by the fact that Joe is offered a raise and trusted with a new Harley-Davidson without argument?

What do April, Monterey, the Italians talking, the fish smell, and the manner of Joe's riding contribute to the story? 2. How conscious is Joe allowed to be of the effect he has on Mr. Wylie and the motorcycle dealer? How would the story have differed or what problems would have been raised if he had been made more conscious than he is? 3. What is the usefulness of the story's style, its simple or incomplete sentences, and the frequent use of "and"? 4. Where does Joe really come from?

I Want to Know Why (450)

SHERWOOD ANDERSON (1876-1941) was born in Camden, Ohio, and grew up in Clyde. He left school when he was twelve and worked at various jobs to help support his eight brothers and sisters. He served in Cuba during the Spanish-American War, and later settled in Elyria, Ohio, as the manager of a paint factory. He walked out of his office one day for good and went to Chicago, where he became acquainted with Carl Sandburg and other writers. *Winesburg, Ohio* (1919), a collection of sketches of Middle Western small-town life, was his first critical success as a writer. Most of his life thereafter was spent in Marion, Virginia, where he owned and edited two newspapers. He died in Colón, Panama, in 1941, on a trip to South America.

1. What kind of boy is the narrator? What problems puzzle him? What do they have in common? 2. Are the details from which the boy frequently recalls himself in order to get on to the story of the farmhouse really irrelevant? Explain. 3. Why is it appropriate that the race itself should be described so briefly? 4. In what ways do the language and sentence structure contribute to the general purpose of the story? Are there any instances of inappropriate style? 5. In its theme and narrative method how is this story like and unlike "Where I Come From People Are Polite" (page 444)? Which is more like Crane's story (page 427)? like Maugham's (page 409)?

The Bear (457)

WILLIAM FAULKNER was born in New Albany, Mississippi, in 1897, and grew up in Oxford, where he still lives. After serving with the Canadian Flying Corps during World War I, he attended the University of Mississippi for two years. He then lived for a short time with Sherwood Anderson in New Orleans, where he wrote and published his first fiction. The Nobel Prize, which he has just received, recognizes a long series of novels and stories, from *The Sound and the Fury* (1929) and *As I Lay Dying* (1930) to *Intruder in the Dust* (1948).

1. What details begin to suggest that this is more than a hunting story? 2. Through what stages does the boy pass in his education or initiation? 3. How does the bear grow into something more than a destructive animal? 4. What role is played by the boy's dog? 5. What qualities are typified by Sam Fathers? 6. What bearing on the symbolic character of the story has the father's remark that Keats "had to talk about something"? 7. What values are added to the narrative of action by the reflective last section of the story? 8. How does this story compare and contrast in style and theme with "I Want to Know Why" (page 450)? and "In Another Country" (page 468)?

In Another Country (468)

ERNEST HEMINGWAY was born in Oak Park, Illinois, in 1898, the son of a doctor. His outdoor boyhood experiences are reflected in *In Our Time* (1925), his service with the Italian army during World War I in *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), his decade as a literary expatriate in Paris in *The Sun Also Rises* (1926), his observations as a correspondent in the Spanish Civil War in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1941), his life in Key West in *To Have and Have Not* (1937). His latest novel is *Across the River and Into the Trees* (1950). Its publication was preceded by a provocative "profile" in *The New Yorker*.

Notes: 1. Scala, p. 469: a theater in Milan. 2. *A basso gli ufficiali*, p. 469: Down with

the officers. 3. *fratellanza, abnegazione,* p. 469: comradeship, self-sacrifice.

1. In what sense have the speaker and the three wounded young men been exiled to "another country"? What are they cut off from? How is their present "country" defined by the description of the dead game, by the account of the ways to the hospital, and by the references to the civilians' attitude toward officers? 2. What is the speaker's tone of voice when he remembers the patriotism of the café girls? 3. Of what use in the author's development of the story's theme is the fact that the speaker is not a true hawk like his companions? 4 How has the first part of the story prepared us to react to the major's statement that he does not believe in bravery? In what "country" is he attempting to live? How is this "country" defined by his attention to grammar, by his dutiful use of the machine, and by his marriage to a young wife? 5. Does the story imply that there is anything which a man cannot lose?

Pale Horse, Pale Rider (472)

KATHERINE ANNE PORTER was born in Indian Creek, Texas, in 1894. She grew up in Louisiana and Texas, and has traveled in Central and South America and in Europe. She has lived lately in California and in New York, where she is now completing a novel. Some of her short stories and novelettes have been collected in *Flowering Judas* (1935), *Pale Horse, Pale Rider and Other Stories* (1939)—which in addition to the title story also includes "Old Mortality" and "Noon Wine"—and *The Leaning Tower* (1942).

1. Why is the theme of this story more accurately suggested by its title than by "Wartime Romance" or "Adventures of a Newspaper Woman"? 2. How does the opening dream tell us what is to be centrally important in the story? How "old" is Miranda? What is her attitude toward her family, the past, the authority and advice of older people? Why does she like early morning best? 3. Miranda's life is defined and objectified through a series of episodes: the Liberty Bond salesman, the society girls, the hospital, the dollar-a-year man, the dance hall, and so on. What qualities do they have in common? By what means is their significance made clear? What dilemma do they pose? 4. Could this story have happened only during wartime? Or does the war simply intensify something that is always present in experience anyway? 5. What kind of person is Adam? How is his character suggested to us? Is there an implied comparison between him and Adam, the first man? Between him and the clear light of early morning in the opening dream? Why is it necessary for the theme of the story that Miranda fall in love with a boy like Adam? What aside from Adam's death makes it inevitable that their love should end unhappily? In order to have Adam what would Miranda have to deny in herself and in her knowledge of life? 6. Is the influenza useful only in terms of plot? Would Miranda have behaved differently and had a different attitude if she had been in good health? How are her delirious dreams in the hospital related to real life and to the opening dream of the story? 7. Is Miranda's recovery complete? Is she now the same as she was at the start of the story, or has her sickness been more than a physical experience? What change has occurred in her understanding of the race with the pale rider and of the people in the past who have raced with him? What is it in the paragraph before the last that she warns herself never to do? What is the meaning of her interest in cosmetics at the end? 8. Trace through the story the references to "light" and "time" and explain their significances.

What We Don't Know Hurts Us (507)

MARK SCHORER was born in Wisconsin in 1908, and took his A.B. and his Ph.D. in English at the state university. In addition to a study of William Blake (1946), he has written two novels and many stories, of which thirty-two are collected in *The State of Mind.* He has lately been teaching writing at the University of California.

1. In what ways is this story more than an account of a "scene" in the Dudley house-

hold? 2. Will such "scenes" end when the weather clears, the house is settled, and the family is acquainted with the new community? 3. The mother explains that Charles' attitude toward owning a house is a sign of immaturity, and that Gordon took the dollar because he needed a friend at school. What is implied by the fact that these valid psychological explanations are not allowed to resolve the problems in the story? 4. What is contributed by the parents' efforts to keep Penelope out of the room and ignorant of Gordon's trouble? 5. What are the relations between the human problems and their solution and the nature of the broom and its clearing? 6. In what ways has the story prepared us to believe that Charles can find help from Gordon, and only from him?

Young Archimedes (517)

ALDOUS HUXLEY was born in London in 1894, the grandson of Thomas Huxley and the grand-nephew of Matthew Arnold. Eye trouble turned him from science, his brother Julian's field, to literature in which he took a degree at Oxford. After six years of writing in London, he lived largely in Italy from 1923 to 1930. In addition to "Young Archimedes," he wrote many stories, novels, and essays during this period, including *Point Counter Point* (1928). In recent years he has lived and written in California, which is satirized in *After Many a Summer Dies the Swan* (1940).

Notes: 1. métayage, p. 525: the halving of produce between landowner and landholder. 2. Piedegrotta, p. 527: a district in Naples celebrated for its annual musical and poetic festival commemorating the uniting of Italy. 3. *Politeama,* p. 527: a variety theater. 4. *Viene giuocare soldati,* p. 528: Come play soldiers. 5. *Cattivo Guido,* p. 533: Naughty Guido. 6. *Sono della,* etc., p. 536: I am playing piano at Mistress's I don't like it she has stolen my book I don't want to play any more I want to go back home come quick Guido.

1. What would be lost by the omission of the long opening description? 2. What is the truth behind Signora Bondi's assertion that she adores children? Are we to understand that her fatal error was forcing a born mathematician to study music? 3. Does the story support the explanation that Carlo's anger derived only from sorrow? 4. By what other means than those suggested by the foregoing questions does this story become a general comment upon man's history? 5. In what respects are the narrator and the child like those in "Mario and the Magician" (page 545)?

Realpolitik (540)

ANGUS WILSON is said to have written his first short story at the age of three. He has lived in South Africa, was educated at Oxford, and since 1937, with time out for World War II, has been on the staff of the British Museum Library. In addition to *The Wrong Set,* from which "Realpolitik" is taken, he is the author of *Such Darling Dodos,* another collection of short stories.

1. In what ways is Veronica useful to the story? 2. What kind of charm does Hobday affect? By what means is it defined? What relation does it have to his real character? 3. Does the story bear out Veronica's description of Hobday as a "confident salesman lost in the dream world of the grandiose schemes he was putting before them"? 4. How well does Hobday really know himself? 5. Are the members of the old staff completely unlike Hobday? 6. In how many ways is there a relation, as the title suggests, between the story and the world at large?

Mario and the Magician (545)

THOMAS MANN was born in 1875 in Lubeck, Germany, the son of a prosperous merchant and civic official. His first novels, *Buddenbrooks* (1901) and *The Magic Mountain* (1924), established his fame and won him the Nobel Prize. His stories and novelettes, including *Mario and the Magician* (1930), were collected in *Stories of Three Decades* (1931, 1936). He left Germany during Hitler's rise to power, when his books were banned, and since 1938 he has lived in the United States. He is an American citizen.

Notes: 1. *cornetti al burro,* p. 546: a kind of bread similar to the French *croissant.* 2. *forzatore,* p. 552: gymnast. 3. *paura,* p. 555: fear. 4. *Ha sciolto lo scilinguágnolo,* p. 556: He is no longer tongue-tied. 5. *donnaiuolo,* p. 557: admirer of women. 6. *simpatico,* p. 558: sympathetic, understanding. 7. *non scherziamo,* p. 560: We're not joking. 8. *E servito,* p. 563: It's all ready. 9. *Lavora bene,* p. 563: He does well. 10. *ragazzo mio,* p. 572: my boy. 11. *salvietta,* p. 572: napkin. 12. *giovanotto,* passim: young fellow.

1. What details in the social and moral conditions described in the first section of the story support the opening statement that "the shocking business of Cipolla . . . lay in the nature of things"? 2. In what ways are the children useful in the working out of plot and theme? 3. What is implied by the sequence of neighborhoods leading to the hall? 4. What overtones of meaning arise from the behavior of the children before the performance begins, from the parents' concern about the lateness of the hour, and from Cipolla's delay? 5. In what detailed ways and by what means does Mann imply that the "entertainment" is a symbolic interpretation of basic political and moral problems? 6. Is the betrayal of Mario the fitting climax and summary for the "performance"? 7. What is implied about "liberation" by the character of Mario, the laugh which breaks Cipolla's spell, and the behavior of the spectators? 8. In what ways is the "I" of this story comparable to the narrator in "Young Archimedes" (page 517)?

A Little Cloud (575)

JAMES JOYCE (1882-1941) was born and educated in Dublin, one of a large middle-class family. He left Dublin in 1903 for Paris and the Continent, where he spent the rest of his life except for occasional visits to Ireland. *Dubliners,* portraits of city life, reflects his experiences as a boy and a young man, although it was not published until 1914. It was followed by *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man,* which was serialized by Ezra Pound. Joyce's radical experiments in symbolic fiction are most fully illustrated in *Ulysses* (1918-22) and *Finnegans Wake* (1939).

1. What concrete details support and dramatize the opening generalizations about Chandler's character? 2. How often and in what ways are "little" and comparable words or phrases used? Do they always suggest immaturity? 3. Why does Chandler flush with pride upon remembering how Gallaher used to behave in a tight spot? 4. What fundamental traits and values are revealed in the discussion of marriage by the two men? 5. Joyce told his publisher that he intended "to write a chapter of the moral history of my country and I chose Dublin for the scene because that city seemed to me the center of paralysis." He first planned to call the stories in *Dubliners* "epiphanies"—defined by his friend Dr. Gogarty as "any showing forth of the mind by which he considered one gave oneself away." What sentence best summarizes Chandler's "epiphany" or realization of his own predicament? How are the other characters and events subordinated to Chandler as a part of his "epiphany"?

The Blind Man (584)

DAVID HERBERT LAWRENCE (1885-1930), was born in Nottinghamshire, England, the son of a coal miner. After graduating from high school, he taught until 1911, when he published his first novel and eloped with Mrs. Ernest Weekley, whom he later married. *Sons and Lovers* (1913) won him recognition as a writer. He left England in 1919, and lived thereafter in various places, including Taos, New Mexico, writing steadily despite attacks of tuberculosis, from which he died in Nice, France, in 1930.

1. In how many ways are Bertie and Maurice complements? opposites? 2. In what sense is it true that Maurice's blindness is not an end in itself but a means of defining and intensifying an element in his character and in the theme of the story? 3. What are the significances of Maurice's scar? 4. What effects, and in what progression, are achieved in the account of Isabel's visit to the stable?

How is this episode related to the smelling of the violets at the tea table? to the meaning of the whole story? 5. What is the theme of the story? Is it hard to state neatly? Why?

The Birthplace (598)

HENRY JAMES (1843-1916), the brother of the philosopher William James, came from a wealthy and cultivated New York family. He was educated abroad and at Harvard Law School, but his real interest was writing. In 1875 he left the United States and settled in Sussex and London, although he frequently spent a season on the Continent and made four visits to America. He became a British subject in 1915. Unmarried, he devoted his life to his friends and to his writing. His many novels and stories are now understood to illustrate a major change in modern fiction.

1. What facts about the plot are provided by the opening paragraphs? Are they subordinated in order to create suspense or in the interest of characterization? Explain. 2. How have we been prepared to react to Mrs. Gedge's assertion that she and her husband "know the difference between realities and shams"? What may be foreseen in their new assignment that will test their knowledge of the difference? 3. At the start what is the Gedges' attitude toward Shakespeare? By what details is it most effectively suggested? 4. What problem begins to trouble Gedge during his practice tours with Miss Putchin? What earlier details have suggested that Mrs. Gedge would not be troubled in the same way? 5. What does Mr. Gedge think he means, near the end of section II, by "you mustn't know too much"? 6. Is there any justification for the impression by the end of section II that this story has widening possibilities of meaning and application? Is there a relation between this impression and the use of pronouns—Him, They, Their, and so on? 7. What metaphorical comparison is developed in section III by Gedge's midnight devotions and such phrases as "Holy of Holies," "Chamber of Birth," "the Fact," "pilgrims," "relics"? by the opposition between being critical and ignorant? 8. In what sense is Gedge's feeling of being split in halves the reflection of a moral situation rather than a private psychological one? 9. What quality about the two Americans stirs Gedge "to let himself go"? 10. Is the "split" in Gedge's personality and situation finally healed? What attitude is proposed or possible besides the extremes of criticism of Him and of excessive adulation? In what respects is Gedge more complex and mature at the end than at the beginning?

Victory (641)

JOSEPH CONRAD (1857-1924). For biographical details see the Introduction to *Victory*, page 638.

PART I (641)

Chapter 1

1. How is Heyst introduced? What kind of evidence about him is presented? From what point of view? In what tone? 2. What is the relation between the tone of the account of the Tropical Belt Coal Company and the picture of the "garish, unrestful hotel" as a symbol of modern society?

Chapter 2

1. What further is revealed about Heyst? 2. How does the episode with Morrison support: "No decent feeling was ever scorned by Heyst. But he was incapable of outward cordiality of manner, and he felt acutely his defect"? 3. What kind of character is being revealed for the narrator? What growing evidence is there to trust his acuteness and fairness? 4. In what ways is Schomberg's hotel like the one mentioned in Chapter 1?

Chapter 3

1. What are the deeper moral and psychological implications in the portrait of Schomberg? What may be gained by the emphasis on the idea that his maliciousness is unfathomable and gratuitous? 2. What justifies the non-chronological presentation of events?

Chapter 4

1. What are we to understand from Heyst's assertion that he is done with facts? 2. In what ways is Davidson more than just an extension of the narrator and his point of view?

Chapter 5

1. What is gained by having the flight of Heyst and the girl discovered and disclosed slowly by Davidson rather than having it rendered directly from the beginning? 2. What is the larger meaning of "the rescue of a distressed human being" from the hotel? How has it been prepared for? 3. What general and specific inferences can be made from the fight between Schomberg and Zangiacomo?

Chapter 6

1. What is the importance of Heyst's discussion of the harmfulness of action? 2. What larger application has Davidson's remark that people had got used to Schomberg? 3. What is implied by Heyst's care to return Mrs. Schomberg's shawl? 4. Why is Davidson's last observation, which concludes the chapter, inadequate?

Chapter 7

1. What is useful and appropriate about the stylized description of Mrs. Schomberg, her meetings with Davidson, and her reactions to her husband? 2 What are we meant to understand from Schomberg's constant misinterpretation of character and events?

PART II (672)

Chapter 1

1. What change occurs in the point of view and narrative method? 2. What are we to understand from the contrast between the quiet of the islands and the noisiness of the hotel? What details elaborate this contrast?

Chapter 2

1. How is the effort to reduce the improbability of Heyst's running off with a girl given a larger meaning? What relation to this question have the discussions of imagination and of reason and subconscious desires? In what sense is the educative experience of Heyst, with its appeal to his emotions and its call to both heart and head, comparable to the effect of the whole novel and to the function of all literary art? 2. What are we to understand from the fact that the girl does not know very clearly where she is, that she has no home, that "they are too many for her"? 3. Why is the dance hall scene a significant one for the meeting of Heyst and the girl? 4. What is the deeper meaning of the girl's insistence that Heyst give her a name? 5. What do we understand about Heyst's loss of invulnerability that is not yet clear to him? 6. What passages in this chapter help most to enlarge the romantic plot into a counterpointing of Appearance and Reality?

Chapter 3

1. What justifies the flashback about Heyst at this point? 2. How are Heyst and Lena like and unlike each other as "waifs"? 3. Why could not Schomberg sense and understand Lena's real reasons for leaving with Heyst?

Chapter 4

1. What qualities are implied by the physical descriptions of the three strangers? 2. Why is it useful to approach the strangers through Schomberg's point of view? 3. What are the point and effect of the outburst about women?

Chapter 5

1. To what extent are the three strangers an extension of Schomberg, a completion of what he stands for? 2. To what extent is Jones an embodiment of rationality without feeling?

Chapters 6-7

1. Why is it emphasized that Schomberg's habitual appearance, like his wife's, is a mask of his true self? 2. How are we to understand the repeated references to Jones as a gentleman? What is foreshadowed by his boredom?

Chapter 8

1. How plausible is the handling of plot? Why is it important in this chapter? 2. To what extent and by what means is it implied that the three strangers are the logical extension into practice of the values represented by Schomberg?

PART III (726)

Chapter 1

1. What passages are particularly intensified by our knowledge of the impending attack on Heyst and Lena? 2. How are theme and character developed by Heyst's meditations and by the flashback to his father's dying advice? 3. What kind of pride is suggested as a part of Heyst's withdrawal from life? 4. What part is played by Wang in the phil-

osophical pattern? Why the emphasis on his instinctiveness?

Chapters 2-3

1. What are the overtones of meaning in the scenes describing Lena as she approaches and enters Heyst's home? 2. What are we meant to understand from Lena's statement that she exists only as Heyst thinks of her? 3. What is implied about Heyst and Lena and their relationship from their long conversation? 4. How does Heyst's account of Morrison differ from others that have been presented? What impressed Heyst chiefly? 5. What do we understand about Heyst's puzzled statements that "he who forms a tie is lost" and yet that Lena "gave him a greater sense of his own reality than he had ever known in all his life"?

Chapter 4

1. How is Morrison's story used to develop the theme of Illusion and Reality? 2. What is implied by Heyst's statement that he respected Morrison's "very madness"?

Chapters 5-10

1. How would you answer the comment that Heyst's only trouble was that he befriended the wrong girl, that probably no one else would have brought the three strangers down on him? 2. What is particularly terrifying about the fact that Jones is motivated merely by the desire to find relief from boredom? 3. Why is it useful to have the three arrive half-dead from thirst?

PART IV (780)

Chapters 1-3

1. What is gained by the shift to Ricardo's point of view? 2. By what are we now made aware of various kinds of restraint represented in the novel? How are they related to other aspects of the theme? 3. What is the chief source of Lena's strength? Why is she able to understand Ricardo? Why is it important for theme and character as well as for plot that Lena now hides the truth from Heyst? 4. Why is the last paragraph of Chapter 3 so successful? What might Henry James say about it?

Chapters 4-5

1. What are we meant to understand from Heyst's need now for diplomacy or dissembling? 2. In Heyst's analysis of why he cannot act against the three, what is implied about how they can be defeated without his becoming like them and fighting on their terms?

Chapters 6-7

1. What do we understand that Jones himself does not understand from his statement, "It's a sort of test"? 2. What is meant by the suggestion that Jones has been made what he is by "gentlemen"? Has Heyst been too?

Chapters 8-9

1. What uses are made in the story of nature's barricade? 2. In what two ways do we understand Lena's refusal to leave Heyst? 3. What is implied by Heyst's assertion: "Something in me thinks—something foreign to my nature"? 4. By what details are the characters of Lena and Heyst and the nature of their final experience progressively clarified?

Chapters 10-14

1. What interpretations have we been prepared to make of the fact that when Jones hears of Lena it will be "the end of his reign"? 2. How is Heyst tested at the end of Chapter 11 by the sight of Ricardo adoring Lena? How are we meant to react to Jones' commentary on the scene? 3. In how many ways can the final victory be defined? Which explicit statements in the final chapters are most useful in framing a definition? How are these abstract statements supported and extended by the many references and scenes involving fire, heat, burning, lightning? 4. What is symbolically significant and appropriate about the way in which each of the three gangsters dies? 5. What is gained by having Davidson describe the final events? Is anything lost?

THE MANUSCRIPT OF *Victory*

NOTE: The following account by H. T. Webster of the MS of *Victory* is from "Conrad's Changes in Narrative Conception in the Manuscripts of *Typhoon and Other Stories* and *Victory*," and is reprinted from *PMLA*, LXIV (1949), 953-962, through the courtesy of the author and the editor.

How does this account clarify or alter your understanding of the novel? Do you agree

with all of Webster's comments and inferences?

Joseph Conrad's MSS provide a curiously intimate link with the personal life of their author. Among other things, the reader may note that Conrad was a smoker, that he had had drawing lessons at some period in his life, that he was on occasion worried about money, and that he was not averse to a refreshing glass. But the greatest importance of his MSS is that they tempt surmises about his creative rather than his personal life. It is lucky that Mr. John Quinn and other collectors were not discouraged by the fact that the holographs were anything but fair copies. The MSS they have preserved contain a full scale of revision offering an unusual opportunity to observe how a narrative art came into being. Conrad says much in his letters of how slow and painful the creative process was for him. His MSS confirm this, not so much by the inordinate amount of revision as by the fact that they show little evidence of pages thrown away or of imaginative flungings. In *Almayer's Folly* and *An Outcast of the Islands,* they suggest an obstinate effort at total recall of scenes and situations that the author had either witnessed or believed he had witnessed. One feels that he was the slave as well as the master of his creations. When he put something on paper, it took on the objectivity of fact for him. He could serve such facts, but he could not alter them.

In the MSS of the *Typhoon* volume and *Victory,* one gets the impression of a greater imaginative freedom in which Conrad strikes the second heat in matters of narrative conception as well as style. . . .

Victory may well be the most popular of Conrad's novels. In addition to a wide reading public it has had a short career on the stage, a long one in several film versions, and it has also been the subject of a radio symposium. Aside from the masterful narrative flow and the imaginative vividness of its pages, its particular appeal probably lies in the fact that it represents two innocent people completely overwhelmed by a human malignancy, adequately personified in Schomberg, Mr. Jones, and his confrères. The MS of *Victory* has a peculiar interest both as an example of Conrad's informal style in its maturity, and because its 1100-odd pages (much longer than the printed version) contain many details that would be of interest to those who have felt the spell of the novel. The published version of the story is much shorter than the MS—half to a third at a rough estimate—and the revisions are nearly all deletions. Whole passages are sometimes rephrased, but the detailed labor with sentences is greatly minimized in this MS. Apparently Conrad initially imagined his story in great detail and then proceeded to carve the finished work of art out of the larger and less shapely mass. But the fascination of the published story partly rests on the fact that it contains reserves of meaning which were explicit in the MS.

Many of the names are changed. The character familiar to readers as Axel Heyst is called Augustus Berg, and later Gustavus Berg (the name Heyst first appears on page 1130 of the holograph); the Tropical Belt Coal Company is introduced as the Archipelago Coal Company; Sourabaja is Samarang, a discrepancy which survives on pages 15 and 58 of the text. Davidson is introduced as Davis, but soon assumes his familiar name; his ship is at first the "Celestial," not the "Sissie"; the guests who arrive on the mailboat are called Mr. John Smith, and Martin Ricards (or Rickards), not Mr. Jones and Martin Ricardo until the story is well advanced. Schomberg, his wife, and Morrison appear, as in earlier stories, but the girl of indefinite names is called Margaret instead of Magdalen, at first.

The story of *Victory* is less obscured in the more extended and leisurely treatment of the holograph than might be supposed. The elements that go into the greater length are mainly as follows: the reaction of the Sourabaja maritime and trading world to Berg (or Heyst) in his various phases; his relationship with the girl, which in the MS contains a greater element of mutual passion and distrust; and last the final scenes of tension between Mr. Jones and Heyst. In the MS, the temporizing side of their relations is stressed, whereas in the printed version, though both men need to gain time, both men also tend

to force the action. There is no conception in the MS that is entirely absent in the printed version, and relatively few scenes are entirely deleted.

The public reaction to Heyst (or Berg) as "the Enemy," the agent of an advancing civilization which threatens the existence of the small trader, belongs chiefly to the MS and culminates in a scene in which an irate captain of a small trading ship says: "You mean to clear all of the boys out of the islands, Mr. Berg" (*Victory,* Barton Currie MS, p. 60). The idea that Berg's venture with the coal company made him generally ostracized survives in vestige on page 34 of the text.

In the MS the incongruity of the polished Berg's association with that girl of varied names and drab antecedents makes a greater stir in the bars and counting houses of Sourabaja than it does in the printed version of the story. The matter is dismissed flippantly by "one of us, a satirical character," who remarks: " 'Now I have no doubt that he must be a Swedish baron'—Didn't we know that at home noblemen, always noblemen, ran off with dancing girls, singing girls—that sort of girl?" (Barton Currie MS, pp. 111-112). Incidentally, Lena gets what seems in the printed text a rather inapposite name, as a diminutive of Magdalen.

The aloof Heyst's love for Lena is treated with more romantic intensity in the MS. The following passages are interesting because they make explicit what Conrad had in mind behind the contained understatements of Part III, Chapter 4, of the printed work, which confront the reader with a rather delicate problem of interpretation:

Suddenly he discovered, as it were, that he was beside himself with fury 'It only wanted this,' he thought, feeling extremely ashamed of a sentiment till then unknown to him as he remembered with pride. And this memory next moment added to his humiliation. 'A confounded hotel keeper upsetting my equanimity like this. What does he [*sic*] matter what he thinks of me, what any human being thinks of me.' He raised his eyes and saw the girl whose existence he had absolutely forgotten for a moment. She was not looking at him. She with bowed head and with her (hands) lightly clasped before her. Her thought mattered. She mattered altogether from head to foot, her outward and inner personality, her complexion (how white she was), her lips, all her body, and her shy soul so shrinking before wickedness, and so unresisting and so well protected by the candid unreadable eyes.

'I won't do you the injury to ask whether you believe this hotel version,' he said. 'Surely you must know the value of human judgement.' [Barton Currie MS, p. 569. In this and succeeding quotations I have altered Conrad's punctuation to the extent of closing quotation marks and supplying a clarifying comma or two. In four instances where words were obviously intended but not written out, I have put them in brackets.]

Yet Heyst's deep-rooted skepticism is nourished by an involuntary vestige of reserve on the part of the girl. Until the lovers face the common menace of Mr. Jones and his companions, neither can wholly trust the other. Heyst repeatedly refers to Lena's eyes as an outward sign of her inscrutability.

'Heavens,' he muttered. . . . 'I could see quite a lot that you don't even suspect yet. At once. A lot You would think that since we have lived together for a good many days you ought to have no secrets from me. But no You can't be seen quite through For one thing your eyes are in the way—your adorable eyes that will say nothing—no, not at any time. And then we have been alone, quite alone, and in such loneliness which is delightful the sight grows dim and the personality grows larger because of the concentration of the thought, of the desire, of the need for ever closer and closer communion. And since identity is not to be achieved one loses a little of one's early confidence, one loses it in the very effort to understand, to embrace, and hold, wholly, thoroughly, forever.' [Barton Currie MS, p. 575; Kent Ed., 210.]

Finally he is led to reconsider the whole perplexing relationship in words which make it so understandable that one almost wishes them in the printed *Victory.* Incidentally these clear up a slight ambiguity in Heyst's assertion that he has never loved a woman (Kent Ed., p. 212):

He had always thought that love began in dreams, in poetic exaltation What he had experienced, however, had been an indefinite emotion much more physical than moral. He had

been nervous, overstrung, uneasy like on the eve of some disease, but there had been nothing painful in that symptomatic agitation which had also extended his thoughts. In a short pause, holding her by the hand, he descended within himself trying to understand. He could not say that she corresponded to any of those feminine ideals which are created by the blind hopes of men calling upon the desire of love to give them a vision of the moral and physical qualities destined to charm and seduce their hearts. He had renounced hastily that with the other desires of life. Neither had he felt impelled toward her by an irresistible impulse of his whole being. Yet now he felt acutely her presence as though she had given him something nameless and subtle of herself, something that *is* (if) she were to rise and go away and vanish would remain with him forever, while she would carry away something of his own personality which she had appropriated and which he could not do without for the future. [Barton Currie MS, pp. 581-582; it would fit in the Kent Ed., p. 212.]

Thus Heyst, and it may be added Lena, show a greater objective awareness of their emotional evolution in the MS than in the novel. But the evolution itself follows the same curve in each.

Mr. Jones' character shows more trace of an evolving conception in the MS than do those of the other people, who are essentially the figures we meet in the published story. At first he is called a type of shady gentleman adventurer familiar enough in the islands (Barton Currie MS, p. 250). In this rôle he answers Schomberg, when the latter wants him to move on: "What do you take us for, tourists? That's only a description for your official book, and don't you make any mistake about it" (Barton Currie MS, p. 280). This passage would fit on page 111 of the Kent edition. Throughout the MS Mr. Jones is conceived in terms of more prosaic probability than is the semi-allegoric apostle of the Uebermensch philosophy of the book. Ricardo consistently mistrusts his partner, as indeed he might in real life. Mr. Jones' formidable marksmanship, an almost myth-like attribute in the final version of the tale, is explained in the following matter of fact terms: "I am rather good at that sort of shooting. It's a knack easily acquired when there's a little natural aptitude to start with" (Barton Currie MS, p. 1065).

The introductory descriptions of both Mr. Jones and Ricardo are by no means as individually conceived as those of the figures in the published book. Here is a deleted MS description of Ricardo, or "Ricards," as he appears in Schomberg's launch (it would fit the Kent Ed., p. 99):

On the other side of him sat, *less at ease another white man the tip of whose rigid white nose rested on a thick reddish mustache He rolled incessantly a pair of expressionless, round eyes which did not seem to see anything and evidently accepted a position of inferiority* another passenger who was introduced by the clean-shaved man as 'My secretary.' [Barton Currie MS, p. 253. The italicized lines were deleted by Conrad in the MS.]

The following long description of Mr. Jones is replaced with a short paragraph on page 112 of the Kent Edition:

Schomberg's small reserve of resistance was worn out. This slow lifeless voice dropping words without passion, without insistance [*sic*] was too much for his fortitude simply because the man who used it affected his imagination with thoughts of death and graveyards and power from another world. It was his livid complexion, this faint voice, the spectral slow way of turning his eyes on one and the spidery thinness of his limbs which suggested his having been resurrected and now going about not exactly alive but animated by some unholy spell. There were moments when he gave that impression strongly enough to make you shudder At other times he was no worse than a very thin gentleman with a perfectly smooth livid countenance with regular features like the head of a statue. [MS, p. 292.]

Another long deleted passage in the MS is interesting because it shows Conrad writing crudely and frankly fumbling with both his story and his character, though the seed of its final development is already evident. Incidentally, it is an interesting evidence of Conrad's understanding of people that, even in this embryonic stage of Mr. Jones' development, Conrad gives him the ability to make his followers feel the fear and the involuntary fascination which seem to be part of the Over-

man's standard equipment. In making Mr. Jones the spokesman of the nineteenth-century philosophy most often opposed to Heyst's passivism, Conrad's imagination illuminated with remarkable accuracy the human terms in which that philosophy later took shape. The deleted passage follows page 117 of the Kent Edition, but would seem very crude if joined to it:

'Whatever it is you've downed him sir.' The secretary spoke with a deference he did not show in public. 'You are better than that fellow we saw in the music hall in Lima, who used to stiffen people hard as iron on the stage. Not that you stiffen them—you make people go soft all over when you like You are a wonder.' He paused. There had been a suggestion of obsequiosity in his deadened utterance A cold murmur of 'you think so' acknowledged it.

'I know it. All I ask is that you should not try any of it on me. I couldn't stand it. As it is, you make me sometimes feel queer all over without meaning it, I suppose. But perhaps you couldn't if you tried on me on purpose, and perhaps I would draw on you if I thought you were really trying.'

'Would you really?' Mr. John Smith asked with a low hollow chuckle, not at all mirthful, which Ricard joined with a stifled half deferential, half ferocious laugh.

'No use,' he said. 'I couldn't pull the trigger on you. I would be like a lost kid on the job. Put me on board ship (i e., under command), and I would face a devil single handed. But you made me clear out with you out of the "Terrier." Oh I don't grumble. The berth wasn't a great catch—especially as that treasure didn't turn up. . . .'

'Sssh,' hissed plain John Smith.

They listened to heavy footsteps below audible in the resounding flimsy wooden hotel. It seemed as if Schomberg had been sitting stark still as they had left (him) till then, and now had started roaming around the great billiard room.

'The Dutchman's putting out the lights before going to bed,' whispered Ricard.

'Very likely.'

'He's been thinking you over, I bet,' opined Ricard. He bent an ear to the sounds. 'He's going to bed right enough. You have daunted him, sir. But it seems hardly worth the trouble, except for the sake of carrying your point. But you always do. There isn't much to be made of this lot here. They can jingle a dozen of their guilders of an evening in their pockets; it's about all. Dam' beggarly.'

'I am tired,' said Mr. John Smith curtly, 'and so you shall have to waste your talents here until I am ready to go on.'

'Go on where, sir?'

'To the end of the world and further,' was the answer.

Schomberg was shooting the bolts of the many doors opening on the verandah. Then he was heard at the back doing the same thing. A silence fell upon the house.

'Oh, Lima was the place for playing a paying game,' sighed Ricard. 'You remember, sir? Why we ever left South America I'm dashed if I can. . . .'

'What's to prevent you going back there?' Mr. John Smith interrupted. 'I don't want you.'

'Don't you, sir?'

'No.'

'Oh, yes you do,' contradicted his henchman with a sort of defiant deference, 'or else why should you have taken the trouble you did take over there on the Nicaragua coast to talk me over into deserting the schooner. I am hanged if you didn't jolly well bewitch me into bolting off with you May I be everlastingly flabbergasted if I'd ever have had the pluck to lay hold of the money in the schooner's cabin and clear out into the woods like this. Don't you think I am sorry I did it. I ain't sorry. But I don't mean to leave you any more than you mean to part with me. You know you don't. And I can tell you why. Shall I?'

'You had better go into your room,' Mr. John Smith advised his companion, 'before you say too much.'

Ricard's feelings seemed too much hurt for prudence or respect.

'I will tell you—whether little or much you won't part with me if only for one thing that if ever a woman of any sort came in the way of our business, you would need me, your Martin, either to strangle her or to talk her over and get her out of the way somehow. I've heard of people being afraid of cats, but this almost beats fainting fits. Were you always like that?'

'You don't understand,' whispered John Smith in a troubled voice. 'You can't be expected to understand a gentleman completely. I won't waste my time explaining.'

'No need, sir. It's enough for me that you don't deny it. And you don't, because you can't, I suppose. I wonder what they have done to you or you to them—for there must have been something.' [Barton Currie MS, pp. 299-301.]

Ricard's last sentence opens up some interesting speculations in abnormal psychology. For the rest, the passage shows that when Conrad wrote it he did not see the development of his story in specific terms. To judge from the improvised character of the writing, even the general development must have been but just apprehended. One gets the impression that he had sent Berg and Lena back to Samburan without having devised a catastrophe for them, that he had resorted to one of those wandering rogues like "Gentleman Brown" of *Lord Jim* as the most likely expedient, and that he was at this point beginning to think of the development in terms of individual character. The later interview with Schomberg in which the latter persuades Ricardo that Heyst is a man worth robbing and the succeeding events on Samburan follow the printed story in all essential matter, except that on pages 422 and 732-733 Ricardo is shown as already half-resentful of Mr. Jones' "whims." His defection from his leader is more impulsive but somehow more credible in the published story.

For the most part the printed text of *Victory* is not so much a rewriting of the MS as an abstraction from it, in which few original conceptions are basically altered. The following passage from the MS may be compared with the conclusion to Part IV, Chapter 2, of the Kent Edition, where it is greatly condensed:

Duplicity. The refuge of the weak, of the cowardly, but of the disarmed too. Nothing stood between that enchanted, tormented dream of her existence and a cruel catastrophe but her duplicity. Nothing could protect the man for whom she was beginning to feel a blind devotion but her duplicity. Therefore she smiled with an effort of such pain that she suspected the smile to be but a ghastly betraying grimace of her infinite anguish. She accepted this anguish with dull resignation.

It seemed to her that what was happening was bound to happen anyhow, that it could not have been otherwise. It was almost as though she had expected it. It seemed to her that the man sitting there before her was an unavoidable presence, that she had known him for years. He was the embodied evil of the world which had tracked her out in this refuge. With woman's sincere judgment of the value of our acts she was not ashamed of her duplicity. With woman's frank courage, directly she had seen that opening she threw herself into (it) without reserve —with only one doubt in her mind, the doubt of her own strength. Like many women before her who did not know that their true force is in their passion, she mistrusted that. She was really appalled by the situation while already all her femininity aroused by Berg, understanding that whether he loved her or not she loved him, and saying to herself that she had brought this on his head, she faced the danger with a passionate desire of defence [*sic*].

As to the man who had attacked her, she was not frightened of him She seemed to have an intuition of his nature It was as though she had known him for a long time She knew who he was. He was the embodiment of the world's evil. A horrible crushing thing. But of him personally, she was not afraid. [Barton Currie MS, pp. 810-811]

The MS treatment of this passage is by no means bad, even for a novelist of literary pretensions, but the published version is an admirable illustration of Conrad at his best. Every word counts, and every word must be read for a clear understanding of this fine example of condensed narrative art.

The Importance of Being Earnest (856)

OSCAR WILDE (1856-1900) was born in Dublin, where his father was a distinguished physician and his mother a writer. He took honors in classics at Oxford, where he was already noted for the wit and the un-Victorian manner which made his tour of the United States a shocking success and which marked his life in London. He married in 1884, and from 1891 to 1895 he wrote his most successful works: *Intentions* (critical essays), *The Picture of Dorian Gray, Lady Windermere's Fan,* and *The Importance of Being Earnest.* In 1895 he was imprisoned in Reading Gaol for two years. Upon his release, he left Victorian England and lived his last three years in Paris.

1. What passages best illustrate Bentley's statement (page 219) that Wilde's wit is not comic relief, but a device for showing up Victorian "false seriousness which means priggishness, hypocrisy, and lack of irony"? Do

the same passages illustrate Feibleman's idea (page 855) that comedy refuses to take society seriously precisely where it expects to be taken seriously? In what detailed ways is Strachey's *Queen Victoria* a helpful background for Wilde's comedy? What instances of Victorian "false seriousness" still exist today in the United States? Would you agree that they are "false"? 2. What evidence is there for the notion that the plot is necessarily improbable because it is meant to be a parody of sentimental novels and plays? 3. In what places does Wilde satirize cleverness itself? Does that cut the ground out from under his own feet and leave him no positive standards for his satire? 4. What would be the probable comments of Socrates, James, and Maugham on Wilde's play?

The Winslow Boy (898)

TERENCE RATTIGAN was born in England in 1911 and educated at Harrow and Oxford. Since 1934 ten plays and seven motion pictures by Rattigan have been produced in England and America.

Set: What are the dramatic possibilities in staging this play in a typical middle-class house, one of those houses that stand in a row of exactly similar middle-class houses?

Act I

1. Why is it useful to introduce Ronnie and his family through a conversation with the maid during the family's absence? 2. What first general impressions are given of the family, individually and as a group? What added effects are made possible because of the opening sub-scene between Ronnie and Violet? 3. What is gained by having it raining? 4. In John's interview with Arthur about marrying Catherine, what is accomplished that will help to dramatize the main complication and theme? 5. What new qualities in Dickie are revealed by his meeting with the wet Ronnie? How may they be useful later on? 6. What kind of mind is suggested by Arthur's witticisms? 7. What is gained by having the letter read aloud, and under these circumstances? 8. How has Arthur's behavior with Ronnie been prepared for? What does it presage?

Act II

1. What are the advantages in breaking the action at the end of Act I and allowing an interval of six months before Act II? 2. Why is the letter from Libertatis Amator not quite satisfactory? 3. Has Dickie's career been ruined? 4. What is the point of having Arthur review the case to a frivolous listener like Miss Barnes? How does it make us react? What does it symbolize? 5. What effects are produced by the fact that Ronnie is so "normal"? 6. How is interest in Sir Robert built up before his arrival? 7. In how many senses is he the "right" person for this particular case?

Act III

1. Has Grace's life been ruined? Is her situation at all parallel with Dickie's? 2. Ronnie's sleepiness at the climactic moment is apparently historical fact. How is it capitalized on in the play? 3. Is Arthur's statement that he hates heroics supported by what we know of him? 4. Has Catherine's life been ruined? What inferences are we meant to draw from her denunciation of Sir Robert as being completely ambitious and cold-blooded? 5. How would you answer the criticism that the last sight of Sir Robert, with his mouth full of sandwich, is too casual and unemphatic?

Act IV

1. In what ways have Grace and Dickie changed? 2. Why is Violet chosen to give the first eye-witness account of the victory? What chiefly impressed her? 3. In what ways does the last act complete the aim of generalizing and deepening the implications of the case? 4. Are there any relationships in character, theme, and technique between this play and Maugham's "Before the Party" (page 409)?

The Little Foxes (962)

LILLIAN HELLMAN was born in New Orleans in 1905, the daughter of a shoe merchant. The family moved to New York when

she was five, and she was educated at New York and Columbia Universities. After graduation in 1924 she was a reviewer, editor, play reader, and press agent in New York, and a script reader in Hollywood. On her return to New York in 1932 she read plays for producer and director Henry Shumlin, and wrote her first play, *The Children's Hour,* which ran for 691 performances. After the pro-labor *Days to Come,* she traveled in Russia, France, and Spain, and on her return wrote *The Little Foxes* (1939). She has continued to write plays of social purpose, the best-known being *Watch on the Rhine* (1941).

Note: The title is from *Song of Solomon* 2:15: "Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes."

Act I

1. What details of the opening exposition emphasize the contrast between the South of romance and of reality? 2. How is the theme enlarged by having Marshall come from the North? Does he differ essentially from Ben? 3. What is implied by having Ben's account of social and economic changes constitute a running interruption of the piano duet by Birdie and Alexandra? 4. What relationship between Regina and Marshall is introduced? What probable motives for it are implied? How? 5. How are the characters clarified by their daydreams about spending money? 6. How well do the shrewd Hubbards understand themselves? 7. What effect is produced by Alexandra's assertion, "Nobody can make me do anything"?

Act II

1. What things are accomplished by the talk between Ben and Oscar about the contents of Horace's safety deposit box? 2. What character traits are revealed by the various greetings to Horace? 3. In Regina's discussion with Horace and their discussion with Oscar and Ben to what extent is it clear that Horace is different from the others? 4. What effects are sharpened through the presence of Leo, Alexandra, and Addie?

Act III

1. What contrasts are implied by the little party of Horace, Birdie, and Alexandra? 2. Birdie says, "If we could only go back to Lionnet." Comment. 3. In what way is Birdie "stupid" as she says? 4. How is Alexandra receiving an "education" different from Leo's? 5. What are Horace's motives for his plan to handle the stolen bonds? Do they square with our conception of his character? 6. Could the play be set in a different part of the country without essential change? 7. What scenes and characters are most successfully handled? Explain.

The Cherry Orchard (1015)

ANTON CHEKHOV (1860-1904) was the grandson of a former serf who had purchased his freedom in 1841 and who became the supervisor of an aristocratic estate near Taganrog in the Ukraine, where Chekhov was born and spent his boyhood. In 1879 he followed his family to Moscow; he took a medical degree there in 1884. He had already begun writing to earn money, and he first made his reputation with short stories, which won the Pushkin Prize in 1888. His great success as a playwright came after his association in 1898 with the Moscow Art Theater, whose directors understood Chekhov's revolt against the well-made play and his effort to create what they called a "theater of inner feeling." *The Cherry Orchard* was produced six months before Chekhov's death from tuberculosis.

1. How can the contrast with *The Little Foxes* (suggested in the Introduction, page 852) be extended to include other characters? Are all of Chekhov's characters more complex than Hellman's? Why does Chekhov need a larger cast even though his main action is less complex? In which play are the characters allowed to know themselves most completely? 2. In what lights and by what means is the past represented by Chekhov? Is the total impression of the past more varied and subtle than in *The Little Foxes?* 3. What is revealed by contrasting analyses of important typical scenes in the two plays? Is the Chekhov scene as sharply focused? Does it build

to a climax? What uses are made of off-stage sounds? What could Chekhov have hoped to gain and avoid by his type of design? 4. Which is more important: the action concerning the orchard, or what the action shows about the characters? 5. Can it be shown that *The Cherry Orchard* is an epiphany, in Joyce's sense? Does it matter that there is no central character, like Chandler in "A Little Cloud"? 6. Though the characters have different abilities and personalities, do they all together point toward a single "truth" about man and society? Is it accurate to say that they point toward what Joyce called moral paralysis? If not, what would be a better definition?

Drayton (1057)

MICHAEL DRAYTON (1563-1631) spent most of his life in London, where he was well known in literary circles and where he wrote voluminously in a variety of poetic and dramatic forms. This sonnet, from a sequence entitled *Idea* (1594-1619), plays with the courtly love situation in which the male speaker conventionally pleads with the girl to return his love. He formally describes the symptoms of his love sickness, catalogues the charms of the girl, and argues that she can prove her perfection by showing the highest virtue of mercy.

1. What is the normal meter? What irregularities in meter are there in the first nine lines? How do they help to suggest the unorthodox tone and manner of the speaker? What is his "line" or strategy? 2. If this were staged, what action would accompany line 2? What would be the general behavior of the girl? 3. What happens to the rhythm and diction at line 9? Is there reason to think that lines 9-12 should be read in a tone of mock solemnity? 4. What are the rhythm and tone of the final couplet?

Shakespeare (1057)

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616) was born in Stratford-on-Avon, a prosperous country town of about 2000 people. His father was a tanner and town officer, and his mother, Mary Arden, was the daughter of a substantial Roman Catholic family in a neighboring village. Shakespeare presumably attended the Stratford grammar school. He married Anne Hathaway in 1582, and they had three children. By 1592 he was an established London dramatist. The sonnets were published in 1609, but most of them were probably written not long after Shakespeare moved to London. His career as a dramatist and producer is recorded in contemporary accounts, business documents, and above all in his plays. He was buried in Stratford, leaving £350 and considerable property, and was survived by his wife, two daughters, and one granddaughter.

Sonnet 18. Notes: 8. untrimmed: shorn of beauty and ornament. 10. owest: own.

1. What pattern of sounds helps to integrate the poem? 2. What words imply a comparison with real estate? Is the metaphor used appropriately and effectively? 3. What qualities of rhythm and diction give emphasis to line 9?

Sonnet 29. Notes: 3. bootless: profitless. 7. art: skill; scope: range of ability and achievement.

1. What light does line 9 throw on the speaker's predicament and character? 2. How are sound and rhythm handled in lines 10-12?

Sonnet 30. Notes: 4. dear: precious. 6. dateless: endless. 8. expense: loss. 10. tell: count.

1. What comparison is implied by "sessions" and "summon up"? How is it related to the speaker's condition? 2. What words are from banking and business? How would you answer the charge that they are not "poetic" enough for this poem? 3. What change occurs after line 12 in sound, metaphor, and emotion?

Sonnet 33. Notes: 6. rack: cloud. 12. region: the upper air. 14. stain: grow dim, be obscured.

1. What meaning for "flatter" in line 2 is determined by "glorious," "sovereign," "kissing," "gilding," and "alchemy"? 2. How does the meaning of the first 8 lines control

that of the last 6? 3. What quality or value is finally attributed to "my sun" (my friend)?

Sonnet 66. Notes: 3. trimmed in jollity: dressed in handsome clothes. 8. limping sway: misgovernment. 9. art: true learning. 10. doctorlike: with appearance of learning. 11. simplicity: simple-mindedness.

1. What do the examples in lines 2-12 have in common? 2. In what kind of world would "my love" be left if the speaker died?

Sonnet 73

1. What are the metaphors in lines 1-4? How do they flow into each other? 2. What is the meaning of "that" in line 12? 3. Is line 14 to be understood to mean "To love me well since I must leave ere long"?

Sonnet 116. Notes: 1-2: Compare the marriage service in the Book of Common Prayer —"If any of you know cause or just impediment," etc. 4. remover. the inconstant person. 8. height be taken: altitude be calculated.

1. What is implied by the metaphor in line 8? by "Time's fool"?

Sonnet 129

1. How are sound and rhythm controlled to emphasize the sense?

Sonnet 130

1. How is this sonnet related to the courtly love formula? 2. What is the tone of the speaker's voice, especially in lines 11-12?

Sonnet 146. Notes: 2. My sinful earth: this was probably a printer's error. 8. charge: body, on which so much has been spent. 10. aggravate: increase.

1. What is the prose sense of the sonnet? On what assumptions about man does it rest? 2. What are the dominant metaphors? In what ways are they effective and appropriate?

Donne (1061)

JOHN DONNE (1573?-1631) was born in London, where he studied law after attending Oxford and Cambridge. After traveling abroad and serving with the Earl of Essex at Cadiz and in the Azores, he became secretary to Sir Thomas Egerton, but he was dismissed and imprisoned in 1601 because of his secret marriage to Egerton's niece, Anne More. After much persuasion and self-doubt, he was ordained in the Church of England, and made Dean of St. Paul's in 1621. His wife died in 1617, having borne twelve children and lost five. At the time of his own death he was one of the most famous preachers in England.

A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning. Notes: 11. trepidation of the spheres: the procession or westward movement of the equinoxes caused, according to Ptolemaic astronomy, by the movements of the ninth or crystalline sphere of the universe. 12. innocent: not harmful. 16. elemented: composed.

1. What is the theme of the poem? 2. How would the action of the first stanza appear on the stage? 3. What ideas and attitudes are implied by "profanation," "laity," "dull sublunary"? 4 By what two means is "less" emphasized in line 20? Should it be? 5. Does the comparison in the last four stanzas support or contradict the mood and theme of the poem?

The Sun Rising. Notes: 24. alchemy: false gold.

1. In what respects is this an example of comedy, as defined by Bentley (page 219) and Feibleman (page 855)? 2. In what places are the diction and rhythm especially well controlled to imply a certain tone of voice and to dramatize the situation?

Break of Day

1. Who is the speaker? 2. What deeper criticism underlies the last stanza? 3. What would Victoria's husband say about this poem? What would Wilde say?

The Ecstasy

1. How does the theme compare with that of "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning"? 2. What does the metaphor in stanzas 4 and 5 say that a literal statement could not? 3. What is the tone of the speaker's voice? How is it established?

HOLY SONNETS

Number 7

1. How are sound and rhythm controlled in the first 9 lines to help the poem say what

it wants to? 2. What two scenes are contrasted? How is the contrast emphasized?

Number 9

1. What is the prose sense? How is it dramatized by the rhythm?

Number 10

1. What is striking about the opening attitude? What is the tone of the speaker's voice, and how is it suggested? 2. What is the relation between the reasons in lines 2-12 and that in 13-14? 3. What is achieved by the irregular meter of the last line?

Herbert (1065)

GEORGE HERBERT (1593-1633) was educated at Cambridge and entered the church in 1626. His mother was a friend of Donne's.

Virtue. Notes: 5. angry: red; brave: showy. 11. closes: end of a musical phrase. 15. coal: ashes, at Judgment Day.

1. What is the theme? How is it developed through the metaphors and the contrast between the two main parts of the poem? 2. What is the meaning of "bridal," "rash gazer," "sweets compacted," "my music"? 3. How is the poem organized by sound, rhyme, and repetition? 4. Is the emphatic accent on "chiefly" justified?

The Collar

1. If this were a play, how would you set the stage and direct the speaker to act? In what tone would he speak? How is the rhythm managed to give cues to the actor? 2. What is the prose sense of the poem? 3. What biblical theme is reflected in lines 7-9? How does it enlarge and control the meaning of the poem? 4. What is effective about the unequal lengths of the two main parts of the poem? 5. In what sense has the speaker tried to be a "man" rather than a "child"?

Marvell (1066)

ANDREW MARVELL (1621-78), the son of a Calvinist minister, was educated at Cambridge. After traveling abroad and tutoring a ward of Cromwell's, he served as assistant Latin Secretary to John Milton. For the last nineteen years of his life he was a member of Parliament from Hull.

The Garden. Notes: 1. amaze: perplex and exhaust. 17. white nor red: of a lady's face. 19. fond: foolish. 28. still: always. 37. curious: delicate. 41. pleasure less: lesser pleasure. 66. dial: sundial with flowers as numbers.

1. Where is the speaker? What two kinds of life is he contrasting? 2. What is the relation among the victor's crown of "oak, or bays," the single tree, "narrow vergèd shade," and "garlands of repose"? 3. How is the treatment of the stories of Apollo and Pan comparable to that of Adam and Eve in lines 61-64? What does this do to the tone? 4. What are the progressive states of thought and feeling in stanzas 5-7? How are they conveyed by the metaphors? How are the metaphors progressively related? 5. What is unexpected about line 56? 6. Why is the sun "milder" in line 67? What is the "fragrant zodiac"?

To His Coy Mistress. Notes: 7. Humber: the estuary at Hull. 11. vegetable: life-containing. 19. state: royal manner. 20. rate: implied valuation. 29. quaint: prim. 34. glew: glow, sometimes emended to "dew" or "lew" (warmth). 35. transpires: comes out. 40. -chapped: -chopped, -jawed.

1. What conversation has just occurred between the speaker and his lady? What does he do to the lady's argument in his first 20 lines? 2. By what means is the tone changed at line 21 to match the change in idea? How is the vastness of line 24 unlike that of the first paragraph? 3. What does the speaker intend by the careful qualifying "I think" of line 32? 4. What details are contrasted between the first and third paragraphs? What metaphors are contrasted in lines 38-40? What preceding image is echoed by "tear"?

Blake (1068)

WILLIAM BLAKE (1757-1827), the son of a London hosier, was brought up in a religious atmosphere and was trained in engraving. He is famous for his illustrations of

Dante, Milton, Bunyan, and the Book of Job. He married in 1782 and published his first poems in 1783. Except for two years in Sussex (1800-02), he lived in London, where he practiced engraving and wrote poetry and prose of an increasingly mystical kind.

The Ecchoing Green

1. What is the deeper or implied subject of the poem? How do the organization and meter help to tell us what it is?

The Clod and the Pebble

1. What human or moral qualities are suggested by the clod and by the pebble? What are the advantages of the poem over your prose answer?

The Tiger

1. Why is it appropriate that the poem should be a series of questions? Is line 20 the central question? What is added to it by the others? 2. How are sound and rhythm related to the thought?

Ah, Sunflower

1. What meaning does the poem give to "time"? 2. What is the prevailing meter? Where and how effectively is it varied?

Wordsworth (1069)

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850) was born in Cumberland and educated at Cambridge. After graduation in 1791, he spent a year in France, where he knew participants in the Revolution and where he fell in love with Annette Vallon, by whom he had a daughter. He returned before war broke out with England in 1793, met Coleridge, and settled in the Lake Country with his sister Dorothy in 1799. In 1802 he married Mary Hutchinson. Except for occasional trips, he lived in the Lake Country for the rest of his long life.

Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey

1. How is the long, factual title related to the theme of the poem? 2. What is the chronology of the experiences described? Why are they not presented in chronological order? 3. How does the theme compare with Yeats' "The Wild Swans at Coole" (page 1132)? 4. What passages are comparable to Marvell's "The Garden" (page 1066)? How do they and the speakers' characters differ? 5. What part do imagery, sentence structure, and rhythm play in the eloquence of certain passages particularly?

The Solitary Reaper

1. What is the deeper implied meaning or subject of the poem? What signs or concrete symbols point to it? Why did the poet need to bring in the nightingale in Arabia and the cuckoo in the Hebrides to define the nature of the girl's song? How are the two parts of stanza 3 related to each other and to the preceding stanzas? What would have been lost by the omission of the last three lines? 2. How are sound and rhythm adjusted or used to help the poem say what it wants to?

The World Is Too Much with Us

1. How is the poem dramatized by control of rhythm and pauses? 2. What is the purpose of lines 5-8? How successfully do they achieve it?

Shelley (1073)

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792-1822) was born in Sussex and educated at Eton and Oxford, from which he was expelled for publishing an essay, *The Necessity of Atheism.* While working and writing for social justice, he met and married sixteen-year-old Harriet Westbrook, by whom he had two children. In 1814 he eloped with Mary Godwin, daughter of William Godwin, whose *Political Justice* had greatly influenced Shelley. Harriet committed suicide in 1816, and Shelley and Mary, now married, lived in Italy, where Shelley wrote most of his poetry. He met his death by drowning when his boat, *Ariel,* was capsized in a storm.

Ozymandias

1. How important is it to know that Ozymandias was Rameses II, who died about 1200 B.C. and was buried in a tomb in Thebes, the ancient capital of Egypt? 2. In line 8, whose is the hand, whose the heart, and what two meanings has "mocked"? 3. What was the character of Ozymandias as he conceived of it and as the sculptor did? Whose concep-

tion survives? 4. How might a knowledge of Shelley's interest in social justice lead one to see a more general meaning in the poem? 5. What is effective about the variation in the length of sentences?

Ode to the West Wind. Notes: 21. Maenad: frenzied female worshiper of Bacchus, god of wine and fertility. 32. Baiae: seaport near Naples.

1. In what ways is the poem developed and integrated? 2. What do these words and phrases contribute: "enchanter," "hectic," "clarion," "tangled boughs," "sweet though in sadness"? 3. From what evidence can it be decided which symbol (wind, wave, seed, etc.) is meant to be most emphatic? Is the emphasis clear throughout? 4. What kind of person might not like the character of the speaker? 5. How is this poem like and unlike Wordsworth's poem on Tintern Abbey?

Keats (1076)

JOHN KEATS (1795-1821) was born in London. His father was employed in the livery stable of a London inn; his mother was the daughter of the innkeeper. At sixteen he was apprenticed to a surgeon, but although he was licensed as a druggist and worked for a short time in a hospital, he soon turned to poetry. He was aided by Leigh Hunt, Shelley, Hazlitt, Lamb, and Byron. In 1819 he became engaged to Fanny Brawne, but he contracted tuberculosis, of which his brother had died the year before, and he himself died in Italy where he had gone seeking relief.

The Eve of St. Agnes. Notes: 1. Eve: January 20. 5. beadsman: poor religious person who received alms for his prayers. 15. rails: garments. 16. orat'ries: prayer chapels. 70. amort: benumbed. 71. lambs: on St. Agnes' day the *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God) was chanted and two lambs were sacrificed and shorn; cf. line 115, which refers to the weaving of the wool. 105. gossip: literally godmother, but loosely, a friend. 126. mickle: much. 171. Merlin: he repaid the demons (who bore him) for his life by his death. 173. cates: delicacies. 174. tambour frame: drum-shaped embroidery frame. 188. amain: exceedingly. 198. frayed: frightened. 214-216. heraldries, emblazonings, scutcheon: coat of arms. 218. gules: red associated with heraldry. 241. clasped . . . pray: unopened as it would be among Paynims (pagans) who would not use missals (Christian prayer books). 277. eremite: solitary worshiper. 325. flaw: gust.

1. What may be inferred from a study of Keats' manuscript revisions? 2. What is revealed about characterization, point of view, focus, plotting, etc., when this poem is studied the way the short stories have been? What things are easier to achieve in verse than they would be in prose? 3. How is the intent or effect of this poem clarified by thinking of it as one version of the age-old story of a young lover stealing his bride away from a hostile world?

On First Looking into Chapman's Homer

1. Is this poem chiefly or consistently about Chapman's translation of Homer? 2. How may it help to know that Chapman was an Elizabethan? 3. How would you arrange the actors in staging lines 11-14? Why are the dashes effective punctuation? What is accomplished by the irregular meter of the last line?

Ode on Melancholy. Notes: 1. Lethe: underworld river of forgetfulness. 4. Proserpine: goddess of the underworld. 7. Psyche: in Greek this word means both soul and butterfly; here, also, object of desire.

1. What kind of melancholy is desired? How is it negatively defined in the first stanza? How affirmatively in the next two? Are all of the defining metaphors in the last two stanzas equally effective and apt? 2. By what means and for what purpose is the tempo varied from stanza to stanza?

To Autumn

1. How do the theme, mood, and attitude toward change compare with "Ode on Melancholy" and with Frost's "After Apple-Picking" (page 1144) and "The Oven Bird" (page 1142)?

Ode on a Grecian Urn

1. How does this poem compare with Yeats' "Sailing to Byzantium" (page 1134) in the treatment of art, eternity, and mortal change? How do the speakers in the two poems differ in character and tone of voice? What is your evidence? 2. Who is "ye" in the last line? Who is obliged to know something else?

Ode to a Nightingale. Notes: 14. Provençal: Provence, in southern France, was the home of the troubadours. 16. Hippocrene: a fountain sacred to the Muses whose waters inspired poetic creation; here thought of as a wine. 32. pards: leopards.

1. Where are striking illustrations of the kind of craftsmanship that is revealed in the manuscript revisions of "The Eve of St. Agnes"? 2. Through which progressive metaphors and situations are the themes of death–immortality, change–permanence, nature–human society explored and represented?

Sonnet. Note: This was written aboard ship on the way to Italy and death.

1. What can be said for and against the criticism that the first eight lines are a fine poem, but the last six a different poem and a poorer one?

Tennyson (1093)

ALFRED, LORD TENNYSON (1809-92), the fourth son in the large family of an Anglican minister, began writing poetry when he was a boy. He continued at Cambridge, where he was known for his shyness. He had to leave college at his father's death in 1831. For the next six years he lived at home in Lincolnshire, prevented by poverty and family responsibilities from marrying Emily Sellwood until 1850, although they became engaged in 1836. He published two volumes, containing some of his famous lyrics, in 1830 and 1832, but they were so violently attacked by the critics (who compared him with Keats) that he was silent for nine years. His next volume (1842) made him famous; and in 1845 Sir Robert Peel presented him a pension of £200 a year from the government. In 1850, after the publication of "In Memoriam," he was appointed Poet Laureate to succeed Wordsworth. During the remaining forty-two years of his life, he published voluminously, and was widely read and honored.

Ulysses. Notes: 1. king: Ulysses, now at Ithaca after his odyssey; his discontent is suggested by Dante's *Inferno,* Canto XXVI. 10. Hyades: a group of stars.

1. By what details does the poet try to distinguish Ulysses' desire from mere wanderlust or from irresponsibility? 2. How is the theme like and unlike that of Browning's "Rabbi Ben Ezra" (page 1120) and Robinson's "Mr. Flood's Party" (page 1135)?

Tithonus. Notes: Tithonus was the mortal husband of Aurora, goddess of dawn, who had given him immortality but not perpetual youth. 29. kindly: natural, according to its proper nature. 63. Ilion: Troy was said to have been built to the music of Apollo, the sun god.

1. What meanings has the poem given to "East" by line 64? to "ground" by line 72? 2. How would you respond to the comment that this would be a better poem if it consisted of only the first and last stanzas?

The Lotos-Eaters

1. What is the relation between the two parts of the poem? Why is "seem" repeated so often in the first part? 2. How are sound, rhythm, and rhyme varied and controlled to help the poem say what it wants to? On what principle and for what ends are the line lengths varied? 3. Is it accurate to say that this poem is about "laziness"? In what sense is it a Victorian poem? In what ways, not only in theme, is it a contrast to "Ulysses"?

Browning (1100)

ROBERT BROWNING (1812-89) was born in a suburb of London, the son of cultivated and well-to-do parents. He attended the University of London but most of his education was obtained at home and through travel. His early poems, published at his father's expense, received no attention. The dramatic monologues that began to appear after 1841 finally established his reputation. He married the invalid poetess Elizabeth

Barrett in 1846; they lived abroad, chiefly in Italy, where she died in 1861. He died at the home of his son in Venice, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

NOTES ON THE BROWNING POEMS

Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister· 10. *Salve tibi:* hail to you. 39. Arian: from Arius, a fourth-century theologian who denied the doctrine of the Trinity. 56. Manichee: one who believes that evil exists independent of God, and that good and evil are equally powerful. 60. Belial: a devil. 63. greengages: plums. 64. sieve: basket. 71-72: *Plena . . .*: Hail, Virgin, full of grace.

The Bishop Orders His Tomb. 1. vanity: folly and worthlessness; cf. *Ecclesiastes* 1:2, whose author is the "preacher." 5. Gandolf: the Bishop's predecessor. 21. epistle-side: on the right as one faces the altar; the gospel is on the left. 31. onion-stone: a poor greenish-colored marble that flakes easily. 41. -frail: basket. 42. *lapis lazuli*· a semi-precious blue stone. 46. Frascati: wealthy Roman suburb. 49. Jesu Church: Il Jesu, Jesuit church in Rome. 51. Swift . . .: "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope"—*Job* 7 6. 54. antique-black: a type of marble. 58. tripod, thyrsus: a three-legged stool used by a priestess at Delphi; the rod or staff of the followers of Bacchus. 62. tables: stone tablets inscribed with the commandments which Moses brought down from Mt. Sinai. 66. travertine: kind of limestone. 68. jasper: a smooth, dark green stone. 77. Tully: Cicero. 79. Ulpian: a Roman jurist, whose late Latin was not a good model. 87. crook: crozier or pastoral staff, sign of the Bishop's rank. 89. mort-cloth: funeral pall. 95. St. Praxed: the Bishop confuses Christ and St. Praxed, a woman saint. 99. *elucescebat*· "he shone forth," "he was famous"—classical Latin would be *elucebat.* 108. vizor: mask; term: bust on a pedestal. 116. gritstone: cheap sandstone.

Fra Lippo Lippi: 1. Lippo: a fifteenth-century Italian painter. 17. Cosimo of the Medici: powerful prince and patron of the arts; see the selection from Machiavelli's *The Prince* (page 111). 23. pilchards: sardines. 67. Saint Laurence: a church, San Lorenzo. 73. Jerome: early saint and ascetic. 117. gentleman processional: man walking in a religious procession. 121. Eight: Florentine City Fathers. 130. antiphonary's marge: margin of a book of church music. 148. cribs: small thefts. 189. Giotto: Florentine painter of the fourteenth century. 196. Herodias: wife of Herod, who caused the death of John the Baptist. 235-36. Angelico, Lorenzo: Italian painters of the generation before Lippo's. 323. Laurence: burned to death in 258. 324. Prato: near Florence. 346. Sant' Ambrogio's: Florentine church, named for St. Ambrose. 347. cast . . .: sample of my work. 375. camel-hair: garment. 377. *Iste . . .*: This man made the work. 381. hot cockles: children's game in which one is blindfolded and tries to guess who struck him.

Andrea del Sarto· Title: Andrea d'Agnolo di Francesca, a Florentine painter, 1486-1531?, called del Sarto because his father was a tailor. His pupil and biographer, Vasari, mentions his timidity and diffidence. He married a beautiful widow, who served as his model and who persuaded him to leave the French court of Francis I and to spend the King's money on a house in Florence rather than on paintings for the court. 15. Fiesole: suburb of Florence. 57. cartoon: large preliminary sketch for a painting. 65. Legate: Pope's representative. 93. Morello: Apennine mountain peak north of Florence. 105. The Urbinate: the painter Raphael, born in Urbino. 130. Agnolo: Michelangelo. 178. Roman's: Raphael's. 210. cue-owls: whose cry sounds like Italian *ciù.* 220. cousin: really her lover. 262. meted: measured and assigned. 263. Leonard: Leonardo da Vinci.

A Grammarian's Funeral 3. crofts, thorpes: farms, villages. 50. gowned: put on the scholar's robe. 86. *calculus*· gallstones. 88. *tussis*· bronchial cough. 127. rattle: death sound. 129-31. *Hoti, Oun, De:* Greek particles with no single translatable meanings.

GENERAL QUESTIONS ON THE BROWNING POEMS

In each poem: 1. Who are the dramatis personae—the speaker, the persons spoken

to? 2. What are the situation and the circumstances? 3. What is the physical scene? 4. What stage action might accompany or is suggested by the speeches? 5. What aspects of character are suggested by indirect hints that might be overlooked in a rapid reading? 6. To what extent do the dramatis personae "give themselves away"? In considering all the poems together: 7. Is Browning's method closer to Maugham's or to Joyce's? Would it confuse critical terminology to call Browning's monologues "epiphanies" (see page 1198)? 8. Is there evidence that although Browning presents a considerable variety of characters, most of his poems deal with the same essential theme or problem? Explain.

Arnold (1124)

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-88), the son of Thomas Arnold, famous headmaster of Rugby, was educated there and at Oxford. He became secretary to Lord Lansdowne, who secured him an inspectorship of schools, which he held from 1851 to 1883. In 1883 Gladstone gave him a pension from the government, and he spent the year lecturing in America. From 1857 to 1867 Arnold was professor of poetry at Oxford. He is famous not only for his poetry, but also for his essays on literature and culture.

Dover Beach

1. What is the general theme? By what details of rhythm and sound is it supported? 2. How are the stanzas and images related? What is the progression from Sophocles to "a thought" to "sea of faith" to "land of dreams" to "darkling plain"? What justification is there for a calm rather than a stormy sea, for moonlight rather than sunlight or blackness?

To Marguerite

1. How are we meant to understand the opening "Yes"? 2. Can the images be precisely visualized, or are they capable of producing only a diffused effect? 3. Why is "god" repeated in line 22? Is it effective? 4. What is the meaning of "salt" in the last line? Does it deserve the heavy emphasis?

Dickinson (1125)

EMILY DICKINSON (1830-86) was born in Amherst, Massachusetts, the daughter of a prominent lawyer. She attended Mount Holyoke Female Seminary. When she was twenty-three she visited her father in Washington, where he was a Congressman for two terms. On her return through Philadelphia she met the dynamic forty-year-old preacher Charles Wadsworth, who became a central figure in her thoughts and correspondence, although they met only three times. After 1856 she led a secluded life in Amherst, writing letters and poems, which are still being published. The first volume appeared in 1890, but she was little read for thirty years, and her present reputation dates from the publication of three volumes of poems and letters in 1924.

The Soul Selects

1. What character does the poem give to the soul? 2. What is the meaning of "valves"? How is it related to "stone"? 3. What effect is produced by the alternate long and short lines?

The Tint I Cannot Take Is Best

1. What idea in general is the poem trying to define? 2. Which stanzas are clearest? Which least clear? Why? 3. What are the meanings of "graspless" and "arrogantly" in the last stanza?

"After Great Pain . . ."

1. What image is suggested by "sits"? How is it related to tombs? 2. Is it natural that the question about Christ should be a little confused in expression? How would it be if asked clearly and at length? 3. Through what words and images is "formal" defined? What new idea is added by "then the letting go"? What light does it throw on the preceding?

Because I Could Not Stop for Death

1. What kind of situation or occurrence is usually described in the terms and tone of the first two stanzas? How does that help to support the fact that we and the speaker have to "surmise" our destination? What evi-

dence is offered us by the representative actions of the third stanza? Why is "paused" crucially important?

Housman (1127)

A. E. HOUSMAN (1859-1936), the son of an English lawyer, studied classics at Oxford. After working in the Government Patent Office for ten years, he was appointed professor of Latin at University College, London. In 1911 he became Kennedy Professor of Latin at Trinity College, Cambridge, and served with great distinction until his death. He never married, and devoted himself to travel and scholarship. Most of his poems were composed after he was thirty-five.

With Rue My Heart Is Laden

1. How is the theme strengthened by the reader's feeling that no word could be moved or replaced?

When I Was One-and-Twenty

1. What is the intended tone of the last line?

To an Athlete Dying Young

1. Why is "smart lad" a key phrase? 2. How do rose and laurel help the poem to say what it wants to? 3. What impression do you have of the speaker's appearance and character?

On Wenlock Edge. Notes: 1, 2, 6. Wenlock and Uricon are the English and old Roman names for a town in Shropshire, where there is a rocky hill known as the Wrekin, and a ridge called Wenlock Edge. 5. holt and hanger: steep wooded hill.

1. What are the meanings and effects of "trouble," "heaves," "snow," "old anger," "threshed," "stare," "riot"? 2. Are "blood" and "thoughts" in stanza 3 more than stock or conventional terms in this poem? 3. How does the conclusion differ from that of the preceding poem? How does the character of the speaker differ?

The Chestnut Casts His Flambeaux. Note: 1. flambeaux: flaming torches.

1. For what reasons might lines 25-26 be preferred to 7-8? Do they sound as if they were by the same speaker?

Yeats (1129)

WILLIAM BUTLER YEATS (1865-1939). For a brief biographical sketch see page 1181.

Among School Children. Notes: Title: Yeats inspected some primary schools when he was an Irish Senator. One of the students at a convent school in Waterford, on being asked to recite for Yeats, repeated the information about him in *Who's Who.* 9. Ledaean: see note to "Leda and the Swan" (page 1218). 14. sphere: Yeats commonly used this word to suggest harmony. 15. parable: In his dialogue, the *Symposium,* Plato gives a parable about the origin of love in which Zeus, angered at human beings, divided them in two, so that they have ever since been trying to reunite as might the parts of a divided egg. The speaker suggests that the childhood trouble described to him by the girl brought them into a communion of sympathy which was as single as the undivided egg. 26. Quattrocento: fifteenth-century, Italian. 34. honey of generation: taken, according to Yeats, from *The Cave of the Nymphs* by Porphyry, a Neo-Platonic philosopher of the third century, but not used by him to mean the "drug" in line 36 which destroys the memory of prenatal freedom. 42. ghostly paradigm: pattern of abstract forms, more real than nature. 43-44. taws . . . kings: Aristotle, believing in a "solider" kind of reality, tried to educate his student Alexander the Great by spanking his bottom. 45. golden-thighed: semi-divine; Diogenes Laertius (VII, ii) reports the legend. 47. star sang: Pythagoras, a sixth-century B.C. Greek philosopher, based his philosophizing about reality on music and mathematics, supposing that the heavenly bodies were arranged according to the laws of harmony.

1. Is the speaker seriously interested in the answer to his questioning about the studies? What more important theme is implied by the words after the dash? Why is the speaker smiling? What image does he have of himself? How does "public" help to answer that question? 2. How do stanzas 2, 3, and 4 follow from 1? What is their central theme

or contrast? How is the material after the dashes comparable to the conclusion of stanza 1? 3. Why is "shape" in line 33 a better word than "baby"? Who has been betrayed? In what sense? 4. What does the last line of stanza 6 say has happened to the three philosophers despite their fame and genius? Is it important that they had different conceptions of reality? 5. What is added by the introduction of nuns along with mothers? What is meant by "self-born"? 6. What answer is offered by the last stanza? What do the last four lines say that the first four do not? 7. On rereading the poem, what interrelations among images do you find? Might lines 61-64 be applied to this poem, or one like it, as well as to life?

A Prayer for My Daughter. Notes: 4. Gregory: Lady Gregory. 10. tower: in 1917 Yeats bought a piece of the Gregory estate in Galway on which was a Norman tower, Thoor Ballylee, which he used for his study. 25. Helen: of Troy. 27. Queen: Venus. 29. smith: Vulcan. 66. radical: original and fundamental, from *radix*—a root.

1. How does the storm described in the first two stanzas serve the poem? How does it compare with the storm in Housman's "On Wenlock Edge" (page 1128)? What is meant by the unusual phrase "murderous innocence"? What does the poem say about how one may contend or come to terms with the "storm"? 2. What part is played by the images of the bellows, the horn of plenty, the laurel, and the linnet? How do they reinforce the prose meaning and keep it from being a conventional piece of sermonizing? 3. How is it like and unlike Dickinson's "The Soul Selects" (page 1125) and Kipling's "If"?

John Kinseela's Lament for Mrs. Mary Moore

1. What part of speech is "for" in line 3? 2. What is meant by lines 21-22? Could the same thing be said about Lamb's Mrs. Battle (see page 148)? 3. What important things can Yeats get said by speaking through a character like Kinseela? How would you respond to the statement that he is a stubborn, ignorant, immoral old fool?

For Anne Gregory

1. What are the age and character of the speaker? 2. In what tone does the girl speak the second stanza? 3. Why does the speaker rely on "an old religious man" in the last stanza? What would have happened to the poem if the speaker had made a dogmatic statement in his own person?

The Wild Swans at Coole. Note: Coole: the Gregory home in Galway.

1. In what ways are lines 7-8 and stanza 4 crucially important? 2. Why is the autumn described in the first stanza the right setting and season for the poem? 3. How are sound and rhythm controlled in lines 10-12? 4. How does this poem compare with Wordsworth's lines on Tintern Abbey (page 1069) and with Keats' on the nightingale (page 1090)?

Leda and the Swan. Notes: Title: Leda, queen of Sparta, was seen bathing by Zeus, who descended in the form of a swan and made love to her, so that she bore Castor, Pollux, Clytemnestra, and Helen. This announced a cycle of culture, to be followed by the annunciation of Mary and the dove, and by others. Yeats felt that the present cycle is so "individualistic, demagogic" and rationalistic that "nothing is now possible but some movement, or birth from above, preceded by some violent annunciation. My fancy began to play with Leda and the Swan for metaphor, and I began this poem, but as I wrote, bird and lady took such possession of the scene that all politics went out of it." 10-11. wall, Agamemnon: the burning of Troy, and the murder of Agamemnon by his wife Clytemnestra.

1. How do the first two stanzas illustrate the statement that the bird and lady took possession of the scene? What emotions are created? How are language and meter purposefully controlled? How does this annunciation differ from the accounts of Mary and the dove with which you are familiar? 2. How are we to understand "brute" in the last stanza? Is it related to "indifferent"? In what sense is it true that only a being more than human can have both knowledge and power? Does their separation bear on Troy,

the Agamemnon story, Yeats' feeling about his own culture?

The Second Coming. Notes: 1. gyre: the spiral flight of the bird, but with overtones from Yeats' *A Vision* and other works in which the movements of civilizations are represented by interpenetrating whirling gyres or cones (sometimes "perne"—Irish for "spool"). Therefore "gyre" (pronounced with a hard *g*) at once suggests that a cultural cycle, dating from the birth of Christ, is coming to an end and evolving violently and ominously into a new one. Compare "Leda and the Swan" (page 1133). 12. *Spiritus Mundi* the world's collective spirit or memory.

1. What is implied by "loosed," "blood-dimmed tide"? 2. How is line 6 clarified by "A Prayer for My Daughter" (page 1130)? 3. What are the tone and emotions of the second stanza? What is contributed by lines 15-17? by "slouches"? 4. How does the context help us to understand the unconventional reference to Christ in lines 20 and 22?

Sailing to Byzantium. Notes: See Introduction, page 1055. Title: Byzantium, the holy city of eastern Christendom, was used by Yeats to symbolize the eternal union and value of art and intellect. He wrote in his *A Vision* "I think that if I could be given a month of antiquity and leave to spend it where I chose, I would spend it in Byzantium a little before Justinian opened St. Sophia and closed the Academy of Plato. . . . I think that in early Byzantium, and maybe never before or since in recorded history, religious, aesthetic, and practical life were one, and that architects and artificers . . . spoke to the multitude and the few alike." 17. fire: Yeats used a scheme of two antithetical realities—earth (a condition of power, heterogeneity, and strain) and fire (a condition of music and rest). 19. perne in a gyre: see note 1 to "The Second Coming" (above). 29. Emperor: in a note in his *Collected Poems,* Yeats recalled that he had read of artificial birds that sang on a gold and silver tree in the palace. He had seen and admired the Byzantine mosaics in 1907 and in 1924, four years before the date of this poem.

1. How can the suggestion made in the Introduction (page 1055) be further developed? 2. How is stanza 2 related to "Among School Children" (page 1129)?

Robinson (1134)

EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON (1869-1935) was born in Head Tide, Maine. After two years at Harvard, the death of his mother and his father's illness, forced him to give up college and return home to Gardiner, Maine (called Tilbury Town in his poems). In 1897, still poor, he came to New York, where he worked as a subway checker, lived in cheap rooms, and continued to write poetry. His difficulties came to the attention of President Theodore Roosevelt, who assigned him a job in the Customs House, which he held from 1905 to 1910. He finally won financial independence and recognition as a poet.

GENERAL QUESTIONS ON THE ROBINSON POEMS

1. To what extent do the general questions on Browning's poems (page 1215) work for Robinson's? How does the latter's method differ? What relationship is there between the difference in method and the different kinds of characters portrayed? 2. In what respects is "Mr. Flood's Party" a comedy? Are lines 25-26 comic in tone? Are they in keeping with the rest of the poem? What of the comparison of the jug to the horn of Roland, the leader of Charlemagne's rear guard, who was killed with his men at Roncevaux in 778 when he proudly refused to blow for help?

Sandburg (1137)

CARL SANDBURG was born in Galesburg, Illinois, in 1878. He worked at all kinds of jobs until 1898, when he enlisted and served eight months in the Spanish-American War. His mustering-out money paid his first year's tuition at Lombard College in Galesburg, from which he graduated in 1902. After a variety of selling and political jobs that took him all over the country, he went to work for the Chicago *Daily News* in 1917, and he was for many years a well-known liberal journalist. His second book of poems,

Chicago Poems (1916), brought him critical and public acclaim. His many other volumes of poems written over the years have just been collected in one volume, and he is now equally well known for his biography of Lincoln, for which he was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1940.

Four Preludes on Playthings of the Wind

1. Is the theme the same as that of Shelley's "Ozymandias" (page 1073)? 2. How is this poem like and unlike Eliot's "Preludes" (page 1154)? 3. What character is suggested by the description of "Tomorrow" putting up her hair?

The People Will Live On

1. This is the last section of *The People, Yes* (1936). How does it say "yes"? How complicated is the statement? 2. How would you respond to the criticism that the language and rhythm are not "poetic" enough?

The Long Shadow of Lincoln

1. How do theme and symbolism compare with Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" (page 1074)? 2. How is the poem organized? 3. What is meant by the first two lines of the last stanza?

Frost (1142)

ROBERT FROST was born in San Francisco in 1875. His father, a Harvard graduate, had moved the family west during the Civil War, in which he favored states rights and the South. Young Frost was named after Robert E. Lee. After his father's death, Frost lived with his mother and grandfather in Lawrence, Massachusetts, where he was the valedictorian of his high school graduating class. Between 1893 and 1912, Frost spent a few months at Dartmouth, two years at Harvard, married his high school sweetheart, worked as a mill hand, a reporter, and a teacher, and wrote poetry which was ignored by the publishers. In 1912, the Frosts and their four children visited England, where his poetry, published in book form there for the first time, received its earliest acclaim. They returned at the start of World War I. Since then Frost has lived largely in New England, teaching at Amherst and other colleges, and writing the poems that have made him America's most widely honored poet.

The Oven Bird

1. In what sense has everyone heard the oven bird? 2. How is the colloquial tone established? Is it the right one for this bird? 3. What does the bird make of "a diminished thing"?

Revelation

1. Are rhythm and sound as well handled in this poem as in the preceding one?

The Tuft of Flowers

1. What is implied by line 19? 2. What would be lost by omitting the butterfly and having the speaker find the flowers unaided?

After Apple-Picking

1. What details, starting with line 2 and running through "Essence" and other words and scenes to "the woodchuck" (line 40), tell us that this is more than a realistic description? What do these details tell us, and how are they kept from sounding too solemn? 2. Where is the normal meter effectively varied to reinforce the sense?

The Wood-Pile

1. What does the bird do for the poem and for the establishment of the speaker's character? 2. What would you have thought on seeing the wood-pile?

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening

1. Why did the speaker stop? How does the answer help to tell us the right tone in which to read the last three lines?

Acquainted with the Night

1. How has the neutral, indecisive clock been prepared for by the preceding description?

Desert Places

1. What action by the speaker precedes the last stanza? How does that stanza modify the impression of his character created by the earlier stanzas?

The Death of the Hired Man

1. What light does Margaret Mead's essay (page 175) throw on the theme and social problem of this poem? 2. What purpose

other than indicating passage of time is served by lines 103-110, and 160-163? 3. How is this poem like and unlike Browning's dramatic monologues (page 1100 ff.)?

Eliot (1151)

T. S. ELIOT was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1888. He took his A.B. degree at Harvard in 1909 and did graduate work in philosophy there and at the Sorbonne and Oxford. He married in 1915, settled in England (becoming a British subject in 1927), and after a short career in teaching and banking, he entered the publishing house of Faber and Faber, of which he is a director. He has been one of the most influential modern poets and critics. The Nobel prize for literature was awarded him in 1948.

The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock. Notes: Epigraph: "If I thought my answer were to a person who could ever return to the world, this flame should shake no more. But since no one ever did return alive from this depth, if what I hear is true, without fear of infamy I answer you." These lines are from Dante's *Inferno,* XXVII, 61-66, where Dante has asked the speaker, Guido da Montefeltro, why he is being punished. Thinking that Dante must be damned to hell too and therefore unable to report what he hears, Guido is willing to give an account of his sin. Guido is in the part of the Inferno where practitioners of fraud and deceit are enveloped in flame; when they speak, the sound comes from the tonguelike flame. This epigraph suggests at the start that Prufrock is fearful of public judgment like Guido, and that he gives himself away to us because he believes that we too are damned. 14. Michelangelo: Renaissance artist, sculptor, and architect, whose creative vitality is in contrast with the affected, would-be culture of the women who are talking about him. 29. works and days: the title of a poem praising farming by Hesiod, a Greek poet of the eighth century B.C., and so another contrast to Prufrock's society. 83. no prophet: no John the Baptist, whose head was "brought in a charger"—*Matthew* 14:1-11. Again the contrast between Prufrock's neurotic inability to love and live fully and John's rejection of Salome's advances in the interest of a great and vital cause for which he actually gave his life. 94. Lazarus: see *Luke* 16 and *John* 11. Both stories, with their themes of repentance and resurrection, would be foreign to Prufrock's world. 113. swell a progress: add to a royal procession. 117. sentence: maxims and stock opinions, like those of Polonius in *Hamlet.* 121. trousers rolled: with cuffs—Prufrock will wear the latest style in his futile effort to be sexually attractive.

1. Why is the unconventional comparison of evening to a patient under ether an appropriate setting for Prufrock's world and his clinical examination of it? 2. How does the approach through the slum district sharpen the quality of the drawing-room scene? How is Prufrock like and unlike the men in that district described in lines 70-72? 3. Are true visions subject to revisions (line 32)? What light do this line and the repeated "Do I dare?" and "Should I presume" and similar phrases throw on the "overwhelming question" of line 10 and elsewhere? Is the question necessarily a precise one or known clearly to Prufrock? 4. What do lines 62-69 tell us about Prufrock's ability to love and the feelings he experiences about women? How is the nature of his "love song" clarified by the echo in line 92 of Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" (page 1067)? What does even a "pair of ragged claws" have that Prufrock does not? 5. What is gained for the poem by considering the allusion to Hamlet in some detail? For what reason does Prufrock fall short even of being an Elizabethan Fool (line 119)? 6. What quality is attributed to the mermaids by the description in 126-128 that is absent from Prufrock's life? What word tells us that he can see them only in dreams? Can he really be with them even then? 7. How much self-awareness does Prufrock have? How is that involved in his predicament? How could he be "happy"? 8. How does this poem compare in method with Browning's dramatic monologues (page 1100 ff.)? with Joyce's "A Little Cloud" (page 575)? How in theme with Arnold's "Dover Beach" (page 1124)?

Preludes

1. What is the mood of the opening description? How are the verbal details reinforced by sound and controlled rhythm? 2. What has prepared us to believe that the "street" would not understand the vision of its emptiness and futility that comes to the "you" of the third section? 3. What kind of person is described in the first part of the fourth section? What qualities of the "street" torture him? What progression is there from the person in the preceding stanza to this one, and in the reaction to the "street"? What further progression is there in lines 48-51? 4. To whom is line 52 addressed? Which character described earlier in the poem would be wiping his hand across his mouth? By whom is it addressed? What tone is imputed to the laugh? Are the last two lines meant to suggest that the whole universe is meaningless and mechanical? 5. What is ironical about the title of the poem?

The Hollow Men. Notes: Epigraph: Kurtz is the central character of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness.* He came out to the Congo filled with the highest ideals, but succumbed to savagery and greed. Just before his death, he cried out "The horror! The horror!" as he finally saw himself. When Marlowe, the narrator of the story, returns to Europe and tells Kurtz' fiancée of his death, he asserts that Kurtz died still believing in the ideal. Eliot's poem tells us which Kurtz to keep in mind. The "Old Guy" is Guy Fawkes, whose stuffed effigy is burned annually in England. The cry "A penny for the Old Guy" traditionally accompanies the ceremony. Children buy fireworks with the money—compare "bang" in the last line. Fawkes (1570-1606) was the leader of the Gunpowder Plot to blow up the Houses of Parliament. Right or wrong, he was a man of violent conviction—unlike the hollow men. 60. river: In Dante's *Inferno,* Hell is on the far side of the river Acheron; the hollow men cannot cross, like those in lines 13-14. 68. prickly pear: cactus-land version of "Here we go round the mulberry bush."

1. How is the condition of the hollow men clarified by knowing that in Dante's *Inferno* Limbo is occupied by those who lived without praise or blame, without doing anything positively good or evil, who were never fully alive and have no hope of death? 2. How are "star" and "eye" varied as symbols? Does it help to know that in Dante's *Purgatorio* Beatrice's eyes represent spiritual reality? And to know, in connection with lines 62-64, that in Dante's *Paradiso* the final spiritual vision takes the form of a rose, the emblem of Christ, the Virgin, and the redeemed souls?

Journey of the Magi. Notes: 1-5. These lines are adapted from the Nativity Sermon (1622) of Lancelot Andrews, an English preacher: "It was no summer progress. A cold coming they had of it at this time of year, just the worst time of the year to take a journey, and especially a long journey in. The ways deep, the weather sharp, the days short, the sun farthest off, in *solstitio brumali,* 'the very dead of winter.' "

1. What does this poem do to the conventional picture-card version of the Wise Men? 2. What died for the Magi because of their experiencing this Birth? What predicament are they now in, that they should be glad to die themselves?

Sweeney Among the Nightingales. Notes: Title: Sweeney in Eliot's poems represents complacent or brutal vulgarity. Epigraph: Aeschylus, *Agamemnon,* 1343—"Ah, I am struck deep with a deadly blow." This is Agamemnon's cry as he is murdered by his wife Clytemnestra. 4. maculate: spotted. 6. Plate: Rio de la Platta in South America. 8. hornèd gate: perhaps the gate of horn in *Odyssey,* XIX, 559 ff., through which come true dreams. Lines 5-10 are apparently a mock-heroic account of Sweeney's sordid death by some foul play. 35. nightingales: two stories are alluded to in these last lines, and both of them imply nobility and beauty in the midst of death—the opposite of Sweeney's meaningless extinction. One is the myth of Philomela, who was transformed into a nightingale after being violated by her brother-in-law and having her tongue cut out. The bloody wood filled with singing nightingales is the home of the Furies, described by Sophocles in *Oedipus at Colonus,* 17-18. The Furies, enforcers of the law, pursued

Orestes after he had killed his mother Clytemnestra in order to avenge her murdor of his father Agamemnon. After a period of expiation, Orestes is freed, and the mechanical justice of the Furies is harmonized with divine compassion. All of these myths and stories imply a creative rebirth and the existence of values beyond those of Sweeney's world.

1. By what words (such as "apeneck") and details of action is the world represented by the cabaret and its occupants depersonalized and drained of value? How does it compare with the world of Schomberg's hotel in *Victory* (page 641)?

Stevens (1158)

WALLACE STEVENS was born in Reading, Pennsylvania, in 1879, and was educated at Harvard and New York Law School He lives in Hartford, Connecticut, where he is a vice-president of a large insurance company. His first volume of poems, *Harmonium,* was published in 1923, and in 1950 he was awarded the Bollingen Poetry Prize.

Peter Quince at the Clavier Note: 9. Susanna: The story of the innocent Susanna is told in the Apocrypha. While bathing, during her husband's absence, she was spied on by the lascivious elders. When she repulsed one of them, he accused her of adultery; but Daniel exposed the elders and saved her from death.

1. What would happen to the theme if the characters and action were treated realistically, rather than impressionistically through the symbolism of music? 2. What is the relation of the first section to the rest of the poem? Is the speaker saying that he is a red-eyed elder? 3. What is suggested by the use of colors? By "muted" (37), "portal" (52), "cowl" (58)? 4. What effects are achieved by the variation in line lengths?

Ransom (1159)

JOHN CROWE RANSOM was born in Pulaski, Tennessee, the son of a Methodist minister. He was educated at Vanderbilt University and as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford. After teaching English for many years at Vanderbilt, where he developed a group of important Southern writers, including Robert Penn Warren, he moved to Kenyon College and founded the *Kenyon Review* in 1939. Most of his poetry was written before 1927; in late years he has devoted himself to criticism. In 1951 he was awarded the Bollingen Poetry Prize.

Spectral Lovers

1. What are the age and character of the speaker who observes the young lovers? What is your evidence? 2. How might Margaret Mead (see page 175) treat the same situation? Is the speaker totally unaware of other attitudes toward young love? Which attitudes does he wish to emphasize himself? Is he insufficiently realistic? 3. Is the predicament of the lovers in any way representative of more than their particular situation? Explain. 4. What meaning does the poem give to "spectral"?

Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter

1. What suggests that the speaker is like the one in the preceding poem? 2. What is the basic contrast in the poem? By what details is it represented? What is gained by "brown study" and "lying so primly propped" rather than the more accurate "dead"? What by the echo of Mother Goose rather than a more realistic description?

MacLeish (1160)

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH was born in Glencoe, Illinois, in 1892 and was educated at Yale and the Harvard Law School. He has been editor of *Fortune* magazine (1929-38), Librarian of Congress (1939-44), and Assistant Secretary of State (1944-45). He is now Boylston Professor of Rhetoric at Harvard, where he teaches poetry. Among his chief writings are *Conquistador* (1930), which won the Pulitzer Prize, and *Frescoes for Mr. Rockefeller's City* (1933).

You, Andrew Marvell

1. Assuming that the speaker is flying westward from the Near East, his mission filling his mind with thoughts of death and mortality, show how the scene below him, the

antiquity of the places, and lines from Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" (page 1067) are combined to form a symbolic picture. What emotions and attitudes come through? How do sound, rhythm, and the unusual punctuation contribute?

The End of the World

1. What metaphor underlies the poem? For what reasons is it an effective and appropriate one? 2. What effects are achieved by the repetition of "there" and "nothing," by "white faces," "vast wings," "cancelled"?

Lewis (1161)

C. DAY LEWIS was born in Queens County, Ireland, in 1904 and was educated at Oxford, where he became acquainted with Spender, Auden, and other young British postwar writers. His poems have been collected twice, 1929-33, 1933-47. He has written in other forms, including detective stories (under the pseudonym of Nicholas Blake), and literary criticism, *A Hope for Poetry*.

Nearing Again the Legendary Isle

1. How does a comparison of the theme and diction of this poem with Tennyson's "The Lotos-Eaters" (page 1096) help reveal what Lewis is saying?

Newsreel. Note: 18. gannets: large sea birds.

1. How is line 9 related to the preceding stanza and to line 20? 2. What is the tone of the first half of line 17? 3. What is the general theme?

Auden (1163)

W. H. AUDEN was born in York, England, in 1907 and was educated at Oxford. He taught school for five years, drove an ambulance for the Loyalists in the Spanish Civil War in 1937, and in the same year won the King George Gold Medal for poetry. Since 1939 he has lived in the United States, teaching, doing editorial work, and writing, and he is now an American citizen.

Lay Your Sleeping Head, My Love

1. How is the gentle innocence of the first line, with its echo of "Now I lay me down to sleep," developed in other details and worked through the poem? How is the sophistication of the second line developed and clarified? Are the two attitudes combined? 2. In answering the preceding question, what help is provided by noticing that many lines have the form of a charm spoken against evil (what is the nature of the evil here?), by noticing echoes of Donne's "The Ecstasy" (page 1063), and Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" (page 1067)?

Law Like Love

1. What is the tone of this poem? How does it change at line 35? How do rhythm, sound, and rhyme help to establish the tone and vary it?

Casino

1. What kind of society is the casino meant to symbolize? What details suggest contrasting values? What resemblance does this poem bear to any of Eliot's?

"O What Is That Sound Which So Thrills The Ear"

1. What are the two characters and tones of voice? 2. How is this like and unlike Yeats' "The Second Coming" (page 1133)?

In Memory of W. B. Yeats

1. How do the many metaphors extend and organize the ideas about fame, the distinction between a man and his poems, the modern temper, the value of poetry like Yeats' for the present?

September 1, 1939

1. In what sense and in what places is this comic? What are we meant to laugh at in lines 67-72? What should be the tone of the laughter? How is it controlled? 2. Does the rest of the poem prepare for lines 91-99? Why are the points ironic? How does this last stanza compare with Arnold's "Dover Beach" (page 1124)?

As I Walked Out One Evening

1. How is this poem like and unlike Frost's "Acquainted with the Night" (page 1146)? 2. What is implied by the contrast between

one kind of exaggerated imagery in stanzas 1-5 and another kind in 7 and 11? What by the alternation of scene, as between stanzas 9 and 10?

Musée des Beaux Arts

1. Where is the center of interest: in the rightness of the Old Masters, suffering, its "human position"? How can the reader tell? 2. What is the effect of the many run-on lines?

The Unknown Citizen

1. What kind of "person" or "mock reader" in Gibson's sense (see page 72) does this poem ask us to be?

Thomas (1171)

DYLAN THOMAS was born in Wales in 1914 and attended the Swansea Grammar School. He has been a reporter and a writer of radio and movie scripts. He toured the United States last year, reading his poems with great success.

Fern Hill

1. How is this poem like and unlike Wordsworth's lines on Tintern Abbey (page 1069)? 2. In what ways is Thomas' use of language unconventional? How is that use related to what he wants the reader to see and hear and feel?

Schwartz (1172)

DELMORE SCHWARTZ was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1913 and was educated at the University of Wisconsin, New York University, and at Harvard, where he taught English. He is an editor of *Partisan Review* and is noted for his literary criticism as well as for his poetry.

The Heavy Bear

1. What is added by the minor metaphors of sports and the circus? 2. How do the tone and attitude of the speaker toward his predicament compare with those of Ransom's "Spectral Lovers" (page 1159)?

Warren (1173)

ROBERT PENN WARREN was born in Kentucky in 1905 and was educated at Vanderbilt University, the University of California, and as a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford. Before becoming a professor of English at the University of Minnesota in 1942, he taught at Louisiana State University, where he edited *The Southern Review* with Cleanth Brooks. He is most widely known as a critic and novelist. *All the King's Men* (1945) won the Pulitzer Prize and was made into a movie.

Bearded Oaks

1. What is the relation between the first stanza and the following ones? 2. How are the images of light-dark-time-eternity worked out and related? How do they define the terms of the more explicit last stanza?

Viereck (1174)

PETER VIERECK was born in New York City in 1916 and was educated at Harvard and Oxford. After serving in the African and Italian campaigns during World War II, he taught at Harvard, and he now teaches history at Mount Holyoke College. His first book was on political theory, *Metapolitics. From the Romantics to Hitler. Terror and Decorum*, his first volume of poetry, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1949.

Kilroy

1. How is this like and unlike Auden's "September 1, 1939" (page 1168)? 2. How much of the older myth and literary material alluded to does the poem assimilate?

Poet

1. The epigraph says that all created form is immortal and that it is independent of matter. What more does the poem say? Are the images merely decorative?

Which of Us Two

1. What makes the poem more than a clever paradox?

A BRIEF GLOSSARY OF METRICAL TERMS

Foot: a combination of two or more syllables, usually one accented and one or more unaccented.

Principal Metrical Feet:

Iamb: one unaccented followed by one accented syllable (alért).

Anapest: two unaccented followed by one accented syllable (interpóse).

Trochee: one accented followed by one unaccented syllable (slówly).

Dactyl: one accented followed by two unaccented syllables (rápidly).

Lines, One to Six Feet: Monometer, Dimeter, Trimeter, Tetrameter, Pentameter, Hexameter (Alexandrine).

Caesura: the main pause within a line.

End-Stop: a line in which the sense ends or pauses at the end of the line.

Run-on: a line, generally without end punctuation, in which the sense runs over into the next line or lines.